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A Discourse Analysis of U.S. Mainstream Media Reportage from Selected
'Media Frames' of the Arab/Israeli Conflict throughout the Oslo Peace Process:
September 1993 - September 2000

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This thesis is the result of my own work. Material from the published or unpublished work of others, which is referred to in the thesis, is credited to the author in the text. The thesis is approximately 40, 000 words in length.

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‘Contents’

| | |
|---|-----|
| ‘Acknowledgements’ | 3 |
| ‘Contents’ | i |
| ‘Abstract’ | ii |
| <i>A Discourse Analysis of U.S. Mainstream Media Reportage from Selected</i> | |
| <i>‘Media Frames’ of the Arab/Israeli Conflict throughout the Oslo Peace Process:</i> | |
| <i>September 1993 - September 2000 ‘Introduction and Methodology’</i> | |
| | iii |
| ‘Birth or Stillbirth of the Oslo Peace Process?’ | 1 |
| ‘Black Friday’ | 13 |
| ‘Goodbye Friend’ | 23 |
| ‘Sunday Bloody Sundays’ | 32 |
| ‘Operation Grapes of Wrath’ and the ‘Massacre of Qana’ | 47 |
| ‘The ‘Stinker’ Comes to Power’ | 57 |
| ‘The Hashmonean Tunnel Opening’ | 71 |
| ‘Har Homa: An ‘Ongoing’ Project’ | 83 |
| ‘The Penultimate Nail in the Oslo Coffin’ | 92 |
| ‘The Death of Oslo’ | 103 |
| Conclusion(s) | 114 |
| Media Sources | 118 |
| Media Sources II | 119 |
| Bibliography | 121 |

'Abstract'

This thesis examines the nature of U.S. mainstream media discourse concerning the Palestinian Arab/Israeli conflict throughout the period of the Oslo 'peace process' *i.e.*, from September 1993 until September 2000. The discourse analysis itself is conducted through the utilisation of selected 'media frames' chosen because it was felt that they could be considered singularly to represent a major dynamic of the conflict that has led precipitously to the present Palestinian/Israeli impasse.

Indeed, the objectives of this study have been twofold, firstly, it was intended, that the narratives of the 'media frames' could stand each alone as a substantive essay. Secondly, and conversely, however, it was also the aim of this study to cover as much of the socio-political history of this turbulent period as possible in a relatively short amount of space.

The central tenet of this work however, is that throughout the entire Oslo 'peace process' Palestinian Arabs in a majority of the channels of the U.S. mainstream media were subject to a mildly racist media portrayal, which fluctuated in the severity of its denigration as and when the much maligned 'peace process' (In the specific language of Oslo.) swerved 'off' and 'on track'. Moreover, it is argued, that all the while a *Pax Americana/Israelica* exists, then negative U.S. mainstream media portrayals of the Palestinian Arab, and other Arabs, shall continue unabated. Therefore, what this work requests is a debunking of this mildly racist xenophobia within the channels of the U.S. mainstream media specifically through intelligently addressed criticism.

A Discourse Analysis of U.S. Mainstream Media Reportage from Selected
 'Media Frames' of the Arab/Israeli Conflict throughout the Oslo Peace Process:
 September 1993 - September 2000 * 'Introduction and Methodology'

'Most Americans picture Arabs as "backward, scheming, fanatic terrorists who are dirty, dishonest, oversexed and corrupt". On the other hand the Israelis are seen as "tough, energetic, hard-working, persecuted and courageous people". They are modern pioneers who have made the desert bloom and democracy a reality in the midst of the backward Middle East'.¹

'Similarly Americans tend to identify with foreign societies or cultures projecting a pioneering new spirit (e.g., Israel) of wresting the land from ill use or savages'.²

This thesis sets out primarily to determine the nature of American mainstream media reportage of the Arab/Israeli conflict throughout the ill-fated Oslo 'peace process' *i.e.*, from the historic signing of the 'Declaration of Principles' of September 13, 1993 until the unfortunate collapse of the process at the end of September 2000.³ The main argument proposed is that there still exists a tangible, if undeclared anti-Arab, pro-Israeli 'bias' in the corpus of the American mainstream media's reportage throughout the vast majority of its channels. Indeed, 'today, newspapers, magazines, radio, and television are the potential media of the public sphere in the United States.'⁴

It shall also be argued however, that throughout certain periods during the much maligned 'peace process', Arab (in this instance Palestinian) media portrayals improved moderately against a backdrop of an overall U.S. enthusiasm felt during intervals of progress in the process *per se*. Yet as soon as there was a

* From the outset a 'media frame' is defined as a specific event *i.e.*, crisis, anniversary, festival, *etc.*, that solicits a detectable increase in media reportage. A 'media frame' opens when the reportage specifically focuses upon an aforementioned event, and closes when the nature of such reportage focuses upon a subsequent, or related event. See: Rabinovitz, Lauren, & Jeffords, Susan, [Eds.], *Seeing Through the Media: The Persian Gulf War*, pp. 6-9.

¹ Ghareeb, Edmund, 'Imbalance in the American Media'. In Ghareeb, Edmund [Ed.], *Arab Portrayal in the American Media*, p. 17.

² Said, Edward, *Covering Islam: how the media and experts determine how we see the rest of the world*, p. 54.

³ This thesis determines that September 28, 2000 represents the termination of the Oslo 'peace process' more for convenience than out of conviction.

⁴ Roache, Thomas, 'Competing News Narratives, Consensus, and World Power'. In Kamalipour, Yahya, R. [Ed.], *The U.S. Media and the Middle East image and perception*. p. 31.

deadlock in the negotiations, or a derailment in the process, the Palestinians were usually portrayed as the intransigent party.⁵ And, moreover, when the 'peace process' broke down altogether, the more familiar 'traditional denigration' of the Palestinian Arab reappeared in the vast majority of media portrayals.⁶

By 'traditional denigration' reference is being made to the recognised negative stereotyping of Arabs and Palestinians (The mainstream media more often than not portrays the Arabs as a single homogeneous entity, which of course they are not.),⁷ that was typical of U.S. reportage throughout the channels of the mainstream media, *i.e.*, as a militarily inept force after the Arab defeat of June 1967, as terrorists rather than Palestinian guerrillas (*Fedayeen*), during the 1970's, 80's, and 90's, and as 'corrupt oil-merchants' after the 1973 Arab oil embargo *etc.*⁸

This 'traditional denigration' was to continue relentlessly until the outbreak of the Palestinian *Intifada* (Shaking Off) in early December 1987, which seriously challenged the usage of such stereotypes and temporarily overturned the Western perceived 'David and Goliath' myth.⁹ The explicit usage of 'myth' in this thesis is based upon a simplification of Roland Barthes' definition, in that myth is firstly a *parole* (speech or narrative) and secondly, something inherently more, a 'message' or 'tradition',¹⁰ (conveyed via discourse) that is a popularly held idea or belief, which is not founded wholly upon the truth. In this instance, however, this study is dealing specifically with political myth, and the role that this plays in assisting a hegemonic power either through the use of 'rhetoric' or propaganda.¹¹

⁵ Dempsey, Judy, 'Clinton keeps low profile ahead of the polls'. *The Financial Times*, October 5, 2000. And: Borger, Julian, 'How a virtuous circle turned vicious', *Guardian*, October 13, 2000.

⁶ Fisk, Robert, 'Peace is dead. My people will no longer be the victims'. (An interview with Hanan Ashrawi.) *Independent*, November 8, 2000.

⁷ Ghareeb, Edmund, *Op-cit.*, p. 18.

⁸ Said, Edward, E. *Orientalism*, pp. 285-286.

⁹ Daniel, Anne Marie, A. U.S. Media Coverage of the *Intifada* and American Public Opinion. In: Kamilipour, Yahya, R. *The U.S. Media and the Middle East*. pp. 61-62. Concerning the 'David and Goliath' myth, see Aronoff, Myron, J. Myths, Symbols, and Rituals of the Emerging State. In Silberstein, Laurence, J. *New Perspectives on Israeli History: The Early Years of the State*, p. 178.

¹⁰ See: Barthes, Roland, *Mythologies*, p. 215.

¹¹ Barthes, Roland, trans. Lavers, Annette, *Mythologies*, p. 150.

In many ways however, it shall be argued that this later denigration *i.e.*, post-Camp David II (July 11-25, 2000), was even more virulent in manner than during previous times in the conflict, as blame for the 'wasted opportunity' required apportioning to either one of the parties.¹² Thus, once again the Palestinians received a bad press and the old negative stereotypes were re-evoked.

It shall further be argued that the U.S. Administration needs to maintain a pro-Israeli attitude, which is expressed by its utilisation of the U.S. mainstream media, and that such an attitude is thus reflected in the bias of the mainstream reportage of the conflict. The U.S. Administration relies upon the support of the 'Jewish Lobby' *i.e.*, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC *et al.*), to maintain its power within U.S. Congress.¹³ Any criticism of Israel, and its treatment of Palestinians, even in her handling of the 'peace process' results in accusations of anti-Semitism, and is met with the subsequent threat of the removal of the 'Jewish Lobby's' support from Congress.¹⁴

Numerous citations can be offered to support this commonly understood phenomena, consider former U.S. president Bill Clinton's reluctance to condemn the Israeli's opening of the 'Hashmonean Tunnel' in September 1996 for fear of upsetting the Jewish electorate in the run up to the elections for his second term.¹⁵ Or more recently: the former President's refraining from castigating the Israelis for their excessive use of force during the 'Uprising of the *al-Aqsa* Mosque' (Fall 2000), once again for fearing the alienation of the Jewish electorate, and turning support away from (then vice-president) Al Gore's

¹² Camp David II refers to the failed 'talks' hosted by former U.S. President Bill Clinton (July 11-25, 2000) as opposed to the successful 'talks' hosted by Jimmy Carter, which led to the Israeli/Egyptian Peace Accord of September 17, 1978, Officially and famously 'celebrated' on the North Lawn of the White House on March 26, 1979. See, Mostyn, Trevor, 'Time-bomb Under Jerusalem'. *The Tablet*, August 5, 2000. pp. 1040-1041. Bickerton, Ian, J. Klausner, Carla, L. *A Concise History of the Arab Israeli Conflict*, p. 187. And: Whitaker, Brian, 'Camp David' gates reopen'. *Guardian*, July 7, 2000.

¹³ The 'Jewish Lobby' comprises many organisations all dedicated to the maintenance of Israel, *i.e.*, AIPAC, the Jewish Agency for Israel Appeal, the World Zionist Organisation, The Jewish Fund, and the World Jewish Congress are just a few examples. See: Becket, Andy, 'Caught in the blast'. *The Guardian Weekend*, October 21, 2000.

¹⁴ Ghareeb, Edmund, *Op-cit.*, p. 29, pp. 121-122.

¹⁵ Dempsey, Judy, & Jurek, Martin, 'US calls summit to revive peace process'. *The Financial Times*, September 30, 1996.

candidacy. The phenomenon also naturally works in apposition to this, for example, George W. Bush's newly appointed team of Middle East experts refrained from even attempting to end the Arab/Israeli impasse until after the Israeli elections on February 6, (2001).

Furthermore, as a continuation of this argument in regards to the 'Jewish Lobby', appeasement of this umbrella organisation insures the smooth continuation of the U.S. 'special relationship'.¹⁶ (A concomitant relationship that ensures the survival of Israel, and the maintaining of U.S. 'hegemony' in her Middle Eastern 'sphere of interest'.) It is necessary here to briefly define what this thesis implies by the use of 'hegemony'. Antonio Gramsci in his seminal work, the 'Prison Notebooks' whilst 'restructuring' an interpretation of Marxian philosophy, conceptualised an understanding that 'ideological struggles' are correctly defined as struggles for hegemony. This is to say: hegemony is a struggle for the consensual basis of an existing political system, attained when a ruling elite has its ideology accepted by the subordinated class; or the acceptance of a replacement ideology by that subordinated class.¹⁷ Gramsci understands 'ideological struggles' as conflicts undertaken explicitly to attain hegemony. Therefore, in essence hegemony is a struggle for the support of the populace.¹⁸ Nevertheless, within the dynamics of this aforementioned hegemonic relationship it is necessary to recognise that the media is in essence a 'voice' of the U.S. Administration: it works largely for, and on its behalf. Indeed, 'the media is increasingly playing a quasi-governmental role in American politics and security.'¹⁹

This is not however, to suggest that there is some grand conspiracy between the U.S. Administration and the U.S. media *per se* for it is to be recognised that journalists and editors have partial autonomy and that the U.S. mainstream media

¹⁶ Taylor, Alan, R. *The Superpowers and the Middle East*, p. 51.

¹⁷ Forgacs, David, [Ed.], *The Antonio Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings, 1916–35*. pp. 422-444.

¹⁸ Urmsion, J. O. & Rée, Jonathan, [Eds.], 'The Concise Encyclopedia of Western Philosophy Philosophers', pp. 120-121.

¹⁹ Ghareeb, Edmund, *Op-cit.*, p. 20.

is still very much an apparatus of freedom of expression in the U.S.²⁰ That politicians and journalists have known social contacts:²¹ and the media companies in several instances share their directors with the large corporations whom receive much of their financing through Congress, the link between the policies that the Administration in Washington wishes to promote, and those which it does not, is evident in some aspects of the collective U.S. mainstream media.²²

This collective mainstream media disseminates many of the U.S. Administration's views throughout its media channels. These views find reflection in the tabloid press, the broadsheets, TV news coverage, documentaries, cinema, and even in cartoons and advertisements. The U.S. populace receives most of its education, *i.e.*, 'cultural awareness' and understanding of international affairs through the medium of the TV.²³ Therefore, if this education (view) is heavily biased or even distorted, then the general public's view is also subsequently biased and distorted.²⁴ The relationship that exists between the U.S. Administration, the U.S. mainstream media, *e.g.*, the big three TV networks CNN, ABC, and NBC, and the 'prestigious press', the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, the *Chicago Tribune etc.*, and between the large U.S. conglomerates, for example General Electric, Boeing, Lockheed Martin *etc.*, is not new.²⁵ In fact, it has been growing since its inception, *i.e.*, since the early 1950's, and is a relationship of reciprocity directed solely so that each interested party can maintain a hegemonic control over the other.²⁶

²⁰ Hudson, Michael, C. *The Media and the Arabs: Room for Improvement*. Hudson, Michael, C. [Ed.], *The American Media and the Arabs*. p. 91.

²¹ Said, Edward, *Covering Islam*, p. 151. And: Chomsky, Noam, & Herman, Edward, S. *Manufacturing Consent*, p. XI

²² Kellner, Douglas, *The Persian Gulf TV War*. p. 61.

²³ Daniel, Anne-Marie, A. 'U.S. Media Coverage of the *Intifada* and American Public Opinion'. In Kamilipour, Yahya, R. *Op-cit.*, p. 64.

²⁴ Kassimeris, George, *Europe's Last Red Terrorists: The Revolutionary Organization 17 November*, p. 153.

²⁵ Kellner, Douglas, *Op-cit.*, pp. 59-60.

²⁶ Ronson, Jon, 'Who pulls the strings?' *The Guardian Weekend*, March 10, 2001.

In addition to the aforementioned arguments, it shall also be argued that throughout the Oslo peace process various players shaped and characterised the peace through their personal inputs in a bid to support and maintain this aforementioned U.S. hegemony over the Middle Eastern region.²⁷ These players in many ways represent the ‘cutting teeth’ of the ‘hegemonic paradigm’. (By the term ‘hegemonic paradigm’ suggestion is being made to the tools that the hegemonic power, in this instance, the United States, utilizes to maintain its control and authority, *viz.* its key players, its rhetoric and propaganda *etc.*) The likes of Martin Indyk, the native Australian, and U.S. appointed ‘special envoy’ to the Middle East (1995-1997), whose subsequent reappointment (due to the flare up of a major crisis), was effected purely because of his clear understanding of the U.S. ‘special relationship’ with Israel, is a good example of such a player.²⁸

An even better example of one of these cutting teeth can be found in the persona of the once disgraced Benjamin Netanyahu, a completely ‘Americanised’ Jew (*i.e.*, culturally assimilated with the U.S.), whom authored a book ominously entitled *How to Deal With Terrorists*.²⁹ This leading Israeli politician is perhaps one of the closest of Israeli links to the White House, (Having held the post of Israeli Ambassador to the UN.), and he offers strong evidence of a hegemonic relationship existing between the U.S. and the Israelis.³⁰ Indeed, even former U.S. President Bill Clinton spoke of his ‘special friendship’ and admiration for the ‘warrior turned peacemaker’, Yitzhak Rabin, with the words: *Shalom, chaver* (‘Goodbye, friend’), at the funeral of this former Israeli Prime Minister after his unfortunate assassination.³¹ Furthermore, in the aftermath of the ineffectual Camp David II ‘talks’, Clinton suggested upon Israeli television that he once again personally favoured the move of the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem from Tel

²⁷ Fisk, Robert, ‘Peace is dead. My people will no longer be the victims’. (An interview with Hanan Ashrawi.) *The Independent*, November 8, 2000.

²⁸ In Cambell, Matthew, & Mahnaimi, Uzi, ‘U.S. puts security ban on own envoy’. *The Sunday Times*, September 24, 2000.

²⁹ For a good analysis of this work see Said, Edward, W, ‘The Essential Terrorist’, in Hitchens, Christopher, & Said, Edward, W. [Eds.], *Blaming the Victims*, p. 151.

³⁰ See, Netanyahu, Benjamin, *Fighting Terrorism: how the democracies can defeat the domestic and international terrorists*. London: Allison & Busby. 1996.

³¹ In Brown, Derek, ‘Israel’s darkest hour: Future of peace process in doubt’. *Guardian*, November 6, 1995. And: Shlaim, Avi, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World*, p. 548.

Aviv, therefore recognising Israel's claim of sovereignty over Jerusalem, and subsequently rejecting any Arab claim.³²

Although it is evident that there are many strong characters representing such cutting teeth in this hegemonic paradigm, recognition is made to the fact that not all Americanised Jews are ardent supporters of Israel, or her Zionist policies, and certainly are not all anti-Palestinian, or anti-Arab. Examples of such players are to be found in the likes of Madeleine Albright (former U.S. Secretary of State) of whom it is said 'does not allow the recent discovery of her Jewish identity to cloud her judgement concerning the Arab/Israeli conflict.'³³ And also in the highly regarded Connecticut Senator, Joseph Lieberman, who is an apparent agent of liberalism on the U.S. political scene.

Examination of some of the activities carried out by many of these cutting teeth would however, surely add weight to the argument that the 'special relationship' is one that works both ways, but at the expense of a balanced media portrayal of the 'Arab' in the U.S. media. Furthermore, it is perhaps churlish to consider that the weight of a pro-Israeli bias will undergo a dramatic shift in favour of the Arabs with the passage of time. It is argued that this pattern of negative stereotyping of the Arabs as an entity, which opposes the U.S. at all levels, is very deeply entrenched,³⁴ so how would the media be able to suddenly change the nature of its reportage without losing credibility in its reporting, or giving credence to an active anti-Arab policy at the governmental level?³⁵

The reality of the situation is this: that since the demise of communism and the dissolution of the former USSR, the U.S. has required its bogeyman.³⁶ This is what has been aptly called the 'villain vacuum' for it could be cynically, and wrongly argued, that the U.S. needs, and must maintain a constant state of belligerency, either against an ideological (*i.e.*, Communism, Islam *etc.*), or a

³² Mostyn, Trevor, 'Time Bomb Under Jerusalem'. *The Tablet*, August 5, 2000. pp. 1040 -1041.

³³ Hardy, Jeremy, 'Doves of war' *Guardian*, October 21, 2000.

³⁴ Said, Edward, W. *Covering Islam*, p. 157.

³⁵ Daniel, Anne-Marie, A. *The Intifada and American Public Opinion*, in Kamalipour, Yahya, R. *Op-cit.* p. 69.

³⁶ Chomsky, Noam, *Peace in the Middle East*. pp. 95-96. And: Halliday, Fred, *Islam and the Myth of Confrontation*, p. 81. And: Said, Edward, W. *The End of the Peace Process*, p. 48.

physical enemy (*i.e.*, Columbian drug barons, perceived Middle Eastern state sponsored terrorists *etc.*), for the sake of the health of her 'military-industrial complex' *viz.* the cornerstone of her economy.³⁷

In previous times the Communists sufficed and the Arabs came in useful for their oil and manipulation during the Cold War, being utilised specifically as a barrier against regional penetration of the communist ideology. At this juncture however, recognition is made to the fact that Israel was herself utilised by the U.S. as a satellite thwarting communist penetration,³⁸ as well as representing a symbol of U.S. global domination and supremacy in the Middle Eastern region.³⁹ Indeed, this relationship allowed for the U.S. to urge the Israelis to use caution in many of her foreign policy objectives (both strategic and political, *viz.* war), particularly in relation to the Lebanon and Syria in the 1970s and '80's *i.e.*, during 'Operation Litany' (March 1978), and during the 'Siege of Beirut' (June 1982). This desire for Israeli caution was mainly driven from the U.S.'s fear of provoking a Russian response, and interfering with a carefully balanced state of *détente*.⁴⁰

Today, however, Israel's importance as a friendly regional bastion opposing conflicting ideologies and their threat of regional penetration is much diminished, and it is this factor which largely underscores Washington's determination to negotiate a lasting peace in order that Israel can stand alone.⁴¹ This allows the U.S. to concentrate on other issues *i.e.*, the growing threat from the South American drug cartels, and the perceived 'global' terrorists that impinges upon, and largely influences the U.S. domestic political arena.⁴² In

³⁷ Bell, Steve, *American Journalism - Practices, Constraints, and Middle East Reportage*: In Hudson, Michael, C. *Op-cit*, p. 54. And: Chomsky, Noam, *Ibid* And: Cromwell, David, 'The hack and flack machine'. *New Internationalist*, Issue, 328, October 2000. And: Halliday, Fred, *Op-cit*, p. 107, and p. 113.

³⁸ Hersh, Seymour, M. *The Samson Option*, p. 153. Guyatt, Nicholas, *The Absence of Peace*, p. 77.

³⁹ King, John, *Handshake in Washington: The Beginning of Middle East Peace?* p. 4. And: Smith, Charles, D. *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, p. 290, and p. 292. And: Said, Edward, W. *The Question of Palestine*, p. 29. And: Guyatt, Nicholas, *Ibid*.

⁴⁰ Evron, Yair, *War and Intervention in Lebanon*, p. 30.

⁴¹ Faour, Muhammad, *The Arab World After Desert Storm*, p. 7.

⁴² Reed, Christopher, 'Dirty hands and finger of guilt'. *Guardian*, November 19, 1996. And: Lennard, Jeremy, 'A War Run On Drugs'. *Guardian Weekend*, November 13, 1999.

essence, the motivations underpinning the sustaining of the once promoted 'special relationship' have shifted, and although the U.S. will never completely abandon Israel, (the relationship is too protracted and entangled), there is a tangible distancing by the U.S. Administration from many of the policies pursued by the *Knesset*, as these policies threaten to undermine her [America's] relations with other Middle Eastern states.⁴³ (This distancing, however, rarely manifests itself in open condemnation of Israel's treatment of the Palestinians, or border incursions into southern Lebanon where she operates with *carte blanche* against the perceived 'global' terrorists.)

Nevertheless, Israel has found herself in the position of being an almost totally expendable asset (indeed, even a liability), in some eyes in Washington. Being told frequently to quieten down her regional belligerencies, and attempt to find peace with her Arab neighbours.⁴⁴ If her complaints concern her national security from both internal and external threats, she is often placated by a fresh delivery of Black-Hawk and Apache helicopters, but very much kept at arms length.⁴⁵ Israel today however, is no longer on the top of the U.S. foreign policy agenda, a fact that has yet to be recognised within the minds of many Israelis, and indeed many members of the *Knesset* with regards to their conduct in the Arab/Israeli conflict.⁴⁶

After August 2, 1990, and greatly assisted by Saddam Hussein's foolhardy invasion of Kuwait, the Arab came to be considered as an even more legitimate target as the causer of the 'ills in the world', and this was reflected in the U.S.'s mainstream media portrayals *i.e.*, 'terrorists' (the Palestinians), 'religious fundamentalists' (the Iranians), and 'usurpers of Western values' (the Iraqis). The Palestinians did not help themselves duly when they sided with Iraq's 'often misunderstood' leader.⁴⁷ This action was born out of frustration with the U.S.'s

⁴³ Sluglett, Peter, & Sluglett, Marion, F. [Eds.], *The Times Guide to The Middle East*, pp. 117-118.

⁴⁴ King, John, *Handshake in Washington: The Beginning of Middle Eastern Peace?* p. 5, p. 52, and p. 134.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* p. 138. Bregman, Ahron, & El-Tahri, Jihan, *The Fifty Year War: Israel and Arabs*, p. 188.

⁴⁶ King, John, *Op-cit*, pp. 64-65.

⁴⁷ Halliday, Fred, *Op-cit*, p. 84.

constant endorsement of Israeli policy against the Palestinian entity. Of course, Kuwaitis are Arab, but the ruling Al-Sabah family *now* promotes U.S. hegemonic domination in the Persian Gulf region. This very minute detail however, is very often overlooked.⁴⁸

There are exceptions to this pattern of negative stereotyping evident in some channels of the U.S. mainstream media, and some very balanced reportage of the Arab/Israeli conflict during the Oslo 'peace process' does exist. For example, the *Christian Science Monitor* is generally regarded to report upon the conflict in an unbiased manner. This balanced reportage however, is the exception, rather than the rule. Nevertheless, it shall also be argued that although the U.S. mainstream media has primarily portrayed their 'Arab' during the lulls of the Oslo peace process with such stereotypes as the Palestinian 'terrorist': elements undoubtedly exist within the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, (e.g., the *Izzedin al-Qassim, Hamas'* armed wing, and *The Jewish Brigade*, the armed wing of the *Islamic-Jihad*, [often referred to as 'Holy War' in the U.S. 'prestigious press'] whom have themselves acted in a way that has not helped remove these deeply entrenched negative stereotypes.)⁴⁹

The Palestinian Authority's leadership has also not acted in a way to improve the media's portrayal of the conflict in favour of the Palestinians.⁵⁰ There are several reasons for this: Firstly, it appears that there are many articulate Israelis ready and willing to utilise the U.S. media's channels in putting over their point of view.⁵¹ This is partly because of the length and nature of the 'special

⁴⁸ Hitchens, Christopher, 'Realpolitik in the Gulf a Game Gone Tilt', in Sifry, Micah, L. and Cerf, Christopher, [Eds.], *The Gulf War Reader*, pp. 107-108. And: Farrel, Stephen, 'Iraqis try to move on while regime plays statues' *The Times*, February 27, 2001. And: Faour, Muhammad, *Op-cit*, p. 89.

⁴⁹ Hamas: *Harakat al-Muqawat al-Islamiyya*, in Hisham, Ahmad, H, *Hamas: from religious salvation to political transformation*. p. 9, and p. 29. And: Smith, Charles, D. *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, p. 301. *The Jewish Brigade* in Goldenberg, Suzanne, 'Proliferating Islamic groups worry Israelis'. *Guardian*, November 3, 2000.

⁵⁰ At times Yassir Arafat had acted irascibly and illogically during interviews concerning his handling of the Palestinians. However, recognition is made to the extreme pressure he was under. In response to Ehud Barak's ultimatum regarding the continuation of Palestinian violence. Yassir Arafat laughingly responded by saying "threats, threats, threats". In Goldenberg, Suzanne, Arafat laughs off new Barak ultimatum. *Guardian*, October 11, 2000.

⁵¹ Ghareeb, Edmund, *Op-cit*, p. 21.

relationship', and also partly because traditionally the Israelis have always been gifted users of the media to promote and sustain their Zionist cause.⁵²

This is to suggest that the Israelis understand the power of the media as a weapon of popular persuasion, and therefore seek to court it.⁵³ Indeed, it is possible to go further and claim that a large proportion of the negative stereotyping of the Arab in the U.S. mainstream media is in itself generated by prominent Israeli appearances on CNN, ABC, *etc.*, or in interviews conducted by *Newsweek* or *Time Magazine* for example. And furthermore, the rhetoric that these prominent and articulate Israeli's promote in these TV appearances is absorbed and transmitted by the journalists and editors within the media channels.

This is, in the main, also true of British media reportage of the conflict. It is quite usual to have the opinion of a prominent Israeli politician or intellectual such as Shimon Peres, or Amos Oz printed in a mainstream 'broadsheet' such as the *Guardian*, or the *Independent*, whereas it is highly unusual to have an opinion of someone representing the Palestinians of such high political calibre.⁵⁴ (Arguably, because such a polity does not exist within the 'youthful' Palestinian Authority, and moreover, because of the many apparent divisions within this polity.)⁵⁵ This apparent lack of representation, it has previously been argued by some, is due to an Arab misunderstanding of the power of the media in promoting their cause.⁵⁶ (In the utilisation of the media as a tool for public awareness, Arab entities have traditionally been considered as slow to catch on. Nevertheless, this is certainly no longer the case.)⁵⁷

⁵² Said, Edward, W. *The End of the Peace Process*, p. 56.

⁵³ *Ibid.* p. 110.

⁵⁴ Said, Edward, W. *The Question of Palestine*, p. 40.

⁵⁵ Recognition is made of the not too infrequent appearance of Hanan Ashrawi in the British media however, although she represents the Palestinians, she does not necessarily reflect the position of the Palestinian Authority *per se*.

⁵⁶ Ghareeb, Edmund, (An interview with Nick Thimmesch.) *Op-cit*, p. 78.

⁵⁷ In the latest flare up *i.e.*, post Sept 28, 2000, two examples show how the Palestinians understand the power of the media. Repeated TV broadcasting of the killing of Muhammad al-Durrah, in the West Bank, and the utilisation of an Italian camera crew's footage of the 'bloody' reprisal *i.e.*, the lynching of the two lost Israelis soldiers. See, Goldenberg, Suzanne, 'Boy's death stokes up battle for Jerusalem'. *Guardian*, October 2, 2000, and Goldenberg, Suzanne, 'When they blundered into the baying mob they sealed their fate'. *Guardian*, October 13, 2000. And: Cornwell, Rupert, 'Can presence of photographers distort events and alter history?' *Independent*, March 23, 2001.

In this aspect, TV journalism reporting upon the conflict potentially conveys more accurate and reliable reportage, as the mainstream broadsheets lack the ability to report live coverage and are not as quick in their delivery of news to their target audiences as is satellite conveyed TV reportage.⁵⁸ Furthermore, journalistic accounts that are targeted for the broadsheets go through a process of recasting by editors and are very often traditionally formulaic in their style of reporting the conflict.⁵⁹ (In this instance, reflecting a pro-Israeli bias). In Israel TV camera crews, however, still undergo rigorous censorship and militarily imposed restrictions upon their reportage. Therefore, in many ways we should consider what we are not being shown of the conflict on TV if we are to reach a more thorough conclusion. This obviously gives rise to some surmise and supposition, which arguably is not necessarily overly damaging in any overall analysis of events.

In light of the above considerations, it seems reasonable to suggest that a large proportion of the negative Arab stereotyping found within U.S. mainstream media, is on the whole generated in Israel itself through both its laws of censorship and by its own propaganda machine. This is aimed at keeping a constant public awareness of the much lauded threat to Israel from the Arab World, and a constant awareness of the vulnerability of the physical, and ideological position of Zionism *viz.* Israel.⁶⁰

Furthermore, it gives credence to the hegemonic aspect of the 'special relationship' in as much as Israel enacts a heavily U.S. influenced foreign policy, and enforces her own regional hegemonic superiority over her Arab neighbours, usually, but not always backed by the tacit approval of the White House.⁶¹ In essence, the closeness of the 'special relationship' at times renders Israel as the

⁵⁸ Hughes, John, 'New media technology increases the pressure to get the story right.' *Christian Science Monitor*, May 3, 1996.

⁵⁹ Said, Edward, W. *Covering Islam*, p. 52.

⁶⁰ Benziman, Uri, *Sharon: An Israeli Caesar*, p. 64

⁶¹ Consider the reluctant condemnation of Israel's fatal 'shelling' of the UN compound of Qana (south Lebanon), April 18, 1996, or the subtle wording of the U.S. call for Israeli moderation in the post September 28, 2000, violence. See: Fisk, Robert, 'Truth brings reality to PR show at Qana', *Independent*, April 22, 1996, and Reeves, Phil, 'Bombs, bullets and accusations fly across Gaza'. *Independent*, November 23, 2000.

U.S. sponsored regional enforcer of U.S./Israeli jointly dictated Middle Eastern foreign policy. Furthermore, the U.S. very often acts on behalf of the West as a judge and jury (the global policeman), whilst Israel acts at times as the executioner of U.S. perceived justice in the Middle Eastern sphere of the West's collective 'interests'.⁶²

Moreover, because of the sheer military and political power that Israel can generate for herself through the dynamics of the 'special relationship' with the U.S., she is able to pursue her own agendas with an almost unrestrained 'freehand'.⁶³ Therefore, in this context, the analogy of Israel representing a Mediterranean based American state is not wholly invalid. Nevertheless, historical and cultural reasons can also be proffered to explain the closeness of this 'special relationship'.

Many U.S. citizens empathise with the Israelis as pioneers surrounded by *savages* due to their own history. For this cultural affiliation they draw an analogy to the Israeli pioneering with that of the early New Englanders whom settled the Americas, and overcame their *own* created *savage i.e.*, the indigenous American Indian.⁶⁴ Furthermore, in the U.S., there exists today a cultural attachment to the 'Wild West' and an affinity with the image of the cowboy *i.e.*, the righteous pioneer opposing the immoral savage: the bringer of good, as the avenger of evil: the propagator of moral righteousness, the teacher, the judge and sometimes as the executioner.⁶⁵

⁶² This is certainly evident in the field of counter terrorism through the close connection that Mossad has with its U.S. counterpart the CIA. See Netanyahu Benjamin, *Op-cit.* And Walker, Christopher, and Dunn, Ross. 'Major pledges to sever Hamas charity lifeline'. *The Times*, March 14, 1996.

⁶³ Again consider Israel's 'preventative' incursions into southern Lebanon in search of *Hizbollah* positions, See: Fisk, Robert, 'UN evidence heaps more blame on Israelis'. *Independent*, April 22, 1996. And in Fisk, Robert, 'Truth brings reality to PR show at Qana'. *Independent*, April 22, 1996.

⁶⁴ Haque, Mazharul, 'Elements of Cross Cultural communication and the M.E'. In Kamalipour, Yahya, R. *Op-cit.*, p.19.

⁶⁵ Orkin, David, 'The complete guide to the Rio Grande'. *Independent: The Traveller*, May 20, 2000. And: Hoggart, Simon, 'Ride 'em cowboy', *Guardian*, February 24, 2001.

It is arguable, however, that the cultural attachment to the 'Wild West' has somewhat been supplanted by other forms of pioneering, which are no less attached to the concept of the morally righteous crusader opposing the immoral savage. Nevertheless, there does remain a committed hardcore cowboy (and cowgirl), element in U.S. mainstream society, particularly in the southern states *e.g.*, in Texas, New Mexico *etc.* For further evidence of an attachment to a general concept of pioneering consider the tradition of game hunting in the U.S. (and Canada), as immortalised in the classic anti-Vietnam movie *Deer Hunter* (1978).⁶⁶

These other forms of pioneering that have largely superseded a cultural attachment to the old 'Wild West', is firstly, U.S. militarism *per se*, as embodied in her experiences and lessons both given and received during the Vietnam imbroglio, which was clearly an exercise in pioneering and colonialism for some. Consider Captain Kurtz 'going up river' in the dubiously fictional account of U.S. intelligence's special operations in Nam, Laos, and Cambodia: immortalised in the movie *Apocalypse Now* (1979).⁶⁷ Indeed, 'Americans in Vietnam, for instance, referred to Vietcong-controlled territory as 'Indian country' a phrase reporters sometimes adopted.⁶⁸ The second form is the U.S. obsession with the pioneering of space (the final frontier), embodied in her achievements of landing on the moon (1969), or the Ronald Reagan envisioned 'Star Wars' project (1983), as it was nicknamed to connect with the definitive science fiction movie of the same name (Lucas Films, 1977).⁶⁹

This pioneering spirit is further evidenced in an American obsession with extraterrestrial life forms that are invariably portrayed as threatening, immoral,

⁶⁶ Rabinovitz, Lauren, & Jeffords, Susan, [Eds.] *Op-cit*, p. 26.

⁶⁷ Dubious because Kurtz played by Marlon Brando was apparently based on a genuine top U.S. military brass that went rogue whilst undertaking an insurgency mission in Laos. For a far superior account of colonialism see Conrad, Joseph, *The Heart of Darkness* (1902), which *Apocalypse Now*, was loosely based upon. See: Campbell, Duncan, 'Apocalypse again with new version of cult film' *Guardian*, February 28, 2001. And: Said, Edward, W. *The Question of Palestine*, p. 76.

⁶⁸ Hallin, Daniel, C. 'Images of the Vietnam and Persian Gulf Wars in U.S. Television'. In Rabinovitz, Lauren, & Jeffords, Susan, [Eds.] *Op-cit*. p. 40.

⁶⁹ See: 'Film in Context: Star Wars' by Kramer, Peter, in *History Today* Vol., 49 (3) March 1999. pp. 41-47.

bloodthirsty, *etc.* These demonised extraterrestrials it is argued have replaced the King Kong (1933) and the Godzilla (1955) creations *i.e.*, the representatives of the Fascist threat ravaging Europe, and the Communist 'Cold War' *other*.

In essence, it is argued, that in many ways a healthy approach to the principles of pioneering typify what it means to be a true and good American. This cultural identification has its reflection in Israel, and indeed, the constant low-level nature of the conflict, her handling of the Occupied Territories, and her frequent border incursions, alongside the phenomenon of Zionist colonial settlement of Judea and Samaria (the Palestinian's West Bank), are loosely reflective (minus the whisky and fur-traders), of the 'Plains Culture' that ravaged the Americas between the 1860's and 1890's.⁷⁰ This is particularly evidenced in the phenomenon of 'spoliation'.⁷¹ Indeed, 'the colonial policy of the Zionists in Palestine, implemented with the assistance of the imperialist states, especially that of the USA, applies the same racist methods which the North American colonizers applied towards the indigenous Indians'.⁷²

Furthermore, in the context of Israel, the Palestinian terrorist is equated with the scalping Red Skin. Both peoples (latterly the Palestinians and the American Indians) have therefore been equally denigrated and dehumanised. Consequently, their struggle against the self-appointed colonial overseer(s) is not considered legitimate because of the colonialist's artful use of labelling. The Palestinian resister cannot be considered as a soldier, and the youthful martyr becomes an insane religious fanatic, just as the Indian *savages* of the early American colonial settlers could never have been considered as braves.

The purpose of this negative labelling is first and foremost as a means of legitimising the nefarious activities of the colonialists, which in their early form were directed at the total annihilation of the indigenous host race. (Consider the plight of the indigenous American Indians and their suffering on their 'trail of

⁷⁰ Brown, Dee, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, p. 11.

⁷¹ See Brogan, Hugh, *The Penguin History of the United States of America*, p. 67.

⁷² Goranov, Stefan, 'Racism a Basic Principle of Zionism' in *Zionism and Racism*, International Organisation for the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination. p. 28.

tears' *etc.*)⁷³ Second, and clearly, constant negative labelling is used as one of the means of sustaining the subjugation of such a host. In an extreme form, if you are the colonialist using such a method, then your aim is the total dehumanisation of your host, and the consigning of them (as in a peoples), into a psychological oblivion, for this assists in embarking upon a little regional genocide. Such was the methodology that underpinned the genocide of the Armenians, the Ibo of Nigeria, the Bengalis of Bangladesh, and of course the *Shoah* or Jewish Holocaust. More recent examples can be found in both Bosnia, Rwanda, and to some extents in Chechnya.⁷⁴

In the U.S., in the context of Israel, a twisted logic and perverse reflection of this righteous pioneer thinking is frequently referred to as 'The David and Goliath' analogy. (David represents morality: Goliath is the perceived evil to be overcome.) Furthermore, and significant in this thinking, Israel is surrounded by many aggressive Arab states wrought with anger, and bent upon the total annihilation of the Zionist entity.⁷⁵

With regard to American empathy for Israel resting upon the principles of the pioneer vs. savage or the good vs. evil dictum, this is further compounded through a consideration of the actions of the American Christian missionaries that arrived in the Middle East, who, whilst searching for converts in the 19th century came across many barriers evident in both Muslims and Islam, namely in culture and religion.⁷⁶ It is to be noted that it was much of the literature written by these missionaries on their experiences in the Middle East, Africa, and South America that shaped the American populace's perceptions of the *others* who lived outside of the New World. It is this aspect that has a great deal of responsibility for the way that the *other* is perceived in the U.S. today. The American perception and fear of Islam as perpetuated by the 'media complex'

⁷³ Brown, Dee, *Op-cit.*, pp. 1-30.

⁷⁴ Politkovskaya, Anna, 'How the heroes of Russia turned into the tormentors of Chechnya.' *Guardian*, February 27, 2001.

⁷⁵ Daniel, AnneMarie, A. 'U.S. media Coverage of the *Inifada* and American Public opinion'. In Kamalipour, Yahya, R. *Op-cit.*, p.66.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

however, is worthy of a separate study.⁷⁷ With regards to the Arab/Israeli conflict it is sufficient to state that Islam has a pervading influence upon both perceptions of the conflict, and upon many of its internal dynamics, as will be discussed.

In addition to the above, and perhaps of a slightly lesser importance within the dynamics of the 'special relationship' is the legacy of the Jewish Holocaust of Europe (c.1942).⁷⁸ Such a profound catastrophe impacts many people's psyches, no less so than the congenial American.⁷⁹ Moreover, the Holocaust is still a relatively recent event in Jewish history, and therefore, any criticism of Israel, further mitigates accusations of anti-Semitism, even though the U.N. charged Zionism of being a racist entity much to the disapproval of the U.S. mainstream media at the U.N. summit of November 1975.⁸⁰ (UN Res. 3379, was revoked, however, in December 1991.)⁸¹

Americans further empathise with Israel and with many Israelis, because of what could be considered to represent a feeling of cultural proximity, and also because of a considered existence of cultural universals *i.e.*, language (but obviously not with *Ivrit* 'modern' Hebrew), moral values, and applied ethics, *etc.*⁸² This can be taken further however, for it can be argued that just as the 'modern' U.S.A. was founded through the liberal usage of the Winchester repeating rifle and the Colt 'peacemaker' revolver (purposefully ignoring the very early European settlers and their flintlocks.), so too was Israel founded, through the usage of a British supplied Enfield. (Reference is being made to the British suppression of the Arab revolt of 1936-39, arguably the real 'beginning of the end' of Palestine.)⁸³ And furthermore, this dubious 'Right to Bear Arms' has found expression through both Israeli law and societal militarism.⁸⁴

⁷⁷ See: Said, Edward, *Covering Islam*.

⁷⁸ Hudson, Micheal, C. The Media and the Arabs: room for improvement, In Hudson, Michael, C. [Ed.], *The Media and the Arabs*. p. 98.

⁷⁹ Hersh, Seymour, M. *The Samson Option*, p. 90.

⁸⁰ The Executive Council of the International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, *Op-Cit*. p. vii. And: Said, Edward, W. *The Question of Palestine*, p. 111.

⁸¹ Davis, Uri, *The State of Palestine*, p. 15. And: King, John, *Handshake in Washington: The Beginning of Middle East Peace?* p. 145.

⁸² Haque, Mazharul, 'Elements of Cross Cultural Communication and the M.E'. In Kamalipour, Yahya, R. *Op-cit.*, p. 19.

⁸³ Kimmmerling, Baruch, & Migdal, Joel, S. *The Palestinians: The Making of a People*, p. 279.

⁸⁴ Whitaker, Brian, 'Israelis gear up for armed struggle'. *Guardian*, October 26, 2000.

Ideologically, Zionism was founded upon an amalgam of European ideologies.⁸⁵ And its chief architects came from a *known* and understood Western European intellectual tradition.⁸⁶ (Herbert Spencer's Eugenics, Social Darwinism, and Friedrich Nietzsche's *Übermensch* [the concept of the Superman *i.e.*, man overcoming himself],⁸⁷ were all philosophical concepts that were in vogue in the latter half of the 19th century.) Therefore, accessibility to the Zionist (rather than Jewish in this instance) mind, *viz.* psyche, it is argued, is comparatively easier for an American to facilitate than it is with the more frequently *unknown* Arab.

This empathy with Israel however, is founded upon an oversimplification of what 'modern' Israel actually represents, as it does not take into account the multifarious divisions evident in Judaism, and in Israel's political and social structure where several Jewish denominations compete against a populace with strong secular sentiments. Furthermore, it also fails to recognise the cultural differentiation and social stratification evident within these groups. The reality is that Judaism, like Islam and Christianity (the American religion) is far from being a simple religious homogenous entity, as is so often interpreted by many home-grown Americans.

Israel, to many observers also represents a supposed 'lone democracy in a sea of dictatorships'.⁸⁸ This consideration however, is in reality another myth that requires critical examination on account of Israel's own behaviour in her administration of the Occupied Territories since 1967.⁸⁹ Furthermore, such a consideration is born out of ignorance and suspicion of the *other*, once again a consideration of Israel that could be associated with the phenomenon of a perceived cultural proximity with the U.S. Nevertheless, the very term 'democracy' in the case of Israel is a misnomer; for the definition of the state is

⁸⁵ Chomsky, Noam, *Peace in the Middle East*, p. 12.

⁸⁶ See: Leo Pinsker, *Autoemanzipation*, 1882, Theodore Herzl, *Der Judenstaat* 1896, *et al.* In Laquer, Walter, *A History of Zionism*. pp. 54-84.

⁸⁷ Urmson, J.O. & Rée, Jonathan, [Eds.], *The Concise Encyclopedia of Western Philosophy and Philosophers*, p. 225.

⁸⁸ Shlaim, Avi, *Op-cit*, p. 507.

⁸⁹ Guyatt, Nicholas, *Op-cit*, p. 77.

that it is Jewish, *i.e.*, a theocracy, which automatically excludes approximately one million Arab-Israelis from proper democratic representation.⁹⁰

Recognition however, is given to the fact that Israel was for a brief spell at the beginning of her history *i.e.*, during her 'War of Independence' (1948-49), which is equally referable to as the Arab's *al-Nakbah* (Catastrophe), considered to represent the biblical David opposing an Arab 'Goliath'. Such a consideration possesses no validity today, and has not since the defeat of the Arab Coalition in the June War of 1967. If the analogy is still credible then Israel may well represent David, but the U.S. could be considered to represent 'the stone for the slingshot' for such is the nature of the 'special relationship'. Several examples could be cited for evidence of this statement, ranging from the military hardware supplied to Israel, and the CIA's involvement in the Gaza and West Bank controlled by George Tenet (another cutting tooth), to maintain U.S. hegemonic control over the 'peace process's implementation on the ground.⁹¹

Moreover, Israel in reality has nothing to fear from a potential holocaust. And quite contrary to any Israeli fear from mass extermination, or an Arab inspired genocide, it could be argued (and has) by the most ardent anti-Zionists that the Palestinians are the ones that actually are at threat from such an act of gross inhumanity. (Saddam Hussein during the Gulf War did however threaten to bring down a rain of fire over Israel, and turn the state into an oven with Scud missile attacks upon Tel Aviv, in a cynical reference to the ovens of Aushwitz.)⁹² To many, however, (usually disenfranchised Palestinians), the Gaza Strip represents the largest prison on earth, the identity card is considered a synonym of the infamous Jewish Star; the curfews, the forerunner of total incarceration.⁹³

Although the Arab Coalition did supposedly once threaten to 'drive Israel into the sea' when war broke out (May 1948), no real evidence for the veracity of this

⁹⁰ Goldenberg, Suzanne, 'Outsider finds his way in Sharon's inner sanctum'. *Guardian*, March 27, 2001.

⁹¹ Black, Ian, 'Playing the security game, with CIA as referee'. *Guardian*, October 20, 2000.

⁹² Caldarola, Victor, J. 'Time and the Television War'. In Rabinovitz, Lauren, & Jeffreys, Susan, *Op-cit.* p. 102.

⁹³ Goldenberg, Suzanne, '3m Palestinians trapped in prison that once was home'. *Guardian*, October 24, 2000. And: Guyatt, Nicholas, *Op-cit.* p. 97, and p. 113.

statement exists.⁹⁴ And furthermore, although recognition is given to the call for the disestablishment of Israel in the founding covenant of the PLO (1964), this much quoted Arab statement was effectively repealed in November 1988 at the Algiers Summit when Arafat recognised Israel's *de jure* existence, and agreed to a 22% claim of territory.⁹⁵

On the contrary, evidence does exist to prove that the Israelis did practice an active policy of disenfranchisement and enforced an Arab *Exodus* during the Jewish War of Independence.⁹⁶ The realisation of this aforementioned Arab threat however, even if now desired by the majority of Arabs, which it is not, isn't militarily viable.⁹⁷ Furthermore, they (the more moderate Arab states) have realised that the expending of any energy in trying to dislodge the thorn in the Arab side is a waste, and that it is in fact far better to concentrate on economic development in which the Arabs require an accommodation with Israel. This is a far better prospect for the future than a constant state of belligerency with an uncompromising, and indefatigable Israeli *fait accompli*. In short, the Arabs can no more dismantle Israel today than they could at any time in the past, a fact that the Arab moderates now well recognise.

Therefore, referral to the Holocaust, and any reference to the potentiality of one occurring in the future by Israel as a legitimisation of their activities is to play upon the sympathies of the misinformed *i.e.*, for the sake of this study, the general subscriber of the U.S. mainstream media. In Israel there exists an obsession with reflection upon the Holocaust: Israeli conscripts are route marched to *Yad Vashem*, the Holocaust Remembrance Authority's memorial

⁹⁴ Peretz, Kidron, 'Truth Whereby Nations Live', in Hitchins, Christopher & Said, Edward, W. [Eds.], *Op-cit*, p. 88. And: Shlaim, Avi, *Op-cit*, p. 463.

⁹⁵ Engleberg, Stephan, 'Christopher is said to have given impetus to Israeli-Palestinian deal'. *New York Times*, August 30, 1993. And, Schiff, Ze'ev, & Ya'ari, Ehud, *Intifada; The Palestinian Uprising – Israel's Third Front*, p. 284.

⁹⁶ Said, Edward, W. *The Question of Palestine*, p. 101.

⁹⁷ Moughrabi, Fouad, 'The Oslo Process and the Arab World' In Giacamon, George, & Lorring, Dag, J. *Op-cit*, pp. 48-49.

museum (f.1953) regularly throughout the period of their service.⁹⁸ And so too are schoolchildren in a bid to endorse a 'lest we forget' culture as-

'Forgetfulness leads to exile.
Remembrance [my emphasis] is the secret of redemption.'
(Baal Shem Tov)⁹⁹

It is arguable that this 'lest we forget' culture is an unofficial Israeli export.¹⁰⁰ Many Americans (and others), it is suggested, helped make Israel strong through their work on the Kibbutzim *etc.*, whilst U.S. servicemen 'bought it in Nam'. Nevertheless, many of these *Kibbutzniks* however, took home with them fond memories of the former Palestinian orange groves and a visit to *Masada* (Caperneum)¹⁰¹ with many of the myths of Israel firmly supplanted in their minds *i.e.*, the Zionists had indeed 'made the desert bloom', and all the while they had suffered relentless persecution:¹⁰² then in June 1967, Israel founded the greatest myth that underpins her existence, for she miraculously smashed the Arab Coalition,¹⁰³ in a spectacular display of militarism that so impressed the Western world they were inspired by it,¹⁰⁴ particularly as the U.S. were at that time having their behinds kicked in Vietnam, all the while believing that their David was morally right and militarily unbeatable.¹⁰⁵

Israel was no longer a timid David though: for she had now become the confident regional Goliath,¹⁰⁶ and for the next three and a half decades she would act towards her Arab neighbours debatably in an arrogant and chauvinistic manner

⁹⁸ Porat, Dina, 'Attitudes of the Young State of Israel Toward the Holocaust and its Survivors', in Silberstein, Lawrence, J. [Ed.], *New Perspectives on Israeli History: The Early Years of the State*, p. 169.

⁹⁹ Quoted in Pilcer, Sonia, 'Viewpoint: 2G' *The Jerusalem Post*, June 11, 1993.

¹⁰⁰ See: Brittan, Samuel, *The Holocaust Industry* (A book review of Norvick, Peter, *The Holocaust in Collective Memory*, and Finkelstein, Norman, G. *The Holocaust Industry*), *Prospect*, November 2000.

¹⁰¹ Masada (Caperneum) is the site of the Jews final resistance to Roman persecution, which led to their [the Jews] mass suicide in AD 70.

¹⁰² Isaacs, John, D. *American Jews in Israel*, pp. 35-36, and pp. 105-168.

¹⁰³ Wallach, Janet, & Wallach, John, *Arafat: In the Eyes of the Beholder*, p. 480.

¹⁰⁴ Hersh, Seymour, M. *The Samson Option*, pp. 167-168.

¹⁰⁵ Woolacott, Martin, 'The militarised rivals who upstage the rest of the world'. *Guardian*, July 21, 2000.

¹⁰⁶ Wallach, Janet & Wallach, John, *Arafat in the Eyes of the Beholder*, p. 34.

upon the strength of this one single conclusive victory.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, this victory would have massive repercussions on Israeli politics and society, a theme that is picked up later in the 'media frame' concerning the 'Hebron Massacre'.¹⁰⁸

Moreover the myth that Israel is an entity which the Americans possess a cultural proximity with may once have had validity in the period of the first three *Aliyas* (Migrations), *i.e.*, in the days of the *Yishuv* (*proto-state*) and in the very early period of the post 1948 period when the early Jewish settlers (homesteaders) could very loosely be considered as pioneers. But even in this, such a considered cultural proximity rests upon the scantest evidence of validity for the early Jewish settlers of then Palestine were of two sorts, those of a sophisticated, educated and in some ways elite of Western Europe, (Herzlian Jews), and those quite the opposite from the East separated by great differences in language, culture, and religious orientation.¹⁰⁹ Neither, in reality possessing very much in common with the principles of pioneering and both quite capable of finding a closer cultural proximity with other surrogates, for example, arguably for a time with Russia when there was economic stability (1900's), or even at the point of the inception of 'political' Zionism, with Imperial Germany (c.1896). Today, however, Israel is a well developed and ultra modern, but much divided country, that could almost be rent in two, leaving a strict orthodox religious north, and an equally austere secular south, with very little in common with the pioneering opportunism of 'Uncle Sam'.¹¹⁰

Finally, and as has been suggested, Israel as a 'lone democracy in a sea of dictatorships' has to be questioned. Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben Gurion it is argued purposefully kept Israel in a state of belligerence with her

¹⁰⁷ Chomsky, Noam, 'Middle Eastern Terrorism and the American Ideological System', in Hitchens, Christopher, & Said, Edward, W. [Eds.], *Op-cit*, p. 102.

¹⁰⁸ Said, Edward, *Peace and its Discontents*, p. 56.

¹⁰⁹ Levy, Richard, S [Ed.], *Antisemitism in the Modern World*, p. 20. And: Sluglett, Peter, & Sluglett, Marion, F. [Eds.], *Op-cit*. p. 116.

¹¹⁰ Cornwell, Tim, 'US Jews fear that Israel is casting them adrift'. *Independent*, November 16, 1996. Cockburn, Patrick, 'Haredi tighten grip on Jerusalem'. *Independent*, November 16, 1996. And: Champion, Daryl, Religious Fundamentalism- A Threat to Israel? In White & Logan [Eds.], *Remaking the Middle East*. pp. 298-299. And: Reeves, Phil, 'Revenge attacks spread to Israel's secular heartland' *Independent*, October 11, 2000. And: Avishai, Bernard, Lost Tribes of Israel, *Prospect*, June 2001.

Arab neighbours in the formative years of the state, *i.e.*, 1948-63 offering no accommodation with them whatsoever. It was this foreign policy that has meant that Israel's democracy has been partially determined by an aspect of militarism.¹¹¹ This is to say, that nearly all the leading figures in Israel's history have come through an academy of militarism (Allon, Dayan, Begin, Rabin, Netanyahu, Barak, Sharon, *et al*), and as such, certain militaristic doctrines underpin Israel's so called democracy. This can be seen in a visit to Jerusalem on any stone-throwing Friday afternoon, nominally called 'days of rage' (full strike days),¹¹² where the Gaza Strip and West Bank are sealed off by the Israeli Defence Forces and both Palestinian and Israeli civilians arguably have equally restricted ease of movement although the armed Jewish settlers of the West Bank have a personal bodyguard comprising a proportionately large contingent from the IDF.¹¹³

Examination of Israel's human rights abuses and her failure to comply with several articles of the Geneva Convention (1948), in this instance particularly article 19, and the lack of compliance with UN Resolution 242 (1967), and 338 (1973), further illustrate this point.¹¹⁴ Israel might have the apparent outside appearance of a democracy, but this should not be understood to represent a democracy in the Western sense. In many of Israel's aspects she has more in common with other regimes in the Middle East that rely on their intelligence services (*Mukhabarat*), and police to maintain their hegemonic control *i.e.*, Syria, Iraq, or to some extents Egypt.¹¹⁵ Moreover, this observation stands outside of what Israel is, namely, a Jewish state comprising a mixed Jewish and Arab

¹¹¹ Said, Edward, W. *The End of the Peace Process*, p. 245. And: Said, Edward, W. *The Question of Palestine*, p. 105.

¹¹² Burke, Jason, 'Child martyrs line up to die'. *Observer*, October 8, 2000. And: Schiff, Ze'ev & Ya'ari, Ehud, *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising – Israel's Third Front*, p. 247.

¹¹³ *Times Magazine*, Diaries of Hope and Hate: five days in the Middle East, October 30, 2000. pp. 36-43.

¹¹⁴ Article 19 of the Geneva Convention 1948, states that: 'Everyone has the right to freedom of expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.' See, The Committee for the Protection of Journalists, *Journalism under Occupation*. October 1988. p. XI. UN Resolution 242 calls for Israel's withdrawal from the Occupied Territories to a pre war state. (June 1967) UN Resolution 338 confirms this, and urges the recognition of the Palestinians right to self-determinism explicitly through a 'negotiated settlement'. See: Ashrawi, Hanan, 'This Side of Peace' p. 85. Regarding the texts pertaining to these resolutions, see: King, John, *Handshake in Washington: The Beginning of Middle East Peace*, Appendix VI, pp. 224-225.

¹¹⁵ Faour, Muhammad, *Op-cit*. p. 46.

populace. The state with its theocratic nature however, cannot recognise Arabs, and therefore, is not remotely democratic in a Western sense, because as was suggested, it excludes approximately one million of its citizens. (A potential source of much future trouble for Israel's domestic stability.)

The reawakening of the Uprising (*Intifada*) *i.e.*, post September 28, 2000, may gain the Palestinians some support in Western, particularly U.S. media interpretations, as the young stone-throwers (*Shabab*), and *al-Fatah's* 'apparatus' (*Tanzim*) units reverse the traditional U.S. interpretation of the conflict.¹¹⁶ In the long term, however, images of the Palestinian youth as martyrs (*Shuhada*), hooded *Hamas* activists, and the ululating female relatives of the deceased, shall only serve to disaffect the audiences of the U.S. mainstream media channels.¹¹⁷

This American audience shall probably determine that the best course of action for a resolution to the conflict is to listen and empathise with the more rational, democratic, and culturally similar Israelis. Influenced primarily by the long tradition of a pro-Israeli anti-Arab reportage in the mainstream media and facilitated as has been suggested, by the nature and closeness of the 'special relationship', and furthered by such horrific media frames depicting the conflict either visually, or by a narrative, which have a dulling switch off effect (empathy fatigue) in the long term amongst the audience.

In reality, some members of a media audience (armchair Generals) might hanker after reportage of the glory of war. To most, however, the Arab/Israeli conflict is far removed from their consciousness both spiritually and physically.¹¹⁸ It could therefore be argued, that this is one of the dynamics of the constancy of negative stereotypical Arab portrayals in the U.S. and Western mainstream media *per se*. It can also be considered however, to represent a question of audience proximity,

¹¹⁶ *Shabab*, 'Youths', in Daniel, Anne-Marie, A. 'U.S. Media Coverage of the *Intifada* and American Public Opinion'. In Kamalipour, Yahya, R. *Op-cit.*, p. 68. *Al-Fatah: Harakat al-Tahrir al-Falistin*. In Chailand, Gerard, *The Palestinian Resistance*. p. 60.

¹¹⁷ Ghareeb, Edmund, *Op-cit.*, p. 127.

¹¹⁸ King, John, *Handshake in Washington: the Beginning of Middle East Peace*, p. 140. And: Moughrabi, Fouad, 'The Oslo Process and the Arab World' In Giacamon, George, & Lorrington, J. [Eds.], *Op-cit*, p. 57.

i.e., the more liable that an audience is to be directly affected by a conflict, the more likely the need for, and desire of, a more balanced reportage.

Another potential reason for eventual preferred empathy with Israel in the conflict is that the Israelis have traditionally been able to manipulate media portrayals of their position within it, using the many channels that are a by-product of Israeli and U.S. hegemony. For example, the two large American broadsheets the *Washington Post*, and the *New York Times* are both Jewish owned.¹¹⁹ Yet again, *this is not* to suggest that a Jewish conspiracy exists, as it is estimated that this ownership is approximately only 3.2% of the U.S. media conglomeration, generating some 8% of U.S. media reportage.¹²⁰ What is accepted though, is that there are many Jews working within the 'media-complex', *i.e.*, journalists, editors, media moguls *etc.* This aspect, coupled with the power of persuasion possessed by American Israel Public Affairs Committee and others in the 'Jewish Lobby', over Congress suggests that pro-Israeli reportage is the order of the day: perhaps, *for no other reason, than self-interest.*

One last point needs to be broached, however. What of the power of the American 'Arab Lobby', and why has this umbrella organisation failed to raise the status of U.S. mainstream media led Arab perceptions? The answer, it is feared, is that the 'Arab Lobby' although extant, (*i.e.*, The Council of American Islamic Relations) it has in the main, historically been frozen out from participation in American political life, generally at all its levels. (There are of course some exceptions.) This is also true of the 'Arab Lobby' in Canada where the large Arab community of Toronto is also poorly represented. The reason for this, it is suggested, derives from the nature of the U.S./Israel 'special relationship' and its longevity. The power of the 'Jewish Lobby'; its persuasive capability over the 'media complex' and its self preservationist instincts, resting upon the premise that 'all is for Israel', dictates that there exists an impenetrable

¹¹⁹ Bell, Steve, 'American Journalism Practices, Constraints and Middle East Reportage'. In Hudson, Michael, C. & Wolfe, Ronald, G. [Eds.], *The American Media and the Arabs*. p. 56.

¹²⁰ Isaacs, Stephen, 'Jewish Bank, Newspaper Control Myth Continues', *The Washington Post*, November 21, 1974. In Hudson, Michael, C. *Op-cit*, p.96.

wall, that shall for a long time shroud U.S. perceptions, and mainstream media portrayals of Arabs, and particularly of Palestinians, perhaps indefinitely.

The theoretical framework that underpins this thesis utilizes a hegemonic interpretation (model) of the U.S. mainstream media. This allows for and recognizes existing differences between the classes of the established and ruling elites, leading influential movements, and members of the general public.¹²¹ Furthermore, and importantly, it also recognizes existing differences between the principles of good *i.e.*, fair and honest journalism, with those interests of the leading corporations. In addition, differentiation is made between what is considered as real information, and government or otherwise engineered propaganda.¹²²

Furthermore, this thesis shall refer to the relationship that exists between the ruling elites *i.e.*, for the sake of this study the U.S. Administration and the U.S. mainstream media as the 'media complex'. This 'media complex' comprises the U.S. governmental apparatus, namely, the policy implementers, policy makers, and its spokespersons, and their symbiotic relationship with the media moguls, editors, journalists, and finally the columnists. And it shall also be argued that the U.S. Administration implicitly utilizes the media and its networks to advance its own agendas, interests, and naturally its hegemonic control over emergent groups within the U.S., as well as over established hierarchies from outside of this once non-interventionist superpower.¹²³

Never more tangible is the U.S. Administration's usage of the U.S. mainstream media than at a time of national crisis. Indeed, the U.S. Administration's control *i.e.*, censorship and manipulation of information transmitted by the mainstream media channels dates back to the U.S./Vietnam War where freedom of expression in the media threatened to seriously erode public support for that

¹²¹ See, Kellner, Douglas, *Op-cit.*, pp. 58-59.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ Said, Edward, W. *The End of the Peace Process*, pp. 54-55.

war.¹²⁴ The first recognised ‘live-time’ TV war, The Gulf War, January 17, 1991-February 26, 1991¹²⁵ showed conclusively that the U.S. Administration’s manipulation of the U.S. mainstream media was evident on a large scale in both the usage of propaganda to justify the ensuing war against Iraq, and in the manipulation of the debate concerning the legitimacy and worthiness of the mass mobilization of the U.S. armed forces for the express conduct of that war.¹²⁶

Nevertheless, it is argued that the manipulation of the U.S. mainstream media by the U.S. Administration occurs outside of the times of national crises. This is conducted purely as an exercise of maintaining governmental authority over the U.S. general public, as well as a means of maintaining and furthering U.S. hegemonic domination over the Middle East and Third World spheres of interest. Therefore, within the dynamics of the Arab/Israeli conflict it is argued that the pro Israeli bias that is still evident in the channels of the U.S. mainstream media today exists as a voice of the U.S. Administration. Indeed, this voice is used in the manipulation of the general public’s opinion regarding the conflict, and subsequently directs this opinion towards a pro-Israeli orientation, which eases the case for legitimising the U.S. Administration’s unwavering support for Israel, and the continuation of the ‘special relationship’. In other words, the U.S. ‘media complex’ helps to propel the many myths that surround Israel through the channels of the mainstream media, in order to purposefully legitimise the continuation of the U.S. ‘special relationship’ with Israel, thus advancing Israel’s own regional hegemonic superiority and also maintaining and furthering the U.S.’s own international hegemonic superiority.

Alongside an hegemonic model of the U.S. mainstream media this study shall also utilize the principles expounded in Edward Said’s ‘Orientalism’ (1978), to support and bolster many of the arguments proposed within the selected ‘media

¹²⁴ Fletcher, Elaine, R. Israelis find news that fits only in print, *Christian Science Monitor*, May 13, 1996. And: Said, Edward, W. *The End of the Peace Process*, p. 278.

¹²⁵ Thedoulou, Micheal, ‘Saddam defeated but not destroyed’. *The Times*, February 26, 2001. And: Halliday, Fred, *Op-cit*, pp. 77-78.

¹²⁶ For accounts of the hegemonic relationship between the U.S. Administration and the U.S. media as practiced during the Gulf War see, Rabinovitz, Lauren, & Jeffords, Lauren, [Eds.], *Op-cit*. And: Kellner, Douglas *Op-cit*.

frames' under analysis.¹²⁷ This is to suggest that partial recognition is given to the principle of the West's absorption of the East's cultural heritage since Napoleon's arrival at Alexandria in 1798, purely as a means of further advancing the West's imperial domination over the region. Furthermore, recognition is made to the tradition of the negative portrayal of the Turk, the African, and Oriental as the *other*, the *savage*, and *the white man's burden*; in relation to the Eastern Question, in the literatures of the West, concerning the Orient.¹²⁸ Indeed, this tradition of negative stereotypical portrayals of the Oriental that commenced at the close of the 18th century has been an ongoing Western generated tradition for two centuries. And, although at times throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, this denigration fluctuated between a patronising romanticism of the Orient and the Oriental (*i.e.*, Ms. Freya Stark, Major T.E. Lawrence, H.A.R. Gibb *et al.*) and a mildly racist deprecation, it has in the main remained largely negative to the point of becoming an almost unquestioned *wisdom* of the West.

Therefore, it seems reasonable to consider that much of the U.S. mainstream media's 'traditional denigration' of the Arab is nothing more than a continuation of this aforementioned 'Orientalism'. It is also possible to argue that the 'media complex' actually recognises these deeply entrenched notions of the *other* within the majority of the American general public, and utilizes methods to further entrench these notions, in order to purposefully promote their hegemonic practices.¹²⁹ This is not to suggest that the majority of the American general public are outright racists, but that such deeply entrenched notions can become equally deeply buried in collective consciousness.¹³⁰ Simply put, a racial statement or act by one person may not be considered necessarily as racially prejudiced by another person. Indeed racial prejudice can oftentimes become the norm for a society, and any veering away from this prejudice can be considered a perverse act, very often making it very difficult to overcome such conventional wisdoms.

¹²⁷ See, Edward Said W. *Orientalism*. London: Vintage Books. 1978.

¹²⁸ Early Western literature concerning the Orient made no differentiation between the Turk, the Muslim, and the Oriental.

¹²⁹ Said, Edward, W. *Covering Islam*, p. 157.

¹³⁰ Said, Edward, W. *The Question of Palestine*, p. xxxii.

An analysis of the language employed in the construction of the reportage shall be undertaken *i.e.*, is the language openly derogatory, anti-Arab, obviously pro-Israeli, or just misleading? Furthermore, does it rest upon traditional negative stereotypes, and is there any evidence of 'semantic distortion'?¹³¹ In other words, has there been a purposeful utilisation of pro-Israeli phraseology in reference to historical dates, place names, *etc.*, over and above the usage of their Arab equivalents?

Secondly, an overall evaluation of the proportion of the reportage relating to the conflict shall be undertaken, *i.e.*, whether there is a tangible bias in the amount of Israeli reportage in ratio to Arab reportage evident in the media channels? Moreover, a consideration shall be made as to the location in the media source that such reportage is placed as traditionally Arab reportage has always followed Israel's in order of prominence in the U.S. 'prestigious press'. Indeed, if such potential Arab reportage was reported at all, for in the dynamics of the conflict many events frequently repeat themselves to the point of becoming un-newsworthy *i.e.*, Palestinian house demolitions, or nominated days of rage, arrests and detentions, *etc.*

Thirdly, analysis shall also be undertaken of 'pop-art' and cartoons (although now rare) associated with the conflict and 'peace process'. Recognition is made, however, of the need to be cautious in any analysis of cartoons. As caricatures are by definition simplistic interpretations of the characters that they attempt to portray, and as such many of the negative stereotypes associated with the Arabs are hard to step away from, *i.e.*, the flowing *galabiyyah* (robe), the *kaffiyah* (headdress), indeed, even the depiction of a camel evokes negative antiquarian stereotypical portrayals.

Analysis shall also be undertaken of images utilised in the storyboards of newspapers and magazines. Does the mainstream media's utilisation of images to

¹³¹ With reference to this use of language in U.S. media reportage it is recognised that 'semantic distortion' does occur. Consider the use of Temple Mt over 'Dome of the Rock', or the Yom Kippur War, which could also legitimately be referred to as the Ramadan War, or the Israeli's use of Judea and Samaria instead of the Palestinian's West Bank, *i.e.*, the west bank of the Jordan River.

consolidate news coverage initially depict the Israelis as protagonists and the Arabs as antagonists? Is there a constant 'hero versus villain' depiction? Is there a bias of Palestinians being portrayed as 'terrorists' over and above the depiction of the Israeli's as 'vanguards'? In film footage, *i.e.*, CNN, ABC, *etc.*, are the Palestinians purposefully portrayed as poor, unaccomplished, degenerate, desperate, and fanatical, in comparison to the wealthy, successful, sophisticated, contented and rational Israelis? Additionally, does the dialogue that accompanies this media format consolidate any pro-Israeli depiction? (In other words, is TV film footage guilty of being the peddler of the myths that the U.S. empathy for Israel resides upon?)

Such is the nature of the type of questions that shall be raised concerning the U.S. mainstream media's reportage concerning the Arab/Israeli conflict during the Oslo 'peace process'. It is not the aim of this thesis, however, to condemn such media coverage outright, as recognition is given to the reputation and overall integrity of the journalism conducted by the agents of the 'prestigious press'.

Furthermore, journalists on the whole tend to report the facts as they receive them, and moreover, they tend to report truth. The fact that such reportage possesses a pro-Israeli bias, has more to do with the tradition of the U.S. mainstream media's coverage of the conflict since its beginning, and the continued pursuance of U.S. hegemonic practices. It is also not the aim of this thesis to argue which of the two combatants in this protracted and bitter conflict possesses the greater legitimacy to their claims. Recognition is given, however, to the fact that concessions need to be made and met on both sides, and a solution to the conflict cannot be found with a continued pursuance of the initiatives undertaken so far.

This thesis determines to analyse the U.S. mainstream media's reportage of the Arab/Israeli conflict during the 'ill-fated' Oslo peace process objectively, and as best as it can be conducted, impartially. It is hoped that the 'media-frames' selected for analyses shall, firstly, lead to a strong overall interpretation of the major dynamics that have shaped both the conflict and peace process, and shall

result in a readable and contemporary historical narrative; because as was suggested, regardless of any pro-Israeli bias within the medium of the U.S. mainstream media, journalists tend to report both the facts as they are received, and moreover, they tend to convey truth.

Although the 'media frames' selected might not appear to cover every issue, or indeed, the whole of the peace process, they have been selected because they cover themes that are recurrent within the general dynamics of the conflict and peace process, or that they constitute, oftentimes regrettably, real media events that cannot fail to solicit either media coverage or debate within the United States. Moreover, it is argued that these themes evident in the selected 'media frames' shall reoccur with unlimited frequency within the general dynamics of the conflict, until such a time as there is any real tangible shift in both the approach and attitudes of the players that attempt to orchestrate a lasting Middle Eastern peace settlement. Such a peace has regrettably never come to fruition in the Middle East for reasons that are well documented, but what this thesis, in the main, shall silently argue, is that as long as there is a continuation of a pro-Israeli bias within the channels of the U.S. mainstream media, then an unfair interpretation of the Arab/Israeli conflict shall continue to be perpetuated. This in the long term shall hinder the search for a lasting solution, because the peace process requires an honestly informed general public within the international community to get behind it, and apply pressure upon the players to deliver working solutions for peace. In essence, the Arab/Israeli conflict demands a fair, and even-handed justice, which the democratically minded West, could, if it really wished for it, comfortably administer.

CHAPTER 1

'Birth or Stillbirth of the Oslo Peace Process?'

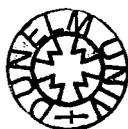
Evidence exists to suggest that the signing of the Oslo 'peace accord' on September 13, 1993, was greeted with an overwhelming enthusiasm by the news hungry U.S. mainstream media channels. The argument that forms the basis of this particular 'media frame' however, is that such an enthusiasm was tentative, nervous, and very often cynical.¹ Moreover, many of the mainstream media's portrayals of the Palestinians and their leadership, were, in some instances, mildly racist. Indeed, it is argued, that much of the reportage continued to reflect a pro-Israeli bias/slant that had been a tradition of the West's since the birth of the state of Israel *i.e.*, since May 14th 1948.²

This tentative nervousness and mild racism however, can be evidenced in an examination of many of the headlines that were connected with this celebrated 'media frame' and also in much of the discourse that commented upon it.³ It is argued that through a selective usage of imagery, alongside an admixture of comments and analyses in the open editorials, the media perpetuated and sustained a pro-Israeli, anti-Arab orientation throughout the entire period, which has, for the sake of this particular study been determined to run from September 1, 1993, until September 15, 1993.

¹ Tisdall, Simon, 'Symbolic gesture seals hope to end blood and tears.' *Guardian*, September 14, 1993. And: Woolacott, Martin, 'Three men in search of a peace that is already working.' *Guardian*, September 13, 1993. And, Terry, Don, 'Accord a bittersweet occasion for Arabs in U.S.' *New York Times*, September 8, 1993. And: Said, Edward, W. *Peace and its Discontents*, p. XX.

² Mostyn, Trevor, & Hourani Albert [Eds.], *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the Middle East*, p. 352. Hiro, Dilop, *Dictionary of the Middle East*, p. 138. And Laquer, Walter, *A History of Zionism*, p. 586.

³ Haberman, Clyde, 'How Oslo helped mold the Mideast Pact.' *New York Times*, September 3, 1993. And: Reuters, 'PLO rejects resignation of peace negotiators.' *New York Times*, August 13, 1993.



September 1st was selected because firstly, the date denotes the unprecedented, and to some, shocking announcement of the decision to sign a 'Declaration of Principles'.⁴ Secondly, it was at this point that media interest concerning the unfolding events that heralded the impending birth of the 'peace process' escalated. Furthermore, it was chosen because of the rapidly undertaken efforts to ensure the closing of the deal by the negotiators *i.e.*, all signed, sealed, and delivered within a phenomenally short space of twelve days, something of a political coup when considering the protracted length of the Arab/Israeli conflict. Indeed, the noose of peace had been cast around Arafat's neck, and therefore, it was not possible to allow the formerly perceived terrorist to escape the revenge of the executioner in the form of a benevolent Israel, and a conniving America.⁵ September 15th however, denotes the transition from reportage concerning the 'handshake' to coverage of the ramifications of implementing such a proposal.

It is *not* the aim of this study however, to analyse the events that led to the creation of the Oslo 'peace process' for this is already well documented.⁶ It is sufficient to acknowledge that there are many arguments that surrounded the 'Declaration of Principles', and the by now very overworked media sound-bite 'Clinton's brave gamble for peace'.⁷ Indeed, these arguments have been taken up by many academics representing various political affiliations on behalf of both sides.⁸ Moreover, the debate concerning the perceived betrayal of the collective Palestinian dream of statehood through bad or ill-orchestrated diplomacy by

⁴ Greenberg, Joel, 'Gazans dare to hope, but hope diluted by fear.' *New York Times*, September 2, 1993. And: Lamis, Antonio, 'Israeli deal stuns Palestinians.' *Christian Science Monitor*, September 1, 1993. And: Greenberg, Joel, 'For the settlers in Gaza: total shock.' *New York Times*, September 7, 1993. And: Ashrawi, Hanan, *This Side of Peace*, p. 274. Recognition is given to the fact, however, that the DOP was initially signed privately in Oslo on August 20, 1993. See: Smith, Charles, D. *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, p. 318

⁵ Cohen, Roger, 'Arafat's move: acting before he became irrelevant.' *New York Times*, September 6, 1993.

⁶ See: Edward W. Said's vehemently polemical and anti-Arafat anthology *Peace and its Discontents*, or Hanan Ashrawi's *This Side of Peace*. And: Avi Shlaim's *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World*, pp. 512-516.

⁷ Tisdall, Simon, 'Symbolic gesture seals hopes to end blood and tears.' *Guardian*, September 14, 1993.

⁸ Most notable among them are the eminent scholars Edward Said and Noam Chomsky writing on behalf of the Palestinians, and Amos Oz and Shimon Peres writing on behalf of the Israelis. For an outline of the dynamics pertaining to this debate see Avi Shlaim's 'work' as above, pp. 512-516. And: Lonning Dag, J. 'Vision and Reality Diverging: Palestinian Survival Strategies in the Post-Oslo Era.' Giacaman, George, & Lonning Dag, J. [Eds.], *After Oslo: New Realities, Old Problems*, p. 179.

members of the Palestinian Authority shall continue no doubt for some time, or at least until Oslo is replaced by an alternative 'peace process' bringing with it its own insufficiencies and criticisms.

Nevertheless, this study recognizes that such a debate exists and furthermore, it gives recognition to its implications; its negative effects upon the entirety of the 'peace process', either within the general dynamic that was Oslo itself, or upon any resurrection of a future 'peace process'. Many observers it would seem consider that this debate gives rise to the conclusion that Oslo was little more than a 'stillborn' peace process.⁹ Indeed, it has been argued by some that Oslo was a 'sham' creation.¹⁰ Reflecting the interests primarily of the Israelis, and the U.S., whilst utterly freezing out and polarizing all Palestinian national aspirations. A fundamentally flawed declaration:¹¹ both purposefully ambiguous in wording and ultimately exclusive to Palestinian self-determinism.¹² Casting these often quoted polemical observations and one-sided criticisms aside however, this study focuses upon the U.S. mainstream media's reportage of this auspicious event *i.e.*, a morale crushing defeat for the Palestinians, and an outright victory for Israel.¹³

Nevertheless, this study really commences with an examination of some of the headlines from the period, as it is hoped that they shall categorically prove that the whole period was one of false optimism, underpinned by an admixture of doubt felt on behalf of the Palestinian's ability to deliver upon their side of the bargain.¹⁴ Such an examination would also prove that it was a period of pessimism surrounding the realistic potential of a 'peace process' ever taking root and flourishing in former Palestine. All these negative, somewhat prejudicial

⁹ Helm, Sarah, 'It may take along time, but this Middle East violence will subside.' *Independent*, May 23, 2001.

¹⁰ Said, Edward, W. *Peace and its discontents*, p. XI.

¹¹ Moughrabi Fouad, 'The Oslo Process and the Arab World' In Giacamon, George, & Lorrington, Dag, J. [Eds.], *Op-cit*, p. 57. And: Guyatt, Nicholas, *The Absence of Peace*, p. 65.

¹² Terry, Don, 'Accord a bittersweet occasion for Arabs in U.S.' *New York Times*, September 8, 1993. And: Khoury, Rami, G. 'Palestinians have reason to take part.' *New York Times*, September 3, 1993. And: Said, Edward, W. *Peace and its Discontents*, p. 5.

¹³ Said, Edward, W. *Peace and its Discontents*, p. XIII.

¹⁴ *Time Magazine*, 'Can they pass the test?' Issue 11, Vol., 142, September 13, 1993. And: *Newsweek* (Special Edition) 'Can they govern?' September 13, 1993, Issue 11, Vol. 122. *Etc.*

and racist sentiments were in the main encapsulated by the express utilisation of a rhetorical question mark.¹⁵ A device utilised by the Western mainstream media channels frequently throughout the whole of the Oslo period as a means to continue casting negative aspersions regarding the Palestinians ability to be actively involved in an imposed 'peace process'.¹⁶

Indeed, this rhetorical question mark abounded everywhere: in the questions that posed as headlines of the U.S. broadsheets: in the insinuating voices of the commentators and newscasters, as well as in the very cynical actions of several leading representatives of the U.S. Administration, *i.e.*, 'we advise you Arafat that you should leave your *Mauser* (pistol) at home, when you come to the ceremony' in an oblique reference to his [Arafat's] 'perceived' terrorist past.¹⁷

It is argued that this question mark still abounds, and shall probably continue to do so with regards to the solution of the 'Palestinian Question'. (Itself a mildly racist sentiment.)¹⁸ For example, consider the *New York Times* leader for September 1, 1993, which ran 'Israeli people divided but are willing to give peace a chance.'¹⁹ Note the choice of 'willing', and 'a chance', surely an insinuation that the peace process was doomed to failure from the outset. To continue: the *New York Times* also ran an article penned by Rami Khoury on the third of the month, which was entitled 'Palestinians have reason to take part' this might not be overtly derogatory, however it does imply that the Palestinians might *not* have had reason to take part.²⁰

¹⁵ It is to be noted that this use of the rhetorical question mark was not exclusively utilised by the mainstream media but also in the realm of academia as well. Consider: King, John, *Handshake in Washington: The Beginning of Middle East Peace?*

¹⁶ Consider: *Newsweek* (Special Edition), 'The face of peace?' September 13, 1993, Issue 11, Vol., 122. And: *Ibid.* (inside cover), 'PLO Chairman Arafat: A historic gamble or death wish?' And: *Ibid.* 'Can they govern?' p. 24. And: *Time Magazine* 'Can they pass the test?' September 13, 1993. Issue 11, Vol., 142.

¹⁷ Sciolini, Elaine, 'Hottest ticket in town only 2,500 have been invited'. *New York Times*, September 11, 1993.

¹⁸ Said, Edward, W. *The Question of Palestine*, p. 4.

¹⁹ Haberman, Clyde, 'Israeli people divided but are willing to give peace a chance.' *New York Times*, September 1, 1993.

²⁰ Khoury, Rami, G. 'Palestinians have reason to take part.' *New York Times*, September 3, 1993.

This begets a simple rhetorical question. Did the Palestinians actually have any choice or alternative? Of course not,²¹ Arafat acted secretly, decisively, and apparently without any mandate from the Palestinians.²² The Chairman saw the window of opportunity being closed by the activities of the Palestinian and Israeli hawks evident in *Hamas, Kahane Chai, et al.*²³ Furthermore, the PLO was close to bankruptcy, and if the PLO was going down, then so to was its charismatic leader, along with his lifelong dream of autocratic rule over a liberated Palestinian state.²⁴ Regarding the near bankruptcy of the PLO, this octopus organisation had been gradually losing both its political prestige, and subsequently its financial backers.²⁵ In effect, it had spent too long in enforced isolation away from the epicentre of Palestinian political realities that were gradually falling under the auspices of the political division of *Hamas*, which mitigated a sentiment of act now before its too late.²⁶ Indeed, if Arafat sensed this, so to did Yitzhak Rabin, the former Israeli Prime Minister whom wished to crown his own tempestuous life by being lauded as the forger of 'modern' Israel and the creator of the great Arab reconciliation.

It would seem then, that it was little wonder that the peace process was fundamentally flawed from the outset. Indeed, well before the ambiguities evident in the text of the now defunct declaration became apparent. For it appears that Oslo was all about personalities and egocentrism, far over and above what the 'people on the ground' actually wanted.²⁷ This sentiment was beautifully expressed by Muhammad Amin, a fifty-seven year old Palestinian born in

²¹ Guyatt, Nicholas, *The Absence of Peace*, p. 64.

²² Hedges, Chris, '3 Palestinians threaten to resign from talks in a rift with Arafat.' *New York Times*, August 9, 1993. (Faisal al-Hussaini, Saeb Erekat, and Hanan Ashrawi) And: Cohen, Roger, 'Arafat battling for Israel accord in his own *Fatah* group.' *New York Times*, September 3, 1993. And: King, John, *Handshake in Washington: The Beginning of Middle East Peace?* p. 43. And: Butenshon, Nils, A. 'The Oslo Agreement: From the White House to Jabal Abu Ghnaim' In Giacamon, George, & Lorrington, Dag, J. [Eds.], *Op-cit*, p. 31.

²³ Ashrawi, Hanan, *This Side of Peace*, p. 293.

²⁴ Engleberg, Stephen, 'Christopher is said to have given impetus to Israeli Palestinian deal.' *New York Times*, August 30, 1993.

²⁵ Smith, Charles, D. *Op-cit*, pp. 312-313.

²⁶ Cohen, Roger, 'Arafat's move: acting before he became irrelevant.' *New York Times*, September 6, 1993. And: Said, Edward, W. *Peace and its Discontents*, p. 2.

²⁷ Ashrawi, Hanan, *This Side of Peace*, p. 292.

Jerusalem, 'We support the peace plan not because we believe in it [but] because we have no choice.'²⁸

Indeed, to emphasize this point, the reality was that the Oslo 'peace process' was first and foremost about three large egos, each needing careful grooming.²⁹ There was Clinton, who believed that the deliverance of a Middle Eastern peace plan was his own political inheritance, and that by pulling off a political coup he would earn himself a heroic pioneering status of Olympian proportions.³⁰ We know of the motivations of Arafat, however his age and failing health may have been additional factors.³¹ As for Rabin, again we know several of his personal motivations.

Returning to the rhetorical question mark type of headlines that were responsible for evoking doubt and negativity, primarily through insinuation of a Palestinian incapacity to deliver peace: consider the *Time Magazine's* leader 'Can they pass the test?' Arguably the title could imply that 'they', in this instance, could mean both Palestinian and Israelis alike.³² But closer examination of the narrative within the various subtexts indicates that a questionably impartial lead title on the outside cover is in fact a dubious representation of equality at best because the negative anti-Arab portrayal is reinforced by further rhetorical questions, images, *etc.*, that arguably tip the balance very much in favour of the Israelis.

Indeed, it is argued that an article has to be analysed as a complete 'whole'. The language of the subtexts should be read in conjunction with the supporting imagery, and other associated media tools *i.e.*, cartoons, statistical data, interspersing comments, and even in some cases related advertisements *etc.* These all combine to tell a particular story, no matter how biased or loaded. If an analysis is conducted upon subtexts and images outside of this whole then a

²⁸ Terry, Don, 'Accord a bittersweet occasion for Arabs in the U.S.' *New York Times*, September 8, 1993.

²⁹ Ashrawi, Hanan, *This Side of Peace*, p. 277.

³⁰ Whitaker, Brian, 'Leaders seeking a place in history'. *Guardian*, July 26, 2000.

³¹ Said Edward, W. *Peace and its Discontents*, p. XII. And: King, John, *Op-cit*, p. 38. And: Hirst, David, 'Supreme test for Mr Palestine'. *Guardian*, October 13, 2000.

³² *Newsweek*, 'Can they pass the test?' (Special Edition), September 13, 1993. And: *Time Magazine*, Issue 11, Vol., 142, September 13, 1993.

deconstruction of the article occurs, reducing its contextual meaning, and thus demeaning the article's credibility and impact.

It is to be noted, that the argument posited stating that the U.S. mainstream media's reportage of the Arab/Israeli conflict is not pro-Israeli, rests upon such a deconstructionist approach to the articles, or citations of particularly balanced news pieces, whilst steering attention away from the open editorials, letters and opinions, as these are considered as part of the debate and criticism, and as such are not news casts *per se*. Whilst this argument may well have some legitimacy, it does not take into account that media discourse works, and is in itself, a complex 'whole'. Therefore, suggestion is made that the article in *Time Magazine* is mildly racist, pro-Israeli, and casts negative aspersions concerning the Palestinians ability to succumb to an imposed peace process.

Furthermore, consider Brent Scowcroft's article in Newsweek's 'Special Edition' of the celebrated media event. His essay's title was 'The kick start that gave peace a chance'.³³ Apart from being an incredibly clichéd use of phraseology; the idea that you are 'giving [the] peace a chance' is bound up with a moral conception *i.e.*, that you are indeed the donor, the teacher, *etc.*³⁴ Once again, this use of 'chance' implies that there is little hope of success, and is a rather pessimistic outlook. An examination of the British mainstream media's reportage will evidence much of the same pessimism: consider, for example, the *Guardian's* leader after the day of the 'handshake' for it read 'Symbolic gesture seals hopes to end blood and tears'. Note again the usage of 'hope' in such an overtly negative fashion, and the doubtful sentiments are so lucid that it is not necessary to push this point too far.

An examination of the texts that accompanied this 'media frame' will reveal that there was a subtle racist discourse evident within many of the comments and

³³ 'The kick start that gave peace a chance.' *Newsweek* (Special Edition), Issue 11, Vol., 142, September 13, 1993.

³⁴ Consider: Sciolini, Elaine, 'Arafat arrives in U.S. to make peace.' *New York Times*, September 12, 1993. And: Haberman, Clyde, 'Everyone's clamouring for peace', *New York Times*, September 6, 1993. And Tisdall, Simon, 'Symbolic gesture seals hopes to end blood and tears'. *Guardian*, September 14, 1993.

analyses proffered. Consider, for example, how the Israeli settlers were portrayed: It seems that there was an anxious desire to restrict direct association with the militarised aspect of such pioneering principles.³⁵ Instead of overt reference to the settler's obvious recourse to machineguns for alleged defensive purposes, there existed an explicit distancing from this aspect, and a subsequent distortion of the truth.³⁶

It appears that there was an overstated insistence to portray the settlers as peaceable people, always standing in their 'hothouses' amongst the healthy rosy glow generated by the tomato plants; or ankle deep amongst the foliage of an egg plant, (aubergine).³⁷ It is axiomatic indeed, that Israeli settling is portrayed as their (the Israeli's) tilling of the soil, whilst to the Arabs it is seen as rape and a further expropriation of Arab lands.

The obverse of this reader friendly portrayal of good, healthy, adventurous pioneering, however, was the discourse describing Palestinians and Arabs, often homogenously, as fanatical hotheads *i.e.*, as quick tempered, and always thirsting for revenge. Indeed, it is argued that the morbid fascination that the U.S. has with state sponsored terrorism that was fuelled earlier in that year (February 1993) with the bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York, had added grist to its mill with the Palestinian populace.

The language speaks clearly for itself *i.e.*, 'the PLO must denounce terrorism' as outlined in the founding PLO covenant of 1964, implying that the organisation openly encourages acts of terrorism, nothing but a distortion of the true picture.³⁸ For as has already been stated, Arafat had openly denounced terrorism in Algiers in 1988 when he accepted just 22% of the contested territories, and subsequently

³⁵ Hoffman, David, 'Israeli settlers in Gaza un-persuaded: farmers say weary compatriots are dodging responsibilities.' *The Washington Post*, September 2, 1993.

³⁶ Hoffman, David, 'Army assault in Hebron kills 4 Muslim suspects.' *The Washington Post*, March 24, 1994. 'Human rights organisations (*B'tselem*) have charged that Jewish settlers are almost never brought to the police for illegal use of fire arms.'

³⁷ Hoffman, David, 'Israeli settlers in Gaza un-persuaded: farmers say weary compatriots are dodging responsibilities.' *The Washington Post*, September 2, 1993. Greenberg, Joel, 'For the settlers in Gaza: total shock.' *New York Times*, September 7, 1993.

³⁸ Cohen, Roger, 'Arafat battling for Israel accord in his *Fatah* group.' *New York Times*, September 3, 1993.

recognised Israel's *de facto* 'right to exist'.³⁹ Moreover, it is a far too simplistic representation of the PLO, which is an umbrella organisation that, in the main, conditions allowing, desires reconciliation with the colonizing overseer(s).⁴⁰

This brings this study to a point of examination into the mainstream media's use, or misuse, of imagery regarding the now infamous handshake. Firstly, the argument posited is that the mainstream media was mildly schizophrenic, inasmuch, as there was a positive depiction of the handshake *i.e.*, the mirth and obvious relief of Arafat, the grave concern of Rabin.⁴¹ Even the comical Clinton was all smiles, with a winsome expression on his face, like a first time father being called into the maternity room to meet his first born.⁴²

These positive images were however, contrasted to the very negative but descriptive images of hooded *Hamas* activists, the *Khaffiyah* enclosed faces of the *Shuhada'*, (Martyrs) alongside the seemingly obligatory, and crazed wielding of AK47s.⁴³ Regrettably though this negative imagery acts, as it is designed to act *in unison with* the titles of the articles, it is therefore, a powerful force useful for further infusing negative stereotypical portrayals of the Palestinians deep into subliminal consciousness *viz.* the American mainstream media's readership. Once again, this is also true to some extent of the British media's reportage, however it does not appear to be fuelled with such a ferocious anti-Arab discourse.⁴⁴ It would seem that British journalists and editors draw on a long tradition of reportage of their *other* knowing the pitfalls of such racially

³⁹ Engleberg, Stephan, 'Christopher is said to have given impetus to Israeli/Palestinian deal.' *New York Times*, August 30, 1993. And: Said, Edward, W. 'Peace and its Discontents' p. XIII, and p. 22.

⁴⁰ Cohen, Roger, 'Arafat battling for Israel accord in his *Fatah* group.' *New York Times*, September 3, 1993. And: King, John, *Handshake in Washington: The Beginning of Middle East Peace*, p. 173.

⁴¹ Ashrawi, Hanan, *This Side of Peace*, p. 271

⁴² Tisdall, Simon, 'Symbolic gesture seals hopes to end blood and tears.' *Guardian*, September 13, 1993.

⁴³ Krauthammer, Charles, 'Israel's enormous risk.' *The Washington Post*, September 3, 1993. And: Drozidak, William, 'PLO allies criticize Arafat.' *The Washington Post*, September 3, 1993. Drozidak, William, 'Issues blocking joint negotiation.' *The Washington Post*, September 8, 1993.

⁴⁴ This consideration of the British 'mainstream media' is on the whole valid, however, recognition is made of the debate that emerged concerning Conrad Black's (owner of *The Daily Telegraph*, and *The Jerusalem Post*) alleged pro-Israeli bias in the pages of the *Spectator*. See: McCann, Paul, 'Black fires back over Taki's 'anti-Semitism' *The Times*, March 3, 2001. And: Wells, Matt, 'The Black arts leave writers riled' *Guardian*, March 16, 2001.

prejudicial representations. Furthermore, it would seem that there is a more informed consensus concerning media portrayals of the Arab world *per se* in Britain.

Nevertheless, the schizophrenia of the media worked in an alternative way, for it had turned the outlaw Arafat, into a likeable portly rogue (a Shakespearian Falstaff if you will).⁴⁵ A man who had turned himself in, moreover, he had become a man who had awoken to the realisation that all he need do was comply too the wishes and demands of the imperialists, and then everything would be forgiven. Arafat could have his Gazan based throne, for the asking price of one innocuous little handshake. Indeed, 'a giant handshake for mankind.' (Clinton's transparent cliché.)⁴⁶

Yet this schizophrenic media also showed the jubilant Arafat peering out from the news-pages, and the various newsmagazines, with a giant rhetorical question mark emblazoned across his forehead, implying Arafat's incapability to promote peace. Consider *Newsweek's* full-page portrait of the Chairman, for not only was the title negative but loaded with heavy bias. ('The Face of Peace'? was how it read.) It was also bolstered by a supporting article to further express the point that Arabs are vicious, vindictive, scheming and nasty, in the story of Terry Anderson's kidnap. ('My Hostage Ordeal' that other U.S. mainstream media bugbear pushed to the ultimate during the Iranian hostage crisis.)⁴⁷ A reading of the text conveyed the horrors of his detention at the hands of Islamic radicals.⁴⁸

Why publish such a potentially ground breaking piece of news in conjunction with such an obviously negative article? The reason it is argued is that it is purposeful and that it serves to always suppress Arab progression. This is the language of the *Pax Americana-Israelica*.⁴⁹ Indeed, of neo-colonialism *per se*.

⁴⁵ Said, Edward, W. *Peace and its Discontents*, p. 12.

⁴⁶ *The Christian Science Monitor*, September 14, 1993, p. 20.

⁴⁷ See: *Newsweek* (Special Edition), 'The face of peace?' September 13, 1993, Issue 11, Vol., 122.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* p. 20.

⁴⁹ Said, Edward, W. *The End of the Peace Process*, p. 47.

For in truth it means ‘the little peoples’ must do as we say there are now no alternatives.⁵⁰

Examination of the *Christian Science Monitor*’s reportage throughout the period, proffered a refreshing alternative to the predominantly pro-Israeli oriented U.S. ‘prestigious press’. Consider for example, ‘Israeli deal stuns Palestinians’, or ‘PLO-Israeli deal creates rift with Arab states.’ Such plain and uncommitted language however, makes for quite a dull read. Nevertheless, this more generous *i.e.*, Arab friendly reportage was also evident in much of the language used to express the actualities of the ‘birth or stillbirth’ of the Oslo ‘peace process’.

Furthermore, the images that the paper used reflected its stance of impartiality. Two examples spring to mind. The first was an image of peace marchers on a rally carrying banners in both Hebrew and Arabic. (A mixed group of both Jews and Arabs are admittedly perhaps to be expected at a peace rally.)⁵¹ The other was an image of an Israeli protester being taken away by some Israeli riot police. An unusual image in that it certainly was not the norm in the majority of the mainstream media channels that largely focused upon the assembly on the South Lawn of the White House.⁵²

Concerning the media’s vacillating attitude towards Arafat, and perhaps the best indicator of the false enthusiasm that surrounded the whole inception of Oslo was a rather humorous cartoon (charmingly satirical), inked by Danzinger that the *Christian Science Monitor* printed. For it showed a broad smiling, roly-poly ‘Chairman’ with ‘Kiss me I’m Palestinian’ emblazoned across the front of his T-shirt.⁵³

⁵⁰ See: Power Pax: a brief history in megalomania, *New Internationalist*, Issue 330, December 2000.

⁵¹ Lynfield, Ben, ‘Israeli-PLO deal spurs fierce debate on security.’ *Christian Science Monitor*, September 1, 1993.

⁵² Lynfield, Ben, ‘Israel’s Rabin banks on a reformed PLO.’ *Christian Science Monitor*, September 2, 1993.

⁵³ Danzinger, *Christian Science Monitor*, (back page) September 2, 1993.

This little image summed up the entire period perfectly: the cynicism of the Washington Administration, the mainstream media itself, and moreover, the subordinate role of the Palestinians in the deal. The Palestinians, their leadership, the concept of peace and of Palestine, were, and to a large extent still are vague entities and concepts. They remain on the whole the whimsies of Washington,⁵⁴ the mainstream media, and any other party wishing to moralistically crusade for peace in the 'modern' Middle East. By dint of their struggle, both Palestinians and Arabs *per se* deserve better treatment, and much fairer media portrayals in all the channels of the Western media. The nature of the American mainstream media that continues to fuel the mildly racist and xenophobic anti-Arabism however, needs to be debunked through intelligently addressed criticism.

⁵⁴ Wallach, Janet, & Wallach, John, *Arafat: In the Eyes of the Beholder*, p. 479.

CHAPTER 2

'Black Friday' •

'Even the Israelis who are most insensitive to Arab life are not proud of this' said Harry Well, the representative of the anti-Defamation League in Israel. 'It reinforces the view that what goes on out there is the Wild West- theirs and ours- and Israel should separate itself from there.'¹

'Indeed, even the defenders of the movement now wonder if Ramati and his breed are the spiritual 'pioneers' they claim to be- or some sort of Torah bound terrorists whom need to be reigned in.'²

On February 25, 1994, a catastrophe occurred that was 'just waiting to happen' which was to have severe future consequences for the by now already heavily beleaguered 'peace process'.³ Just waiting to happen for several reasons: Doctor Goldstein's unwarranted, but pre-meditated, murder of twenty-nine Muslims at the Tomb of the Patriarchs (Hebron) was not, in reality, a singularly unique event.⁴ It is understood that victimisation of Palestinians by Jewish settlers is commonplace enough, as too is the harassment of settlers by certain elements within the *Shabab*, and activists of *Hamas*.⁵

Several factors had coalesced however, to make such a catastrophe possible. For fifteen years *Likud* policy (1977-1992), had been to encourage further settlement of all areas of *Eretz Israel* as outlined in the '100,000 Plan', which commenced in 1981. This policy was to offer arms and protection to those settlers whom

* The title for this media event was taken from the *New York Times*'s opinion page. See: 'Refugee camps echo with calls for revenge'. *New York Times*, February 27, 1994.

¹ Goldstein, Lawrie, & Wilgoren, Debbi, 'An ocean away, area Muslims, Jews share the anguish of Hebron'. [Sic], *The Washington Post*, February 27, 1994.

² O'Shea, James, & Rowley, Store, W. 'We are reclaiming the land of Israel' *Chicago Tribune*, February 28, 1994.

³ Khalidi, Ahmad, & Raviv, Moshe, 'Israel and Palestine: what now?' *Independent*, March 1, 1994. And: Hundley, Tom, 'West Bank bloodbath at holy site; Jewish settler guns down ten', *Chicago Tribune*, February 25, 1994.

⁴ Goldstein, Lawrie, & Wilgoren, Debbi, 'An ocean away, area Muslims, Jews share the anguish of Hebron'. *The Washington Post*, February 27, 1994.

⁵ Numbers vary from source to source on the actual amount of fatalities at Hebron, however twenty-nine seems to be the most frequently cited assessment. See, Jones, Clive, 'Ideo-theology: Dissonance and Discourse in the State of Israel', in Karsh, Efraim, *Op-cit*, p. 30. And: Dunn, Ross, 'Double suicide bomb attack on Israel kills 25', *The Times*, February 26, 1996.

chose to homestead in the obviously more uncomfortable areas *i.e.*, areas already occupied by Palestinians, such as the West Bank, or where Arab villages abutted fresh Jewish settlements,⁶ such as in the south easterly Jerusalem district of Har Homa.

It was this *Likud* policy that partially drew the native New Yorker to Israel, in 1983.⁷ Dr. Goldstein could find in Israel what was partially lacking in New York *viz.* further spiritual fulfilment, by following the path of his mentor and friend Rabbi Meir Kahane who had himself made *Aliyah* (migration) back in 1971, forming the militant, and vehemently anti-Arab *Kach* party.⁸ The *Likud* policy of encouraging settlement with the reward of land, rights, and citizenship, not to mention rank (Goldstein was a Captain), within the Israeli Defence Force was in part too great a lure for the gifted doctor.

It has been argued but not entirely convincingly, that the most ardent supporters of an ideology are those that come to it from a distance, *i.e.*, are not born into it. The ideology is seized upon and becomes the adherent's *raison d'etre*. In some it becomes an obsession, to the point that the 'message' that the ideology purports is often demonised, and takes over the rational mind. This tendency towards obsession however, is no less true of the Messianic religions, where fanaticism and distorted ideology can invariably lead to disaster. For it is to be noted that if Zionism attracts radicals, so too does Islam.

In the case of Dr. Goldstein however, he certainly was not a recent convert to Judaism, fuelled with a religious fervour that often accompanies fresh adherents to an ideology. Indeed, the doctor was a member of a traditional orthodox family, had attended two Jewish *yeshivas* (religious seminaries) before graduating with full honours from the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in 1981. Indeed, he had always been political, bringing himself to the attention of the *New York Times* in June 1981, by submitting a letter outlining a solution to the 'Arab

⁶ Smith, Charles, D. *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, p. 293.

⁷ Mitchell, Allison, 'A killers path of militancy: From Brooklyn to West Bank', *New York Times*, February 26, 1994.

⁸ Said, Edward, W. *Peace and its Discontents*, p. 56.

problem of Israel' viz. their [the Arabs] ultimate expulsion or annihilation.⁹ Furthermore, after making *Aliyah* 'he was almost *messianic* [my emphasis] in his strong commitment to the land.'¹⁰

These aforementioned factors suggest that Dr. Goldstein's primary motivation for the massacre is not to be understood as an attempt to derail the 'peace process' *per se*, (a political act).¹¹ But, has a greater attribution to a Jewish theological concept (*Hillul ha shem*), and a furtherance of a *Kahanist* inspired anti-Arabism.¹² This theological aspect underpinning the massacre, it is argued, was largely not emphasised by the channels of the U.S. mainstream media.¹³ Indeed, the 'media complex' considered the event largely in political terms, viz. What impact the massacre would have upon the implementation of Oslo's vague timetable, and Israel's forestalling over the scheduled withdrawal from the West Bank?¹⁴

Nevertheless, it was of no real surprise that an ardent Jewish settler, a supporter of the extreme right and member of the outlawed *Kach* group would consider anathema, the rescinding of Jewish territory to the 'Arabs'.¹⁵ Simply put, this can be considered as a conflict waged against non-Jewish inhabitants of Israel (*Amulek*), in this instance Palestinian Arabs, whose incorporation into a 'peace process' denies the potential of the redemptive process that underpins both Judaism and 'political' Zionism. This, however, is a hotly contested Jewish theological dogma, causing much debate between the different *yeshivas* and their associated Rabbis. The Jewish extremists however, consider that Israel must be *Arabrein*, (Arab free) in order to facilitate the restoration of the 'New Jerusalem'.

⁹ See article in *New York Times* of June 1981. In Firestone, David, 'Seed planted in Brooklyn blooms as violence', *New York Times*, February 26, 1994.

¹⁰ Lempart, Lesley, quoted in Mitchell, Allison, 'A killers path of militancy: from Brooklyn to West Bank', *New York Times*, February 26, 1994.

¹¹ Hundley, Tom, 'West Bank bloodbath at holy site: Jewish settler guns down ten', *Chicago Tribune*, February 25, 1994.

¹² Jones, Clive, 'Ideotheology: Discourse and Dissonance in the State of Israel'. In Karsh, Efraim, *Op-cit*, p. 39.

¹³ Said, Edward, W. *Op-cit*, p. 54.

¹⁴ Atlas, Terry, 'wire-services', *Chicago Times*, February 26, 1994. And: Gwin, Ifil, 'Clinton calls peace talks from Cairo to Washington.' *New York Times*, February 26, 1994.

¹⁵ Lerner, Michael, 'Disarm the West Bank settlers', *New York Times*, February 26, 1994. And: Smith, Charles, D. *Palestine and the Arab Israeli Conflict*, p. 319.

The supporting logic of this concept runs thus: Israel ultimately belongs to God. It is on a semi-permanent loan to the Jews as their reward for being God's chosen people. What is to be done? The Oslo 'peace process' and any territorial compromise with the Arabs is ungodly, (as stated in *Talmudic* law), and ultimately prevents the installation of the 'New Jerusalem'. Therefore, a solution to the problem must be derived through the termination of the 'peace process'.

It is suggested that a continuation of this logic (albeit with slight variations and modifications) would raise itself several times, in various forms throughout the meandering 'peace process' within elements of both parties in the conflict, ever threatening to completely destroy, or retard the peace. Indeed, this religio-political concept is often referred to as the 'unholy alliance' where extremists on both sides attempt to nullify the peace.¹⁶ Indeed, there is some evidence to suggest that at times there has been active collusion between the activists of *Hamas*, and the settlers. It is ironic, that the *Hamas* 'maximalists' *i.e.*, those that reject any reconciliation with Israel, and the extreme settlers representing Israel's far right, are united in their political ambitions *viz.* cessation of a 'peace process', and their selected methodology, namely, through bloodshed.

Other factors however, came in to play on that fateful day in Hebron. Although Dr. Goldstein was eventually overcome by the Muslim congregation and was battered to death, the question remains as to how he managed to kill twenty-nine Muslim worshippers? The answer can be attributed to very slack security and Israeli law. It is suggested that Dr. Goldstein knew the layout of the security cameras overseeing the Tomb and could gain easy access to the killing field. It is also hinted that the Israeli guards were asleep and in some cases even absent from their tour of duty. But what is of major significance, and has the greatest responsibility within the dynamics of the massacre, is that it is against Israeli law to engage in live-fire with another Jew. If the guards were present, then they were technically powerless to do anything about it.¹⁷ Further suggesting that the

¹⁶ King, John, *Handshake in Washington, The Beginning of Middle East Peace?* p. 45.

¹⁷ Borger, Julian, 'US struggles to keep talks together', *Guardian*, October 3, 2000.

'Hebron Massacre' was a tragedy that was 'just waiting to happen', and in reality, there is nothing to prevent such a catastrophe from occurring again.

It is argued that the suicide of Dr. Goldstein failed to destroy the 'peace process'. Indeed, contrary to this, the massacre acted in a way to further encourage the negotiators of the accords to find away through the deadlock. Unfortunately however, it did initiate a set of events that would in time, irreparably cripple the fragile peace. This is to suggest that Dr. Goldstein's suicide was inspirational to some. Indeed, many had made him a martyr worthy of highest honour as they had done with Rabbi Meir Kahane.¹⁸ Furthermore, the underpinning logic of his action would be taken one natural step further at the next fateful juncture in the ill fated 'peace process'.¹⁹

Selection was made of this 'media frame' for several reasons. Firstly, and regrettably, a massacre such as this cannot fail to generate a vast amount of reportage, and debate. Secondly, Dr. Goldstein hailed from Brooklyn, and his action must have had some impact on the large Jewish population there, as they distanced themselves from such a disreputable event. Indeed, many American Jewish groups were appalled by the callousness and implications of the act.²⁰ Thirdly, it would be interesting to see how the U.S. mainstream media would actually report such an obviously condemnable action. For after all, traditionally it had been the Palestinians who were the hotheads that enforced their grudges through the medium of murder. Jewish settlers were brave, just and noble, not cowards, whom empty their machineguns into the backs of defenceless worshippers. An American perception and an Israeli generated myth had been overturned, and it would not be the last to be disestablished throughout the period of Oslo.

The main argument proposed is that there was no tangibly explicit pro-Israeli bias evident within the channels of the mainstream media. In a counter to this,

¹⁸ Greenberg, Joel, 'Sounds of chanting and shooting echo in a town awash with blood', *New York Times*, February 26, 1994.

¹⁹ See: Chapter 3, 'Goodbye Friend'.

²⁰ Greenberg, Joel, 'Sounds of chanting echo in a town awash with blood', *New York Times*, February 26, 1994.

however, there appeared to be no pro-Palestinian bias either. The time frame under specific analysis runs from February 25, 1994, (the date of the 'massacre' itself), until February 28, 1994, when the nature of the media's discourse focused upon the ensuing violence that the catastrophe provoked. To some this violence was reminiscent of the violence witnessed during the 1987-1993 *Intifada*.²¹ Prior, to this, the U.S. mainstream media's reportage focused primarily upon the facts relating to the massacre, and also offered psychological profiles into the mind of the killer.²²

It is argued that the reason that there was no explicitly tangible pro-Israeli bias evident in the channels of the U.S. mainstream media during this particular 'media frame' was due to several factors. Firstly, it is suggested that the 'media complex' was genuinely shocked by what had happened at Hebron. Secondly, if there had been any overtly explicit pro-Israeli bias evident within the 'media complex', this would have given rise to loud protestations from the Arab League, the Arab Lobbyists, and from voices within the international community. And, although these organisations possess very little clout in the shaping of media discourse, it was however, a criticism that the U.S. 'media complex' could ill afford, particularly when the Administration desired so much to restart the stalled 'peace process'.

Nevertheless it is argued, that although the nature of the reportage was not pro-Israeli, or pro-Palestinian, it was, in fact neither, sorrowful or apologetic. It was, as is always the case, an unsympathetic machine that churned out its stories, comments and analyses, in a relentless fashion. Furthermore, it appears that U.S. mainstream media discourse is far more gratuitous in its usage of vocabulary and imagery, conveying the true horror of an event in glorious Technicolor far more

²¹ It is possible to consider using the term *Intifada* to describe this kind of popular revolt. But it is argued that to constitute an *Intifada* proper, an uprising must have a) political goals and aspirations, and b) some form of leadership and direction. It is all too often read that an uprising might represent a mini, or lesser *Intifada*, however, if this habit persists the definition of an organised struggle will become blurred. Consider, for example the post September 28, 2000 'Uprising', this 'Uprising' does represent an *Intifada*, as at least there is some explicit organisation viz. the *Tanzim*, and one clearly articulated political objective viz. overthrow, no matter how disorganised this organisation is, or unrealisable its stated objective.

²² Mitchell, Allison, 'A killers path of militancy: From Brooklyn to West Bank', *New York Times*, February 26, 1994.

than its British counterpart. Indeed, its approach in covering the catastrophe was by treating it as something of a military operation that the Doctor had undertaken. To support this consideration every miniscule piece of information emphasizing the logistics of the massacre was supplied.

There were maps that charted the route that the ‘crazed gunman’, (note: not fanatic, or terrorist) took to the scene of the ‘killing field’.²³ There were inserts depicting the design and specifications of the *Galil* Assault Rifle, (based on the AK47). This weapon can incidentally fire 10.8 rounds per second, and carries 35 bullets to a clip.²⁴ Implying that if 111 shells were collected from the scene of the carnage, then the Doctor reloaded three times, if we assume that there was a clip already loaded.²⁵ This calculation fits with the stated time span of three to four minutes given as the length of the incident, which to the victims felt more like a very long ‘fifteen’.²⁶ Concerning the gratuitous and perhaps unnecessary graphic accounts offered of the slaughter consider these two accounts.²⁷

‘When I heard the shots. I felt the bullet [sic] The man next to me his brain out of his skull. He raised his finger, to show when one feels death coming- and I felt like I wanted to die.’

Sharif Zahdi.

‘The people who were shot fell back on the others. Most of the people were bloody.’

Shaban Ishwaiki.

Furthermore, there were computer-generated images depicting the Mosque, and also images of the killing field showing the ‘cauldron of death’ in all of its bloodied glory.²⁸ The argument posited then, is that the nature of the U.S.

²³ Sulzberger, Arthur, Ochs, Jnr, ‘Comment’, *New York Times*, February 26, 1994. And: Youssef, Ibrahim, M. ‘Two Palestinian rivals warn of storm to come.’ *New York Times*, February 27, 1994.

²⁴ Hedges, Chris, & Greenberg, Joel, ‘Before killing, final prayer, and final taunt’. *New York Times*, February 26, 1994.

²⁵ Accounts differ however, the *New York Times* reported 111 shells discovered. This calculation was reached utilising the *New York Times*, as it is the more prestigious paper, furthermore, the *Chicago Tribune* is apt at receiving a lot of its factual information courtesy of ‘wire services’ and subsequently reported 118 rounds fired. See: Hedges, Chris, & Greenberg, Joel, ‘Before killing, final prayer, and final taunt’. *New York Times*, February 26, 1994. And: Hundley, Tom, Israel acts against settlers: some arrests sought, arms a problem.’ *Chicago Tribune*, February 28, 1994.

²⁶ *The Washington Post*, February 27, 1994.

²⁷ *Ibid.* These two citations were, however, not part of the discourse *per se*. They were used as interspersing comments of a display of various images.

²⁸ Hoffman, David, ‘20 Arab worshippers slain in West Bank.’ *The Washington Post*, February 25, 1994.

mainstream media's discourse concerning this atrocity was primarily sensationalist, and fuelled a certain bloodlust that is evident within the audience of the U.S. mainstream media. This is not an outright criticism *per se*, as blood thirsty media audiences abound everywhere. By making out that the attack, however, was some kind of military operation (which in many ways it was, but one without any legitimacy, except perhaps to Dr. Goldstein's *Kahanist* inspired logic), it was as if the U.S. mainstream media was attempting to legitimise the nefarious action of the Doctor. Indeed, there is some evidence to support this view.

The very fact that the atrocity was pre-meditated was, in the main, simply whitewashed over, and a view was postulated that the Doctor had acted on grounds of diminished responsibility.²⁹ Although, this latter view may possess a certain element of truth, it overrides the evidence that implies the massacre was pre-meditated. It also ignores the fact that the doctor had made very strong overtures concerning his intentions to carry out a massacre.³⁰ Moreover, he was known to the authorities for previously causing upset at the shared place of worship. Furthermore, he had clearly stated on numerous occasions what should happen to the Arabs inhabiting Israel. If these factors were not proof enough of his real mental state, then consideration has to be made of the day he selected to carry out his perceived *messianic* mission, for the eve of *Purim* is a sacred day to Judaism, where celebration is made to the ending of the persecution of the Jews, at the hands of a Persian tyrant by Queen Esther in the sixth century BC.³¹

Several citations were used to imply that the morally good Doctor had simply snapped.³² Furthermore, reference was made to the fact that that the racially prejudiced homesteader of Kiryat Arba was depressed, and had been for several

²⁹ Greenberg, Joel, 'Sounds of chanting and shooting echo in a town awash with blood.' *New York Times*, February 25, 1994.

³⁰ Mitchell, Allison, 'A killers path of militancy: From Brooklyn to West Bank.' *New York Times*, February 26, 1994.

³¹ Hoffman, David, '20 Arab worshippers slain in the West Bank'. *The Washington Post*, February 25, 1994.

³² Lerner, Michael, 'Disarm the West bank settlers'. *New York Times*, February 26, 1994.

weeks, over the recent murder of two friends earlier in January.³³ Moreover: Rabbi Meir Kahane was himself assassinated in New York in 1990 by an Egyptian born assassin, and Goldstein had sworn to avenge the loss of this particularly close friend and mentor.³⁴

Furthermore, it was postulated by some, that the Doctor treated both Palestinian, and Israeli victims alike.³⁵ Inasmuch as this may be true, it does not exonerate the Doctor from guilt. For there have been many instances where ethically sound medical doctors ignore their true ideological leanings whilst pursuing the profession. Indeed, it is a pre-requisite in the field of medical practice to treat patients regardless of colour and creed. Nevertheless, it was suggested in the mainstream media that all these factors *i.e.*, emotional stress, grief, length of service, *etc.*, bore down upon the Doctor, and clouded his judgement.

To bolster this view, the emotive language of the 'Vietnam Experience' was employed to conjure up both empathy with, and sympathy for the murderer. The Doctor had simply 'been in the shit too long', and had developed the 'five mile stare'.³⁶ Indeed, his neighbour Mr Ramati, a former pioneering scout in the U.S. Marines whilst serving in Vietnam, testified that in essence Baruch had been a good, and kind man, but had merely seen too much. Furthering this, he implied that, every now and then, a man is justified for cutting loose.³⁷ This sentiment suggests much regarding the psychology of the Israeli settler.

The 'Vietnam Experience' is culturally deeply entrenched within the U.S., and it is argued, the psychological damage it inflicted upon American society on the whole was enormous. It has in many ways its analogy with the Jewish Holocaust

³³ Hundley, Tom, 'Assassin discussed hatred of Arabs long before spree'. *Chicago Tribune*, February 26, 1994.

³⁴ *Ibid.* And: MacAskill, Ewan, 'West Bank fears new reprisals'. *Guardian*, January 1, 2001.

³⁵ Hoffman, David, 'Doctor to victims turns violent'. *The Washington Post*, February 27, 1994.

³⁶ With regards to the 'Vietnam Experience' reference is being made to the complete dynamic *i.e.*, the war itself, its cultural legacy, and impact on American society and its subsequent ramifications for Israel. For examples of such emotive language specifically evoking the 'Vietnam Experience' see: Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* (1979), and Stanley Kubrick's *Full Metal Jacket* (1987), *etc.*

³⁷ Hundley, Tom, 'Assassin discussed hatred of Arabs long before spree'. *Chicago Tribune*, February 26, 1994.

(which incidentally, Dr Goldstein referred to with continued frequency in the build up to the ‘massacre’)³⁸ inasmuch as it evokes a sentiment of ‘never again’ or ‘lest we forget’. (See: introduction p. 20.) Once, it is argued, it was allowable to be openly against American involvement in the Far East (Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam), this, however, is now no longer the case.³⁹ Respect for, and empathy with, the whole ‘Vietnam Experience’ is now perceived to be the ‘true’ American way, particularly now that the humiliation of defeat in that particular imbroglio was washed over after the Gulf War (1991).⁴⁰

This phenomenon has a negative antithesis in Israel, however, realising huge implications for the Palestinians. For all the time that the pioneering adventurism exemplifying the ‘Vietnam Experience’ continues to be eulogised in the United States, and while this is perceived as a legitimate export for Israel, finally filtering out into the Occupied Territories, the result will be a continued ‘Rambowitzisation’ of settler society, and will subsequently realise an escalation of more orchestrated extremist violence.⁴¹ Indeed, in sum, a grim omen for the future of Palestinian and settler relations, particularly within the Occupied Territories.

³⁸ Lerner, Michael, ‘Disarm the West Bank settlers’. *New York Times*, February 26, 1994.

³⁹ See: <http://www.nytimes.com/library/world/asia/0141300vietnam-overview.html>.

⁴⁰ See: <http://www.nytimes.com/library/world/asia/vietnam-war-index.html>.

⁴¹ Rambowitz was a term coined by Paul Breines in ‘Tough Jews’ as cited in Said, Edward, W. *Peace and its Discontents*, p. 56. And: King, John, *Handshake in Washington: The Beginning of Middle East Peace*, p. IX.

CHAPTER 3

'Goodbye Friend'

'To everything there is a season,
 And a time to every purpose under heaven:
 A time to be born, and a time to die;
 A time to kill, and a time to heal;
 A time to weep, and a time to laugh;
 A time to love, and a time to hate;
 A time of war; and a time of peace:
 'The time for peace has come.'¹
 (Ecclesiastes III, v., 1-8.)²

'Of course its possible to kill him. The point is that the chances of escape would not be too high. A fanatic prepared to die himself in the attempt is the most certain method of eliminating a dictator who exposes himself to the public. I notice, 'he added with a touch of malice,' that despite your idealism you have not been able to produce such a man.'

(The Day of The Jackal.)³

On November 4, 1995, calamity was to strike the 'peace process' once again, as the former Israeli warlord now turned peacemaker was assassinated after making a speech of peace at a Labour-*Meretz* and Peace Now co-sponsored peace rally in Tel Aviv's main *Kikar Yisrael* square.⁴ Yigal Amir, a twenty-seven year old Jewish law student, had reached the only logical conclusion that belief in such religious extremism could allow him to make, being connected with a religious extremist group called the AYIN,⁵ an offshoot of *Kach*. That 'the Rabin 'dove' is

¹ *Al-Koholeth* from the Torah, as quoted by the late Yitzhak Rabin during the 'Declaration of Principles' speech, September 13, 1993, Washington. Brown, Derek, 'Israel's darkest hour: Future of peace process in doubt'. *Guardian*, November 6, 1995.

² Ecclesiastes III, v., 1-8. *Holy Bible*.

³ Forsyth, Frederick, *The Day of the Jackal*, p. 51.

⁴ Champion, Daryl, Religious Fundamentalism - A Threat to the State of Israel. In White & Logan [Eds.], *Remaking the Middle East*. p. 313. And: Weil, Martin, 'A horrible tragedy'. *The Washington Post*, November 5, 1995.

⁵ Wallach, Janet, & Wallach, John, *Arafat: In the Eyes of the Beholder*, p. 466.

ultimately rescinding God's territory to the Arab infidels, and therefore, he must die!' ⁶

For surely it states in *Talmudic* literature, and is a notion propounded in classical Jewish thinking, that it is the responsibility of religious leaders (and political ones), to hold an opinion concerning Jewish settlements, the status of the *Gerim* (non Jews inhabiting *Eretz Yisrael* who are only to be accorded favour not more),⁷ and the circumstances in which territory can be rescinded.⁸ Indeed, it is a continuation of this classical thinking that allows for, and legitimises, political assassination of anyone who attempts to rescind the Jews earthly covenant. Once again however, the logic concerning God's sovereignty over territory is not peculiar to extreme Judaism, it has its reflection in Islam, and was partially attributable to the assassination of King Abdullah of Jordan by a disgruntled Palestinian for perceived collusion with the Israelis (1951),⁹ and furthermore, for the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, by four soldiers linked to the Islamic fundamentalist groups of *Al-Takfir wa al-Hijra*, and *Munazzamat al-Jihad* in the October of 1981.¹⁰

Yigal Amir, has, it is argued, acted upon the inspiration of Dr. Goldstein. (Indeed, a book eulogising Goldstein as a hero was found in his possessions, as also was Frederick Forsyth's influential *The Day of the Jackal*.)¹¹ Only Amir had reached a more logical conclusion than the Doctor, for he had detected that the 'Hebron Massacre' although seriously disruptive and threatening to the 'peace process', had, as its focus of attention, the wrong target group. The cold-blooded murder of Palestinians would not destroy the 'peace process' *per se*. Only the

⁶ *Ayin*: the Avenging Jewish Organisation. See: Greenberg Joel, 'Suspect says he tried to kill Rabin before'. *New York Times*, November 5, 1995.

⁷ Sprinzak, Ehud, The Iceberg Model of Political Extremism. In Newman, David, [Ed.], *The Impact of the Gush Emunim*, p.32.

⁸ Battersby, John, 'Israel struggles to understand loss of a Hero'. *Christian Science Monitor*, November 6, 1995.

⁹ Seale, Patrick, *Abu Nidal: the world's most notorious terrorist*, pp. 63-64. And: Parker, Thomas, *The Road to Camp David: U.S. Negotiating Strategy Towards the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, p. 4.

¹⁰ Hiro, Dilop, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, pp. 78-79. See: Hoagland, Jim, 'Rabin perished during brutal war'. *The Washington Post*, November 5, 1995.

¹¹ Greenberg, Joel, 'Investigators describes a determined killer whose target was Peres as well as Rabin'. *New York Times*, November 6, 1995.

complete removal of its architects might do this. In this thinking though, Yigal Amir was also wrong, and perhaps a little naïve. Moreover, he had fundamentally miscalculated, for the supposed true architect of Oslo was Shimon Peres (one of the proposed targets of the assassin).¹² The assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, it is argued, did not derail the ‘peace process’, but ironically restored momentum behind it, as the U.S. and the international community equally mourned the loss of their ‘friend’.¹³

There was no need for Rabin to have lost his life, or even to have lost ‘the brave gamble for peace’. If Yigal Amir had been a little more patient, rather than undertaking his own perceived *messianic* mission *i.e.*, his dream of deliverance from out of the hands of the peacemakers, it is argued, would have eventually been realised. Instead, however, he now serves a life-sentence in an Israeli jail, because the assassination was not considered to be a crime against humanity.

What the assassination did do though was this, it dispelled yet another American perception, and Israeli generated myth. For it was the Arab states of the emergent ‘modern’ Middle East that had traditionally been blighted by political assassinations.¹⁴ Indeed, it was an Islamic legacy that the removal of the Sultan was generally carried out in a bloody and brutal way.¹⁵ Moreover, the word assassin is derived from the Arabic term *hashaashin*.¹⁶ Meaning ‘smokers of cannabis’ and is associated with the Nizari branch of Ismaili Shi’ism who inhabited various parts of the Middle East during the 11th and 12th centuries, and is not necessarily a term associated with respectable citizens of ‘modern’

¹² Shimon Peres is very often erroneously attributed with being the ‘architect’ of Oslo, however, Yossi Beilin and Johan Jergan Host can equally be considered as worthy of this title. See: King, John, *Handshake in Washington: The Beginning of Middle East Process*, pp. 106- 107.

¹³ See, Saffire, William, ‘Rabin earned the admiration of sceptics’. *International Herald Tribune*, November 7, 1995. Guardia, Anton L. ‘The legacy of Rabin must be preserved’. *The Daily Telegraph*, November 7, 1995. And: Schmemmann, Serge, ‘Surge for Peres and peace, till elections’. *New York Times*, November 5, 1995.

¹⁴ Hundley, Tom, ‘Among Israelis, armed civilians commonplace: weapons often a fact of life for self-defence’. *Chicago Tribune*, November 5, 1995. And: Comment: *Christian Science Monitor*, November 6, 1995.

¹⁵ Turner, Brian, S. *Weber and Islam: A Critical Study*, pp. 82-92.

¹⁶ Wehr, Hans, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, p. 179. See: Editorial, ‘Wedded to death in a blaze of glory’ *The Times*, March 9, 1996.

Western styled democracies.¹⁷ Moreover, it is generally considered in the West that political assassination is not the done thing.

Politically, the assassination was not wholly unsuccessful, but not in ways that Yigal Amir could have possibly envisaged them. Shimon Peres had to stand in for the fallen war hero against a backdrop of heightening unrest within Israel. The *Likud* leader, Benyamin Netanyahu, was blamed for inciting the Israeli right (*i.e.*, members of *Shas*, *Kuk*, and *Kahane Chai*, *etc.*), to oppose Labour's implementation of a 'peace process'. Within a few months, however, the 'peace process' would receive yet another seriously crippling blow with the coming to power of Netanyahu (May 1996). Nevertheless, prior to this setback, events were to take on a rather dramatic aspect. The assassination of Yitzhak Rabin unleashed a hive of activity that represented the most turbulent period in the entire 'peace process', where much long term, and arguably in many ways, irreparable damage was done.

Selection was made of the unfortunate assassination of Yitzhak Rabin again for several reasons. The first is that obviously an assassination of any titular head of state cannot fail to generate a large corpus of reportage and debate. Secondly, although the assassination was an unprecedented event in Israel's colourful history,¹⁸ the fact that it was committed, in essence, by 'one of their own' was shocking to the Israelis, and many sympathetic Americans.¹⁹ For the act fell outside of their traditional perceived conventions of what Israel is, and what it represents *viz.* 'a land of the brave, and a land of the free'. Thirdly, the U.S. mainstream media had never before reported on an assassination of an Israeli head of state, how would it convey the sad news?²⁰

¹⁷ Brill, E. J. [Ed.], *First Encyclopedia of Islam 1913-36*, pp. 491-492.

¹⁸ Schmemmann, Serge, 'Rabin slain after peace rally in Tel Aviv'. *New York Times*, November 5, 1995.

¹⁹ Battersby, John, 'Israel struggles to understand loss of a Hero'. *Christian Science Monitor*, November 6, 1995. And: Schmemmann, Serge, *Ibid.* And: Goldberg, Carey, 'As the Sabbath wanes, word spreads, bringing sadness and tears'. *New York Times*, November 5, 1995.

²⁰ Karsh, Efraim, [Ed.], *From Rabin to Netanyahu: Israel's troubled Agenda*, p. 1

The main argument posited in this chapter is that there was no anti-Palestinian reportage evident within the various channels of the mainstream media. Indeed, nor should there have been any, as the event did not concern the Palestinians directly. There was a concern amongst the Palestinians themselves, however, regarding the future of the 'peace process' now that one of its chief 'architects' had been rather abruptly removed.²¹ This concern was reflected in the West generally, and in particular in the U.S., which led Clinton to personally intervene in efforts to get the faltering process back 'on track', as he had after the earlier catastrophe at Hebron.²²

Furthermore, it is argued that although there was no anti-Arab or Palestinian reportage evident in the channels of the U.S. mainstream media, there was an enormous amount of pro-Israeli reportage, and this took several forms. Firstly, there was a large corpus of coverage concerning the dynamics and logistics underpinning the assassination itself. (Again, like the Massacre of Hebron, the media approached its subject as if it were reporting a military operation offering every consumable fact gleaned.) This style of reportage did give rise to a criticism concerning both tragedies, for it is strongly suggested that the journalists on the whole failed to blame Israel's tendency towards societal militarism *per se*, which undoubtedly was a contributing factor.

Secondly, there were, as would be expected from a political assassination of such a prominent, and to the West 'well liked' character,²³ obituaries and eulogies dedicated to the 'warrior turned peacemaker'.²⁴ These obituaries were, however, as to be expected of an obituary pressed during a time of national mourning, for they were both praised Rabin's personal achievements and focused upon

²¹ Jehl, Douglas, 'A moment of disbelief and uncertainty' *New York Times*, November 6, 1995. And: Goldberg, Carey, 'As the Sabbath wanes, word spreads, bringing sadness and tears'. *New York Times*, November 5, 1995.

²² Rosenbaum, David, E. 'A shaken Clinton mourns Rabin'. *New York Times*, November 5, 1995.

²³ Sciolini, Elaine, 'American officials warmly remember Rabin as a friend they came to trust' *New York Times*, November 6, 1995.

²⁴ Schmemmann, Serge, 'A stunned Israel mourns and honours its fallen leader', *New York Times*, November 6, 1995.

elements of his good character.²⁵ Indeed, it is generally perceived that it is wrong to write or speak ill of the dead.²⁶ This medium of the press, however, gave rise to a further criticism, in that it rapidly glossed over Rabin's evident culpability in the events of *Ramla*, and *Lydda etc.*, in April 1948, whilst focusing upon him in the light of a military 'hero'.²⁷ Indeed, they credited him, erroneously, with the responsibility of personally creating the army that destroyed the Arabs in 1967. Indeed, a military victory that ultimately underscores the myths that surround Israel's existence.

Thirdly, there was a detectable strand of reportage that followed the details of the killer, his incarceration, and impending trial. Fourthly, there were copious amounts of reportage concerning the effects of the assassination upon the large Jewish communities of New York, Washington DC, Chicago, and Los Angeles *etc.* A collective Jewish community, which it is argued, was emotionally distraught, and grieved openly for the loss of their great leader. In this process of mourning, it is suggested that many non-Jewish Americans lamented equally for the loss of the Israeli leader. For it is understood that there existed both an empathy for, and sympathy with, the Israeli's general sense of anguish, having suffered the same psychological trauma through the assassination of J. F. Kennedy in November 1963.²⁸

Finally, after a short period, as the 'media event' cooled and as Israel and the international community came to terms with its unified grief, there emerged a strand of reportage that inevitably hinted that there was a conspiracy underpinning the assassination. This involved active collusion between the settlers, and some elements in the army. (No one was brave enough to suggest, however, that the political right *i.e.*, Netanyahu's *Likud*, *Shas*, *et al* had any responsibility whatsoever in the assassination itself, except by being guilty of

²⁵ Berger, Marilyn, 'Yitzhak Rabin, 73, a soldier turned peacemaker'. *New York Times*, November 5, 1995.

²⁶ Gove, Michael, 'Assad's bid for peace was a thin disguise'. *The Times*, June 13, 2000.

²⁷ Haberman, Clyde, 'Recalling a peacemaker, hard crust and all'. *New York Times*, November 6, 1995. For, *Lydda*, *Lod*, and *Ramla*, see Guyatt, Nicholas, *Op-cit*, p. 52.

²⁸ Cowell, Alan, 'Arafat absence from funeral underscores a fragile peace'. *New York Times*, November 6, 1995. And: Hoagland, Jim, 'Rabin perished in brutal war: one for peace'. *The Washington Post*, November 5, 1995. And: Hersh, Seymour, M. *The Samson Option*, p. 126.

incitement.) Moreover, and unexpectedly, the Palestinian hawks were not implicated. It seemed that the assassination was a purely an Israeli generated phenomena. This predictably emergent conspiracy theory, however, did give rise to the media's obligatory use of the negatively loaded rhetorical question mark, which made its expected reappearance, after a brief absence.²⁹

Furthermore, it is also argued that like the 'Massacre of Hebron' (that harbinger of impending catastrophe; in the sense that it offered to Israel, and the World, an example of how vulnerable the Oslo 'peace process' was to the unsolicited attentions of the Israeli extremist right), the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin was largely misreported in the various media channels. These focused primarily on the political implications of the assassination, rather than its obvious theological underpinnings. Moreover, it is suggested that there was very little in depth analysis proffered upon the ideological connection that existed between the two murders, as although they were slight variants of each other, they clearly stemmed initially from an extension of *Kahanist* inspired anti-Arabism, and only very loosely found legitimisation in *Talmudic* law. Nevertheless, certain Rabbis in Israel and America (Abraham Hecht of New York was blamed in particular,) were correctly chastised for offering a theological legitimacy to logic promulgated by Amir, which he could act upon without compromising his own ideological leanings.³⁰

Indeed, it seems that there exists another similarity within the dynamics of the two catastrophes, in the sense that Israel is a receptacle for imported ideologies, and conversely, America is the recipient of accusations of complicity in the shaping of Israel's socio-cultural environment.³¹ The U.S. mainstream 'prestigious press' (as did the Israeli press), blamed the assassination upon someone representing the 'lunatic fringe' of Israeli society.³² Inasmuch as this

²⁹ See: *Newsweek*, 'Will peace survive?' Vol., 126, No 20, November 13, 1995.

³⁰ Battersby, John, 'Settlers regret Rabin killing: but stand their ground'. *Christian Science Monitor*, November 10, 1995.

³¹ Cowell, Alan, 'Arafat absence from funeral underscores a fragile peace.' *New York Times*, November 6, 1995.

³² Sander, Mendelson, H: In Weil, Martin, 'A horrible tragedy'. *The Washington Post*, November 5, 1995. And, Wallach, Janet, & Wallach, John, *Op-cit*, p. 467.

may be true, the lunatic fringe is in essence the wrong entity label for this group of disparate peace wreckers. For, as the media correctly reported the assassin was 'surreally calm' in manner, and extremely articulate in defence of his actions.³³ Moreover, there are vast number of Israelis that support the views, and to some extents, the actions of both Goldstein and Amir, which warrants consideration of them as something more than just a 'fringe' group.³⁴

Indeed, if it takes just two ideologically misguided members of an Israeli fringe to wreak so much havoc on the 'peace process', then the omen for the future is not a good one. This is to suggest that *Shin Bet*, *Mossad*, and others, failed to understand the ramifications of the 'Massacre of Hebron'. And moreover, failed to interpret the signs (which in hindsight were apparent, as warnings were given by several right wing Rabbi's pronouncements earlier in July),³⁵ that the dark spectre of political assassination would be cast upon Yitzhak Rabin, (at a peace rally of all ironies). Indeed, there was always the threat that someone would take the law into their own hands after attaching some theological legitimacy to their intentions and placing the blame upon God's divine will. Furthermore, it is argued that this implicit threat is nigh impossible to defend against, and, in reality, any ensuing peace process is at threat through being just that, a 'peace process'.

It is, perhaps, a little more than ironic, that arguably the time of the most peaceable conditions in Israel, during the entirety of the Arab/Israeli conflict, was between the cessation of the *Intifada*, and the official signing of the 'Declaration of Principles' in September 1993. After this, when Oslo was becoming a *de facto* reality, opposition to the 'principles of peace' from both sides had cause to balk at the responsibilities imposed upon them. Perhaps, there

³³ Gellman, Barton, 'Israeli Prime-minister Rabin is killed: Jewish gunman says he acted alone'. *The Washington Post*, November 5, 1995.

³⁴ King, John, *Handshake in Washington: The Beginning of Middle East Peace?* p. VI.

³⁵ Battersby, John, 'Israel struggles to understand loss of a hero.' *Christian Science Monitor*, November 6, 1995. As much as this incitement is true, another contributing factor to the assassination can be attributed to the recent ratification of the Oslo II Agreement. (September 28, 1995.) See: Giacaman, George, In the Throes of Oslo: Palestinian Society, Civil Society and the Future, in Giacaman, George, & Lonning, Dag, J. [Eds.], *After Oslo: New Realities, Old Problems*, p. 4.

is a lesson from this consideration to be learned for any future implemented 'peace process'.

CHAPTER 4

'Sunday Bloody Sundays'

'I was stepping on flesh, on legs, on hands. People were screaming, burning, I was taking people out of there. They were yelling to me, burning up. It was literally hell... 'A headless body still sat on a seat. A severed leg poked out from a blanket. Pieces of flesh littered the road, and were carefully collected by recovery teams.'¹

Do not regard those that have died for the sanctification of the holy name as deceased, for they will live on, and shall receive their reward from Allah in heaven.²

'Thank God I am headed where I have always wanted to go.'³

The period dated from February 25, 1996, until March 4, 1996, represents a very sorrowful and depressing chapter within the Oslo 'peace process'. Indeed, one wonders if this period really warrants inclusion as part of an analysis of the 'peace process', so barbarous was its character.⁴ The chain of events that had been unleashed with the 'Massacre of Hebron' by a reportedly deranged doctor, and compounded upon by the efforts of a misguided Israeli law student, had drastically increased the tensions between the two parties. The Palestinian extremist groups of *Hamas*, and the *Islamic Jihad* had sworn to avenge Dr. Goldstein's callous action at Hebron.⁵ They eventually achieved this with devastating effect, when *The Jewish Brigade*, the armed wing of *Islamic Jihad* struck with a suicide bus-bomb at Beilid, near Netanya killing twenty-one soldiers on January 22, 1995.⁶ Throughout the remainder of the year *Hamas*

¹ Statement of Avi Revivo cited in Greenberg, Joel, 'For rescuers it was 'entering gates of hell'. *New York Times*, February 26, 1996.

² Famous verse from the Qur'an: as cited in Schiff, Ze'ev, & Ya'ari, *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising-Israel's Third Front*, p. 73.

³ Suicide note of *Hamas* bomber Nabil al-Areer, In: Goldenberg, Suzanne, 'Suicide cyclist spurs Palestinian militants', *Guardian*, October 28, 2000.

⁴ The time frame for this case study was determined from the first in a series of *Hamas* terrorist attacks that commenced on February 25, 1996 and culminated with the *Dizengoff* 'shopping mall' attack on the eve of March 4, 1996.

⁵ Greenberg, Joel, 'Sounds of chanting and shooting in a town awash with blood'. *New York Times*, February 26, 1994. And: Shlaim, Avi, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World*, p. 525.

⁶ Horowitz, David, [Ed.], *Yitzhak Rabin: Soldier of Peace*, p. 194.

activities were to cause Israel much discomfort as a psychological war raged between the extremists and *Shin-Bet*, Israel's internal security division.⁷ As a result, Israeli security was tightened, and there was a crackdown on the perceived militant elements that were associated with the radical groups of the Gaza Strip, West Bank, Beirut, and Damascus.

And so it was, in early January of 1996⁸ when the *Hamas* 'Engineer', the group's 'master bomb-maker', had his head 'atomised' by fifty grams of plastic explosive concealed in a booby-trapped mobile telephone, planted in his car by a 'turned' *Hamas* insider, Usama Hamad.⁹ The successful 'scalping' of Yahya Ayyash was considered a great moral victory for *Shin-Bet* who had suffered some severe criticism for their failure regarding Yitzhak Rabin's security.¹⁰ Indeed, it had even seen the resignation of its then head, 'K' a considered 'expert' of the extreme Jewish 'right' organisations!¹¹

The funeral that took place of Yahya Ayyash in the Gaza Strip was attended by approximately 100,000 mourners, such was the notoriety and dubious respect that the Iranian trained bomb maker commanded for standing up to the Israeli occupation.¹² Indeed, in a chilling reminder of how deep rooted the Palestinian discomfiture is with continued Israeli domination, Sheikh Nafiz Azzam addressed the large crowd in attendance, and declared that 'millions of Yahya Ayyash's will be born' to which the gathered throng retorted Yes to *Izzidin al-Qassim, Hamas'* armed wing.¹³

⁷ For a list of attacks see: Weil, Martin, 'A horrible tragedy'. *The Washington Post*, November 5, 1995.

⁸ January 5th, See: Wallach, Janet, & Wallach, John, *Op-cit*, p. 468.

⁹ Walker, Christopher, 'Booby-trap phone kills top Palestinian bomber'. *The Times*, January 6, 1996.

¹⁰ Goldberg, Andy, 'Israel seals Gaza as *Hamas* vows to avenge its dead hero', *The Sunday Times*, January 7, 1996.

¹¹ Walker, Christopher, 'Calls for vengeance as hero of *Hamas* is buried'. *The Times*, January 8, 1996.

¹² Walker, Christopher, 'Booby trap phone kills top Palestinian bomber'. *The Times*, January 6, 1996.

¹³ Walker, Christopher, 'Calls for vengeance as hero of *Hamas* is buried'. *The Times*, January 8, 1996.

Any analysis of this turbulent period however, cannot be undertaken without consideration of another important factor, namely, the Palestinian elections.¹⁴ For the January elections were to be just another impacting dynamic that would lead to the *Hamas* orchestrated massacres. On election day, popular feeling would show that although Arafat had overwhelming support, and *al-Fatah* featured predominantly: *Hamas* had only very limited support.¹⁵ If it was *Hamas*' intention to derail the 'peace process', and even change the popular mood into one of a more hard line militancy in opposition to the 'principles' of Oslo, they had failed. This single factor had a large responsibility for the upsurge of *Hamas* activity as the bombers struck at Israel not only to avenge their 'Engineer' but more out of frustration than anything else. Moreover, *Hamas* had become a splintered organisation, again in part due to the elections as some of its leaders wished to 'come in from the cold' and participate in the political process, whilst others felt it more beneficial to remain on the 'fringe' and continue their largely ineffectual destabilising tactics.

In many ways, however, the Israelis had been too thorough in their tightening of security, and had made a serious tactical error in choosing to liquidate Yahya Ayyash at that time. The way of things within the Arab/Israeli conflict seems to be that timing is of the essence very often it is the difference between a massive political coup or a miserable abject failure. Furthermore, and as was suggested, Israeli preventative measures *viz.* assassination, seriously fractured the already splintered, and internally divided *Hamas* organisation, into an entity comprising many small, and vengeful cells, both difficult to monitor by *Shin Bet*, and subsequently eradicate.¹⁶

This was the political backdrop that underpinned *Hamas*' first emotional, and aggressive response to the loss of their 'Engineer', *i.e.*, two suicide bus bombings. The first devastated a number eighteen bus near the busy bus station

¹⁴ Walker, Christopher, 'Hamas gunmen killed as election tension mounts'. *The Times*, January 20, 1996.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Brown, Derek, 'Martyr leaves perilous legacy', *Guardian*, March 4, 1996.

on the Jaffa Rd. in the early morning rush hour.¹⁷ The second at Ashkelon some fifty minutes later would kill two more on a fateful Sunday, February 25, 1996.¹⁸ *Hamas* declared that the two 'heroes' who had perpetrated the attacks were avenging the martyr Yahya Ayyash, and the massacre of twenty-nine Muslim worshippers, in an obvious reference to the 'Hebron Massacre'.¹⁹

The following day, Ahmad Abdul Hamidah (incidentally a Lebanese American), killed two more Israelis before being shot to death by petrified and confused onlookers when his car skidded out of control near a bus stop. There was, however, some debate generated by this incident within Israel because it was not immediately evident whether his car possessed a mechanical fault, or whether he was a pre-programmed suicidal terrorist. Later, Israeli officials claimed that, after an inspection of his car no mechanical fault could be detected, and furthermore, that there was a cache of extremist literature pertaining to the *Islamic Jihad* within his automobile.²⁰ To substantiate this claim, the officials suggested that he had told friends that: 'Tonight you'll see me on television'.²¹

This is interesting, because it would seem evident that if the Israelis had opened fire on an innocent man whilst fearing a suicide attack, then their actions would have been perceived as hysterical, perhaps warranting a review of Israel's gun laws (an Israeli was shot in the leg in the confusion [or rush] to execute the Arab).²² It is argued then, that it was politically expedient to portray this man as a suicidal attacker rather than face the potential of a political storm, regardless of the man's true identity or motivations.

At this juncture, confusion seems to have arisen within the *Hamas* organisation as separate elements supposedly representing the leadership made alternative gestures to the Israelis. One group, based in the West Bank offered a ceasefire,

¹⁷ Dunn, Ross, 'Double suicide bomb attack on Israel kills 25', *The Times*, February 26, 1996.

¹⁸ Brown, Derek, 'Martyr leaves perilous legacy', *Guardian*, March 4, 1996,

¹⁹ Dunn, Ross, 'Double suicide bomb attack on Israel kills 25'. *The Times*, February 26, 1996.

²⁰ Rowley, Storer, H. 'Israelis to Arafat: crackdown'. *Chicago Tribune*, February 28, 1996.

²¹ Walker, Christopher, 'Driver dies after fearful Jews fire on skidding car'. *The Times*, February 27, 1996.

²² For an interesting article concerning Israel's 'gun laws' see: Whitaker, Brian, 'Israelis gear up for armed struggle'. *Guardian*, October 26, 2000.

whilst the other (based in Damascus) rejected the notion that the offer was even legitimate. Regardless of this internal dispute the Israelis refused to accept any ceasefire, instead castigating Arafat and urging him to reign in the militants. Meanwhile, the clock was ticking inexorably away, until the spectre of carnage descended upon Jerusalem once again.²³

At 6:25am on March 3 (once again a Sunday), on the same stretch of the Jaffa Road an *Egged* bus was rather abruptly brought to a halt by a powerful explosion, in which eighteen more Israelis lost their lives.²⁴ The psychological effect of this attack upon the Israeli population was massive. The previous week's terrorist activities had already strained Israeli nerves, and the perception of vulnerability was extreme.²⁵ The disillusionment with the Israeli leadership was already high, as the majority felt that their security was being jeopardised.²⁶ This explosion was for many the last straw as they vented their anger in abusing the Labour leader. Voices along the Jaffa Road that day, were heard to shout 'Next time its you Peres'.

Confusion and panic had gripped Israel. The Labour party had set out to grant the Palestinians their own state by ceding territory to them (territory that had been notoriously difficult to control, and was a liability for Israel in the long term anyway). And what were the Israelis receiving in return? Nothing, except their wholesale slaughter at the hands of the crazed and 'religiously fanatical suicidal killers.'

Then to top it all, on the eve of *Purim*, (note the date), Salah Ahmad Rahim wandered off in the direction of the *Dizengoff* shopping mall (Tel Aviv) apparently armed with two containers of Benzine, and some old Egyptian

²³ Dunn, Ross, Terrorists put PLO on the spot'. *The Times*, March 5, 1996.

²⁴ Associated Press, 'Bomb demolishes bus in Jerusalem'. *New York Times*, March 3, 1996. And: Walker, Christopher, 'Israeli's demand revenge for second 'bloody' [my emphasis] Sunday'. *The Times*, March 4, 1996. Note: the title for this chapter was partially inspired by the title of this particular article.

²⁵ Walker, Christopher, 'Israelis declare war on bombers'. *The Times*, March 4, 1996.

²⁶ Schmemmann, Serge, 'Peres promises a war on Hamas'. *New York Times*, February 27, 1996.

landmines.²⁷ He was turned away by suspicious security at the mall however, so instead he chose a crowded spot near a cash machine, and successfully detonated: killing himself, and twelve more Israelis.²⁸ In the ensuing eight days of violence, a grim total of sixty people were to die in related attacks carried out by *Izzidin al-Qassim*.²⁹

Concerning these *Hamas* activities they should naturally be condemned as unconscionable. Recognition is made however, to the fact that Palestinian terrorism is first and foremost a reaction to Israeli occupation, and the ills this has wrought upon the Palestinian population *i.e.*, the squalor of the camps, the lack of 'hope' of a prospect of change in their status, and the negation of their right to front any valid opposition to a *de facto* Israeli *fait accompli*. In short, it is violent resistance to the victory of Israel.³⁰

It is argued that, politically, *Hamas*' activities failed to derail the 'peace process', however they did seriously hamper its credibility and worthiness. Furthermore, as was suggested, the pressure placed upon Yasser Arafat to bring in the fugitives and outlaws, and bring them to book was severe from Israel, the U.S., and from elements within the international community.³¹ Yet, if the Palestinian leader were to do this, he would incur the wrath of all Palestinians for perceived collusion with the Israelis *viz.* a further immediate threat to his own welfare. Nevertheless, the Palestinian Preventative Service did rein in approximately three hundred and fifty supporters of *Hamas* at Arafat's behest, but such collusive efforts by the Israeli and Palestinian security apparatus were not effectual, as at least two of the bombers came from Hebron in the West Bank.³²

²⁷ Marie, Colvin, & Goldberg, Andy, 'Israel on alert for wave of sleeper bombers' *Chicago Tribune* March 10, 1996.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Walker, Christopher, 'Driver dies after fearful Jews fire on skidding car'. *The Times*, February 27, 1996.

³⁰ Seale, Patrick, *Abu Nidal: The World's Most Notorious Terrorist*, p. 62.

³¹ Walker, Martin, 'US tries to heel wounded peace', *Guardian*, March 5, 1996.

³² Schmemmann, Serge, 'Arafat's police hunt bombers, pushed hard by the Israelis'. *New York Times*, February 28, 1996.

An important factor in understanding why *Hamas*' activities are ineffective in derailing the 'peace process' *per se* is to be found in the fact that *Hamas* is a separate maximalist Palestinian entity that is outside of, and in direct opposition with, Arafat's *Al-Fatah*. Therefore, the Israelis need to maintain a common dialogue with the Palestinian leader as it is perceived that he alone can really communicate through the complex channels of popular resistance that permeate the Gaza Strip and West Bank via a process of mediation with other PLO representatives.³³ Today, however, Arafat no longer holds as much authority as he once enjoyed. The likes of Saeb Erakat (a leading *Al-Fatah* negotiator), and Marwan Barghouti (head of the *Tanzim* 'Apparatus' organisation), are the real power holders in the Occupied Territories.³⁴

In relation to this, Israeli methods of eradicating dangerous terrorist elements within the Occupied Territories, although very often successful through the utilisation of the *Duvdevan* (The Cherry Brigade), they are also politically dangerous, and threaten to curtail any dialogue between the two parties.³⁵ Nevertheless, this elite brigade was eventually sent in to round up the militants on March 4, 1996, due to domestic pressure placed upon the Israeli leadership, and Shimon Peres' personal attempt at damage limitation.³⁶

This damage limitation was implemented not only for the sake of the Israeli citizenship, but to arrest the further slide of his slim majority over *Likud*. Prior to the February blasts (Jerusalem and Ashkelon), this margin had stood at 20 points.³⁷ By the time of the third bomb attack however, on another number eighteen bus, this lead had dwindled to just a few points. By March 4th, the *Dizengoff* shopping mall attack had finally killed off any Labour lead.³⁸ Indeed, as one cynical *Likud* supporter put it: 'The irony is that as much as I hate them,

³³ Freedman, Lawrence, 'Israel depends on Arafat'. *The Times*, March 5, 1996.

³⁴ *Newsweek*, 'Firestorm in the Mideast', Vol., 136, No, 17, October 23, 2000. And: Dempsey, Jude, 'Leader of the insurrection'. *The Financial Times*, October 14, 2000.

³⁵ Mahnaimi, Uzi, 'Barak's commandos risk all to go undercover among Gaza militants'. *The Times*. October 22, 2000. See Peretz, Don, *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising*, p. 62.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Editorial: 'Bomb law'. *The Times*, February 26, 1996.

³⁸ Editorial: 'Vision of Death' *The Times*, March 5, 1996.

the beasts from *Hamas* could win us this election.’³⁹ Moreover, *Likud* were enraged when Muhammad Abu-Wardah the alleged *Hamas* bombing convener, stated that he was working on behalf of *Likud* in order to defeat Labour, and sabotage the ‘peace process’.⁴⁰

This begs the cynical question; could any such conspiracy from the Israeli right and Islamic ‘militants’ actually exist? For it has been suggested that Israeli settlers have supplied *Hamas* with explosives to carry out their attacks.⁴¹ Additionally *Hamas*, although headed by Shaikh Yassin and seemingly vehemently opposed to any peace deal with Israel has intimated that it would like inclusion in the political process.⁴² Indeed, this very organisation was initially an outgrowth of the *Ikhwan al-Muslimin* (Muslim Brotherhood),⁴³ which Israel had purposefully allowed to garner support within the Occupied Territories during the mid 1980’s in order to destabilise *Al-Fatah* the largest faction of the PLO by offering a more controllable alternative.⁴⁴ If there is no collusion anywhere between *Hamas*, *Mossad*, or *Shin Bet*, (which there must be, or how otherwise would have they [*Shin Bet*] ‘gotten to’ Yahya Ayyash?), then it would seem that the Israeli intention to create such a controllable opposition failed, resulting in terrible and quite literally grave consequences for the Israeli populace.

It is argued that *Hamas*’ activities, although both destructive and disruptive to the peace process, they are largely ineffectual for several reasons. Firstly, as *Hamas* is outside of the umbrella of the PLO, their activities are largely ignored politically, because they lack any modicum of legitimacy. This is why *Hamas* has made overtures that it wants in on the political process.⁴⁵ Furthermore, it is argued that their methodology is so base and cruel, that even the Palestinian

³⁹ Mothi Cohen cited in Walker, Christopher, ‘Peace process is terrorists target’ *The Times*, February 26, 1996.

⁴⁰ Walker, Christopher, ‘Israel sends tanks to seal off border with West Bank’ *The Times*, March 8, 1996.

⁴¹ Storer, Rowley, H. ‘Israeli anger threatens peace process’ *Chicago Tribune*, February 27, 1996. And: Bashar, Richard, ‘Breakthrough? Arafat says Israel, Hamas are holding talks.’ *Chicago Tribune*, May 26, 1996.

⁴² Schmemmann, Serge, ‘Israeli rage rises as bomb kills 19, imperilling peace’. *New York Times*, March 4, 1996.

⁴³ Hiro, Dilop, *A Dictionary of the Middle East*, pp. 105-106.

⁴⁴ Kimmerling, Baruch, & Migdal, Joel, S. *The Palestinians: The Making of a People*, p. 272.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

political mainstream *i.e.*, the Palestinian Authority cannot consider openly supporting them. (Although Arafat often receives snide insinuations from Israel that he holds some form of executive power over the organisation.)

Secondly, *Hamas*' terrorism attracts condemnation from most key governments throughout the globe who fear the threat that such terrorism could blight their own cities.⁴⁶ This factor, it is argued, establishes an almost universally shared resolve to stand by the principles of peace.⁴⁷ Owing to this, *Hamas* closes the window of opportunity upon itself, as the 'peace process' is actually thrown forward, after being merely temporarily jilted. And moreover, their terrorist activities serve only to fuel the Israeli right *i.e.*, *Likud*, *Shas*, *et al*, and the extreme settlers. Thirdly, suicide attacks although having a disturbing psychological effect upon the populace and the politicians whose careers depend upon domestic support (a theme picked up later) their long-term effects are limited outside of the periphery of their immediate victims.

Selection was made of this 'media frame', however, again for several reasons. Firstly, condemnable suicide attacks perpetrated by the bombers are, and perhaps rightly so, portrayed in a fashion that instantly draws out sympathy for the mainly innocent Israeli victims, *i.e.*, images of dismembered and grizzled corpses, melted flesh, chunks of raw meat, blood soaked and stunned survivors, and other associated carnage abound.⁴⁸ Furthermore, there is a moral and religious image that is frequently evoked by the depiction of the black-cloaked *Hasidim* (Respect for the Dead) who scavenge the mangled wreckage, and

⁴⁶ Rowley, Storer, H. 'Peres unswayed in peace process as bombs kill 25'. *Chicago Tribune*, February 26, 1996. And Rhodes, Tom, 'Clinton takes lead in Middle East anti-terror drive'. *The Times*, March 9, 1996.

⁴⁷ Schmemmann, Serge, '2 suicide bombings in Israel kill 25 and wound 77, highest such total', *New York Times*, February 26, 1996.

⁴⁸ Greenberg, Joel, 'For rescuers it was 'entering gates of hell', *New York Times*, February 26, 1996. To further compound this fact consider this sickening account offered by George Will in the *USA Today* of a very recent 'suicide' bombing. "The blast...sent flesh flying onto second storey balconies a block away. Three men were blown 30 feet: their heads, separated from their bodies by the blast, rolled down the glass-strewn street...One woman had at least six nails embedded in her neck. Another had a nail in her left eye. Two men, one with a six-inch piece of glass in his right temple...tried to walk away... A man groaned...his legs were blown off. Blood poured from his torso...A three-year-old girl, her face covered with glass, walked among the bodies calling her mother's name..." See Sullivan, Andrew, 'America loses faith in the Israeli peace.' *The Sunday Times* August 26, 2001.

immediately surrounding areas for body parts to be sent to the morgue for corpse reassembly (the sacred duty of *mitzvah*).⁴⁹

These images are utilised, it is argued, in conjunction with imagery of hooded *Hamas* activists to impact upon the anonymity of their acts of terror, specifically to cause a psychological effect that further perpetuates fear of such acts of terrorism.⁵⁰ Thus, legitimising the liquidation of perceived dangerous elements by whatever methods (shooting, explosive devices in mobile telephones and car seat headrests, and by even administering poison through the ear).⁵¹

Secondly, it is argued, that the U.S. mainstream media portrayals have once again regressed into a 'traditional denigration' of the Arabs, and particularly Palestinians, that evoke sentiments of *savages*, murderers, cold-blooded killers, devils incarnate, beasts, dogs, *etc.* Although some U.S. mainstream media channels utilised such emotive language in print: in Israel, such condemnation and name-calling was much more explicit and open.⁵²

Within the framework of this media denigration, however, it shall be argued that any progress that Arab and Palestinian portrayals may have initially received during the early days of the 'peace process' suffered a severe setback and retardation. As the Arabs and Palestinians became clumped together, once again, as one perceived homogenous entity that exists only to harm the interests of Israel, and the U.S. For example, all Palestinian occupants of the Occupied Territories are collectively punished when the Israeli security forces enclose them, and enforces a siege. Furthermore, the Palestinian terrorists are not content with residing in just the Occupied Territories. In the eyes of the 'media complex' they naturally hang out in Beirut, Damascus, and as far away as Baghdad, and

⁴⁹ See: Jacobson, Philip, 'Saving souls'. *The Times*, Saturday March 9, 1996. And: Peretz, Don, *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising*, p. 62.

⁵⁰ Rowley, Store, H. 'Land of Holy Terror: in a region choked by hatred, can peace survive?' *Chicago Tribune*, 'Perspective', March 3, 1996.

⁵¹ See: Said, Edward, W. *The End of the Peace Process*, p. 200.

⁵² Jerusalem shopkeeper, 'We have to do something about these bastards' cited in Walker, Christopher, 'Arafat arrests 140 suspects as Israel braces itself for further attacks'. *The Times*, February 28, 1996.

Teheran as well. (In fact they [the Arab terrorists], are everywhere, right through the 'Arc of Crisis' *i.e.* sweeping from Moscow around to Marrakech.)⁵³

Furthermore, it is suggested that this representation of the far-flung roots of Palestinian terrorism is purposeful, and is actively encouraged, serving to legitimise Israel's conflict with all the Arabs, who are accused of being, all terrorists alike. This feeling is summed up with the oft quoted they, the Arabs, just desire to cast us into the sea. There are historical reasons that can explain and legitimise this argument that culminate in only one rather grim conclusion for both Israel and the U.S.

The Arab/Israeli conflict, has from its inception, witnessed its fair share of terrorist activity. Indeed, the terrorism conducted by elements of the *Irgun Zvei Leumi*, (The Stern Gang), the *Haganah*, and *Palmach* brigades helped to formalise the nascent Israeli state.⁵⁴ Such Zionist terrorism included methods of assassination *e.g.*, that of Lord Moyne in November 1944, and Count Bernadotte in September 1948:⁵⁵ bombing *e.g.*, that of The King David Hotel: July 1946.⁵⁶ Subversion and sabotage *e.g.*, raids on Arab villages, and strategic sites, such as the Allenby Bridge in June 1946,⁵⁷ Cold-blooded murder *e.g.*, at *Deir Yassin*, *Lydda*, and *Ramla* in April 1948,⁵⁸ and psychological intimidation after May 1948, to enforce an Arab *Exodus*.⁵⁹

⁵³ The 'Arc of Crisis' is an adaptation of President Jimmy Carter's Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski's 'Arc of Crisis'. Which incorporated Afghanistan, Iran, Yemen, and Eritrea. Here, however, the definition of the 'Arc of Crisis' is an expanded one, ranging from Moscow around to Marrakech. See: Halliday, Fred, *Islam and the Myth of Confrontation*, pp. 11-12. And: Laffin, John, *The Dagger of Islam*, pp. 4-5. 'Grozny', here reference is being made to the 'outlawed' Arab 'rebel' leader Al-Khattib in Chechnya. See: Lagnado, Alice, 'Chechen warlord who beheaded Britons is killed.' *The Times*, June 26, 2001.

⁵⁴ Seale Patrick, *Op-cit.*, pp. 59-61.

⁵⁵ Concerning Lord Moyne, see: Smith, Charles, D. *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict* p. 115, and Count Bernadotte, see: Pappé, Ilan, *The Making of the Arab Israeli Conflict, 1947-1951*, p. 163.

⁵⁶ Smith, Charles, D. *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, pp. 132-133. And: King, John, *Op-cit*, p. 34.

⁵⁷ Allon, Yigal, *The Making of Israel's Army*, pp. 157-161.

⁵⁸ Pappé, Ilan, *Op-cit*, p. 85.

⁵⁹ Said, Edward, W. *The Question of Palestine*, p. 34

Within this tradition of terrorism the Palestinians and Arabs have had an equal responsibility, and several examples have already been cited. But, if we were to consider specifically Arab/Palestinian (a purposeful homogenisation) acts of terrorism, then a good starting point, and one that denotes a change, *i.e.*, an 'upsurge in terrorism' would be the 1968 hijacking of an *El Al* flight that culminated in the Palestinians first post-1967 victory against the Israelis.⁶⁰ Such a 'victory' set a precedent for a spate of hijackings throughout the early 1970's. The most famous being the multiple hijacking, and subsequent 'Dawson Field' saga, and the *El Al* flight that created notoriety for Layla Khalid in September 1970.⁶¹ Another important event was the Palestinian orchestrated hostage taking of nine Israeli athletes, at the Munich Olympics in September 1972, and their subsequent murder.⁶²

The period from 1970 onwards until 1973, represented the emergence of the 'Black September' terrorist organisations, which heralded the beginning of the 'War of the Spooks' that would continue throughout the 1970's and '80's across Europe, Central Asia, and North Africa. This covert warfare didn't really dissipate until the historical November 1988 (Algiers) Palestinian recognition of Israel.⁶³ Recognition is made though to the loss of flight Pan Am 103 with 259 passengers over Lockerbie (Scotland), in the December of 1988. A terrorist attack for which the PFLP General Command (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine) based in Syria was initially blamed, and then later ruled out.⁶⁴

From this short inventory of nefarious terrorist activities, the U.S. as a victim, had usually been, in the main, excluded. True, several U.S. targets had been singled out in the Middle East; for example, consider the bombing of the U.S. barracks in Beirut in 1983, which killed 241 marines, or the attack upon USS

⁶⁰ Wilkinson, Paul, 'Blood is spilling over the map'. *Observer*, September 1, 1996.

⁶¹ Hasla, Malu, 'My cousin the hijacker'. *Guardian Weekend*, January 11, 1997. And in Cabinet Papers 1970- 'Leila Khaled freed after U.S. pressure'. *Guardian*, January 1, 2001. And: Nicholson, Michael, *Back to the Front: Israel*, A Granada Production for ITV. Broadcasted: August 12.

⁶² Seale, Patrick, *Op-cit*, p. 47.

⁶³ *Ibid.* p. 41

⁶⁴ See: *Lockerbie on Trial*, Radio 4, Broadcast, February 20, 2001.

Stark, (May 1987.)⁶⁵ But this was the price to be paid for an enforced U.S. hegemonic domination over the Arabs. The bombing of the World Trade Centre (New York) in February 1993, was however, to change how the U.S. populace would consider the threat of terrorism, for it literally brought home to them how vulnerable they were to the backlash of Arab/Palestinian frustration and anger towards perceived U.S. imperialism.⁶⁶ This American perception of vulnerability, it is argued was further impacted upon by the Oklahoma Bombing, (April 1995).⁶⁷ A bombing that 'Arab' terrorists were once again initially charged with culpability for, and then later reprieved, but not apologised too. And the 'Islamists' were once again blamed for the loss of flight TWA 800 in July 1996 where after intensive analysis it would seem that a rogue US Navy missile downed the ill fated aircraft.⁶⁸

Furthermore, President Ronald Reagan's obsession with the threat of 'global terrorism' (throughout the 1980's directed in the main against Colonel Gadhaffi in Libya.) was being 'rung true' in the minds of the U.S. populace, and in the channels of the U.S. mainstream media.⁶⁹ It is argued that this had several effects. Firstly, it turned the phantom spectre of terrorism into a real phenomena and it also helped to propel the U.S. nascent paranoia of subterfuge into a national obsession. An aspect that is very much evident in the media channels of the U.S. today. Recognition is made, however, to the fact that this paranoia is not aimed at Arabs *per se*, but also at all potential threats (domestic and international), to U.S. vital interests.

As Arabs are perceived through their use of terrorism, however, to represent such a threat to the U.S., it has assisted in legitimising Israel's own security measures against considered terrorist elements either within, or peripheral to Israel. In

⁶⁵ Lancaster, John, 'Israel steps up Lebanese attacks'. *The Washington Post*, April 13, 1996.

⁶⁶ Wilkinson, Paul, 'Blood is spilling over the map'. *Observer*, July 21, 1996.

⁶⁷ As reported by Jeremy Bowen see *Islamaphobia*, BBC2, August 18, 2001.

⁶⁸ The media's use of 'Islamists' as an entity term, it is argued, is deliberate as it allows for, and to some extents legitimises this aforementioned process of homogenisation of the Palestinians and Arabs. Moreover, it circumvents the problem of characterizing whom you are addressing: An opportunity then, for a bit of mild racism. See: Vulliamy, Ed, & Black, Ian, 'FBI follows twists in Islamist terror trail' *Observer*, July 21, 1996.

⁶⁹ Wilkinson, Paul, 'Blood is spilling over the map: ignore the rhetoric global terrorism is growing'. *The Observer*, July 21, 1996.

other words, it has legitimated the liquidation of all perceived emergent human threats (soft targets), as well as military ones (hard targets), at the grass roots level.⁷⁰ Therefore, justifying the terminations carried out during the 'War of the Spooks' for example, or the Israeli bombing of *Osiraq*, the Iraqi nuclear reactor in June 1981, and of course, the liquidation of Yahya Ayyash.⁷¹

Nevertheless, regarding Arab and Palestinian acts of terrorism: such terrorist activity although conducted in the pursuance of undermining the Israeli's and the U.S.'s hegemonic control over them. It actually serves only to tighten their [Israel's and the U.S.'s] grips on the region, as they feel justified in increasing their security, and conducting pre-emptive operations that have in the past (and continue to do so) cost the Palestinian leadership dearly.⁷²

Israel needs to take the threat from *Hamas*, the *Islamic Jihad*, and other radical movements seriously, however, for several reasons: Palestinian disaffection with the 'peace process' and Arafat's handling, or mishandling of their interests, may further encourage support for the organisations, leading to a suffocation of any future 'peace process', and subsequently more violence. This factor, however, has not come into fruition yet. If Arafat dies however, without having established an alternative leadership, it could result in a free for all power-struggle in the Occupied Territories that might lead to a civil war between the Palestinian hawks and doves.⁷³ And given the propensity of terrorist violence advocated by the former, a rather ill omen for the future of the Palestinian cause. Concerning Israel, and the U.S., the grim portent is this; that their continued hegemonic domination over the Middle Eastern region will ultimately result in an exponential rise in terrorist activity conducted against them.⁷⁴ To some, this

⁷⁰ This is what is recognized as the 'Begin Doctrine'. See: Levrant, A, *Israeli Strategy After Desert Storm*, pp. 264-265.

⁷¹ Osiraq. See: Catadul, H. *Israel's Nuclear Weaponry*, p. 126.

⁷² Kimmerling, Baruch, & Migdal, Joel, S. *The Palestinians: The Making of a People*, p. 265. And: Said, Edward, W. *The Question of Palestine*, p. xxxii.

⁷³ Walker, Christopher, 'Arafat arrests 140 suspects as Israel braces for attacks', *The Times*, February 28, 1996.

⁷⁴ Zakariah, Farid, *Newsweek*, October 23, 2000. And: Fisk, Robert, 'Forget the peace process: this is a murderous civil war.' *The Independent*, December 29, 2000. And: Said, Edward, W. *The Question of Palestine*, p. 195. And: Guyatt, Nicholas, *Op-cit*, p. 79.

could be interpreted as 'the wages of sin'. Indeed, even as a form of Divine retribution.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Thedoulou, Michael, & Binyon, Michael, 'Iranian voters told to defy West's pressure.' *The Times*, March 9, 1996. And: Goldenberg, Suzanne, 'The street was covered with blood and bodies: the dead and the dying, *Guardian*, August 10, 2001.

CHAPTER 5

'Operation Grapes of Wrath' and the 'Massacre of Qana'

... 'If you don't beat an Arab into obedience, he'll always be on top of you.' Said Yifrah Albert who said he knew the Arab mentality because he emigrated from Morocco when he was young.'¹

After the *Hamas* orchestrated attack at the *Dizengoff* shopping mall on the 4th of March 1996, terrorist activities against Israel temporarily ceased. It is argued that there were several reasons for this. Firstly, the Israeli Defence Force had sealed off the Occupied Territories, seriously restricting movement, either into, or out of, the stricken enclaves.² Secondly, Israel's internal security service *Shin Bet*, with the collusion of the PPS, rounded up all known supporters and activists, of *Hamas*, and the *Islamic Jihad*.³ Thirdly, the relatives of the suicide bombers were evicted, and their homes were demolished.⁴ (An Israeli method of prevention assimilated from the British, and designed to put off would be martyrs.)⁵ Fourthly, *Hamas* had called a moratorium on its destabilising tactics, as it had, for the time being at least, completed its agenda.

Prior to the first *Hamas* attack of February 25th however, Labour's lead over *Likud* had stood at 20 points, but by the 4th of March this lead had all but vanished.⁶ Shimon Peres, it is argued, was in grave political trouble. The Israeli right *i.e.*, *Likud*, *Shas*, *et al*, was gaining favour amongst the Israeli mainstream, by claiming that it would put Israel's security, over and above, any further negotiation with the Palestinians. And if *Likud* were elected, a time out of the

¹ Gellman, Barton, 'If it's lights out for Israeli synagogue, Beirut must go dark too.' *The Washington Post*, April 16, 1996.

² Walker, Christopher, 'Israel puts West Bank under military siege'. *The Times*, March 6, 1996.

³ Schmemmann, Serge, 'Arafat's police hunt bombers, pushed hard by Israelis'. *New York Times*, February 27, 1996.

⁴ Greenberg, Joel, 'Bombing suspects neighbours fear'. *New York Times*, February 28, 1996.

⁵ Smith, Charles, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, p. 294. And: Schiff, Ze'ev. & Ya'ari, Ehud, *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising – Israel's Third Front*, p. 145.

⁶ Walker, Christopher, 'Israel rejects offer of Hamas ceasefire'. *The Times*, March 2, 1996.

misnamed 'peace process' would be declared. It was ironic indeed, that in effect, *Hamas* had electioneered on behalf of the Israeli right.

And so it was, that on April 11th Israel commenced upon 'Operation Grapes of Wrath'.⁷ A military operation, with the primary stated objective of driving *Hizbollah* (the party of God) guerrillas out of their positions in southern Lebanon, where they constituted a threat to northern Israel.⁸ Strategically speaking the missions stated objective was firstly to cause a stampede (note the 'plains culture' language) of the southern Lebanese to the north of the country, in order to then carpet bomb the outlaws positions.⁹ Indeed, the Israeli pretext for starting the engagement with *Hizbollah* was a claim that two Katyusha rockets were fired on Israel's most northern settlement of Kiryat Shmona.¹⁰

The main argument proposed in this chapter, is that the U.S. mainstream media's reportage of this selected 'media event' took two forms. Prior, to the 'Massacre of Qana', there was a definite pro-Israeli bias evident in the U.S. mainstream media channels.¹¹ Indeed, one article ironically suggested that it was acceptable to attack *Hizbollah* positions as long as the force utilised was commensurate to the task. Furthermore, it stated that it was reasonable to do so because no civilians would be injured, as the Israeli's use precision-guided munitions.¹² It is commonly accepted though, particularly after analysis of the damage inflicted upon Iraq during the Gulf War, that this form of technology is not infallible.

Nevertheless, this pro-Israeli bias, it is suggested, had been generated out of sympathy shown towards Israel because of the suffering she had endured at the

⁷ Reuters. 'Israel hits Lebanon targets after two guerrilla attacks.' *The Washington Post*, April 11, 1996. And: Greenberg, Joel, 'An attack on Israel brings woe to Peres'. *New York Times*, April 11, 1996.

⁸ Schmemmann, Serge, 'A debate for Israel'. *New York Times*, April 22, 1996.

⁹ Said, Edward, W. *End of The Peace Process*, p. 50.

¹⁰ Reuters, 'Israel hits Lebanon targets after two guerrillas attacks, *The Washington Post*, April 11, 1996

¹¹ Gellman, Barton, 'Israel finds challenge impossible to ignore.' *The Washington Post*, April 12, 1996. And: Lancaster, John, 'Israel steps up Lebanese attacks.' *The Washington Post*, April 13, 1996.

¹² ...'Retaliating for terrorist attacks is justified as long as the response is carefully targeted, as these raids appear to have been.' See: Editorial: 'Israel's answer to terror' *New York Times*, April 12, 1996.

hands of *Hamas*, and the *Islamic Jihad* terrorists. After the massacre, which Israel declared was 'an accident' the U.S. mainstream media was not so blatant in its praise and support, for Israel's punitive action(s) in southern Lebanon.¹³

The U.S. mainstream media did not, however, directly condemn Israel's excessive use of force, and neither did the Administration in Washington. It was seven days after the operation commenced before Clinton merely urged the Israeli's to show restraint, and use commensurate force.¹⁴ The reason for this delay was because the Administration was highly suspicious of Netanyahu, and what might happen to the U.S. led Middle Eastern peace initiative if the *Likud* party came to power.¹⁵ They clearly wanted Peres, a man of peace, to win the coming May election, for he was someone that the Administration felt that they could do business with.¹⁶ Furthermore, Netanyahu, although not an entirely unknown quantity, was perceived as a potential maverick, and was also a known committed believer in *Eretz Yisrael*. Nevertheless, even after the tragedy at Qana the Administration categorically placed the blame for the Israeli error on the *Hizbollah* guerrillas who they claimed had triggered of the violence by attacking Kiryat Shmona.¹⁷ Moreover, they claimed [rightly], that Israel had the right to defend herself against attack upon its sovereign territory, and furthermore, defend itself against perceived acts of terrorism.¹⁸

Several factors had coalesced, however, that led to the Israeli operation against *Hizbollah*, and the ensuing catastrophe at Qana. Firstly, it is argued that the *Hamas* attacks had sufficiently destabilised the 'peace process' and that any operation carried out against the *Hizbollah*, or indirectly against Syria, could not

¹³ Schmemmann, Serge, 'A debate for Israel'. *New York Times*, April 22, 1996.

¹⁴ Newsweek, 'Go up to Lebanon and cry': April 29, 1996. And: Lippman, Thomas, W. 'Christopher contacts Mideast leaders as U.S. refrain from criticism of Israeli air-strikes'. *The Washington Post*, April 16, 1996. And: Schmemmann, Serge, 'Israel and militants trade blows as fighting spreads in Lebanon: Syrian troops drawn into affray'. *New York Times*, April 13, 1996.

¹⁵ Schmemmann, Serge, 'Voicing regret, Israeli leader offers a ceasefire'. *New York Times*, April 19, 1996.

¹⁶ Sciolini, Elaine, 'In the face of horror diplomacy stays muted.' *New York Times*, April 19, 1996.

¹⁷ ...'Sen. Bob Dole said that it was 'a terrible thing' but blamed the fighters in Lebanon for starting the violence' See: Sciolini, Elaine, 'In the face of horror diplomacy stays muted'. *New York Times*, April 19, 1996.

¹⁸ Editorial: 'A deadly day in Lebanon'. *New York Times*, April 19, 1996.

damage the process any further. It is suggested that Peres sensed that there was a window of opportunity to rid Israel of a long suffered irritant. (It is important to note that since the time of the first *Hamas* attack on February 25th talks had been suspended with Syria, which permitted Israel to act in southern Lebanon, without having to worry about any serious repercussions.)¹⁹

This Syrian factor is important, because since 1991, it is Syria who holds real political power in the Lebanon.²⁰ Indeed, Syria has to be considered if there is to be any diplomatic solution to a crisis there. Furthermore, Syria has 35,000 troops stationed in Lebanon, whom Israel believes could do more to rein in *Hizbollah*. It would seem that these days, however, the Syrian army is to pre-occupied with assisting in drug trafficking, and bolstering the Syrian economy, than to be bothered to rein in a group that is not actually a threat to Syria, and apparently conducts an active anti-Israeli policy on her behalf.²¹ This collusion between, Syria and *Hizbollah*, is an argument that raises itself repeatedly within the dynamics of the Arab/Israeli conflict, and has done since *Hizbollah* was formed in 1982.²² Indeed, the former Syrian president Hafiz al-Assad was often openly charged with actively encouraging *Hizbollah* to strike at Israel.²³

Indeed, concerning 'Operation Grapes of Wrath' it is strongly suggested that an article was published in the *New York Times* on April 5th that was firstly, highly propagandist, and portrayed Syria specifically in a poor light; namely, by referring to the suspension of the talks in relation to Damascus' support of a *Hamas* faction. Furthermore, it referred to Ahmad Jibril's PFLP (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine), as using Syrian radio to taunt Israelis, before going on to suggest that the PFLP is one of ten groups (including *Hamas* and the

¹⁹ Jehl, Douglas, 'In Mideast, a hard line gets harder.' *New York Times*, April 5, 1996.

²⁰ Sciolini, Elaine, 'in the face of horror diplomacy stays muted.' *New York Times*, April 19, 1996. And: Smith, Charles, D. *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, p. 283.

²¹ Conradi, Peter, 'Troops reap rich harvest from Lebanese drugs trade' *The Sunday Times*, June 18, 2000.

²² Jehl, Douglas, 'Lebanon fighters gain stature but for how long?' *New York Times*, April 21, 1996. And: Smith, Charles, D. *Op-cit*, p. 285.

²³ Erlanger, Steven, 'Christopher sees Syria chief in a bid on Lebanon truce.' *New York Times*, April 21, 1996.

Islamic Jihad), that warrants Syria's inclusion on the 'State Sponsors of Terrorism List' *i.e.*, the U.S.'s created list of perceived rogue or pariah states.²⁴

Secondly, it is suggested that this article, perhaps not intentionally, is to some extents and purposes, a 'consensus manufacturing' article.²⁵ This, it is argued, is because what the article is actually saying is that Syria aids terrorism, almost conclusively. And furthermore, Syria supports, and offers a home to Israel's greatest perceived foes *i.e.*, *Hamas*, and the *Islamic Jihad*. Therefore, it is legitimate for Israel to act chauvinistically towards both Syria, and the Lebanon, whilst in hot pursuit of her enemies.

Furthermore, by reference to the PFLP, memories of the 'Tragedy of Maalot' were evoked (May 1974).²⁶ In other words, the article strongly suggested that all 'Arabs' are 'terrorists', and are a legitimate target for Israeli punitive operations. It is, as has already been suggested a purposeful homogenisation of the Arabs, and furthermore, it is the point where this process actively begins. Within the channels of the U.S. mainstream media, (particularly the 'prestigious press') numerous articles containing this specific process of homogenisation exist.²⁷ We could just supplant Syria with Iran, Iraq, or Afghanistan, *etc.* and the result would be much the same, *viz.* legitimisation for the hegemonic practices of the neo-imperialists. Indeed, one seemingly confused official at Washington stated on separate occasions that the Syrian president himself had personally ordered the *Hizbollah* attack on Kiryat Schmona, before going on to state that it was Iran who had ordered the attack in order to affect the outcome of the May 29 Israeli

²⁴ Jehl, Douglas, 'In Mideast, a hard line gets harder.' *New York Times*, April 5, 1996. See: Zunes, Stephen, 'The Function of Rogue States in U.S. Middle East Policy'. *Orientalia*, The CMEIS Student Magazine of Durham University, November 27, 1998. Reprinted with permission from the *Middle East Policy Quarterly*, Washington, D.C., Vol., V., No 11 May 1997.

²⁵ Manufacturing Consent was a term was coined by Walter Lippman in the 1920's. See: Chomsky, Noam, & Herman, Edward, *S. Manufacturing Consent* p. XI.

²⁶ Nayif Hawatmeh is the present head of the PFLP. He is perceived to be personally responsible for the 'Tragedy of Maalot' in 1974, an atrocity where twenty-four Israeli children were killed by Palestinian gunmen. See; Schmemmann, Serge, 'U.S. helps to start negotiations to end fighting in Lebanon.' *New York Times*, April 16, 1996. And: Said, Edward, *The Question of Palestine*, p.172.

²⁷ Consider the opening quote. For examples, see: Gellman, Barton, 'If its lights out for Israeli synagogue, Beirut must go dark to.' *The Washington Post*, April 16, 1996.

Elections.²⁸ It would appear then that the logic is, suggest enough potential culprits, then you'll name the right one, eventually.

With regards to Iran, she suffers constant rebuke from both Israel, and the U.S. 'media-complex'.²⁹ For instance, much is made of her role as the chief exporter of the global Islamic revolution, and her unquestionable hatred of Israel and the West. Therefore, it is suggested that the U.S. mainstream media is guilty of peddling several myths concerning Iran's role in the Middle East, that have severe repercussions for both the Lebanon, and the Occupied Territories.

Firstly, it is true that Iran does bankroll Shaikh Nasrullah's *Hizbollah*, as rightly or wrongly, it is championing the cause of resistance to Israel.³⁰ Furthermore, *Hizbollah* is a Shi'ite organisation, so there is naturally a strong spiritual association with Iran.³¹ *Hizbollah* no longer wishes however, for the establishment of an Islamic state, or wishes to destroy Israel outright. Rather, it has made overtures that it would like to see eventual stability in the Lebanon and then enter the political process.³² Ironically, the more Israel tries to punish *Hizbollah*, the more its support grows amongst the Lebanese as it resists the Zionist's hegemonic practices. Furthermore, the mainly impoverished, and much maligned southern Lebanese peasants have largely benefited from the groups presence in their region. *Hizbollah* have developed a social infrastructure including schools and hospitals, a factor not often stated in the U.S. mainstream media.³³ This situation, however, is a veritable Catch 22 for Israel, who cannot allow *Hizbollah* to establish strong connections in southern Lebanon because of her own perceptions of vulnerability to attack.

²⁸ See: Erlanger, Steven, 'Christopher sees Syria chief in a bid on Lebanon truce.' *New York Times*, April 21, 1996. And: ironically, Erlanger, Steven, 'Syria and Iran are still balking over a ceasefire' *New York Times*, April 22, 1996.

²⁹ Associated Press, 'Israel says Iran sent arms to attack Jews' *New York Times*, April 8, 1996.

³⁰ Walker, Christopher, 'US supports war on Hamas', *The Times*, March 7, 1996.

³¹ Kifner, John, 'The peacekeepers with no peace to keep'. *New York Times*, April 18, 1996.

³² Thedelou, Mike, 'Their future hazy, Lebanon's guerrillas try tourism', *Christian Science Monitor*, May 21, 1996.

³³ Jehl, Douglas, 'Lebanese under fire, direct fury at U.S.' *New York Times*, April 20, 1996.

Moreover, Iran naturally finances *Hamas* as it is standing up to the victory of Israel.³⁴ Inasmuch as this is true, it does not take into account that both these groups are not solely financed by Iran.³⁵ Indeed, it is argued that both groups would survive without Iran's support, as, ironically, much of its financing comes from the United States.³⁶ Furthermore, Iran's support for *Hamas* plays on U.S. perceptions of the dangerous implications of any 'Islamic Revolution' or 'Global Jihad'.³⁷

Nevertheless, the Iranian Revolution occurred a little over two decades ago, and subsequently, many social and political transformations have occurred within Iran. The Islamic state has been in a condition of 'flux and reflux' since the death of the 'charismatic' Ayatollah Khomeini in 1989.³⁸ And as a result, those reforms carried out by President Khatami, have been consistently opposed by Ayatollah Khamenai.³⁹ Moreover, it also fails to take into account that Iran is otherwise pre-occupied with maintaining vigilance upon a belligerent and often bellicose Iraq, as well as on the condition and status of the *Shia* communities in Afghanistan, who have suffered since 1996 under the oppressive *Taliban* regime.⁴⁰ This is to suggest that although Iran may well have ill feeling towards Israel and the West, she is, however, rather pre-engaged. Moreover, in addition to these factors, it is further suggested that Iran's general orientation *i.e.*, her foreign policy is more closely tied up with Central Asia and Russia than the Middle East at this present time.⁴¹

This aforementioned consensus manufacturing can be taken further, however, for it is argued that your average home grown American mainstream media reader,

³⁴ Seale, Patrick, *Op-cit.* p. 62. Indeed, ironically a great deal of funding for both *Hamas* and *Hizbollah* comes from both America and Britain respectively. See: Schiff, Ze'ev, & Ya'ari, Ehud, *Op-cit.*, pp. 223-224.

³⁵ Walker, Christopher, 'Britain attacked over Hamas cash'. *The Times*, March 1, 1996. And: Walker, Christopher, & Dunn, Ross, 'Major pledges to sever Hamas charity lifeline'. *The Times*, March 14, 1996.

³⁶ Natta, Van, D. 'Judge orders Hamas leader extradited to Israel'. *New York Times*, May 9, 1996.

³⁷ Halliday, Fred, *Op-cit.*, pp. 70-71.

³⁸ 'Iran: Testing the Waters of Reform'. *National Geographic*, Vol. 196, No.1, July 1999.

³⁹ Halliday, Fred, *Op-cit.*, p. 67.

⁴⁰ Evans, Michael, 'Iran and Russia in Pact on Saddam'. *The Times*, April 19, 2001.

⁴¹ Gordan, Michael, R. 'As West shuns Iran, Russia pulls closer.' *New York Times*, April 12, 1997. Lagnado, Alice, 'Moscow defies U.S. with Iran deal'. *The Times*, March 11, 2001.

(a layman), could not state what the difference is between *Hamas* and the *Islamic Jihad* both movements having their origins in the *Ikhwan al-Muslimin*,⁴² or between Lebanon's *Hizbollah* and *Amal*: or the Syrian based DFLP of Ahmad Jibril: or the PFLP of George Habash, and nor, perhaps, should they be expected to. They might, however, be more able, if they were supplied with clearer definitions and a more in depth analysis.

Thirdly, it is suggested that this article can be understood to be a 'Notice of Intention'. For it is argued that Israel would probably like to eradicate its enemies in Syria, but can't risk the dangerous implications of a direct confrontation with her, and this is why the Lebanon serves as Israel's 'chessboard'.⁴³ The buffer zone that was established in 1985, and is now home for some 4, 500 members of the UN (UNIFIL),⁴⁴ as well as the southern Lebanese population and at various times to some guerrillas of *Hizbollah*; serves several purposes.

Firstly, it can always be used as a scapegoat, (which in this instance it most certainly was).⁴⁵ Peres, was in serious political strife, desperately needing to raise some polling points.⁴⁶ The best way to achieve this was to act in the interests of Israel's security (that most ancient of Israel's bugbears), and to be seen as being tough on crime (terrorist is often juxtaposed with criminal within U.S. mainstream media reportage) *i.e.*, as the hard man of Israeli politics.⁴⁷ 'You have removed the threat however, posited by *Hamas*, and the *Islamic Jihad*, so you have to pursue more terrorists outside of Israel. You can't 'go as far as Damascus' or Teheran, because of U.S. pressure, and the risk of global condemnation.⁴⁸ Therefore, the only logical place to cause a diversion is the

⁴² Hiro, Dilop, *A Dictionary of the Middle East*, pp. 105-106 and p. 136.

⁴³ Gellman, Barton, 'Israel finds challenge impossible to ignore'. *The Washington Post*, April 12, 1996.

⁴⁴ UNIFIL: United Nations Interim Force for Lebanon.

⁴⁵ Guyatt, Nicholas, *The Absence of Peace*, p. 39.

⁴⁶ Schmemmann, Serge, 'Israel and militants trade blows as fighting spreads in Lebanon: Syrian troops drawn into fray.' *New York Times*, April 13, 1996.

⁴⁷ Greenberg, Joel, Peres vows to submit final pact with Palestinians to Israeli vote.' *New York Times*, April 2, 1996. And: Shlaim, Avi, *Op-cit*, p. 560.

⁴⁸ Freedman, Lawrence, Open Editorial, 'Lebanon's Aftermath'. *New York Times*, May 15, 1996. This phrase is readily adapted from David Lean's 'Lawrence of Arabia' (1962). For further interest consider: Kedourie, Elie, 'The Capture of Damascus' in, *The Chatham House Version*, pp. 33-47.

Lebanon, where, as long as the sketchy rules of engagement are adhered to, *i.e.*, 'no engagement with civilians' as outlined, but unwritten by Warren Christopher in 1993,⁴⁹ you will not receive condemnation from the U.S., because their greater interest is being pursued, *i.e.*, the eradication of perceived global terrorists, and avenging the sponsors of the bombers of the U.S. marine barracks of Beirut (1983). Regrettably, for the southern Lebanese victims, these rules were either flagrantly ignored, or mistakenly forgotten, and furthermore, this fatal omission, in part, cost Peres his leadership.

Secondly, it is argued that if Israel occasionally carries out punitive operations in southern Lebanon, *i.e.*, against *Hizbollah* positions, or buzzes Beirut with her American supplied F16's, or Apache AH64 attack helicopters (the modern battlefield 'peacemaker') she sends a powerful message to Syria.⁵⁰ Inasmuch as she indicates to Syria, that her [Israel's], old military policies are still in effect *e.g.*, the 'transference of war into the enemy's territory', and the 'pre-emptive strike theory'. It also shows that Syria is not all that important to Israel, and any ensuing 'peace process' with the Palestinians.

This can be taken further however, for it is arguable that if the Occupied Territories are internally disorganised, the Lebanon is an absolute 'mess'.⁵¹ Syria in effect runs Beirut, and northern Lebanon. Israel, formerly with the assistance of the SLA (a *Druze* and *Phalangist* based Christian militia), and UNIFIL, controls the nine-mile border.⁵² *Hizbollah*, and *Amal* vie for control of southern Lebanon,⁵³ and an element of the Syrian army controls the Bekka Valley, therefore, it is little wonder that like the hashish, in between them, terrorist cells grow and flourish.

⁴⁹ Sciolini, Elaine, 'In the face of horror diplomacy stays muted'. *New York Times*, April 19, 1996. And: Wallach, Janet, & Wallach, John, *Op-cit*, p. 470.

⁵⁰ Schmemmann, Serge, 'Israeli aircraft strike guerrillas in Beirut suburbs'. *New York Times*, April 12, 1996.

⁵¹ See: Kifner, John, 'The peace keepers with no peace to keep'. *New York Times*, April 18, 1996.

⁵² Schmemmann, Serge, 'Israeli aircraft strike guerrillas in Beirut suburbs'. *New York Times*, April 12, 1996.

⁵³ Smith, Charles, D. *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, p. 284.

It is argued that this state of chaos suits Israel and is actively encouraged. The constant instability and fractious nature of the Lebanon exacerbated by Syria's constant intervention and meddling, allows Israel to act with a free hand and pursue her rarely clearly stated objectives. (In the sense they are purposefully unclear to allow for strategic flexibility). Indeed, if the Occupied Territories are perceived by some to represent Palestinian 'Reservations' then it is argued, that the Lebanon is unfortunately, Israel's true Wild West.

CHAPTER 6

'The 'Stinker' Comes to Power' •

Corrections and clarifications:

In her op-ed page column of April 26, [1996], Georgie Anne Geyer wrote that Syrian President Hafiz Assad 'was born to the despised Alawite tribe and was so poor that his name means pig.' In fact, the Alawite are not a tribe but a religious group and Assad's name does not mean pig.

The *Tribune* regrets the errors.¹

On May the 29th 1996, the *Likud* leader Benjamin Netanyahu won the Israeli General Election by the slimmest of electoral margins over his oftentimes politically unfortunate Labour rival, Shimon Peres.² Nevertheless, it is argued that Netanyahu's rise to the political fore, and his assuming the role of Israel's Prime Minister was to affect the future course and eventual outcome of the Oslo 'peace process' in perhaps a more tangible and explicit way than any other single event or factor that affected this incipient 'peace process'. Indeed, as one editorial succinctly put it: 'Netanyahu and [Ariel] Sharon are to a peace process what a fox is to a chicken coop' in a beautifully expressed sentiment reflecting

• The title of this chapter is derived from the unfortunate Arabic translation of Benjamin Netanyahu's surname. Meaning literally: 'He who stinks' (*Natan, yahu*) See: Bhatia, Shyam, 'Leader who lost friends'. *Guardian*, April 18, 1997. And: *The Concise Oxford-English Arabic Dictionary of Current Usage*, p. 383. Wehr, Hans, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, p. 942.

¹ An apology proffered in the *Chicago Tribune*, May 14, 1996.

² 1,501,023 votes were registered for *Likud*, against 1,471,566 for Labour, a majority of some 29, 457 votes of the votes polled. See: Dunn, Ross, & Walker, Christopher, 'Peace process in jeopardy as *Likud* snatches victory'. *The Times*, June 1, 1996. Schemann, Serge, 'Election for prime minister of Israel is dead heat'. *New York Times*, May 30, 1996. In terms of percentage points: these were reported as follows 50.2% *Likud* to 49.7% Labour of 72.3% of ballots counted. See: Rowley, John, 'Israeli vote is a cliff-hanger'. *Christian Science Monitor*, May 30, 1996.

the Semitic language's propensity for the use of similitude.³ Nevertheless, this insightful sentiment shall be borne out in the analysis of the subsequent 'media frames' that comprise the remainder of this study.

Furthermore, it shall be argued that there was very little (but regrettably some) overt and explicit anti-Palestinian *viz.* anti-Arab discourse evident within the majority of the U.S. mainstream media channels, and that this was due to specific emphasis placed on the significance of Israel's General Election to both the Israelis, and in this particular instance, American Jewry. Yet two or three clear examples of a rare, but explicit anti-Arabism, did emerge during this 'media frame'. (It is doubtful that any better examples of the overt castigation of the homogenised 'Arabs' could be found elsewhere within the mainstream media channels of the U.S., throughout the entire Oslo 'peace process' period.)

Firstly, consider this particular half-page advertisement that the *Washington Post* circulated on May the 19th 1996, entitled *Remember Saddam? Meet Syria's Assad: Blood Brothers* penned by Daniel Pipes. This advertisement it is argued, was purposefully and very explicitly anti-Syrian, and moreover, was typically anti-Saddam *viz.* anti-Iraqi in content. (Inasmuch as the West, led by the U.S. 'media complex' has been waging a rather vicious and protracted smear campaign against the Iraqi leader ever since the Gulf War.)⁴ Nevertheless, after supplying an exhaustive list of all Syria's perceived major faults *i.e.*, the sponsoring and encouragement of *Hizbollah*: overt support for the Abu Nidal Organisation, the DFLP, the PFLP, *Hamas* and the *Islamic Jihad etc.*, the article went on to refer to Syria's violent suppression of the Syrian branch of the

³ Editorial, 'The Price of Failure', *Guardian*, October 3, 2000. For such use of similitude, consider Farid al-Din Attar's *The Conference of the Birds*, trans. Dick Davies. For examples of the use of similitude in a derogatory anti-Palestinian manner by the Israelis, consider these two examples: 'Trying to kill the mosquito' *i.e.*, the Palestinian 'terrorists' and 'drain the swamps' *viz.* the Occupied Territories. And: Rafael Eitan speaking in 1983 said that after Israel's invasion of Lebanon, the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories would be like 'drugged cockroaches in a bottle'. See: Khalidi, Muhammad, A. 'Israeli discourse still reflects hatred'. *New York Times*, May 24, 1996. And: Smith, Charles, D. *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, p. 328.

⁴ Thedelou, Michael, 'Saddam's sex pest son blamed for woman's suicide'. *The Times* July 5 1996. Cockburn, Patrick, 'Portrait of Saddam: the man setting the world agenda', *Independent*, February 20, 1998. Norton-Taylor, Richard, 'Britain intensifies propaganda war against Saddam'. *Guardian*, October 24, 2000. Colvin, Marie, 'Saddam builds new atom bomb', *The Sunday Times*, December 24, 2000, Beeston, Richard, 'Saddam may hold the key to West's prosperity', *The Times*, January 18, 2001. *Etc.*

Muslim Brotherhood at Hama in 1983, where reportedly as many as 15, 000 Syrians died, many allegedly gassed to death. This catastrophe was contrasted with a direct comparison of Saddam's gassing of the Iraqi Kurds at Halabja in March of 1988.⁵

Here though, common sense it is argued should prevail. Because the author of this obviously governmentally sponsored piece of anti-Arab propaganda has got his historical facts jumbled.⁶ For if the facts are interpreted correctly, then the title of the article would better and more correctly read: *Remember Assad? Meet Iraq's Saddam: Blood Brothers*. Indeed, closer examination of the facts shall establish that it was President Nasser that set the trend for gassing undesirables in the 'modern' Middle East during Egypt's involvement (1963-67) in the Yemeni Civil War (1962-1970).⁷ To some, this confusion might represent a moot point, or indeed, an argument concerning the selective manipulation of historical facts. Such distortions no matter how slight, it is argued, when occurring in the channels of the mainstream media have a detrimental effect upon the audience, and its subsequent understanding, and evaluation of the truth. In this particular instance, the methodology of the gassing of one's own citizens is portrayed as being the special preserve of scary Middle Eastern potentates, which might be true in relation to the gassing of one's *own* citizens. Nevertheless, the method of gassing is a well 'tried and tested' formula that has had currency on several inauspicious occasions within twentieth century Europe.⁸

Moreover, and once again, it is argued that the process of a purposeful homogenisation of the Arabs has occurred, initially at a personal level, and then

⁵ Conason, J, 'The Iraq Lobby: Kissinger, The Business Forum & Co', in Sifry, M, & Cerf, C, *The Gulf War Reader*, p. 80. And: Miller, Judith, & Mylroie, Laurie, *Saddam Hussein and the Gulf Crisis*, p. 14.

⁶ Pipes, Daniel, *Committee for Democracy and Peace in the Middle East*: PO Box 123, Berkeley, CA 94701.

⁷ Mostyn, Trevor, & Hourani, Albert, [Eds.], *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the Middle East*, p. 455.

⁸ Consider the use of mustard 'yellow' gas in the trenches of France and Belgium during the latter half of The Great War, and of course, the evil use of Zyklon B by the Nazi Regime during the Jewish Holocaust of World War II. Moreover, it is even rumoured that the Israelis themselves have had recourse to the use of gas as a form of torture. See Nicholas Von Hoffman's report, as cited in Said, Edward, W. *The Question of Palestine*, p. 43. And See: Peretz, Don, *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising*, p. 67 for confirmation of the IDF's misuse of tear gas.

at a national one. In essence, the U.S. mainstream media on behalf of a U.S. governmental think tank is implying that Saddam Hussain and Hafiz al-Assad are one and the same. Indeed, just mere reflections of the other. Moreover, Syria can be juxtaposed with Iraq effortlessly. Furthermore, this explicit homogenisation is also reflective in the advertisement's title, and subsequent use of the term 'Blood Brothers' (mildly reminiscent of the language of the 'Plain's Culture'). Such a validated usage of this terminology, however, is an absurdity that defies rational logic. For Syria and Iraq have been at loggerheads at different extremes since the early 1950's. For example, the Syrian and Iraqi *Ba'ath* (Renaissance) parties have waged an on and off ideological battle for regional hegemony.⁹ (That reached its peak during the years between 1958-61, *i.e.*, the years of the AUR.) Moreover, the two leaders have themselves waged a 'cold war' for the title of supreme leader of the Arab Middle East (Note: not Judith Miller's of the *New York Times* 'Godfather' analogy, which, it is argued, is an affront to Islam.)¹⁰

Nevertheless, after this advertisements explicit reference to the Syrian leader's use of poison gas at Hama, it went on to suggest that Syria is a major arms manufacturer and supplier, and furthermore, is a prolific drugs producer, possessing links with the Columbian drug cartels and the Sicilian Mafia. (In other words, Syria is a major contributor to many of America's perceived ills.) There is no direct refutation of this argument, however it seems that Syria is the target of an American dirty tricks campaign, inasmuch as these are rather heavy and largely unsubstantiated accusations levelled against her.¹¹ Finally, the advertisement portrays al-Assad as the devil incarnate, for example consider, the final bullet pointed statement:

⁹ Adams, Michael, [Ed.], *The Middle East: A Handbook*, p. 205, and pp. 300-301.

¹⁰ Judith Miller and Laurie Myroie make an analogy of Saddam Hussein with Don Corleone, *i.e.*, Mario Puzo's 'Godfather' (1972), however, the point being made is that such an analogy is insensitive to Islam: as the *Shuhada i.e.*, the 'Testimony of Faith' states: *La Allah ila Allah, Wa Muhammadu Rasul Allah*, (There is no God except God: and Muhammad is his Prophet.) Indeed, a better analogy, and one that is not such an open affront to Islam would be with Martin Bregman's 'Scarface' (1983), as portrayed by Al Pacino, this it is argued would remove the religious implications of the former choice of character. See: Miller, Judith, & Laurie, Myroie, *The Rise of Saddam Hussain*, in Sifry, Micah, L. & Cerf, Christopher, *The Gulf War Reader*, pp. 66-68.

¹¹ Zunes, Stephen, 'The Function of Rogue States in U.S. Middle East Policy'. *Orientalia*, The CMEIS Student Magazine, University of Durham, November 27, 1998. Reprinted with permission from the *Middle East Policy Quarterly*, Washington, D.C., Vol., V. No. 11, May 1997.

‘Assad is as ruthless a tyrant as Saddam, but much more cunning: his promises of peace are as worthless as Saddam’s broken peace with Iran and Kuwait. The U.S. paid dearly for ignoring Saddam’s character and true intentions. Let’s not repeat that mistake with Syria’s dictator.’

How was the former Syrian leader *more* cunning than Saddam? Alas the advertisement does not tell us that; although, we can premise that it has something to do with his failure to kow-tow to a U.S. dictated Middle Eastern peace initiative.¹² But, if we were to read and believe much of the explicit anti-Saddam propaganda that is evident in most of the Western mainstream media channels, then no one could possibly be more cunning, or slier than the Iraqi leader.¹³ Indeed, what promises has al-Assad reneged upon? Again, such information is unfortunately omitted. But this is probably an allusion to the Syrian’s leader’s political ability to wrong foot the majority of his opponents, and to stand up to a U.S. and Israeli enforced regional hegemony, particularly, in this instance, with regards to his demands over the restoration to Syria of the Golan Heights.¹⁴

Finally, did not the Kuwaitis, Saudis, immigrant workers in Kuwait, Coalition Forces, Israelis, Palestinians, and latterly, the Iraqis themselves, also pay dearly for Saddam’s ‘character and true intentions’?¹⁵ What the advertisement does not tell you, however, is that the U.S. led Coalition paid dearly for Saddam’s belligerency, not because it ignored the ‘character and true intentions’ of Iraq’s leader, but primarily because it *failed to understand* his ‘character and true intentions’.¹⁶ Moreover, and arguably, Saddam was not allowed to escape the military might of the Coalition, even if he had wished to do so.¹⁷ For there is a specious argument that exists, which alleges that all the diplomatic channels that

¹² Obituary, ‘President Assad of Syria’, *The Times*, June 12, 2000.

¹³ Sweeney, John, ‘Arms and Saddam’, *Observer*, February 4, 1996.

¹⁴ Obituary, ‘President Assad of Syria’, *The Times*, June 12, 2000. And: Faour, Muhammad, *Op-cit.* p. 117. And: Smith, Charles, D. *Op-cit.* p. 311

¹⁵ Faour, Muhammad, *Op-cit.* p.100 and p. 114.

¹⁶ Miller, Judith, & Mylroie, Laurie, *Saddam Hussein and the Gulf Crisis*, p. 8.

¹⁷ Forsyth, Frederick, *The Fist of God*, p. 354, pp. 358-61, and p. 383.

might have allowed the Iraqi leader to climb down and escape the wrath of the U.S. led Coalition with his military machine intact, were, in effect closed down.¹⁸

This is not to suggest that al-Assad as a leader was without fault. Indeed, brutal suppression of political dissidents was clearly something that he certainly did have in common with his Iraqi neighbour.¹⁹ But many distortions and contradictions still abound within this rather unnecessarily pernicious advertisement. Furthermore, it is argued, that the advertisement serves two functions. Firstly, it is obviously and rather candidly, consensus manufacturing, and moreover allows for the direct solicitation of public support for the U.S. 'media complex's' propaganda war that is being conducted against the Arab World *per se*. This fact is substantiated by the use of the first person plural *i.e.*, 'Let's [Let us], not make that mistake with Syria's dictator'. Indeed, this is to suggest that the U.S. 'media complex' believe that the Syrian leader's antagonism towards the West, and his refusal to submit to a U.S. and Israeli dictated regional hegemony is a shared responsibility of the U.S. mainstream media audience, which, surely cannot be reasonably plausible. Secondly, it is suggested that the advertisement is also silently urging for further support of Israel amongst its target audience, and in particular advocates a harsh stance against Syria. (Coincidentally a support for Israel, that ties in nicely with Netanyahu's election campaign, and his espoused desire at this time to 'get tough with the Arabs'.)²⁰

Nevertheless, casting this explicitly racist and xenophobic anti-Arabism aside, consider another advertisement published in the *New York Times* upon the 10th of May entitled: *March for Israel's Future*. This advertisement, it is argued, was both myth impacting and fallacious. For it read:

'There should be some place on earth where we have a Jewish majority...as a minority we have quite a history' (Golda Meir).

¹⁸ *Ibid.* And; Smith, Charles, D. *Op-cit*, p. 309.

¹⁹ Al-Khalidi, Samir, *Republic of Fear*, pp. 3-146.

²⁰ Storer, Rowley, H. 'Majority of Israelis Arabs to vote for Peres.' *Chicago Tribune*, May 18, 1996.

'There is such a place, and it's called Israel.' [Indeed, consider the oblique reference to Jewish persecution in Europe, and the whole settler colonialist experiment being lauded as something of a justifiable triumph and moral victory.] 'Join us, and thousands of other proud New Yorkers this Sunday May 12th at noon, for the 31st annual Salute to Israel Parade.' [This sentence, it is argued, is a subtle indication as to the longevity of the U.S./Israel 'special relationship'.] 'We will march up Fifth Avenue, from 57th to 79th Street. Celebrate modern Israel's 48th birthday.' [No doubt an equally enjoyable birthday celebration for the disenfranchised Palestinians.]... 'In solidarity with our Israeli brethren, some 300 New Yorkers are leaving today for Israel to commemorate Jerusalem's tri-millennium.' [Recognition is made to the fact that these three hundred New Yorkers were not described as potential settlers. If they were, however, then undoubtedly more good news for the already much harangued Palestinians of the Occupied Territories. 300 potential Baruch Goldstein's on their doorsteps.] 'Israel is a fulfilment of a once impossible dream. We salute her people and all those who cherish Jewish unity and sovereignty.'²¹

Once again, casting this negativity aside, it is strongly suggested that this advertisement is rather an explicit and self-explanatory attempt at mitigating popular support for Israel within New York proper. Indeed, the explicit nature of the advertisement, and the way in which the *New York Times* has unabashedly printed it, gives true definition to the overt character, and highly obtrusive nature, of the 'special relationship' as personified by the 'media complex' and 'Jewish Lobby' *per se*. Moreover, and quite simply, it is an obvious Zionist foray into the realm of U.S. public relations. Yet the real mythical and fallacious nature of the article is to be discovered in the advertisement's last lines *viz.* 'Israel is a fulfilment of a once impossible dream. We salute her people and all those who cherish Jewish unity and sovereignty.'

Firstly, Israel was never really 'a once impossible dream'.²² Only the realization of the establishment of the Jewish national home in the heart of the Arab World upon former Palestine caused a protracted problem for the advocates of 'political' Zionism. Indeed, this factor might have led some to consider the

²¹ See; 'March For Israel's Future' an advertisement lodged in the *New York Times*, May 10, 1996 sponsored by the *Israel Tribute Committee* in cooperation with the *Jewish Community Relations Council*.

²² Indeed, consider the language, you can either have a dream, or not have a dream, but not really 'an impossible dream'. More correctly speaking 'an unrealisable dream' conveys a truer sense.

establishment of Israel as a practical impossibility; however it was not. A Ugandan, or even an Argentine based Israel was once quite a feasible alternative, particularly in the early days of 'political' Zionism *i.e.*, (c.1887-1903).²³

To take this argument further, however, it is proposed that if there had been any serious doubt as to the possibility of the creation of the state of Israel, this doubt was cast aside by several factors. Firstly, by the pronouncement of the now infamous Balfour Declaration (November 1917), and secondly, by the British handing the Mandate over to UNSCOP in 1947,²⁴ (due largely in part to Jewish agitation of the colonialist overseer by the likes of the *Hagganah*, the *Irgun Zvei Leumi*, and the 'Stern Gang' 'terrorist' organisations), and finally due to a sensitive U.S. president, Harry Truman, overruling the Peel Commission's report (1937)²⁵ and the subsequent British 'White Paper' (1939), and his granting of 150,000 immigration visas for Israel to the Jews of the 'Displaced Persons' camps of Europe immediately after World War Two.²⁶ Indeed, and understandably so in the light of the *Shoah*, (a more respectful term for the Holocaust), Israel's permanence was guaranteed at the conclusion of World War Two, it was merely made an article of 'fact and faith' with the subsequent forging of the 'special relationship' with the U.S., which commenced with the philanthropic Harry Truman, and reached its zenith with the most overtly pro-Israeli, American president to date Bill Clinton.²⁷

Finally, it is suggested that openly encouraging the saluting of a people who 'cherish unity and sovereignty' is an exhortation to commit an act based quite frankly upon a mild but explicit distortion of the truth. Because, as has already been discussed, Jewish society particularly within Israel is much divided.²⁸ And moreover, Jewish sovereignty over Israel is in itself, (given the circumstances of

²³ Laquer, Walter, *A History of Zionism*. pp. 126-130. And, Said, Edward, W. *The Question of Palestine*, p. 23.

²⁴ UNSCOP: United Special Committee on Palestine.

²⁵ Black, Ian, 'Double tragedy rolls back years of progress.' *Guardian*, October 13, 2000.

²⁶ Kimmerling, Baruch, & Migdal, Joel, S. *The Palestinians: The Making of a People*, p. 298.

²⁷ Schmemmann, Serge, 'Sharon keeps claws very sharp'. *New York Times*, May 25, 1996. And: Hirst, David, 'Private view: slow-motion conquest', *Guardian*, March 8, 1997. And: Smith, Charles, D. *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, p. 322.

²⁸ Gellman, Barton, 'Israelis are edgy as election nears'. *The Washington Post*, May 16, 1996.

how it was achieved *i.e.*, the blatant dispossession of the host peoples), a rather questionable concept. Furthermore, Israel has had a poor record of achievement when it comes to respecting the principles of a state's sovereign rights. Consider, for example, her audacious raid upon Entebbe airport in June 1976²⁹ Mossad's abduction of the Israeli 'whistle blower' Mordechai Vanunu, from the suburbs of Rome in October 1986,³⁰ or even the commando raid upon the PLO headquarters in Tunis and the subsequent assassination of PLO deputy Abu Jihad in April 1988, *etc.*³¹ All of these operations were carried out in direct breach of another state's sovereign rights, and many more other occasions could be cited.

Nevertheless, these two very different, yet, very similar advertisements it is argued show explicitly how the U.S. mainstream media works upon the process of manufacturing a consensus amongst its target audience. For example, the first advertisement, which is unquestionably extremely anti-Arab in the nature of its discourse, directs the readership towards a very negative interpretation of Arabs and Arab culture *per se*. Whilst, the second advertisement is working in direct apposition to this racist propaganda, conjuring a perception that Israel is something of a miracle in terms of 'modern' state building, and that the Israelis as a result are also something of a miraculous peoples.³² Furthermore, it is argued that the advertisements when considered individually are clearly damaging distortions of the truth. The first, is both cynically and gratuitously condemning of Arabism, whilst the other is unnecessarily overly laudatory of a people who are both tenacious and tendentious, not, however, miraculous.

Yet if the advertisements are considered in conjunction, they serve only to doubly impact upon this distortion of truth. And moreover, they serve only to further embed the 'David and Goliath' *viz.* the 'good vs. evil' dictum deeper into the subconscious minds of the U.S. mainstream media's audience (See:

²⁹ Shott, Ian, *World Famous SAS and Elite Forces*, p. 36.

³⁰ Said, Edward, W. *The End of the Peace Process*, p. 200. And: Cohen, Yael, *The Vanunu Affair*. p. 135. And: Hersh, Seymour, M. *The Sampson Option*. pp. 197-198.

³¹ Seale, Patrick, *Abu Nidal: Gun for Hire*, pp. 219-220. And: Smith, Charles, D. *Op-cit*, p. 289. And: Bregman, Ahron, & El-Tahri, *The Fifty Years War: Israel and Arabs*, p. 193.

³² 'Israel has always presented its history as a spectacular experiment in nation-building under the most harsh conditions.' Guyatt, Nicholas, *Op-cit*, p. 89.

introduction, p.16.) Here though, recognition is made to the fact that the advertisements were published by two different papers, and upon two separate dates. Yet it is argued, that the mainstream media operates as a complex whole. Indeed, it is this aspect of the media and its *modus operandi* that warrants its consideration as part of a larger 'media complex'. Therefore, in light of this, it is felt that it is quite legitimate to analyse these two advertisements in juxtaposition, and indeed, even loosely consider them as part of the U.S. mainstream media's discourse upon the Arab/Israeli conflict *per se*.

Nevertheless, having considered these two rather explicit, but not necessarily typical pieces of propaganda *i.e.*, a U.S. government sponsored piece of anti-Arabism, and a pro-Israeli advert lodged by the American 'Israeli Lobby', it is now necessary to return specifically to an analysis of the U.S. mainstream media's reportage of the run up to the Israeli General Elections of May 29th 1996.

Therefore, the principle argument posited is that the nature of the U.S. mainstream media's reportage during this particular 'media frame' was, firstly, very evidently pro-Israeli, and secondly, mildly racially deprecating with regards towards the Palestinians and Arabs. (Carping on in particular about the Palestinian and Arab propensity towards terrorism.)³³ It is argued, however, that although the U.S. mainstream media channels were explicitly pro-Israeli in their bias, they were, nevertheless, divided into two broad but discernable camps.³⁴

Firstly, there existed a tangible element within the 'media complex' that supported the principles of peace as espoused by Yitzhak Rabin *et al*, and who considered that Shimon Peres was the most suitable man for the presidency, despite his previous failings with regards to Israel's overall security and the unfortunate blunder that resulted in the 'Massacre of Qana'. This camp predictably and explicitly placed the blame upon the Palestinian maximalists *i.e.*, *Hamas*, the *Islamic Jihad*, and elements within *Al-Fatah etc.*, for the breakdown in the 'peace process'.

³³ Gellman, Barton, 'Israelis are edgy as election nears.' *The Washington Post*, May 16, 1996.

³⁴ Schmemmann, Serge, 'Israel's parties open the election campaign with slick ads and a focus on security.' *New York Times*, May 9, 1996.

Secondly, the Arab outlaws *i.e.*, *Hizbollah* were categorically condemned for antagonising Israel,³⁵ despite Israel's (and to a lesser degree the United States) obvious complicity within the events that led to the regrettable catastrophe at Qana.³⁶ This consistent condemnation of the *Hizbollah* guerrillas it is argued helped Peres legitimise his hard-line stance shown towards these perceived outlaws and fugitives right up to polling day. Indeed, most Israelis were not overtly vocal in their condemnation of Peres' foolhardy misadventure into southern Lebanon. Quite contrary, many perceived it as a necessity, and the subsequent tragedy (*i.e.*, the loss of ninety lives), little more than unfortunate; indeed nothing more than a small price to be paid for the maintenance of Israel's territorial integrity and the protection of her citizenry. It was this particular camp that was supported by the U.S. Administration; and Bill Clinton in particular threw himself wholeheartedly into Shimon Peres' election campaign.³⁷ Indeed, Clinton's electioneering fervour, undertaken on behalf of his Israeli buddy led him ironically and perhaps a little foolishly (in light of Peres' impending failure), to state that the two men were, metaphorically speaking, nothing less than 'cousins'.³⁸

This support for Peres from a particular camp (led in the main by the *New York Times* with the exception of A.M. Rosenthal who praised the 55% that supported Netanyahu),³⁹ within the U.S. 'media complex' clearly headed by Clinton, and backed by Henry Kissinger (The sharpest tooth and committed forger of the U.S. Israeli 'special relationship' particularly during Israel's troublesome years' *i.e.*,

³⁵ Jehl, Douglas, 'After fighting flares again in Lebanon, Israel shells villages'. *New York Times*, May 20, 1996.

³⁶ The point being made here is twofold. Firstly, the U.S. Administration's failure to rebuke Israel for its cynical incursion into southern Lebanon acted as a further 'green light' to the IDF, leading inexorably to the 'Massacre of Qana'. And, the catastrophe would not have been possible if the Israelis were not using American supplied technology *i.e.*, a sophisticated tracking and targeting device and drone vehicle.

³⁷ Erlanger, Steven, 'Clinton and Peres find mutual admiration.' *New York Times*, May 1, 1996. And: Schmemmann, Serge, 'Eyes of the World upon Israeli election'. *New York Times*, May 28, 1996.

³⁸ Schmemmann, Serge, 'Eyes of the world upon Israel election.' *New York Times*, May 28, 1996. And: Krauthammer, Charles, Opinion, 'The case for Netanyahu'. *The Washington Post*, May 17, 1996. And: *Time Magazine*, 'Which way to peace.' Vol. 147. Issue, 21, May 20.

³⁹ Rosenthal, A. M. 'That fifty five percent of Jews.' *New York Times*, June 5, 1996. As cited in Guyatt, Nicholas, Ref: No., 13, *Op-cit*, p. 84.

from 1973-79) amongst others, was principally predicated upon two motivating factors.⁴⁰ Firstly, Peres was perceived as something of a dove (albeit, a perception that was somewhat compromised by Israel's ever present security considerations.) Secondly, because Peres was also generally regarded, although largely erroneously, as the main instigator behind the Oslo 'peace process' it was felt by the U.S. Administration that he could, circumstances allowing, restart the stalled negotiations with the Palestinian Authority when given the opportunity to take a pragmatic approach to the problems evident within the often considered fraudulent process.⁴¹

Peres, like his unfortunate predecessor Rabin, earnestly believed that Israel's security could be guaranteed in exchange for territory, viz. that Israel's security was inextricably linked with the exchange of illegally occupied territory. (In itself a rather rational and quite logical deduction.) Moreover, Rabin and Peres were perceived as the 'Guardians' of a Middle Eastern 'peace programme'. Rabin had met his unfortunate demise however, and Peres had, by default, inherited both his legacy and his dream.⁴²

Conversely to this camp that openly supported Peres however, was a camp (headed in the main by *The Washington Post*) that also openly supported the young and well groomed Benjamin Netanyahu.⁴³ This camp within the U.S. 'media complex' considered that Netanyahu was probably 'the best man for the job' in the light of his even more intended hard line approach towards the Palestinians,⁴⁴ and his declaration to impose a moratorium (a declared permanent cessation, before being revised to a temporary halt, in the face of stiff U.S. pressure)⁴⁵ upon the peace process if he were successful in his election bid. Furthermore, Netanyahu was not unknown to this particular camp, because his

⁴⁰ Rowley, Storer H. 'Day of decision for Israel's voters.' *Chicago Tribune*, May 29, 1996.

⁴¹ Ajami, Fouad, *The Dream Palace of the Arabs*, p. 276.

⁴² Schemann, Serge, Israel's parties open the election campaign with slick ads and a focus on security.' *New York Times*, May 9, 1996. And: Storer, Rowley, H. 'Israel's stark choice: next weeks election marks a watershed as voters decide between 2 visions of the future'. *Chicago Tribune*, May 22, 1996. And: Wallach, Janet, & Wallach, John, *Op-cit*, p. 472.

⁴³ Krauthammer, Charles, 'The case for Netanyahu.' *The Washington Post*, May 17, 1996.

⁴⁴ Guyatt, Nicholas, *The Absence of Peace*, p. 39.

⁴⁵ Battersby, John, 'Israeli vote may pivot on immigrants.' *Christian Science Monitor*, May 17, 1996. And: Guyatt, Nicholas, *Ibid*.

years as serving Israeli Ambassador to the U.N had enabled him to create a good working relationship within the U.S. mainstream media channels through his regular appearances on CNN and NBC, and by his regular interviews conducted with many of the U.S. newsmagazines.⁴⁶

It is also suggested that this strong working relationship that Netanyahu had with the mainstream media in particular was also further enhanced through his careful cultivation of many friends within the U.S. 'industrial complex' who as in previous electioneering campaigns, certainly helped in footing the bill of this costly campaign. Moreover, Netanyahu's links to the 'media and industrial complexes' were further supported through his strong ties to the American branches of the Jewish Lobby within the United States, in sum then, a very powerful and persuasive candidate, who effectively used his supporting camp to promote himself as the man for the job. Indeed, media portrayals of Netanyahu showed the 'sound bite cowboy',⁴⁷ in a positively good light, focusing upon several different aspects of his character, all of them favourable, if not based upon mild distortions of truth.

For example, much was made of Netanyahu's successful military career (1967-1972),⁴⁸ and the fact that he was a Sabran *i.e.*, someone born in Israel after the establishment of the state, in contrast to his apparent lack of religiosity, and his confirmed adulterous nature. These positive aspects *i.e.*, his strong working knowledge of the U.S. mainstream media, and his perceived heroism, were starkly contrasted to Peres lack of military experience and rather wooden demeanour, and lack of electoral appeal for the Israeli public.

In sum, the Israeli General Election of May 29, 1996, was probably the single most important election in Israel's relatively short history. For in essence, it was a referendum (and was billed as one) over the future of the Oslo 'peace

⁴⁶ *Newsweek* 'Beautiful Bibi.' Vol. 127, No. 22, May 27, 1996. And: Schmemmann, Serge, Eyes of the world upon Israeli election.' *New York Times*, May 28, 1996.

⁴⁷ *Newsweek*, 'Beautifuil Bibi.' Vol. 127, No. 22, May 27, 1996.

⁴⁸ Hiro, Dilop, *A Dictionary of the Middle East*, p. 225

process'.⁴⁹ It was high time that the Israeli electorate decided whether peace with the Palestinians was desirable for the price of an enormous concession, and recognition that peace could only be achieved through an active and ongoing dialogue with their once bitterest foe. The outcome of the election (decided by approximately half a percentage point),⁵⁰ would spell disaster for the aspirations of the Oslo 'peace process'. It was a very sad day indeed, for those on both sides, who still cherished the dream of creating a lasting peace, and offering future generations of Palestinians and Israelis the chance to live in hope and security.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Rowley, Storer, H. 'Israel's stark choice: next week's election marks watershed as voters decide between two visions of the future, *Chicago Tribune*, May 22, 1996. Rowley, Storer, H. 'Israeli vote is a cliff hanger.' *Chicago Tribune*, May 30, 1996.

⁵⁰ Schmemmann, Serge, 'Election for Prime Minister of Israel is dead heat.' *New York Times*, May 30, 1996.

⁵¹ Guyatt, Nicholas, *Op-cit*, p. 56.

CHAPTER 7

'The Hashmonean Tunnel Opening'

On September 26, 1996, one hundred days to the day,¹ since Benjamin Netanyahu was sworn in as Israel's new Prime Minister,² the already stalled 'peace process' was once again thrown violently further 'off track'.³ Ehud Olmert's (The Mayor of Jerusalem's) decision to open the northern entrance of the ancient Hashmonean Tunnel that runs 400 metres alongside the length of the *Al-Haram al-Sharif's* (Temple Mount) western perimeter wall, whilst being backed by the tacit approval of the Israeli premier, gave legitimisation to an already nascent violent Palestinian protest.⁴ (Skirmishes had broken out a week before, over the IDF's forced closure of an Arab market in Hebron.)⁵

The violence that ensued after this particular ominous event was to some analysts highly reminiscent of the violence witnessed during the troublesome and deadly days (for both protagonists) of the *Intifada*.⁶ Indeed many Western media sources, European and American alike, wrongly claimed that the violence represented a new, a lesser, or even a mini *Intifada*.⁷ Arguably however, the ensuing violence was both serious and disruptive enough to the already fractured

¹ Shlaim, Avi, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World*, p. 563.

² Schmemmann, Serge, 'Netanyahu and Arafat, the political burdens of their stubbornness'. *New York Times*, September 27, 1996.

³ Bhatia, Shyam, 'Arabs heap scorn on Israeli 'stinker'', *Guardian*, September 26, 1996. And: Walker, Christopher, 'Israel on brink of war as 55 die in 'new intifada''. *The Times*, September 27, 1996.

⁴ Guyatt, Nicholas, *The Absence of Peace*, p. 39 and p. 133.

⁵ Prusher, Llena, R. 'A look but don't act mandate in West bank'. *Christian Science Monitor*, September 25, 1996.

⁶ Schmemmann Serge, 'Arab/Israeli clashes leave five dead in West Bank'. *New York Times*, September 26, 1996. And: Said, Edward, W. *The End of the Peace Process*, p. 111.

⁷ Dempsey, Judy, 'The start of a new intifada; businesses close as Palestinians come to take away the dead'. *The Financial Times*, September 27, 1996. And: Shahin, Mariam, 'The road to ruin'. *The Middle East*, Issue 267, May 1997.

peace, but it clearly lacked the articulated objectives that would characterise an *Intifada* proper.⁸

Nevertheless, *Intifada* or not, there was one very tangible difference in the nature of the violence that arose from the inception of the 'interim stage' of Oslo. The Palestinians through the assistance of the PPS,⁹ and other Palestinian security organisations (It is estimated that there may be as many as nine of them, perhaps more.),¹⁰ now had recourse to their own assault rifles.¹¹ Therefore offering an opportunity to even things up a bit with the IDF.¹² Indeed, many of these estimated 30, 000 PPS security men¹³ were described as battle hardened *Ex-Fedayeen*, *i.e.*, the Israeli's perceived criminals, outlaws, and 'arch terrorists' who had served as guerrillas in the Lebanon.¹⁴ It was little wonder then, that the international community, and in particular the U.S. 'media complex', watched the unfolding events with growing alarm and consternation.¹⁵ For the American imposed 'peace process' appeared to be in grave trouble; the outburst of violence was at the worst the Occupied Territories had experienced since its conception.¹⁶ Indeed, the IDF found itself in the unenviable position of discovering that the boundaries of their Indian country *i.e.*, the Lebanon had now shifted, and moreover, their *natives* were now extremely restless.¹⁷ Furthermore, some of

⁸ Schmemmann, Serge, '50 are killed as clashes widen from West Bank to Gaza', *New York Times*, September 27, 1996.

⁹ Schmemmann, Serge, 'Arab/Israeli clashes leave five dead in West Bank'. *New York Times*, September 26, 1996.

¹⁰ Said, Edward, *The End of the Peace Process*, p. 35.

¹¹ Farquhar, Neil, 'For Jews a split over peace effort widens'. *New York Times*, September 27, 1996. For a 'Byzantine Tree' See: *Time Magazine*, October 23, 2000.

¹² Schmemmann, Serge, 'Arab/Israeli clashes leave five dead in West Bank'. *New York Times*, September 26, 1996.

¹³ Wallach, Janet, & Wallach, John, *Op-cit*, p. 477.

¹⁴ Greenberg, Joel, 'PPS- The breakdown and the gunfight'. *New York Times*, September 27, 1996. And: Bhatia, Shyam, 'Israelis stunned as Palestine rises in bloody revolt'. *Guardian*, September 27, 1996. And: Butenschon, Nils, A. 'The Oslo Agreement: From the Whitehouse to Jabal Abu Ghnaim' In Giacamon, George, & Lorrington, Dag, J. *Op-cit*, p. 37.

¹⁵ Erlanger, Steven, 'Alarm around the world, and calls for calm talks', *New York Times*, September 26, 1996.

¹⁶ Schmemmann, Serge, 'Arab/Israeli clashes leave five dead in West Bank'. *New York Times*, September 27, 1996. And: Erlanger, Steven, 'Alarm around world, and calls for calm talks'. *New York Times*, September 27, 1996. And: Silver, Eric, 'Dozens killed, hundreds shot, as Middle East hopes are buried in the battle of Joseph's tomb'. *Independent*, September 27, 1996,

¹⁷ Peretz, Don, *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising*, p. 69.

these *natives* were also alarmingly armed with more than just the traditional stones and slingshots.¹⁸

It is suggested however, that in fact the ensuing violence was tantamount to little more than a form of mob rule *i.e.*, spontaneous, and lacking no credible direction or moral purpose whilst opposing a well tried and much tested Israeli military machine,¹⁹ even though the Israelis antagonism of the Palestinians and their much humiliated, and to some, humiliating leader, caused him [Arafat] to declare his intention of rekindling the still warm embers of the *Intifada* earlier in the month.²⁰ Therefore, on the strength of Arafat's pronouncement, perhaps the U.S. mainstream media felt justified in labelling what was to them, for all intents and purposes, a popular uprising constituting a 'shaking off' of the Israeli oppressor, *viz.* an *Intifada* proper.²¹ Nevertheless, it is argued, that the opening of the ancient tunnel was utilised as little more than a justification for the *Shabab* to vent their frustrations and anger with Israel, brought about through Netanyahu's political backtracking, vacillation, and constant u-turning, with regards to the implementation of the 'peace process', *viz.* the recently articulated proposal of further extensive settlement, in the guise of 40,000 new housing units and the Israeli Prime Minister's reluctance to release Palestinian political prisoners as agreed earlier with Arafat. This nascent Palestinian frustration was also particularly heightened due to Israel's very recently suspended scheduled withdrawal from Hebron in the West Bank.²²

Moreover it is further argued, that the opening of the tunnel (carried out under the cover of darkness, amongst heavy IDF protection; indicating the Israelis

¹⁸ Schmemmann, Serge, 'Arab/Israeli clashes leave five dead in West Bank'. *New York Times*, September 27, 1996. And: Greenberg, Joel, 'Arab protest in West Bank explodes in gunfire'. *New York Times*, September 26, 1996. And: Avishai, Bernard, 'Lost Tribes of Israel' *Prospect*, June 2001.

¹⁹ Consider an image by Castelbuono, Rina, 'An Israeli army jeep made its way through barricades and a hail of stones towards Mary's Tomb yesterday after a mob of Palestinians tried to set the Jewish shrine on fire'. *New York Times*, September 27, 1996.

²⁰ Bhatia, Shyam, 'Israeli insults drive Arafat to threaten new intifada,' *Observer*, September 1, 1996.

²¹ Ashrawi, Hanan, *This Side of Peace*, p. 43.

²² Shmemmann, Serge, 'Arab/Israeli clashes leave five dead in West Bank'. *New York Times*, September 26, 1996. And: Greenberg, Joel, 'Arab protest in West Bank explodes with gunfire'. *New York Times*, September 26, 1996.

realisation that to do so, would be a highly contentious, and an extremely inflammatory move), was firstly, an unfortunate harbinger of the violence that was inevitably to come with the death throes of the 'peace process'.²³ Indeed, the purposeful violation of the sanctity of the *Al-Haram al-Sharif* and *Al-Aqsa* Mosque, would, undoubtedly herald the true 'Death of Oslo'.

Therefore it is suggested that the opening of the tunnel, was not only a cynical act of Israeli chauvinism, (highly reminiscent of Israeli acts of chauvinism displayed towards the Palestinians during the 1960's and '70s),²⁴ but could also be considered as something of a dummy run. If you will, an acid test to deliberately ascertain how vulnerable the 'peace process' actually was. And to gauge precisely how the 'peace process' could once and for all be nullified if the Israeli Authorities so wished for it, at any given time in the future. To develop this argument further, it seems a reasonable consideration to postulate, that supporting this observation, is the contention that the Israelis do not require a *de facto* accommodation with the Palestinians, nor an extant 'peace process' to maintain and enforce their regional hegemony. Whilst contrary to this, the Palestinians certainly require an accommodation with Israel, if they wish to improve their unfortunate, and often considered miserable lot.²⁵

This is to suggest that the erupting violence and protestations of the Palestinians were being closely followed and assessed by many Israeli hawks.²⁶ Who neither cared for the principles of Oslo, nor, had wished for its inception.²⁷ Indeed, it had appeared to them, that Rabin had sold out on the principle of *Eretz Yisrael*, by offering a supposed olive branch to the Palestinians, and trading territory for security, and therefore a cessation of the 'peace process' would suit them.²⁸

²³ Schmemmann, Serge, 'Netanyahu and Arafat, the political burdens of their stubbornness'. *New York Times*, September 27, 1996.

²⁴ Erlanger, Steven, 'U.S. urges Israel to yield and close tunnel entrance'. *New York Times*, September 27, 1996.

²⁵ Woolcott, Martin, 'Neither peace nor war, just endless suffering'. *Guardian*, October 13, 2000.

²⁶ Farquhar, Neil, 'For Jews a split over peace effort widens'. *New York Times*, September 27, 1996.

²⁷ Greenberg, Joel, 'After prayers at the Mosque, oasis of peace is shattered'. *New York Times*, September 28, 1996. And: Wallach, Janet & Wallach, John, *Op-cit*, p. 477.

²⁸ Ajami, Fouad, *Op-cit*, p. 286.

Indeed, a prevalent theory amongst the Israeli hawks was that it was better that this violence had emerged now, in order to show the Palestinians that the issue of Jerusalem was to them [the Israeli hawks] non-negotiable.²⁹ Secondly, it could be argued, that many Israelis, both politicians and populace alike, were rather sick to death with Oslo, and the difficulties that its implementation had brought particularly to the Israeli domestic arena *i.e.*, the constant threat of terrorist activity, or the continued unrest of the approximately one million Arab Israelis, who for the first real time since the *Intifada* of 1987-93, were beginning to show a compatriotism for their incarcerated Palestinian brethren.³⁰

Therefore it is suggested that many Israelis were really wishing for a return to the 'stalemate' that was pre-Oslo, and abruptly ending the dream of Palestinian national aspirations, perhaps, arguably for 'all' eternity.³¹ (Stalemate however, is something of a frequently used misnomer within the mainstream media's discourse concerning the conflict, particularly when considering that Israel has total control in the shaping of the Palestinian's destinies within the Occupied Territories. Moreover, to the Israelis, such a dominance and purposeful suppression of Palestinian 'hope' constitutes an outright victory for Israel.) Indeed, given the political and social upheavals of the previous six months, and the uncertainties for the future, particularly now that it was clear to them, [the Israelis], that the strong committed leadership of Rabin was long gone, in favour of the more opportunistic and autocratic political style of Netanyahu, a moratorium of the 'peace process' might indeed be the best thing (for them).³²

Selection of this particular 'media frame' was made once again for several reasons. Firstly, and as was suggested, the eruption of the violence that

²⁹ Olmert, Ehud, 'Jerusalem will stay ours'. *The Jerusalem Post*, August 1, 1993. And, Greenberg, Joel, 'Arab protest in West Bank explodes with gunfire'. *New York Times*, September 26, 1996.

³⁰ Schiff, Ze'ev, & Ya'ari, Ehud, *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising-Israel's Third Front*. p. 127.

³¹ Realisation is made of two factors however; the first is that Oslo, or something very like it, might rise like a phoenix from out of the ashes, the second, is that there is an argument that exists that suggests that the implementation of the Oslo 'peace process' had to happen to facilitate a proper, more workable initiative. See: Halm, Sara, 'It may take a long time, but this Middle East violence will subside'. *Independent*, May 23, 2001.

³² Farquhar, Neil, 'For Jews a split over peace efforts widens'. *New York Times*, September 27, 1996.

accompanied the tunnel opening could be considered to constitute something of a portent of things to come. Secondly, it is argued that U.S. mainstream media portrayals firstly showed the Palestinian *Shabab* and the guerrillas of the PPS in a reasonably favourable light, as they reacted to what many in the U.S. 'media complex' considered as a wilful and unnecessary provocation undertaken by the Israeli authorities.³³ As the days of tension and violence mounted, and as the Palestinian protestations became rather predictable and habitual, the U.S. mainstream media's portrayals of the protesters slid back into a form of 'traditional denigration' that the Palestinians had experienced during the *Intifada* proper.

For example, there were scores of images that depicted large groups of the disaffected Palestinian youths lining up to throw volley after volley of rocks down onto the heads of the IDF.³⁴ And in apposition to these images, there were many that showed views looking down the length of rifle barrels into the midst of these apparent seething hordes from the perspective of the 'noble and brave' Israeli soldiers.³⁵ To all intents and purposes, the utilisation of these images in the mediums of the U.S. mainstream media was in itself deliberate, for it showed a considerable distortion of a reality with regards to the construed nobility of the IDF. Furthermore, it is argued, that regrettably, these images have become the stock in trade of images utilised in the compilation of the visual narrative that accompanies this particular aspect of the conflict.³⁶

Indeed, this is to argue that in both images, the Palestinians were portrayed as crazed, irrational, hotheads (the intransigent party) who throw rocks at the moral,

³³ Erlanger, Steven, 'Alarm around the world and calls for calm talks'. *New York Times*, September 26, 1996. And: Schmemmann, Serge, '50 are killed as clashes widen from West Bank to Gaza'. *New York Times*, September 27, 1996.

³⁴ Consider, for a good example, the image shown on the cover of the *New York Times* as supplied by *Reuters*. See: *New York Times*, September 26, 1996.

³⁵ Again, consider Castelbionio, Rina, 'An Israeli soldier returns fire towards Palestinians at Rachel's tomb in Bethlehem'. *New York Times*, September 29, 1996. And: Shiff, Ze'ev, & Ya'ari, Ehud, *Op-cit*, p. 159.

³⁶ Consider for example these very graphic and powerful images selected from various Western mainstream media sources: Abadi, Sharon, 'Israeli troops prepare to fire as Palestinians stone them in Hebron yesterday'. *Guardian*, April 10, 1997. Guez, Jack, 'An Israeli soldier takes aim in Bethlehem'. *The Sunday Times* October 22, 2000. Johansson, Magnus, 'The firing line: a Palestinian boy keeps up the pressure on Israeli troops'. *The Sunday Times* March 4, 2001.

logical, Israeli soldiers (the armed vanguards of 'modern' civilisation).³⁷ Moreover, it is suggested that in a way, they, [the Palestinians], are portrayed as being incapable of rationalising their anger. Furthermore, they throw stones purely because they have nothing better to be doing with their time.³⁸ This consideration, some bigots might argue, is due to their general laziness, and lack of inventiveness. And moreover, has nothing whatsoever, to do with the harsh brutality, and the insipid nature of the Israeli occupation, and the subsequent despondency this instils in the noticeably disaffected Palestinian youth. Nevertheless, this typical depiction of an unruly mob, serves to provide a loose legitimisation for the IDF opening fire on the *Shabab*, and if any of the Palestinian outlaws are regrettably killed? 'Well, that's just too bad, they shouldn't have been out on the streets in the first place.' (At least if there is a curfew in force the death toll is slightly curbed.)³⁹ Moreover, it serves to conjure sympathy for the young conscripts of the IDF within the audience of the U.S. mainstream media, inasmuch as it provokes the sentiment of: 'Oh those brave boys...How difficult it must be to restrain oneself when having rocks and abuse hurled at you indiscriminately...I don't blame them for losing their patience every once in a while.'

In a way, it is probably possible to empathise with this last sentiment. However, it says nothing for the foolhardiness, but sheer bravado of the Palestinians (man, woman and child alike), who stand up to an extremely well equipped modern army, that possesses racially prejudiced views and ideology, and who can pick you off at will through the use of a high powered rifle (M16) and a 'full metal jacket' deterrent, (*al-malan*) if and when, they wish to use it.⁴⁰ (On that impassioned afternoon of the 25th they certainly did.) It is suggested, that to argue that the IDF is not racially prejudiced in its views and ideology, is to foolishly deny yet another reality, for it is a regrettable truism, that a 'modern' standing army can only operate in such conditions unless spoon-fed upon a constant diet

³⁷ Schiff, Ze'ev, & Ya'ari, Ehud, *Op-cit*, p. 145.

³⁸ Schmemann, Serge, '50 are killed as clashes widen from West Bank to Gaza Strip'. *New York Times*, September 27, 1996.

³⁹ Schiff, Ze'ev, & Ya'ari, Ehud, *Op-cit*, p. 115.

⁴⁰ *Al-malan* see Peretz, Don, *Intifada: the Palestinian Uprising*, p. 86

of hateful and racist propaganda concerning the *true* nature of the perceived enemy.⁴¹

To consolidate these aforementioned views, there was another strong image that appeared quite frequently, which depicted members of the PPS standing rifle to shoulder, and loosing clip after clip at a predominantly unsighted target, with a demonstrative expression on their faces denoting anger or rage. (Indeed, effusing an expression close to blind fury.)⁴² It is argued that the express utilisation of such images as these was purposeful, for it depicted Arafat's hand picked men as Goons who are both militarily inexperienced and are also largely ineffective. Moreover, they are portrayed as boys with their *new* toys; whooping like a pack of over excited Indian 'braves' riding out on a raiding party, firing willy-nilly into the air like a gang of drunken Mexican bandits.⁴³

Therefore, it is suggested that the true purpose of these images is to show how the *ex-Fedayeen* and *Shabab* have descended into an unruliness that is largely predicated upon a perceived notion of a base Arab machismo. And moreover, that this rabble are too naive and unsophisticated to even use a rifle effectively. Indeed, the analogy with an American 'Plains Culture' *i.e.*, 'Cowboys and Indians' is easy to facilitate with the usage of such obvious imagery. And in the channels of the U.S. mainstream media this is often reflected by the common and popular usage of such language as gunfights, revenge at high noon, (*i.e.*, after, noon prayers) *etc.*⁴⁴

Nevertheless, it is also argued that accompanying this shift in temporary empathy for the Palestinians within the U.S. mainstream media's portrayal of the supposed 'new' *Intifada* was a transition in the nature of media's discourse *per se*. For example, when the violence officially erupted in the aftermath of the

⁴¹ Ashrawi, Hanan, *This Side of Peace*, p. 41. And: Said, Edward, *The Question of Palestine*, p. 91. And: Peretz, Don, *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising*, p. 49, and p. 54.

⁴² Hollander, Jim, (Reuters) 'A Palestinian policeman fires his AK-47 rifle at Israeli troops stationed on the hills surrounding the West Bank town of Ramallah'. *Guardian*, September 27, 1996. And: *The Times*, September 27, 1996.

⁴³ See: Masland, Tom, *Newsweek*, 'Shot all to hell'. Vol. 128, No 15, October 7, 1996.

⁴⁴ Ze'ev Schiff & Ya'ari, Ehud, *Op-cit*, p. 121.

tunnel opening there was some sympathy for the Palestinians expressed in many of the U.S. and Western mainstream media channels. Indeed, this media recognised that the Israelis had been unnecessarily provocative, and had indeed acted in an extremely chauvinistic manner. (A manner in which their regional hegemony allows for.) And furthermore, that given the disappointments that the Palestinians had received, and the ire that had been provoked since Netanyahu had attained power, they were more than just a little justified in venting their anger and frustrations. Indeed, many analysts had wondered what had taken the disillusioned Palestinians incarcerated in the Occupied Territories so long to rise up.⁴⁵ Traditionally the oppressed Palestinians had never tolerated the Israeli's colonial tactics of divide and rule and 'carrot and stick' quietly.⁴⁶ (This last term construes the underlings as donkeys, and is, in itself, a derogatory phrase, connoting both stubbornness and foolishness).

By September 27, 1996, however, there appeared a tangible shift in the nature of the mainstream media's discourse as the Palestinians vowed to gather after noon prayers at the *Al-Haram al-Sharif* and *Al-Aqsa* Mosque complex, and conduct a 'day of rage' in direct protest at the Israeli inspired violation of the Holy Site.⁴⁷ Indeed, whereas the Palestinians had evoked sympathy within the U.S. mainstream media channels on the strength of the flagrant injustice conducted against them, this mildly more favourable empathy shown toward them, would descend into an antipathy and a more recognisable 'traditional denigration'. Many writers, journalists and analysts, now perceived that the Palestinian youths were, in the main, largely overreacting, and embarking upon a dangerous escalation with the ranks of the IDF. Furthermore, it was claimed that the *Shabab* were being incited to revolt against the Israeli occupancy specifically by Arafat himself, and whilst doing so were being shielded by the armed policemen of the PPS.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Friedman, Thomas, L. 'Bibi's moment of truth: partnership or fantasy'. *New York Times*, September 28, 1996

⁴⁶ 'Carrot and Stick' see Kimmerling, Baruch & Migdal, Joel, S. *The Palestinians: The Making of a People*, p. 241. And Schiff, Ze'ev & Ya'ari, Ehud, *Op-cit*, p. 117.

⁴⁷ Schmemmann, Serge, 'Netanyahu and Arafat, the political burden of their stubbornness'. *New York Times*, September 27, 1996.

⁴⁸ Schmemmann, Serge, '50 are killed as clashes widen from West Bank to Gaza Strip'. *New York Times*, September 27, 1996.

Inasmuch as this maybe true, it is argued that another mild distortion often occurs within the U.S. mainstream media concerning the Palestinian Chairman's utilisation of the disaffected Palestinian youth. For although Arafat may openly encourage keen spirited young men to make it as difficult as possible for the IDF to impose their rule over the Occupied Territories, it does not take into account that these youths are fiercely independent and vehemently politicised, or that they have little or no future in the current status of the Israeli occupation, and are therefore more than prepared to become potential martyrs for the sake of Palestinian national aspirations and perceived liberty.⁴⁹

Recognition is also made to the fact, however, that a lot of the false bravado evident in the foolhardy, but arguably brave *Shabab* (not insane, *i.e.*, *Majanin*), is fuelled by both peer pressure, and by what some have questionably identified as a supposedly specific Arab inclination to a male machismo. This sentiment is a mildly racist allusion in itself, as young Arab men are no more inclined to a specific male machismo than any other group of young men venting their frustrations in impassioned acts of defiance, or in this case, legitimate resistance to an Israeli *fait accompli*.

It is also argued that the Palestinians did little to halt this transition of a more balanced media portrayal into a traditional form of media denigration, and this was brought about through several factors. Firstly, as the violent protest to the Israeli injustice became more habitual, its original justification was lost. Indeed too many observers and analysts, the protestations were now perceived as violence perpetuated just for the sake of it. And furthermore, the Palestinians were now just simply overreacting, for after all, this was an ancient tunnel, the opening of which, was not directly harmful to the Arabs. Moreover, it did not directly impinge upon the sanctity of the Muslim's revered Holy Site, for it only passed alongside the *Al-Haram al-Sharif*, albeit, below ground. The Palestinians fears and anger however, were to some extents valid, *i.e.*, that with the opening of the tunnel, the potential for terrorists from Israel's far right, if they so wished,

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

could tunnel further under the revered site, and perhaps attempt to destroy the golden domed eight century Mosque of Omar by an act of wanton terrorism.) This suspicion however, was not totally groundless for some extreme settlers had indeed articulated their plans to carry out such a reprehensible scheme on several previous occasions.⁵⁰

It is argued however, that this violation of the *Al-Haram al-Sharif* was in its sheer audacity, even more inflaming by dint of its supposed justifiability and questionable legitimacy. Secondly, and very harmfully for the Palestinians as far as more temperate media portrayals were concerned, the violence that erupted soliciting Israel's extremely firm response *i.e.*, that of no tolerance (iron fist)⁵¹ inevitably brought out onto the streets both the rabidly fervent nationalists of *Al-Fatah* and the ephemeral appearance of the hooded would-be martyrs of *Hamas* and the *Islamic Jihad*.

As soon as their presence was detected however, and then reported by the U.S. mainstream media, any last sympathy for the Palestinian's sense of injustice vanished. For it is argued that the injustice of opening an ancient tunnel for the officially stated purpose of easing the difficulties and burdens of Jewish veneration at the Wailing Wall, (*Kotel Maaravi*)⁵² when compared to the threat and injustice of being blown to bits upon an *Eged* bus, does not equate within the minds of the readership of the U.S. mainstream media.

An analysis of the U.S. mainstream media throughout this turbulent 'media frame' did give rise to a serious criticism, however, namely that on the whole the journalists and analysts failed to pick up upon the religious implications that instigated the escalation of violence. Instead, it is argued, that not for the first time throughout the period of the Oslo 'peace process', the 'media complex'

⁵⁰ Smith, Charles, D. *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, p. 295. Sprinzak, Ehud, The Iceberg Model of Extremism. In Newman, David [Ed.], *The Impact of Gush Emunim*, pp. 42-43. Indeed, an underground Jewish organisation calling itself the Fist of Defence attempted to destroy a mosque in Hebron in May 1983, and there was also another subsequent attack upon the *Al-Haram al-Sharif* and *Masjid al-Aqsa* in January 1984. See Peretz, Don, *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising*, p. 21.

⁵¹ Schiff, Ze'ev, & Ya'ari, Ehud, *Op-cit*, p. 261.

⁵² Syrkin, Marie [Ed.], *Golda Meir Speaks Out*, p. 158.

once again showed grave concern for the continuation of the 'peace process' and concentrated upon the political ramifications of the Israeli's controversial decision. Indeed, this was reflected in the way that Bill Clinton promised to personally intervene to find a way through the deadlock and perhaps whilst only showing the Palestinians and their leadership mere lip service, did castigate Netanyahu for deliberately pushing the Palestinians too far.

It is suggested that since the inception of Oslo (perhaps with the exception of the 'Massacre of Hebron'), the violence that ensued after the harmful opening of the ancient Herodian tunnel was extremely reminiscent of the violence that hallmrkad the *Intifada* proper. Nevertheless, such violent outbursts after this extremely provocative action would characterise the remaining days of the Oslo 'peace process' until the regrettable outbreak of *Intifada* II, which denoted the true 'Death of Oslo'. It seems fair to suggest, that all the while that Israel acts in such an overtly chauvinistic manner towards the Palestinians and Israeli Arabs, she [Israel] and the international community *i.e.*, the U.S. in this instance, can expect, little more than violent and retrogressive behaviour conducted against them. Therefore, in light of these factors, it is strongly argued that an Israeli imposed moratorium of the 'peace process' would not be equal to a moratorium of purposeful inflammatory Israeli orchestrated acts of blatant chauvinism, upon any true path to peace.

CHAPTER 8

'Har Homa: An 'Ongoing' Project'

'By God, this is the worst situation in the 'peace process' since 1977 [Camp David]... You have [Netanyahu] succeeded in frightening the world... You have pushed all of us into a very difficult situation.'¹

This 'media frame' deals specifically with the 'ongoing' Zionist project of the establishment of immutable 'facts on the ground', namely the Israeli settlement of Arab southeast Jerusalem at the contended site of Har Homa.² (*Jabal Abu Ghnaim* to the Palestinian Arabs.)³ The main argument proposed in this chapter, is that U.S. mainstream media discourse during this lengthy period *i.e.*, March 15, 1997 until approximately the end of March in 1998, took distinct forms, and possessed several different aspects.⁴ Therefore, this chapter will undertake to discuss the nature of U.S. mainstream media discourse during this *initially* extremely turbulent, and potentially very grim and destructive period.⁵

From the outset then, when the politically intransigent and personally determined Benjamin Netanyahu declared his own 'steadfast' intention to commence upon the project of Har Homa,⁶ despite stiff opposition from the Palestinian Authority,

¹ Egyptian President, Hosni Mubarak, as cited in Schemann, Serge, 'New strife leads Netanyahu to schedule a visit to Clinton,' *New York Times*, April 2, 1997.

² Dempsey, Judy, 'Netanyahu seeks troop pull out backing: Israeli leader cuts controversial Har Homa settlement to win far right support'. *The Financial Times*, March 7 1997. And: Editorial, 'Setting facts in concrete'. *Guardian*, February 28, 1997.

³ Editorial, 'Whistling in Jerusalem.' *Guardian*, March 19, 1997.

⁴ These dates were decided upon, firstly, because March 15, 1997 represents Netanyahu's confirmed commitment to embark upon the Har Homa project, and the end of March 1998 represents the coming to office of Ehud Barak.

⁵ Grim has been used here because Har Homa represented the potentially gravest threat to the 'peace process'. See: Hirst, David, 'Arafat quandary as dream fades'. *Guardian*, March 29, 1997. And: Gellman, Barton, 'Gap widens in Mideast peace making, *The Washington Post*, March 25, 1997.

⁶ The use of 'steadfast' here is a purposeful connection with the Palestinian's 'steadfastness' (*Samud*) *i.e.*, the specific language of resistance. Butenshon, Nils, A. 'The Oslo Agreement: The White House to Jabal al Ghnaim, In Giacaman, George, & Lonning, Dag, J. [Eds.], *Op-cit*, p. 25. The Har Homa settlement was initially the 'brainchild' of *Likud's* Yitzhak Rabin, and was 'spearheaded' by Ariel Sharon. See: Editorial, 'Setting facts in concrete'. *Guardian*, February 28, 1997. And: Guyatt, Nicholas, *Op-cit*, p. 63.

⁷ and a quite unusual overt condemnation from the U.S. 'media complex',⁸ U.S. mainstream media portrayals were on the whole rather sympathetic to the Palestinians, recognising that Israel was purposefully violating the ambiguous good nature of the Oslo 'peace process' *i.e.*, that of supposedly 'no more settlement'.⁹

So when the surveyors moved up onto the 'hill' on the 18th of March, as scheduled,¹⁰ and a peaceful Palestinian protest was instigated,¹¹ (led in the main by the late Faisal Hussaini a stoical Jerusalemite),¹² the U.S. mainstream media empathised with the plight of the powerless Palestinians, and even relatively surprisingly rallied to their defence, openly questioning Israeli motivations and their claimed moral legitimacy of such an unnecessarily pernicious move.¹³ Indeed, it was evident to most observers and analysts in the U.S. 'media complex' that it was now Israel, or more specifically Benjamin Netanyahu, that was endangering the fragile 'peace process'.¹⁴ Moreover, there were vociferous voices from within the U.S. 'media complex' warning of the impending violence that would inevitably break out if such a plan were executed.¹⁵

⁷ Storer, Rowley, H. 'Israel repeats vow to build in Arab zone.' *Chicago Tribune*, March 15, 1997.

⁸ Bill Clinton was quite vocal in his disapproval of Netanyahu's potentially inflammatory and dangerous action and perhaps this was what encouraged Netanyahu to 'stick to his guns'. See: Waldmeir, Pat, & Dempsey, Judy, 'Clinton criticises Israel over Jerusalem homes plan'. *The Financial Times*, March 8, 1997. And: Walker, Martin, 'Clinton snubs Israeli PM in frank talks'. *Guardian*, April 4, 1997.

⁹ Bhatia, Shyam & Black, Ian, 'Bulldozers roll in'. *Guardian*, March 19, 1997. And: Hirst, David, 'Private view: Slow motion conquest', *Guardian*, March 8, 1997. Prusher, Llène, R. 'Unravelling peace pushes Netanyahu into a corner.' *Christian Science Monitor*, April 3, 1997.

¹⁰ Storer, Rowley, H. 'Israeli, Arab negotiators hurry to avert violence'. *Chicago Tribune*, March 18, 1997. And: Greenberg, Joel, 'Tense stand off in Jerusalem ends, but nerves are taut.' *New York Times*, March 1, 1997.

¹¹ Up until then, and even initially as works began, the Palestinians protest to Har Homa had been mainly peaceful. See: Bhatia, Shyam, & Walker, Martin, 'Netanyahu accused of secret deal on settlers' *Guardian*, February 28, 1997. And: Storer, Rowley, H. 'Israel resets peace clock.' *Chicago Tribune*, March 20, 1997.

¹² Ephron, Don, 'Ex-terrorist turned peace activist dies.' *The Washington Times*, June 1, 2000. And: Goldenberg, Suzanne, & Whitaker, Brian, 'Hussaini, the 'voice of sanity' dies.' *Guardian*, June 1, 2000.

¹³ Will, George, F. 'Land for a liars promises.' *The Washington Post*, March 27, 1997.

¹⁴ Geyer, Georgie, A. '2 weak leaders hope for peace in the Middle East'. *Chicago Tribune*, March 28, 1997. And: Storer, Rowley, H. 'Israel resets peace clock.' *Chicago Tribune*, March 20, 1997.

¹⁵ Farquhar, Neil, 'Arafat lobbies U.S. against Israeli's housing plan.' *New York Times*, March 6, 1997.

Therefore, when violence erupted on the 21st (poignantly denoted by a *Hamas* sponsored 'suicide attack' upon a cafe in Tel Aviv, which killed three), several days after the big lumbering bulldozers accompanied by a heavily armed IDF contingent rolled out onto the hill 'to break the ground' on the eighteenth,¹⁶ (indicating that the Israeli authority had accepted that they were acting chauvinistically, and immorally, once again towards the Palestinians), no one was really shocked, least of all the Israelis and the U.S. 'media complex'.¹⁷ The ensuing violence however, was not all that different from the violence that had erupted last fall, when the Israelis had maliciously opened the ancient tunnel.

Indeed, so similar was both the use of imagery and the descriptive narrative of the violence, that it would, to some, represent once again a 'lesser' or 'micro' *Intifada*.¹⁸ Therefore, it is felt that it is unnecessary to spend too much time in this present chapter conducting an intensive analysis of it. Suffice to say however, there was one significant difference between the violence surrounding the commencement of the Har Homa project, and that of the Hashmonean Tunnel, and this difference was reflected in the both the textual and visual narratives pertaining to the early and transitory period of the project.

For instance, there were many images that showed the impressively bulky bulldozers, chewing up the pine trees,¹⁹ and spitting them out like shredded and snapped matchsticks whilst spewing out big black diesel clouds high into the Mediterranean sky; meanwhile the graders and levellers flayed the rock strewn topsoil.²⁰ Moreover, there were many more images depicting the frustrated and

¹⁶ Bhati, Shyam, 'Bulldozers roll in'. *Guardian*, March 19, 1997. And: Dempsey Judy & Machlis, Avi, 'Netanyahu sends in the bulldozers'. *Financial Times*, March 19, 1997. And: Storer, Rowley, H. 'Israeli, Arab negotiators hurry to avert violence.' *Chicago Tribune*, March 18, 1997.

¹⁷ Storer, Rowley, H. 'U.S. seeking good will gestures from Israel.' *Chicago Tribune*, March 13, 1997. And: Storer, Rowley, H. 'Israel resets peace clock.' *Chicago Tribune*, March 20, 1997. And: Schmemmann, Serge, 'Israeli cabinet votes to build in East Jerusalem next week.' *New York Times*, March 15, 1997.

¹⁸ Bhati, Shyam, & Black, Ian, 'Israel warned of new *Intifada* over settlement'. *Guardian*, February 27, 1997. And: Bhatia, Shyam, 'Tide of fury runs towards a third *Intifada*, *Guardian*, March 23, 1997. And: Prusher, Llène, R. 'This time, Palestinian *Intifada* loses punch.' *Christian Science Monitor*, April 10, 1997.

¹⁹ Greenberg, Joel, 'Tense stand off in Jerusalem ends, but nerves are taut.' *New York Times*, March 1, 1997.

²⁰ AP Photo, 'Breaking ground damaging peace hopes.' *Chicago Tribune*, March 19, 1997. And, Israel breaks ground at housing site'. *The Washington Post*, March 19, 1997.

saddened protesters, powerless to stop the wilful betrayal of the principles of Oslo and the onslaught of the Zionist state maker *i.e.*, the construction company's (and in some cases, the army's) heavy machinery.²¹ (This was colonialist pioneering made too easy; indeed, 'like taking candy from a baby'.)

Yet this relatively pro-Palestinian discourse however, did give rise to a criticism, because once again, as on several previous occasions throughout the Oslo 'peace process', the U.S. mainstream media largely failed to indicate or reflect the obvious religious implications and their clear significance to the crisis that was triggered by the commencement of the project.²² Indeed, this is to say, that in fact, what was unleashed, represented the potentially gravest and most troubling issue relating to Oslo itself. For the Palestinians, the 'Battle of Jerusalem' had now begun.²³ The fan of extreme violence, (as in a vortex) had regrettably been switched on, whipping everyone up into an angry frenzy (It was largely the Palestinians that were portrayed as frenzied, however.) and it would be remain to be seen whether or not it could be switched off again.²⁴

In order to clarify this contentious and debatable point, it is necessary to understand exactly what the Har Homa project means and represents to both parties of the conflict. Firstly, the Har Homa project means *all* that is positive and good for the Israelis, and 'political' Zionism. Conversely, it represents everything negative and nihilistic for the Palestinians, and their long held national dream and fanciful allusions. Indeed the Har Homa project means for the Israelis, the completion of two final concentric rings of Jewish settlement, and the closing of a 'horseshoe'.²⁵ Moreover, this completion defines the Zionists total 'conquest' of the ancient city and the creation of a Greater Jerusalem,

²¹ Hersh, Seymour, M. *The Sampson Option*. pp. 184-185.

²² Gellman, Barton, 'gap widens in Mideast peacemaking.' *The Washington Post*, March 25, 1997.

²³ Greenberg, Joel, 'Tense stand off in Jerusalem ends, but nerves are taut.' *New York Times*, March 1, 1997. Hirst, David, 'Arafat quandary as dream fades'. *Guardian*, March 29, 1997.

²⁴ Prusher, Llenn, R. 'Unravelling peace pushes Netanyahu into a corner' *Christian Science Monitor*, April 3, 1997.

²⁵ Greenberg, Joel, 'Tense stand off in Jerusalem ends, but nerves are taut.' *New York Times*, March 1, 1997. Editorial, 'Setting facts in concrete.' *Guardian*, February 29, 1997.

emblematic of Zionism's greatest physical and spiritual achievement.²⁶ Whilst conversely, for the Palestinians, it represents their total entrapment and cantonment, viz. the Balkanisation or Bantustanisation of Palestine. In sum, the Har Homa project is the 'keystone' for the resounding Israeli victory,²⁷ and is axiomatically the building block that seals Palestinian access through the land corridor from the West Bank to their much beloved *Al-Quds*. (Jerusalem)

The fear for the Palestinians then, is that they shall appear as 'a people' (indeed, 'a nation' purposefully to refute Golda Meir's infamous and often quoted racist sentiment)²⁸ cast like 'seeds of grain upon a path', for whom without contiguity for their territory, they as a supposedly emancipated nation, shall for a short time grow and flourish, only before withering away, perhaps forever, consumed by the vexatious ministrations of their neo-colonialist Israeli overseer. Furthermore, this process of decay, would, it is argued, take years, perhaps even decades. In short, it would represent a slow and painful descent into a condition of deep and dark desperation, which in itself, is a rather morbid and nihilistic 'projection'.

Finally, the Har Homa project is a symbol of Israel's 'modern' vibrancy and status as a matured and established Zionist state. Yet it sends a clear message to the world that the tenets of 'political' Zionism are also healthy and secure. (In the sense that Israeli settlement is 'ongoing' and the actualisation of *Eretz Yisrael* is gradually being realised and not 'forsaken'.)²⁹ This factor is obviously appealing to the settlers and the Israeli right, i.e., Likud: Jerusalem would finally become the indivisible Jewish capital forever.³⁰ Secured quite simply with the creation of six thousand five hundred housing units at the Har Homa site.³¹ Indeed, secured for the price of the settling many of the Israelis supposedly much needed Russian

²⁶ Hirst David, 'Private view: slow motion conquest'. *Guardian*, March 29, 1997.

²⁷ Leader, 'Dangers in Jerusalem.' *The Financial Times*, March 3, 1997.

²⁸ Syrkin, Marie, [Ed.] *Golda Meir Speaks Out*, pp. 13-14.

²⁹ Aronson, Geoffrey, 'Despite confrontation Oslo still stands.' *Christian Science Monitor*, April 15, 1997. And: Borger, Julian, 'Anger on streets of Hebron.' *Observer*, July 16, 1997. And: Sharrock, David, 'Jerusalem builders find Mary's resting place.' *Guardian*, November 10, 1997.

³⁰ Rowley, Storer, H. 'U.S. seeking good will gestures from Israel.' *Chicago Tribune*, March 13, 1997.

³¹ Cloud, David, S 'Mubarak fears Jerusalem violence.' *Chicago Tribune*, March 12, 1997.

immigrants.³² A price that in the long term might be too much to pay, as colonialism is by nature a cyclical process, inasmuch as it has to have fuel *viz.* subjects to dominate and territory in which to develop. Therefore, in Israel we see marginalized and expendable Palestinians today, and perhaps 'lower grade' and expendable Russian Jews tomorrow.

Politically speaking the Har Homa project was quite simply a *Likud* ploy to circumvent the 'final status talks'³³ and pre-empt the final solution to the 'Question of Palestine' by creating permanent and immovable obstacles on the ground, that are not just merely housing units, but are a people, with a very dubious specific Jewish identity.³⁴ Theoretically then, no one would dare, or would be allowed, to ask them to move to a less contested area on the Israeli side of Jerusalem's 'Green Line' in order to make way for an eventually agreed partition.

All these aforementioned considerations hopefully cover the major dynamics and socio-political ramifications of the Har Homa project. Simply put, they confirm Israel's conquest, whilst signifying the conclusive defeat of Palestinian designs upon Arab East Jerusalem. (But not the abject defeat of the Palestinian peoples *per se.*)³⁵ Therefore, it is strongly suggested that the Har Homa project was not the seemingly innocuous project it first appeared, but is in reality a symbol of probably the single most emotive issue pertaining to the Arab/Israeli conflict, *i.e.*, 'the final status' and the contested inheritance of Holy Jerusalem.³⁶

Yet it would seem as in previous times of crisis, the 'media complex' concentrated their efforts largely upon the political ramifications and the potential damage to the frail and inert 'peace process', specifically due to an escalation of violence. It was Washington in the form of envoy Dennis Ross

³² Avishai, Bernard, 'Lost Tribes of Israel', *Prospect*, June 2001.

³³ Bhatia, Shyam, & Black, Ian, 'Israel warned of new *Intifada* over settlement'. *Guardian*, February 27, 1997. And: Gellman, Barton, 'U.S., Israel fault Arafat on Hamas.' *The Washington Post*, March 24, 1997.

³⁴ 'Arguably of Jewish identity', consider the debate within Israel concerning 'Who is a Jew?' See: Schiff, Ze'ev, & Ya'ari, Ehud, *Op-cit*, p. 307.

³⁵ Guyatt, Nicholas, *The Absence of Peace*, p. 185.

³⁶ Hirst, David, 'Arafat quandary as dream fades'. *Guardian*, March 29, 1997.

(sent to Israel initially on the 26th of March), who eventually managed to pull the plug and halt the fan, temporarily forestalling the already nascent 'Battle of Jerusalem', but only after the Administration had seriously reined in the mischievous Netanyahu, by threatening all sorts of political and fiscal recriminations for Israel.

It is strongly suggested however, that Clinton had to rummage quite extensively through his personal address book at this particular time of crisis.³⁷ It was an irony indeed then, that Netanyahu's belligerent attitude over the instigating of the Har Homa project contrastingly saved the greatest of all of the Palestinian national aspirations.

The violence may have quelled as a result of direct U.S. intervention, but not before Arafat received some rather typical U.S. 'media complex' denigration and slander once again over his perceived inability to maintain his authority over his subjects in the Occupied Territories.³⁸ It is doubtful however, that the violence ceased as a result of what was often rumoured in the 'prestigious press' *i.e.*, that the Palestinian leader had struck a deal with Netanyahu over his personal use of Israeli airspace and also over the opening Gaza International Airport, which had recently been completed.³⁹

And all the while the two leaders were bickering over who possessed the moral high ground with their American friend in Washington, the erstwhile Israeli Building Minister, Ariel Sharon,⁴⁰ was undoubtedly watching from the wings and analysing the unfolding events with perhaps more political acumen than even his 'perceived' master, friend, and adversary, Benjamin Netanyahu.

³⁷ The surmise being that if it hadn't been for the tangible clash of personalities evident between the American and Israeli leader, (very possibly induced because they were from the same 'charismatic' and egocentric style of political leadership mould), and Clinton's much needed 'arbitration', Arafat's dream might well have been irredeemably broken.

³⁸ Tribune News Service, 'U.S. asks Arafat to reign in Arab terrorists.' *Chicago Tribune*, March 25, 1997. And: Gellman, Barton, 'U.S., Israel fault Arafat on Hamas.' *The Washington Post*, March 24, 1997.

³⁹ Bhatia, Shyam, 'Arafat seeks airport deal with Israel'. *Guardian*, April 13, 1997. And: Guyatt, Nicholas, *Op-cit*, p. 67.

⁴⁰ Bhatia, Shyam, & Black, Ian, 'King Bibi besieged'. *Observer*, April 20, 1997.

Nevertheless, once the extreme violence had seemingly dissipated *i.e.*, by mid-April, ⁴¹(low level violence is a constant way of life in Israel), after exacting a substantially large amount of Palestinian casualties, and a traditionally disproportionately small amount of Israeli ones, the U.S. mainstream media's reportage of Israeli settlement, particular at Har Homa, (but also in other carefully selected sites) also dissipated. In fact, the continued Israeli settlement was only ever mentioned in passing reference in the channels of the U.S. mainstream media after the cessation of the seemingly *Intifada* like violence, and the cooling off of the immediate crisis. Indeed, mention of the Israeli's settlement policy usually only occurs when U.S. diplomatic mediation upon the 'peace process' falls directly onto the Washington Administration's foreign policy agenda.⁴²

As far as the lengthy period of Har Homa is concerned (determined for the sake of this study, as just a little more than a month in length),⁴³ it represents a period of tangible stagnation, a continued moratorium of the 'peace process', inspired and sustained by Netanyahu's purposeful forestalling and political vacillation, which to a large extent, was purposefully appeasing to his 'friends' of the Israeli right and less than liberal American backers.⁴⁴

Therefore, in consideration of the above factors the conclusion that is drawn concerning the U.S. mainstream media's reportage of the of Har Homa project, and indeed the phenomenon that is Israeli settling itself, is that it is not an issue that really generates to much direct media attention. Only when such Israeli activity actually mitigates an outbreak of extreme violence, or implicitly risks directly further damaging an already heavily beleaguered 'peace process' does the U.S. 'media complex' show any true concern.

⁴¹ Greenberg, Joel, 'Israelis and Palestinians cooperate to seize four terrorist suspects.' *New York Times*, April 11, 1997.

⁴² Guyatt, Nicholas, *Op-cit*, p. 115.

⁴³ Recognition is made that the Har Homa project because of its 'ongoing' nature cannot really be accurately placed within a 'time frame.' Netanyahu did concede however, to offer a halt of the project, which diffused the tension, but the development went silently on.

⁴⁴ Schmemmann, Serge, 'Israel to yield 9% of West Bank: a victory for Netanyahu.' *New York Times*, March 7, 1997. And: Schmemmann, Serge, '9% of a loaf.' *New York Times*, March 11, 1997.

In truth, the reality is this, Israeli settling goes on unabated, and the U.S. 'media complex' has always traditionally turned a blind eye to it, considering it as a dynamic of the conflict that is to a large degree not worthy of direct Washington attention, or even direct reference within the mainstream media's narratives regarding the Arab/Israeli conflict.⁴⁵ This seeming lack of interest is motivated in part from out of a latent fear of provoking an accusation of anti-Semitism from the Jewish Lobby, and the threat of having this umbrella organisation's support removed from Congress.⁴⁶ In sum then, the 'media complex's' attitude to Israeli settlement, is that as long as it is conducted quietly, and with the minimum of fuss, *i.e.*, a contained non violent and silenced Palestinian protest, then it is perfectly reasonable in principle, indeed, even quite acceptable, and to some, *i.e.*, the avowedly staunch supporters of Israel, even morally laudable.⁴⁷ This attitude evident in a great majority of the U.S. 'media complex' is a cynical, patronising, insincere, mildly racist, (and in the case of the U.S. Administration, cowardly,) pro-Israeli attitude, bought and paid for through active Palestinian disenfranchisement, humiliation, marginality, and ultimately their expendability.

⁴⁵ Guyatt, Nicholas, *Op-cit*, p. 82.

⁴⁶ Walker, Martin, 'Clinton hedges as Arafat appeals for support against Netanyahu'. *Guardian*, March 4, 1997. Greenberg, Joel, '3 Palestinians killed and a hundred wounded in clashes with settlers and troops in Hebron.' *New York Times*, April 9, 1997.

⁴⁷ Will, George, F. 'Land for a liars promises.' *The Washington Post*, March 27, 1997.

CHAPTER 9

'The Penultimate Nail in the Oslo Coffin'

'Its like churning water to get butter, it will never work, that is what these negotiations are like.'¹

'Yesterday, there was trepidation among Palestinians that Arafat would come under intolerable pressure from Clinton and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak to swallow compromise proposals or be cast as the summit wrecker.'²

'On the American side some suggest, President Clinton's first objective is to ensure that if the summit fails, someone else will get the blame.'³

This 'media frame' examines an extremely short, but tremendously important period within the Oslo 'peace process', namely the unsuccessful Camp David II 'talks' of July 11, 2000 until July 25, 2000.⁴ The main argument posited however, is that U.S. mainstream media portrayals during this particular phase were not altogether unlike those that surrounded the initial 'birth or stillbirth' of the 'peace process', inasmuch as they were largely based upon a false enthusiasm, and were moreover, once again tentative, nervous, and very often cynical.⁵ In essence, the channels of the U.S. mainstream media were mildly schizophrenic, and at times, mildly racist towards the Palestinians.⁶

¹ Goldenberg, Suzanne, 'Homecoming: crowds out for Arafat, daggers out for Barak.' *Guardian*, July 27, 2000.

² Goldenberg, Suzanne, 'Hope just glimmers in light of Jerusalem's golden dome.' *Observer*, July 23, 2000.

³ Whitaker, Brian, 'Camp David's gates reopen.' *Guardian*, July 11, 2000.

⁴ Mostyn Trevor, 'Time-Bomb under Jerusalem.' *The Tablet*, August 5, 2000.

⁵ Perlez, Jane, 'U.S. is trying to be upbeat about the talks in Maryland.' *New York Times*, July 11, 2000. And: Sontag, Deborah, 'Cautious hopes for significant agreement' *New York Times*, July 12, 2000.

⁶ Krauthammer, Charles, 'Camp David: Finality.' *The Washington Post*, July 18, 2000.

Initially, these media channels were incorrectly optimistic and expectant,⁷ portraying the leaders of both immediate parties to the Arab/Israeli conflict with apparent equanimity and respect. When the 'talks' inevitably collapsed in an abysmal failure however, the Palestinian leader was largely perceived as the intransigent party, and subsequently received the familiar 'traditional denigration' and was categorically cast as the 'summit wrecker' by the American 'media complex'.⁸ (The American President being among the most vocal in his open condemnation of the Palestinian leader.)⁹ This overt denigration of Arafat however, offered by some representatives of the U.S. Administration was quickly and instinctively followed by the U.S. mainstream media channels.¹⁰ Furthermore, in an act of consolidation of the American position, and in a bid to shore up his own damaged image in the aftermath of Camp David II, the Israeli leader was also quick to condemn the Palestinian leader over his perceived intransigence and intractability.¹¹

Nevertheless, the decision to hold 'highest level' talks between the Palestinian Chairman Yassir Arafat, and the politically stricken Ehud Barak, at the idyllic and historic site of Camp David, high in the Catoktin Mountains (Verdant Hills) of Maryland, was taken ultimately by the U.S. President (on Ehud Barak's insistence), for several reasons.¹² The official reason given, was that Camp David II was a 'last ditch attempt' to restore 'momentum' upon the path (read pendulum) to peace that Oslo was to have *supposedly* delivered. It has been suggested in some circles however, that Bill Clinton's real motivation for

⁷ Perlez, Jane, 'Clinton voices some optimism on peace talks.' *New York Times*, July 17, 2000. And: Sontag, Deborah, 'Talk of lower expectations as Mideast deadline nears.' *New York Times*, July 18, 2000.

⁸ Goldenberg, Suzanne, 'Hope just glimmers in light of Jerusalem's golden dome.' *Observer*, July 23, 2000.

⁹ Whitaker, Brian, 'Camp David's gate reopen.' *Guardian*, July 11, 2000. And: Freedman, Laurence, Any peace deal in the Middle East must include extremists on both sides, *Independent*, October 16, 2000. And: Fisk, Robert, Forget the peace process: this is a murderous civil war. *Independent*, December 29, 2000.

¹⁰ Hockstader, Lee, 'Mideast summit ends with no deal.' *The Washington Post*, July 26, 2000.

¹¹ Perlez, Jane, & Sontag, Deborah, 'Talks are declared over but Barak and Arafat stay.' *New York Times*, July 20, 2000. And: Lancaster, John, 'Impasse over Jerusalem' *The Washington Post*, July 26, 2000. And: Goldenberg, Suzanne, 'Barak rushes to blame unyielding Arafat.' *Guardian*, July 26, 2000.

¹² Sontag, Deborah, 'Cautious hopes for significant agreement.' *New York Times*, July 12, 2000. And: Delios, Hugh, 'Barak wins showdown.' *Chicago Tribune*, July 11, 2000.

inviting the two leaders to meet in such calm and tranquil surroundings, was to attempt to force a passage through the 'deadlock' by purposefully attaching significance to the successful Camp David 'talks' (framed by Dr. H. Kissinger) of 1978, and held between Anwar Sadat and Menachim Begin, and presided over by then U.S. President Jimmy Carter.¹³ Moreover, if any reconciliation could be achieved, then Clinton could leave office with his own reputation as 'peace broker' and 'facilitator' intact. Indeed, it was an irony not missed by many, that both of the 'peace processes' that Bill Clinton had personally championed, (that of Northern Ireland and the Middle East), were dissolving, just like his presidency.

In political terms, the Camp David II talks aims were to ditch the 'multi-layered' inadmissible structure of the Oslo 'peace process' package (a long recognised flawed approach to 'peace initiatives'), by circumventing both the 'interim phase' (Oslo II of September 28, 1995)¹⁴ and the 'final status talks' (initially timetabled for May 1999), and placing all the complicated and protracted issues upon the table, namely, the three main 'core issues' *i.e.*, the 'right of return' of some three million Palestinian exiles,¹⁵ or their full compensation, the amount of illegally occupied territory to be finally rescinded back to the Palestinian Authority, and the highly controversial and irresolvable issue of the final territorial demarcation of Jerusalem.¹⁶

Whilst not omitting the equally important issues of Israeli settlements, and consequentially some 200 000 settlers,¹⁷ water rights (Israel has a serious water

¹³ Perlez, Jane, 'For Clinton the personal is political at summit.' *New York Times*, July 14, 2000. And: Lancaster, John, 'Impasse over Jerusalem' *The Washington Post*, July 26, 2000. September 17, 1978 witnessed the successful culmination of a peace proposal framed by Dr. Henry Kissinger between Egypt and Israel, with an attached solution to the Palestinian Question. This historic deal was famously ratified on the North Lawn of the White House on March 26, 1979. Needless to say, that it fell far short of its noble intentions.

¹⁴ See: Giacaman, George, In the Throes of Oslo: Palestinian Society, Civil Society and the Future, in Giacaman, George, & Lonning, Dag, J. [Eds.], *After Oslo: New Realities, Old Problems*, p. 4.

¹⁵ Diamond John, 'Tensions mounting in Mideast summit.' *Chicago Tribune*, July 15, 2000

¹⁶ Perlez, Jane, 'Moment of truth on tough issues.' *New York Times*, July 11, 2000. See: Giacaman, George, 'In the Throes of Oslo: Palestinian Society, Civil Society and the Future' In Giacaman, George, & Lonning, Dag, J [Eds.], *Op-cit*, p. 9. And: Guyaratt, Nicholas, *The Absence of Peace*, pp. 33-34.

¹⁷ Diamond, John, 'Tensions mounting in Mideast summit.' *Chicago Tribune*, July 15, 2000.

problem with regards to the location of her reservoirs and aquifers: to the point that possession of them, will in time become a major dynamic of the Arab/Israeli conflict),¹⁸ and finally, Israel's security arrangements with both Jordan and Syria. Indeed, every issue that had blighted Oslo's ultimate chance of success would be raised, discussed, and negotiated, until a settlement could be reached in a comprehensive new deal that avoided the old and acrimonious sticking points.

This definitive and final resolution to the impasse was to be reached by trading concessions and accepting compromise proposals, in 'closed door' sessions lasting a fortnight with small groups of 'negotiators' and 'facilitators' working to resolve the less important details concerning the final deal,¹⁹ *i.e.*, Israel's troop redeployment, the final size of the Palestinian security apparatus, Palestinian access to roads and highways, and of course the insurmountable problem concerning the final and declared permanent shape and character of the infamous 'Green Line' *viz.* the pre-1967 war lines.²⁰ (It would of course remain to be seen whether this would lead to a successful settlement of the Question of Palestine, or the further apartheid of the Palestinian people.)²¹

Meanwhile, the two leaders would meet each other after consulting these smaller teams and attempt to end the conflict through the most important of all 'confidence building measures' *i.e.*, a commonly held trust of the *other* via direct personal interaction, thus facilitating an active and ongoing dialogue.²² If there wasn't any progress achieved by the scheduled termination of the talks then it would be left for the protagonists themselves to attempt to settle this most

¹⁸ Sherman, Martin, *The Politics of Water in the Middle East*, p. ix.

¹⁹ Hoagland, Jim, 'A peace within reach.' *The Washington Post*, July 9, 2000.

²⁰ Butenshon, Nils, A. 'The Oslo Agreement: From the Whitehouse to Jabal Abu Ghnaim' In Giacamon, George, & Lonning, Dag, J [Eds.], *Op-cit*, p. 37.

²¹ In 1987, Israeli academic Uri Davis declared Israel an apartheid state with regards to her treatment of Israeli Arabs. If, however, Israel's Arabs can be considered to be living in a condition of 'petty' apartheid, then those Palestinians of the Occupied Territories are living in a condition of 'grand' apartheid and have been since the inception of Oslo. See: Davis, Uri, *Israel: An Apartheid State*. London: Zed Books. 1987. As cited in Guyatt, Nicholas, *The Absence of Peace*, pp. XIII-XIV, and p. 159, and p. 170.

²² Hockstader, Lee, 'Summitspeak: A translation, *The Washington Post*, July 13, 2000.

ancient of disputes without Clinton's personally acclaimed persuasive powers of arbitration.²³

Indeed the hugely egotistical Clinton suggested that when he was to leave office, *his* ideas were to go with him. Therefore, if the two leaders were wise and serious about their commitment to supplant a lasting peace in the region that would deliver their peoples from out of the 'meat-grinder' that was (is) the Arab/Israeli conflict in all of its vainglorious pointlessness, and give 'hope' to their future aspirations, then they should unhesitatingly seek to utilise this much vaunted 'final opportunity',²⁴ to thrash out a binding settlement that would offer strong foundations upon which a full and comprehensive 'peace settlement' could be built. This exhortation, was initially received by both the pugilists with a sense of wanting to achieve something of substance at the 'talks', for they both equally recognised the enormity of the occasion, and furthermore, they both realised that to fail at Camp David II, it would, in effect, consign the Oslo 'peace process' to a long awaited grave.²⁵

This 'all or nothing' method however, being conducted at the 'last chance saloon' that was the Laurel Cabin of the Maryland retreat was never going to be without its problems. Indeed, there were many within the 'media complex' that intuitively knew that because of the lack of trust between the two parties, the chances of success were about fifty-fifty,²⁶ and at that time a tri-partite settlement that incorporated U.S. considerations, would be extremely difficult, if not nigh impossible to achieve.²⁷ It was even suggested by the U.S. mainstream media, that the U.S. President knew that this was indeed the case.²⁸ This suggests two things, the first, that his decision to stage-manage and referee a supposed 'last

²³ Hoagland, Jim, 'A peace within reach.' *The Washington Post*, July 9, 2000. This was not actually the case though, for after the outbreak of hostilities on September 28, 2000, and up until Clinton left office in January 2001, the outgoing U.S. President made several desperate attempts to resuscitate the moribund 'peace process'. See: Fisk, Robert, 'Sham summit promised little for the Palestinians.' *Independent*, December 29, 2000. And: Dunn, Ross, Brodie, Ian, 'Clinton's final push to sell peace to Arafat.' *The Times*, January 3, 2001.

²⁴ Perlez, Jane, 'Moment of truth on tough issues' *New York Times*, July 11, 2000.

²⁵ Whitaker, Brian, 'Leaders seeking a place in history.' *Guardian*, July 26, 1996.

²⁶ Godenberg, Suzanne, 'Barak plays for high stakes at summit.' *Guardian*, July 7, 2000.

²⁷ Kettle, Martin, & Hooper, John, 'Clinton casts around for foreign success.' *Guardian*, July 16, 2000.

²⁸ Sontag, Deborah, 'Cautious hopes for significant agreement.' *New York Times*, July 12, 2000.

chance for peace' was primarily motivated for his own personal gain and prestige, and was not necessarily undertaken for altruist reasons.²⁹ The second; that such a momentous decision was in itself an act of desperation undertaken on behalf of all three leaders, and a farcical attempt to salvage something, (a full and committed peace agreement) if anything, (simply, any agreement), from an unworkable, impractical, finally exhausted and rapidly unravelling 'peace process'.³⁰

Nevertheless, the U.S. mainstream media speculated quite extensively upon the difficulties that surrounded the potential opportunity for success at Camp David II, and arguably, actually helped contribute towards these difficulties by applying immense pressure upon the leaders to succeed, or let down a much hyped and expectant U.S. media audience, (not to mention the 'hopeful' Palestinians and Israelis). When the talks began on July 11 however, there was media blackout imposed concerning discussion of the issues raised and placed upon the agenda at the summit.³¹ This censorship concerning the issues being raised for discussion at the meeting was principally motivated to prevent any unnecessary leakage of extremely sensitive information that might directly affect the progress of the summit itself.

For it was considered by the 'facilitators' and 'conveners' that leaks might threaten the summit's success, and bring about its premature closure. It seemed to be overlooked however, by the U.S. mainstream media in this particular instance, that Camp David II was destined to end in an unavoidable and lamentable failure from its outset. Indeed, the U.S. Administration had either fooled the agents of the press into believing that there was some semblance of 'hope' in holding the meeting, or they were also going along with the government charade by doing the Administration's bidding. There was also

²⁹ Naftali, Bendavid, ' Clintons crusade comes up short.' *Chicago Tribune*, July 20, 2000. It seems the way of the Middle Eastern 'peace process' that many summits and talks (emergency, crisis, or otherwise), are usually billed as the 'last chance' or 'last step for peace' however, this is never the case, for in reality, there is always at least one more distant glimmer of hope. See: Fisk, Robert, 'Sham summit promised little for Palestinians,' *Independent*, December 29, 2000.

³⁰ Diamond, John, 'Clinton reports some progress.' *Chicago Tribune*, July 17, 2000.

³¹ Sontag, Deborah, 'Cautious hopes for significant agreement.' *New York Times*, July 12, 2000.

another fear however, that mitigated the muzzling of the press, for it was felt that leaks could have severe consequences for those within the Occupied Territories and Israel, perhaps provoking a violent outburst from either the Palestinian 'maximalists' and Israeli settlers, or from sympathisers of Israel's far right.³² Yet, despite the blackout, many of the media's narratives were inevitably fuelled by a certain amount of leakage in the form of 'nods and winks' from sources close to the 'key players'.³³

Therefore, ironically, because of the restrictions imposed upon the media there was a subsequent upsurge of reportage concerning the talks, and much of it was highly speculative, (but not necessarily wholly inaccurate), in content.³⁴ Moreover, it also meant that because the U.S. mainstream media was officially proscribed from direct coverage of the events unfolding at the retreat, it focused upon less frequently reported issues of the Arab/Israeli conflict.³⁵ Many of these articles were, however, couched in a language that was purposefully utilised to create an atmosphere that was reminiscent of the euphoria that surrounded the 'landmark' talks twenty-two years earlier. In essence, Camp David II was billed as a sequel, and was little more than a heavily staged and carefully choreographed 'media event'.³⁶

Indeed, here was an explicit example of the U.S. mainstream media promoting the interests of the U.S. Administration, because it was undoubtedly a purposeful intention of Bill Clinton's, to attempt to force a settlement by physically and psychological reminding the two leaders that they were the keys to the future

³² Sontag, Deborah, 'Cautious hopes for significant agreement.' *New York Times*, July 12, 2000.

³³ Diamond, John, 'Signs of progress in Mideast summit.' *Chicago Tribune*, July 14, 2000. And: Sontag, Deborah, 'Camp David talks in a lull before an expected whirl of decision making.' *New York Times*, July 15, 2000.

³⁴ What is implied here is that there was a great deal of rumour and speculation concerning the nature of the 'talks', however, a majority of it was not necessarily inaccurate as the journalists and analysts have been following the conflict/peace process for many years, and therefore they are able to speculate intuitively. See: Franklin, Stephen, 'Partisan crowd in Tel Aviv sends a message to Barak: come home.' *Chicago Tribune*, July 17, 2000. And: Lancaster, John, 'Camp David talks going to the wire.' *The Washington Post*, July 19, 2000. And: Nafatali, Bendavid, 'Clinton's crusade comes up short.' *Chicago Tribune*, July 20, 2000.

³⁵ See: Hockstader, Lee, 'Fading hopes, fading demands.' *The Washington Post*, July 18, 2000. And: Franklin, Stephen, 'Nightmare of splintered Jerusalem.' *Chicago Tribune*, July 25, 2000.

³⁶ Diamond, John, 'Israel bows to U.S. on radar sale to China.' *Chicago Tribune*, July 12, 2000.

shape and destiny of the 'modern' Middle East.³⁷ And moreover, that if they considered themselves to be great and respected leaders, then they too should follow the exemplary attitudes of Anwar Sadat and Menachim Begin and make the effort to forge a peace. Indeed, 'to go that extra mile for peace', (an often quoted 'sound-bite' cliché),³⁸ it was in this thinking though, that the fundamental flaw of Camp David II lay, and where, interestingly, another possible lesson for the future of the Middle Eastern peace process and its initiatives is to be found.

It is argued that Bill Clinton had been somewhat foolish to think that by bringing the two leaders together and making them fight it out in close quarters that a permanent peace settlement could be achieved. The actuality was that the American President by forcing the issue, would inadvertently bring the realisation of a long held suspicion of the Palestinian people, *i.e.*, that peace with Israel was unachievable, Oslo was literally 'killing them', and U.S. intervention and arbitration was little more than a proven one sided, pro-Israeli, phenomenon.³⁹

The Palestinian's greatest fear concerning the Camp David II summit was not realised, however, for Arafat was not crushed by the enormity of the occasion, nor would he sell out on the 'Palestinian Dream', even in the face of extreme pressure applied by the U.S. President and his Israeli interlocutors. Instead, he would leave the 'talks' after having rejected an Israeli offer 'he couldn't refuse', (Barak's poisoned offer of two separated portions of East Jerusalem: certainly not prime pieces of real estate.) Camp David II would, however set of the timer

³⁷ The summit was often referred to as Camp David II, and sometimes less seriously as the ABC summit, after Arafat, Barak, and Clinton. See: Diamond, John, 'Leaders launch Mideast summit.' *Chicago Tribune*, July 11, 2000.

³⁸ Songer, Deborah, 'talk of lower expectations as Mideast deadline nears.' *New York Times*, July 18, 2000. And: Lancaster, John, 'Summit extended as Clinton departs' *The Washington Post*, July 20, 2000.

³⁹ Diamond, John, & Naftali, Bendavid, 'Time short at Mideast talks.' *Chicago Tribune*, July 18, 2000. And: Sontag, Deborah, 'stalled but alive, peace talks on Mideast reach 10th day.' *New York Times*, July 21, 2000. And: Lancaster, John, 'Summit teams await talk and await Clinton.' *The Washington Post*, July 22, 2000. And: Goldenberg, Suzanne, 'Talks key to Barak's failure.' *Guardian*, July 10, 2000. *Etc.*

of a bomb, that once activated could not be defused.⁴⁰ Indeed, now it was only a question of time before Oslo would perish, indeed the 'ship of peace' was foundering upon its own rocks (*i.e.*, its evident flaws and insufficiencies), and furthermore, was now well and truly beginning to sink. Camp David II had now become the 'penultimate nail in the Oslo coffin'.⁴¹

Casting all this gloom and pessimism overboard, however, it is argued that one image in particular, published in the U.S. mainstream media and the British press, showed in a purely allegorical fashion, the innate and fundamental differences between the two protagonists, and how close and biased the 'special relationship' between the U.S. and Israel evidently was, and to some extents *still* is.⁴² For this image published at the start of the ill fated 'talks' showed a characteristically broad smiling Clinton standing tall and authoritatively between two 'pocket sized battleships' *i.e.*, a diminutive Barak to his right, and an equally short Arafat to his left, with a paternal and custodial arm about each of the Middle Eastern leader's shoulders. The contrast between these two would-be 'peacemakers' was startling however, for Barak was a mirror image in every way of the American President, (except in his facial expression which was typically nervous and strained, and historically befitting of Israeli heads of state attending perfunctory occasions), as his shirt, belt, trousers, and most probably his shoes and socks as well, could have quite easily come from the same gentleman's outfitters.

Conversely however, there was Arafat, dignified, thoughtful, and apparently good humoured, (relieved) swathed in his traditionally worn black and white *Kaffiyah*, and his dark olive green military fatigues, but noticeably this time without his German pistol. This image was indeed telling, for it showed conclusively that the Israeli leader was a man that the U.S. media audience could identify with, if only through a commonly shared Western oriented 'modern' dress code. Axiomatically however, it portrayed the Palestinian leader in a

⁴⁰ Mostyn Trevor, 'Time-Bomb under Jerusalem.' *The Tablet*, August 5, 2000. And: Hockstader, Lee, 'Mideast peace summit ends with no deal, *The Washington Post*, July 26, 2000.

⁴¹ Oz, Amos, 'Even if Camp David fails, this conflict is on its last legs.' *Guardian*, July 25, 2000.

⁴² Hosefros, Paul, *New York Times*, July 12, 2000. And: McNamee, Wyn (Reuters) *Independent*, October 16, 2000.

negative light, *i.e.*, as a man who still has not left his militaristic leanings behind: as a man living in the past: as a Middle Eastern demagogue of an earlier era. In essence, an anachronistic dinosaur too immersed in violence and 'dodgy back room deals' to bring anything of real worth or substance to Camp David. This depiction of 'Abu Ammar' it is suggested, did nothing to improve the U.S. mainstream media's, the Administration's, and the audience's perception of the Palestinian Chairman. It is a paradox indeed that the solution to the Palestinian's plight may well be found through a simple re-imaging of their leader, but it is difficult to imagine Arafat arraigned in Armani. Designer sunglasses? Yes, possibly. Lounge suit? No. Never.

Indeed, when the summit opened Arafat's dress code was very often overlooked; his uniform considered as one of Arafat's personal foibles and trademarks, (just like his chequered *kaffiyah* folded in the shape of Palestine), but when the 'talks' collapsed, and Arafat apparently was left with no option than to state his intention of declaring the claim of a *de facto* Palestinian state on September 13, 2000,⁴³ the media circus seized upon the image as would-be warmonger with alacrity, and this interpretation was unquestionably reflected in a majority of the comments and analyses proffered with the U.S. 'prestigious press'.

The lesson to be learned for the future administrators of a Middle Eastern peace package from the political disaster that was the failed Camp David II 'talks' is this: that within the dynamics of the Arab/Israeli conflict, when it comes to dark and desperate acts of violence and terror, history undoubtedly repeats. When however, it comes to positive acts (which are very rare) of peacefulness and security, history regrettably is not quite as fortuitous. This unfortunate truism is what has led to the consideration that The U.S. President was hopelessly out of touch when convening Camp David II.

⁴³ Perlez, Jane, 'Moment of truth on tough issues.' *New York Times*, July 11, 2000. And: Sontag, Deborah, 'Talk of lower expectations as Mideast deadline nears.' *New York Times*, July 18, 2000. And: Delios, Hugh, 'Barak wins showdown.' *The Washington Post*, July 11, 2000. Concerning Arafat's dangerous intention to declare an independent statehood, it could be viewed like this: Oslo to the Palestinians was like a cracked mirror (*i.e.*, fundamentally flawed from the outset). By declaring a *de facto* Palestine, Arafat was merely ending 'seven years bad luck' that accompanies the smashing of any mirror.



In short, twenty-two years had passed since the successful Carter brokered 'talks'. Moreover, way back then, Egypt had a fundamentally strong bargaining position, *viz.* state sovereignty, stature, and economic independence, alongside a territorial bargaining chip, the Sinai.⁴⁴ The simple fact of the matter is that the Palestinians have neither with which to trade, implying that they shall always find themselves cast as 'summit wreckers' and the intransigent party in negotiations. The Oslo 'peace process' has been replete with clichés from its outset, however, one phrase in particular carries great currency, namely 'confidence building measures'. It is suggested that this phrase should be the cornerstone of any ongoing 'peace process' repeated, and repeated, *ad infinitum*.

⁴⁴ Parker, Thomas, *The Road to Camp David: U.S. Negotiating Strategy Towards the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, p. 3.

CHAPTER 10

'The Death of Oslo'

The dowry was in dollars.
 The diamond ring was in dollars.
 The fee for the judge was in dollars.
 The cake was a gift from America,
 and the wedding veil, the flowers,
 the candles, and the music of the marines,
 were all made in America.
 And the wedding came to an end:
 and Palestine was not to be found at the ceremony.¹

... 'America's credibility as mediator has long been questioned by Palestinians, and with reason. The Palestinians always complain that we know the details of every proposal from the Americans before they do. One Israeli source told the *Independent* recently: 'there's a good reason for that we write them.'²

... 'I brought a message of peace. I believe Jews and Arabs can live together. *There was no provocation*. [My emphasis], Jews have the right to visit every place in Israel.'³

In the aftermath of the failed Camp David II talks (July 11-25 2000)⁴ a general feeling of pessimism and anger descended upon the Palestinians within the Occupied Territories, shrouding the slum-like camps just like an oppressive rain cloud, ever swelling and threatening to break, only awaiting the right conditions. Arafat had returned to Gaza, politically outmanoeuvred and downtrodden, only

¹ Excerpt from *Al-Muharwiluun* (The Hurried Ones) by the celebrated Syrian poet Nizar Qabbani and translated by Fouad Ajami, as cited in Ajami, Fouad, *The Dream Palace of the Arabs*, p. 258.

² Reeves, Phil, 'Humiliation of Palestinians triggers rush to war: dying peace process' *Independent*, October 9, 2000.

³ Ariel Sharon's defence of his 'unwise' visit to the *Haram al-Sharif*, on September 28, 2000 as reported by Ross, Dunn, 'Muslims shot in clash at Jerusalem site'. *The Times*, September 30, 2000.

⁴ Mostyn, Trevor, 'Time-Bomb under Jerusalem'. *The Tablet*, August 5, 2000, pp. 1040-41 and Goldenberg, Suzanne, 'Boy's death stokes up battle for Jerusalem'. *Guardian*, October 2, 2000.

to receive a hero's welcome from his loyal supporters.⁵ (Apparently, he hadn't sold out on the Palestinian dream of statehood.)⁶ And moreover, it was indeed true! Barak had laid upon the table at the unsuccessful talks the greatest concession to the Palestinians in the history of the conflict.⁷ The Israeli leader had been prepared to relinquish 'certain' portions of Israeli occupied East Jerusalem, and recognise the Palestinian and Arab claim to their legitimate right to protect the *Al-Haram al-Sharif*, at a cost perhaps of both his personal political career, and the inflammation of both the Israeli right and the religiously extreme hawks.

At Clinton's orchestrated round of talks however, the Palestinian leader's hands had been tied. For it was not possible for him to accept the limited offer of certain portions of East Jerusalem.⁸ The portions in question were territorially separated (Abu Dis, and Azariyya),⁹ and furthermore, any acceptance of the Israeli proposed concession would have given *de facto* recognition of Israel's claim to sovereign possession of the entirety of Jerusalem, an absurdity that has propelled the conflict since the Israelis annexation of East Jerusalem in June 1967.¹⁰

Moreover, could the question concerning Jerusalem and its final status, really have been determined by the Palestinian leader even if he had so wished it? Indeed, the *Al-Haram al-Sharif* was not Arafat's to negotiate. For it belongs to the entire Islamic community.¹¹ Therefore, when it came to concluding the deal at Camp David II, the Palestinian Chairman could not settle upon any agreements because essentially it was out of his remit to do so.¹² This left the U.S. Administration to accuse the Palestinian leader of coming to the talks without

⁵ Goldenberg, Suzanne, 'Homecoming: Crowds out for Arafat, daggers out for Barak.' *Guardian*, July 27, 2000.

⁶ Sontag, Deborah, 'Cautious hopes for significant agreement.' *New York Times*, July 12, 2000.

⁷ Sullivan, Andrew, 'America loses faith in the Israeli peace.' *The Sunday Times*, August 26, 2001.

⁸ McGeary, Johanna, 'The many minds of Arafat'. *Time Magazine*, October 23, 2000.

⁹ Said, Edward, W. *The End of the Peace Process*. p. XV.

¹⁰ Goldenberg, Suzanne, 'West Bank explodes in fury'. *Guardian*, May 16, 2000.

¹¹ Hockstader, Lee, 'Jerusalem the Holy, the city of Zion, the conundrum.' *The Washington Post*, July 21, 2000.

¹² Sontag, Deborah, 'Stalled but alive, peace talks on Mideast reach 10th day.' *New York Times*, July 21, 2000.

receiving a mandate from the members of the Arab League facilitating his potential negotiation over Jerusalem:¹³ A rather unfair accusation given the fact that the *Al-Haram al-Sharif* when considered by Muslims falls under God's sovereignty and thus severely restricts any human intervention regarding its status.¹⁴

To many Israelis though, Arafat's refusal to accept Barak's 'perceived' generous offer was a sign that the Palestinian leader did not really wish for peace.¹⁵ But rather, he advocated a return to the 'stalemate' that was pre-Oslo. Moreover, to them [the Israelis], Oslo was coming to be considered as one of the gravest mistakes in the history of 'modern' Israel, a sentiment that had its reflection amongst many Palestinians interred in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The disaffected and disillusioned Palestinians had great justification for feeling that they were being betrayed by the promises of Oslo. Indeed, it seemed that all the warnings given by the pessimists were being realised *i.e.*, economic strangulation by the Israeli surrogate, alongside incarceration in the festering and fetid camps *etc.*¹⁶ Indeed, the reality was that many Palestinians had become genuinely worse off with the inception and partial implementation of the Oslo 'peace process' and its seemingly honourable intentions.

Nevertheless, the 'peace process' certainly wasn't intended to become the proverbial nemesis of both longsuffering peoples. The process had been constructed by leaders however, who were often considered to be out of touch with the realities on the ground by its recipients, and furthermore was overseen by both a U.S. Administration with an interest of forging further hegemonic

¹³ New York Times: News Services, 'Regions leaders had made it clear, Jerusalem wasn't up for compromise.' *Chicago Tribune*, July 26, 2000. Borger, Julian, 'US reaction: Clinton Administration stunned and angry as its investment in Arafat fails to pay off'. *Guardian*, October 13, 2000. And: Freedman, Lawrence, 'Americans blame Arafat' *Independent*, October 16, 2000. And: Fisk, Robert, 'Forget the peace process: this is a murderous civil war'. *The Independent*, December 29, 2000.

¹⁴ Dempsey, Judy, 'Clinton keeps low profile ahead of polls'. *The Financial Times*, October 5, 2000.

¹⁵ Reeves, Phil, 'Blood flows as Middle East summit opens'. *Independent*, October 17, 2000.

¹⁶ Goldenberg, Suzanne, '3m Palestinians trapped in prison that once was home'. *Guardian*, October 23, 2000. And: Silver, Eric, 'Barak tries economic war in bid to beat the *Intifada*'. *Independent*, November 7, 2000. And: Guyatt, Nicholas, *The Absence of Peace*. p. 158.

domination over the Middle East, (particularly in any ongoing 'peace' initiative that might have several potential serious regional consequences, *i.e.*, shifts in territorial demarcations, and state alliances, *etc*), as well as being directed by a U.S. president whose Administration very often gave indications that his primary motives for 'fronting' a complex peace process was for the pursuit of personal gain. (The 'crowning achievement' of Clinton's term in office and perhaps a Nobel peace prize nomination.)¹⁷

That the 'peace process' and all of its concessions and recriminations would be the trigger for the complete retardation, but, arguably, not permanent damage, in Palestinian/Israeli relations, was, perhaps, of no real shock.¹⁸ For it is very often the way of complicated and protracted arguments held between protagonists, that when an arbiter offers a difficult choice for a solution, one side will invariably balk near the closing of the deal, paranoid of the intentions of their long term mistrusted enemy, and the 'hawks' that invariably 'roost' in their own camp.¹⁹

This factor is why Clinton called Oslo 'a brave gamble for peace' *viz.* Arafat's 'peace of the brave' for perhaps they foresaw the bloodshed and disappointments that would emerge along the difficult route.²⁰ But could they have possibly foreseen the extent of the carnage that lay at the feet of Oslo's last hurdle? Namely, the reduction of Palestinian/Israeli relations once again to a 'bloodthirsty' 1929-36, or even a 1948-49 level,²¹ alongside the complete annihilation of several thousands of man-hours spent in the pursuance of solutions to the conflict, no matter how temporary, and furthermore, in a worst-

¹⁷ *Newsweek*, 'Shot all to hell'. Vol. 128, No 15, October 7, 1996. And: Whitaker, Brian, 'Leaders seeking a place in history.' *Guardian*, July 26, 2000.

¹⁸ Helm, Sarah, 'It may take a long time, but this Middle East violence will subside'. *Independent*, May 23, 2001.

¹⁹ Friedland, Jonathan, 'The enemy within.' *Guardian*, July 11, 2000.

²⁰ Tisdal, Simon, 'Symbolic gesture seals hopes to end blood and tears'. *Guardian*, September 14, 1993. And: Said, Edward, W. *The End of the Peace Process*, p. 45. And: Goldenberg, Suzanne, 'When they blundered into the baying mob they sealed their fate'. *Guardian*, October 13, 2000. And: Wallach, Janet, & Wallach, John, *Op-cit*, p. 469. And: See: Giacaman, George, In the Throes of Oslo: Palestinian Society, Civil Society and the Future, in Giacaman, George, & Lonning, Dag, *J.Op-cit*, p. 17. And: Guyatt, Nicholas, *The Absence of Peace*, p. 197.

²¹ Woolacott, Martin, 'Neither peace nor war, just endless suffering'. *Guardian*, October 13 2000. And: Kiley, Sam, 'Israeli soldiers may be freed'. *The Times*, December 12, 2000.

case scenario, an inexorable slide into a dangerous and unnecessary war.²² (That Israel might one day have to fight on three fronts, unless reconciliation or withdrawal can be achieved, which is impossible for very obvious reasons.)²³

Underpinning all this negativity and pessimism however, and what was of real significance to the ultimate failure of Oslo; was the supposed 'generous' offer made by Barak, for in reality it was a 'Hobson's Choice' *i.e.*, absolutely no choice whatsoever. And so it was throughout that millennial summer; both protagonists were tired and deluded by the uncertainties of the Oslo 'peace process', and were waiting nervously like two exhausted boxers for the ever threatening final bell, and the referee's (America's) fateful decision.²⁴ In the last days of that summer, or perhaps in the early days of the fall, an Israeli court's decision not to take Netanyahu to trial for corruption whilst in office was made due to alleged insufficient evidence.²⁵ This would act as the catalyst that denoted the real beginning of the end of the Oslo aspirations, for it would reopen for the formerly disgraced Israeli premier a path to political power within the *Likud* party.

This emergent threat from the once ousted Netanyahu however, could not be contained by the then *Likud* leader Ariel Sharon. Sharon was aware that Netanyahu possessed more electoral popularity than himself and that he [Netanyahu] could probably regain the leadership of the party in any internal power struggle. This meant that Netanyahu could be in a position to enforce a greater political influence in the event of any coalition needing to be formed with Barak's failing Labour government. Sharon was further inflamed by the then Prime Ministers offer to rescind Israeli claimed sovereignty over the Temple Mount. Sharon, it is argued, wilfully and unhesitatingly, exercised his democratic

²² Haberman, Clyde, Israelis and Palestinians prepare for a long struggle, *New York Times*, August 18, 2001.

²³ Israel having to wage war on three fronts is determined as follows. Firstly, a war waged against the Palestinians of the Occupied Territories. Secondly, a bloody civil war waged against the Israeli Arabs whom have critically shown support for their Palestinian brethren. Thirdly, and although improbable, a war waged against a Coalition Arab Force or a 'preventative' war, or incursion conducted against a neighbouring state such as Lebanon simultaneously.

²⁴ Woolacott, Martin, 'Time to find an exit from this daily ritual of suffering'. *Guardian*, November 3, 2000.

²⁵ News in Brief, 'Netanyahu charges dropped'. *The Times*, September 28, 2000.

right to freedom of movement for a Jew inhabiting *Eretz Yisrael* and decided to embark upon a purposefully provocative excursion.²⁶

Therefore, surrounded by a personal praetorian guard of a thousand security men (indicating guilt and perceived vulnerability).²⁷ The known architect of the Sabra and Shatila Massacres (1982)²⁸ lumbered lazily and provocatively across the courtyard of the sublime and majestic *Al-Haram al-Sharif*, like John Wayne, before standing at 'high noon' and re-enacting a scene reminiscent from 'True Grit'. Sharon hadn't 'come for his boy' though, but had come to exercise his Divinely given 'Right to Roam'. Of course no real offence was intended. Or according to some Israeli accusers, taken legitimately by anyone whatsoever. The offended Palestinians were merely using their religious attachment to their third most important shrine, as a catalyst, so as to carry out their evil business namely, the slitting of innocent Jewish throats.

It is now understood that Barak could, and should have forbidden the *Likud* leader from visiting the Jewish 'Temple Mount', perhaps realising that this action would inflame the already flaring tensions with the Palestinians.²⁹ But, Barak weighed up the cost of prevention against the cost of acquiescence. The cost of appeasing the Jewish right for the sake of domestic stability, against the cost of giving the red light to the Palestinians and the subsequent legitimisation for the venting of their frustrations.

Barak should have realised that any violation of the sanctity of the *Al-Haram al-Sharif* would give rise to an extreme response, and it did. For it legitimated an already nascent Palestinian uprising. Furthermore, it also offended the Orthodox Jews, who considered the visit a repugnant act undertaken by an atheistic gun toting Americanised Jew as representing a purposeful violation of their holy site. Moreover, it riled those Israelis that still had intentions of making eventual peace with their Semitic cousin.

²⁶ Black, Ian. 'Double tragedy rolls back years of progress.' *Guardian*, October 13, 2000.

²⁷ Burke, Jason, 'Child martyrs line up to die'. *Observer*, October 8, 2000.

²⁸ See Keane, Fergal, 'The Accused' *Panorama*, BBC 1, June 17, 2001.

²⁹ Freedland, Jonathan, 'doves must be hawks'. *Guardian*, October 11, 2000.

It has been suggested by some analysts that perhaps Sharon imagined that he would be turned away by Israeli security at the site.³⁰ But why would this have been the case? If the order wasn't given by Barak to elements of the Israeli Security Services to restrain or restrict Sharon, then surely a body of young, bored, conscripted Israeli guards were not going to challenge a man of Sharon's political standing and proclaimed if some what dubious, military prestige whilst accompanied by a thousand hardnosed henchmen, picked no doubt from the elite units of the IDF. Sharon knew that he would not be turned away, therefore his action was without doubt premeditated and malicious, and not too dissimilar from other Sharon orchestrated adventures *i.e.*, that of the murder of sixty nine at Qibya, in October 1953,³¹ and lamentably his responsibility for the massacre at Sabra and Shatilla in September 1982.³²

Furthermore, it is strongly suggested that the *Likud* leader knew the enormity of his actions at the *Al-Haram al-Sharif*, for it is a known flashpoint, and even the relatively ambivalent U.S. Administration urge the Israelis to utilise caution when dealing with specific issues encompassing it. In fact, this factor can be taken further. If Jerusalem is the single most contended issue in the conflict, then the *Al-Haram al Sharif*, and the sanctity of the *Al-Aqsa* Mosque represent the most hotly contended issue relating to Jerusalem. To the Palestinians, and the remainder of the *Dar al Islam*, (literally the House of Islam, in this instance, however, Muslim community) Jerusalem and the *Al-Haram al-Sharif* are as one inseparable and nonnegotiable. To overlook this obvious truism is to completely fail in understanding the true dynamics of the conflict.³³ On the surface, the conflict could be considered to be a struggle just conducted over territorial issues. If only it were that simple however, then a solution to the Arab/Israeli conflict, it is considered, would not be too long in coming. Indeed, the weeping and festering wound that ails the entire Middle Eastern arena would have been

³⁰ Whitaker, Brian, 'Ariel Sharon: the bloodstained past that inflames Palestinians'. *Guardian*, October 3, 2000.

³¹ Benziman, Uzi, *Sharon: An Israeli Caesar*, pp. 51-54.

³² *Ibid.* pp. 258-259. And: *The Economist*, 'The Road to War?' Vol. 357, No, 8191, October 7, 2000. p. 19. And: *New Internationalist*, 'Message of War'. No. 333, April 2001. p. 3.

³³ Prusher, Llène, R. 'Mideast tale of brothers at odds'. *Christian Science Monitor*, April 4, 1997.

tamped long, long ago, and the region would have fallen from such great significance, in many Westerners minds.

It is now evident that this dangerously flirtatious and flagrantly disrespectful action of Sharon's was not the true trigger of the 'Uprising of the *Al-Aqsa* Mosque'. Hostilities had been brewing for some time and had erupted in several areas prior to September 28, 2000, but, as is the way of things within the dynamics of the Arab/Israeli conflict, if any violence by either combatant needs justification, then it is never very long before it is found. Usually following hot on the heels of the violence that precedes it. For nowhere is the biblical maxim that violence begets violence more true, than in the seething cauldron of irreconcilable ideologies that is the 'modern' Middle East. This last statement is about as liberal as can be put forward regarding both Israel's military offensive that commenced after the Friday noon prayers on September 30, 2000, and the Palestinian response, as they [the Palestinians], celebrated yet another nominated 'day of rage'.³⁴

On that particular emotionally charged afternoon, however, the Israelis made the decision to exchange their traditionally utilised rubber coated bullets for a 'full metal jacket' deterrent, before deciding to embark upon a rather poor public relations exercise.³⁵ It is now clearly documented that the Israeli Defence Force's sharpshooters were pursuing a 'shoot to kill' policy.³⁶ Someone, somewhere, was advocating the breaching of rather sketchy 'rules of engagement'. It also seems evident that the *Shabab* had finally become expendable, to some.

Is this a continuation of the thinking that: 'If there is no Oslo 'peace process' then there should be no Palestinians with whom to deal with?'³⁷ Or a continuation of: 'We should have finished what we started in 1967, namely, the

³⁴ Goldenberg, Suzanne, 'West Bank explodes in fury'. *Guardian*, May 16, 2000.

³⁵ Dunn, Ross, 'Muslims shot in clash at Jerusalem site'. *The Times*, September 30, 2000. Regarding 'Days of Rage' see Goldenberg, Suzanne, 'Palestinian's tell-tale wounds expose shoot to kill tactics'. *Guardian*, October 5, 2000.

³⁶ Goldenberg, Suzanne, 'Palestinian tell-tale wounds expose shoot to kill tactics'. *Guardian*, October 5, 2000.

³⁷ Ashrawi, Hanan, *Op-cit*, p. 117.

liquidation of Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation, and the enforced transference of the residual Palestinian population to other territories?’³⁸

It is not generally agreed at which point the Oslo ‘peace process’ actually died. (For many it had been stillborn anyway.) But, for the sake of this study, it is suggested that for the Palestinians the last hope was lost on the afternoon of September 30, when the Israeli ‘sharpshooters’ executed the unfortunately now famous, innocent young boy Muhammad al-Durrah, as he sought shelter in his father’s arms at the ‘Nezarim Junction’. (Now romantically, but a little naively, called ‘Martyrs Corner’ by the *Shabab*.) At this point, however, in contrast, the ‘peace process’ (if it can be called that) was still alive for many Israelis, for after all they had traditionally dictated its course and implementation.³⁹

For them [the Israelis], and in particular for the ‘sharpshooters’ of the IDF, opening fire upon the Palestinian *Shabab*, it is argued, was no more of a chore than taking a critically injured dog to the vet to be put to sleep, fuelled by the sentiment of another day, another shekel.⁴⁰ As the violence initially escalated, and the fatalities and casualties continued to amass at a ratio of approx. 6:1 in Israel’s favour, (of course, this ratio varies depending on the previous evening’s bloodletting), however, events were leading inexorably to the final death knell of the U.S. and Israeli manipulated Oslo ‘peace process’.⁴¹

On the 12th of October 2000, two Israeli reservists (possibly *Duvdevan* agents *i.e.*, The Cherry Brigade) happened to get lost in the West Bank, and were arrested by representatives of the PPS and escorted to a Palestinian police station for their own protection. Word got round however, that Israeli security men had been discovered in a highly emotionally charged Palestinian area, and a baying

³⁸ See: Smith, Charles, D. *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, p. 291. Grant, Linda, ‘Them and Us’. *Guardian*, G2, October 24, 2000. And: Peretz, Don, *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising*, p. 31.

³⁹ Reeves, Phil, ‘Humiliation of Palestinians triggers rush to war: dying peace process.’ *Independent*, October 9, 2000.

⁴⁰ Reeves, Phil, ‘bus driver brings carnage to Tel Aviv in worst Palestinian attack in four years.’ *Independent*, February 15, 2001.

⁴¹ Goldenberg, Suzanne, ‘Fresh gunfire shatters Israeli truce’. *Guardian*, October 4, 2000.

mob of approximately one thousand stormed the courtyard of the police station.⁴² The subsequent lynching of the unfortunate Israelis that occurred is well documented, having been recorded by a morally questionable Italian camera crew.⁴³ Nevertheless, brutal events such as these are not new in the dynamics of the conflict.⁴⁴ What was new, however, and for the sake of this study, represents the true 'Death of Oslo' was the damage that occurred through the transmission of these horrific killings upon Israeli TV.⁴⁵ The military reprisal *i.e.*, calculated rocket attacks upon the police station where the atrocity occurred were arguably commensurate with the crime. Militarily speaking, Israel can always enforce its need for recompense. But, the psychological damage done by showing this violent episode of primeval bloodlust encapsulated by the image of Thabit Abbas Aasi, or Aziz Tsalha raising his bloodstained palms in victory at the window of the police station was irreparable concerning the Oslo 'peace process'.⁴⁶

Any real consideration of Oslo as a 'peace process' after this event it can be argued is worthless. In essence, the peace was at this point, like a victim of an automobile accident, wasting away in a coma, unconscious, starved of life, and clinically dead.⁴⁷ If, and for the time being it is a *small* if, any 'peace process' can be reconstituted from the ashes of this unworkable and impractical stillborn peace, then it should have a new name, new schedulers, and new conveners, and moreover, be driven by new innovators: Perhaps it is the time for a European, a

⁴² Goldenberg, Suzanne, 'When they blundered into the baying mob they sealed their fate'. *Guardian*, October 13, 2000,

⁴³ Silver, Eric, 'Israeli agents seize suspected lynch mob leaders'. *Independent*, October 19, 2000.

⁴⁴ Such examples of brutal violence are to numerous to cite. For an example however, of a specific incident of lynching consider, Shiff, Ze'ev, & Ya'ari, Ehud, *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising – Israel's Third Front*, pp. 147-148.

⁴⁵ Black, Ian, 'Double tragedy rolls back years of progress', *Guardian*, October 13, 2000, and Dempsey, Judy, 'Israel blames television for adding to the violence'. *The Financial Times*, October 14-15, 2000. And: Editorial, 'A day of horror: Who can halt the slide to war'. *Guardian*, October 13, 2000.

⁴⁶ Some confusion has emerged concerning the identity and culpability of the alleged self-confessed murderer. For instance the *Guardian* initially reported that the man responsible was one Thabit Abbas Aasi. See: Whitaker, Brian, 'Report of US plan to offer Arafat an instant mini-state'. *Guardian*, October 28, 2000. Yet, due to an attempt by the Israelis to send a warning to the Palestinians, through humiliation of the suspect, the man's identity is claimed, as one Aziz Tsalha. Granted the confusion may have been made through either a revision of Israeli supplied information to the journalists, or simply a journalistic error occurring in the first report.

See: MacAskill, Ewan, Humiliation for Palestinian murder suspect, *Guardian*, June 27, 2001.

⁴⁷ Goldenberg, Suzanne & Capella, Peter, 'Red Cross says fighters edging into all-out war'. *Guardian*, November 22, 2000.

Russian, or Chinese initiative. Or *even*, as the eminent scholar Edward Said consistently urges for, a Palestinian inspired initiative, conducted alongside an active Palestinian dialogue.⁴⁸ At least then, the Palestinians, the Arabs, and other interested parties, could not claim, and perhaps legitimately, that U.S. and Israeli hegemonic interests shall always stand in opposition to the true interests of peace in the Middle East. And furthermore, that all the time that a *Pax Americana Israelica* exists, then the Palestinians and Arabs are always going to play a subservient role in the further shaping of the 'modern' Middle East, and be prevented from taking real control over their own destinies.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Said, Edward, W. *The Question of Palestine*, p. xxxiv. And: Ashrawi, Hanan, *This Side of Peace*, p. 94.

⁴⁹ *New Internationalist*, 'Power Pax': A brief history in megalomania'. Issue 330, December 2000, p. 24. *Pax Americana* see Said, Edward, *The Question of Palestine*, p. 196.

Conclusion(s)

In general, the motive and character of the perpetrators is shrouded by rhetoric about their 'cowardice and their 'shadowy' character, almost as if they had not volunteered to immolate themselves in the broadest of broad blue daylight. On the campus where I am writing this, there are a few students and professors willing to venture about United States policy. But they do so very guardedly, and it would sound like vain apologetics if transmitted live. So the analytical moment, if there is to be one, has been indefinitely postponed.¹

Today, as I write, fifty weeks exactly, since the Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon wilfully violated the sanctity of the *Al-Haram al-Sharif* and *Masjidi al-Aqsa* complex in the Holy City of Jerusalem, it falls upon me to offer my heart felt condolences to 'all' those victims who are inextricably bound up within the national tragedy that has befallen the United States, on this, a collective Day of National Remembrance *i.e.*, September 14, 2001. And also, to offer my thoughts to those 'innocents' of all nations and religious denominations, who legitimately fear for their futures in this time of great sadness and uncertainty.

Any analyst of the 'modern' history of the Middle East who contemplates upon the many intricacies and complications inherent within the dynamics of the Arab/Israeli conflict in particular, runs the risk of both exogenous and extraneous events, (regrettably, very often tragedies), overtaking his or her assessment, prior to either examination or publication, leaving them in possession of nothing more than a frustratingly incomplete analysis. Nevertheless, and in stark contradiction to Christopher Hitchens's 'postponement of the analytical moment' in the aftermath of such unfortunate and desperate circumstances, a conclusion must, and shall have to be drawn.

¹ Hitchens, Christopher, 'So is this war?' *Guardian*, G2, September 13, 2001.

Since the inevitable 'Death of Oslo', horrors unimaginable *i.e.*, child murders, suicide bombers, 'targeted killings' (assassinations)² as well as 'random killings' have been unleashed upon both parties to this protracted and internecine conflict. Indeed, it is perhaps a little ironic, if not saddening, that this thesis' secondary aim *i.e.*, that the 'media frames' were selected because it was felt that they represented good examples of a particular dynamic or salient feature inherent within the Arab-Israeli conflict has been proven, regrettably, to be very true. A rapid analysis of the events of this last year will unquestioningly verify this observation.³ Indeed, it is arguable that every dynamic analysed in each chapter, bar possibly one, (assassination of a head of state, and this has certainly been mooted in some corners)⁴ has been tragically replicated.

The consequences and ramifications of the 'Death of Oslo' and the ensuing violence have not yet been fully realised however, but history shows us that many things are cyclical in their nature, no less so 'peace processes' and conversely, 'death processes'. To consolidate this observation, Israeli military planners have forecast a 'worst case scenario' situation, estimating that the violence could rage on unabated for upwards of five years.⁵ Axiomatically, and discouragingly for the region's quest for peace, it also indicates that the Israeli's

² Reeves, Phil, 'Gun battles erupt day after Israeli's call truce.' *Independent*, May 24, 2001.

³ Regarding 'child killings' see: Greenberg, Joel, '2 Jewish teenagers are beaten to death in West Bank.' *New York Times*, May 10, 2001. And: Kiley, Sam, 'Two Israelis boys stoned to death in desert cave.' *The Times*, May 10, 2001. For 'targeted killings' (assassinations) see: Reeves, Phil, 'Israel accused over Palestinian 'assassinations.' *Independent*, February 21, 2001. And: Sontag, Deborah, 'Sharon orders air raids on Arafat's bases.' *New York Times*, March 29, 2001. Concerning 'random killings' see: Sontag, Deborah, 'Palestinians mark a bitter milestone amid violence.' *New York Times*, May 16, 2001. For 'settler violence' see: Goldenberg, Suzanne, 'Israeli court paroled murderer.' *Guardian*, February 19, 2001. And: Sontag, Deborah, 'Israeli baby's funeral becomes focus of settlers militancy.' *New York Times*, April 2, 2001. For 'suicide terrorist attacks' see: Reeves, Phil, 'Suicide bomb at rush hour kills three Israelis.' *Independent*, March 5, 2001. And: Sontag, Deborah, 'Suicide bomber kills five, Israeli retaliation jets kill twelve' *New York Times*, May 19, 2001. And: Haberman, Clyde, 'Day after bombing, Israelis grieve, and strike back.' *New York Times*, August 11, 2001. Concerning 'border incursions' see: Associated Press, 'Israeli's attack Syrian radars in Lebanon.' *New York Times*, April 16, 2001. And: Fisk, Robert, 'Israeli raid in Bekaa raises risk of Syrian war.' *Independent*, July 2, 2001. Concerning 'violation of religious sites' see: Kiley, Sam, 'Temple Mount dig provokes Israeli wrath.' *The Times*, March 9, 2001. For 'Intifada like conditions' see: 'Israeli's kill twelve year old protester, Palestinians in Gaza say,' *New York Times*, June 18, 2001. *Etc. etc.*

⁴ Colvin, Marie, 'Wary Arafat gives Sharon a chance.' *The Sunday Times*, February 11, 2001. And: Goldenberg, Suzanne, 'Israelis blast Arafat's HQ.' *Guardian*, March 29, 2001.

⁵ Habermas, Clyde, 'Israelis and Palestinians prepare for a long struggle.' *New York Times*, August 18, 2001.

have drawn up a plan of action, and this was well before the 'day of infamy' *i.e.*, September 11, 2001.⁶

This thesis has argued consistently that throughout the ill-fated Oslo 'peace process' there has been a pro-Israeli, anti-Palestinian-anti-Arab discourse (a purposeful homogenisation) evident within the vast majority of U.S. mainstream media channels, which fluctuated in the strength of its denigration as the process careered inauspiciously from one dilemma to the next. In light of the 'day of infamy' and President Bush's ensuing 'War on Terrorism' it is considered that at least two things will now occur. The first and rather obviously, is that U.S. mainstream media portrayals of both the Palestinians and other Arabs can, for the time being, only worsen, although the U.S. Administration (and forming Coalition) has made it clear that it is not conducting a war against Islam *per se*. (Although if you had analysed the U.S. mainstream media after the February 1993 attack on the World Trade Centre you might have thought otherwise, because at times the 'prestigious press' has presented its readership with a veritable 'rogues gallery'.) Nevertheless, this retrogressive media denigration of the Arab is an unfortunate truism, inasmuch as the U.S. Administration needs to act upon an immediate and already 'manufactured consensus' explicitly in order to wage its 'War on Terrorism'.

The second inevitability, is that the fragile truce declared between the Israelis and Palestinians *will* eventually hold, (it is naïve to believe that all guns can be silenced at all times, however), and there can at last be some active dialogue (more than likely with some restrictions) with the reasonably level headed and potentially (if allowed to be) pragmatic Shimon Peres.⁷ Hopefully, then a series of 'confidence building measures' can be emplaced, finally facilitating movement towards a reconfigured fair and balanced 'peace process'. It is an irony not missed by many though, that this 'movement' could only happen after America had applied pressure upon the protagonists in the name of 'coalition

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Reeves, Phil, 'Peres and Arafat reach 'flexible' deal as new violence threatens peace talks.' *Independent*, September 27, 2001.

building' and under the spectre of the threat of a possible global scale conflagration.⁸

America *needs*, and *must*, prosecute her, (*our*), war (noticeably not 'crusade') against 'global terrorism'. To suggest, as the likes of Shaikh Abu Hamza and an anonymous Palestinian West Banker have,⁹ that America 'had it coming' in the light of her duplicitous foreign policy is a wicked and unconscionable insinuation, although as this thesis has indicated, the warnings that something catastrophic could happen were clearly there.¹⁰ It is a travesty of justice indeed, that it takes an 'apocalyptic' event, as 'epoch making' as the 'day of infamy' to bring about such transformations in policy, but in the immediate aftermath of the catastrophe many analysts and newscasters were at least beginning to raise questions concerning the United State's unequivocal support for Israel. In view of this, it is hoped that when America has slaked her justified thirst for revenge, she may take stock of how she is perceived by *others* in her role of 'global policeman' (the anomaly regarding America's gender here is recognised), and redress those aspects of her foreign policy that are causing so much pain and enmity, in this specific instance, towards those bound up in the revolutions of the Arab/Israeli conflict, but also of those in other corners of the world, where she has interests to protect. To conclude, there is a lesson for us all, brought to us in the wise words of Chief Seathl from the tribe of the Suquamish of the Sioux:

Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth.
If men spit upon the ground, they spit upon themselves.
This we know.
The earth does not belong to man; man belongs to the earth.
This we know.
All things are connected like the blood, which unites one family.
All things are connected.
Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth.
Man did not weave the web of life; he is merely a strand in it.
Whatever he does to the web he does to himself.

Chief Seathl, 1855.¹¹

⁸ Kiley, Sam, 'Why the hatred in Israel may give rise to peace.' *Evening Standard*, September 21, 2001.

⁹ Martin, Philips, & Rollings, Grant, 'Fanatics who shame Islam.' *The Sun*, September 14, 2001. And: Goldenberg, Suzanne, 'Palestinians joy – global condemnation.' *Guardian*, September 12, 2001.

¹⁰ See: Chapter Four, 'Sunday Bloody Sundays'.

¹¹ *The Great Chief Sends Word*, Chief Seathl's Testament.

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