

Chaillot Papers

July 2003

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The European Union and the crisis in the Middle East

*Muriel Asseburg, Dominique Moïsi, Gerd Nonneman and
Stefano Silvestri*
Edited by Martin Ortega



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Institute for Security Studies
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Paris

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Post-11 September, terrorism has further complicated the already confused equation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Granted, it is difficult to talk of direct links between a suicide attack on a bus in Jerusalem, hostage-taking in a Moscow theatre and the terrible attacks on the twin towers of the World Trade Centre in New York: the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, like the Chechen question, cannot be seen as simply an aspect of the al-Qaeda phenomenon. Nevertheless, at least two types of indirect linkage between events in the Middle East and the new international terrorism can be discerned. First, there is no doubt that on the ground the accumulated frustration, failure and despair in Palestine, but also the Arab world as a whole, create a breeding ground from which terrorist groups can easily recruit suicide bombers. Second, there is a perception that the priority now given to international terrorism in the list of major threats has radically reinforced solidarity among the targeted states – the United States and Israel in particular but also Russia and European countries – to the detriment of already difficult real situations, particularly the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. But the priority given to the fight against terrorism does not necessarily imply shared analyses of underlying problems and regional crises.

Since 2002 at least two consequences have been clearly perceptible in American and European policies on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Terrorism has firstly brought the United States back into the Middle East and strengthened American support for Israel: whereas the new President Bush was not very involved in the conflict at the beginning of his presidency, after 11 September the Middle East quickly became a priority for America, initially via Iraq and then via the domino theory on democracy in all of the region. In Europe, the phenomenon of terrorism greatly complicated the expressing of policies: separating condemnation of terrorism and support for the Palestinian Authority became a more subtle business and condemning Israel's repressive methods also became more difficult. The European Union has never denied the principle of the Palestinians' right to an independent, secure state, any more than it has compromised over the condemnation of terrorism and Israel's right to ensure its own security. However, since 11 September the Europeans have often been criticised, in a

very simplistic way, by certain elements in Israel and the United States as 'accomplices' of Palestinian terrorism.

And yet the European Union has kept to its principles and continued to press for peaceful resolution of the conflict. This Chaillot Paper edited by Martin Ortega does not of course answer all possible questions on the Union's role in the Middle East. Yet it is very useful in shedding light on various dimensions, in particular in pointing out the way in which the Union's policy differs from that of America and by ruling out two extreme options that would be equally disastrous for both parties: de facto apartheid on the one hand and endless violence on the other.

Since the end of the American intervention in Iraq, the players involved find themselves holding a new hand of cards. President Bush has now personally involved himself in the search for a political solution to the conflict: by agreeing both to publish the Quartet's 'road map' (which, as a member of the Quartet the United States had accepted in any case in late November 2002) and by fixing the objective of two independent states within secure, recognised borders. The problems encountered by the Americans in Iraq – the failure, for the moment, to find any weapons of mass destruction, the difficulty in maintaining peace on the ground and in devolving power democratically to an Iraqi authority – are certainly acting as a driving force in this new American involvement in the peace process. Yet whatever the reasons, the opportunity should be grasped. The Europeans were deeply divided over American policy on Iraq, that is to say on the free use that Washington intends from now on to make of its military power, and those divisions persist. But if the United States again finds itself having to break the vicious circle of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Europe must support it: the Union should involve itself more in implementing the road map, whose letter and spirit are all the more balanced for having been negotiated and drafted in a multilateral framework. By definition, a multilateral peace plan cannot be successful if implemented by only one actor.

Paris, June 2003

Martin Ortega

In summer 2000 the negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians hosted by President Clinton at Camp David raised the prospect of a peaceful resolution of the most sensitive aspects of their controversy, after almost nine years of difficult but promising exchanges following on from the Madrid Conference of November 1991. Nevertheless, Yasser Arafat's refusal to accept the terms negotiated at Camp David and the outbreak of a second *intifada* on 28 September 2000 led to a spiral of violence that dashed hopes for peace, leading instead to low-intensity war. Nor did the election of Ariel Sharon as Prime Minister in February 2001 make a return to the negotiating table any easier. The two parties considered that they would have more to gain from acts of violence than from negotiations and agreements. Therefore, violence in the Middle East was the continuation of diplomacy by other means. The external actors did not want, or were unable, to break this vicious circle. The most bitter regional conflict since the Second World War was thus rekindled following a phase of pacification that had appeared to be permanent. The European Union and its member states, but also the European public, viewed this negative development with great concern, because the breakdown of the peace process symbolised the end of a decade of optimism that the international community could promote peace not only in the Middle East but also in many other regions, such as southern Africa, Central America, the Balkans or South-East Asia.

In September 2002 the Institute for Security Studies held a seminar with a view to both looking at the role played by the EU during two years of conflict between Israelis and Palestinians and making specific proposals for restoring peace. European experts and academics, diplomats from member states and officials from the Union were invited with the aim of identifying possible points of agreement among the Fifteen. Four participants at the seminar were invited to produce chapters for this *Chaillot Paper*, and contributions were received by February 2003.

In the meantime the war in Iraq was being prepared in Washington and debated in New York. Events resulting from the Iraq crisis actually altered the international scene and not unnaturally delayed publication of this paper. Nevertheless, those events have not changed either the nature or the relevance of this publication for three reasons. Firstly, it takes account of the most recent developments. Secondly, a study of the role played by the European Union in the Middle East crisis since summer 2000 remains of general, possibly central interest to examination of the CFSP as a whole. Indeed, the Union's relations with the United States, member states' respective positions on the CFSP, the means and actions of the various European bodies, the notions of crisis prevention and management and the obstacles confronting them are all issues present in this conflict. It is hardly possible to make an overall assessment of the CFSP without detailed knowledge of what the Union has achieved, and what it has failed to achieve, during this crisis. The third reason why it is at present important to analyse the Union's role during three years of conflict has to do with the continuity in this role before and after the war in Iraq. Indeed, the most significant aspects of the Union's action during recent months, before and after the war, have been its participation in the 'Quartet', which has put forward a 'road map', and its insistence, in various types of declaration, on the need to put an end to the violence.

The end of the war in Iraq has admittedly opened up new prospects for a resolution of the Middle East crisis, in particular owing to publication of the 'road map'. However, at the time of going to press, this 'road map' has met with mixed reactions. On the one hand, the United States and the EU have declared that violence must stop and that the parties should start a new round of negotiations. On the other, this new peace plan is giving rise to some divergences not only among those who proposed it but also among Israelis and Palestinians, who hold differing views of the content and timetable sketched out in the 'road map'. Without any doubt, launching a new phase of negotiations after a long crisis will require determination from both parties as well as strong backing from the United States and the European Union.

The purpose of this *Chaillot Paper* is to reflect on the EU's role during the Middle East crisis, rather than to make specific proposals on its resolution.¹ The first chapter, by Muriel Asseburg, contains an exhaustive analysis of the three facets of the European Union's role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: economic and financial aid for the peace process, participation in multilateral frameworks and support for the creation of effective, democratic Palestinian institutions. The author also advocates more dynamic involvement of the Union in the political aspects of the dispute. The second contribution, by Dominique Moisi, is an extremely thoughtful essay on the psychological obstacles, which are present in many European countries, that make it very difficult to reach a common EU position. He suggests a balanced European approach based on respect for human rights and encouraging the two sides to compromise in order not to '[allow] the two peoples to pursue a suicidal course'. The third chapter, by Gerd Nonneman, is a fascinating analysis of US policy on the conflict, and the deep-seated reasons behind it, from a European point of view. Even if the Europeans have to support the mediating role played by the United States, as it is the only power with the influence to make itself heard, Nonneman wonders whether the Europeans are condemned for ever to playing a supporting role. Finally, Stefano Silvestri introduces a very interesting scheme for characterising US policy in the Middle East, and by extension the world. He draws up several scenarios, asserting that, with its unequalled political and military power, the United States has a free choice between a specific global policy of imperial power and one in which it accepts limitations and responsibilities.

The last chapter addresses the very difficult task of drawing a few conclusions. For the moment one main conclusion can be advanced. Despite its firm commitment to support a peaceful solution and activities by EU institutions directed to that end, the EU's record during the crisis between Israelis and Palestinians since summer 2000 is not wholly satisfactory. As a result, and in the general view, the Union (and at the same time member states, who set the Union's foreign policy) must be invited to play a more active role, with the object of halting the violence and helping in the search for a negotiated solution.

1. A number of proposals by officials and academics are listed in the Conclusion. The problem is a lack of political will to put such proposals into practice.

To complete this *Chaillot Paper* a number of annexes have been added. The first is a chronology of the conflict since summer 2000; the accuracy of some figures (dates and number of victims, for instance) may vary slightly according to sources, which are normally the press. Next comes a list of recent books, articles and documents necessary for an understanding of the Union's role during the conflict. Lastly the European Council's statements on the Middle East since Berlin in March 1999 are reproduced, as they summarise the Union's political standpoint.

From declarations to implementation? The three dimensions of European policy towards the conflict

Muriel Asseburg

1

Following the historic breakthrough between Israel and the PLO in the Oslo negotiations and their mutual recognition in September 1993, the EU was eager to become engaged in support of the ensuing peace process. The EU concentrated its efforts on supporting the creation of an environment that would make possible lasting peace in the region rather than contributing directly to a political solution between the conflicting parties. EU support was to be complementary and parallel to the political negotiations at the official level. It was only with the collapse of the Oslo process and the outbreak of the second, or Al-Aqsa *intifada* that we witnessed a shift in the EU's approach. The EU has finally realised that its support for peace building and economic development cannot be effective in the absence of a genuine peace process. It has therefore lately assumed more of a political role – be it in the field of crisis management or multilateral diplomacy – searching for a way out of the current cycle of violence. To date, however, these efforts have not translated into tangible progress on the ground; on the contrary, the situation has rapidly deteriorated further.

This chapter assesses EU policies in support of the Middle East peace process over the last few years and focuses on the period following the collapse of this process and the outbreak of the *intifada*. In a rebuttal of the frequently made generalisations about the complete ineffectiveness of the EU's involvement, EU policies are here considered under three main headings: (1) financial and economic support for the peace process, (2) efforts at regional stabilisation and the search for multilateral solutions, and (3) support for Palestinian state- and institution-building. These headings are, of course, in reality overlapping and less clear-cut than presented here for the purpose of analysis. However, this approach will present more clearly the areas in which there has been progress, the areas in which deficiencies have surfaced and the reasons for them. Finally, this paper will offer policy recommendations that aim at making the EU's involvement more effective.

At the centre of European efforts: financial and economic support

Since the inception of the Oslo process, the financial and economic dimension has been at the core of the European approach. Indeed, in the period 1993-2000, the EU and individual member states were the largest donors of financial and technical aid to the Palestinian Authority (PA) as well as to the Middle East peace process in general.¹ Financial aid and economic cooperation have been based on the understanding that (1) the Palestinian population could be convinced to support the peace process and radical positions could be neutralised through economic development that would lead to a tangible improvement of living conditions for each individual Palestinian; (2) the creation of a democratic and viable Palestinian state is in Israel's interest; and (3) enmity between the two populations could be reduced and reconciliation induced through joint projects at the level of civil society. Therefore, this aspect of the EU's efforts addressed three main fields: the creation of the necessary conditions for economic development in the Palestinian territories; budget support for the PA and the establishment of structures for Palestinian self-government; and support for Israeli-Palestinian civil society cooperative projects.

Economic development in the Palestinian territories

The bulk of European aid after Oslo went into projects aimed at improving the infrastructure in the Palestinian territories such as road networks, water wells and pipelines, waste and sewage disposal, the Gaza harbour and airport, hospitals and schools. At the same time, efforts were made to help the Palestinians establish a regulatory framework allowing for a free-market economy.

However, in the crucial early years of the Oslo process, the Palestinians did not come to enjoy, as had been envisaged, anything like an individual economic peace dividend that would have helped convince them of the benefits of the peace process. On the contrary, in the years 1992-96, per capita income in the Palestinian territories fell by about 35 per cent and unemployment rose to approximately 30 per cent. The economic setback resulted from a combination of factors, the most important among them being the newly introduced closure policy – i.e., the introduction of a

1. The EU and its member states have been the biggest donors of financial and technical assistance to the PA, providing over 50 per cent of the international community's finance for the West Bank and Gaza Strip between 1994 and 1998. Total EU assistance to the Palestinian territories accounted for €1.42 billion in the period 1993-2001 according to figures provided by the European Commission. See also Commission of the European Union, 'The EU & the Middle East Peace Process. The Union's Position & Role', http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/mepp/.

system by Israel pursuant to which Palestinians were not allowed to enter (or to work in) Israel and Jerusalem or move between West Bank and the Gaza Strip without a special Israeli permit.² In 1997 a period of comparatively few closures started and by the end of the year macroeconomic indicators started to signal an improvement of the economic situation. In the following period, however, the Palestinian territories' economic dependency on Israel (above all for employment opportunities and trade) did not decrease, and no basis for sustainable development was laid. In the absence of the rule of law under the PA, and given the uncertainty of the development of the peace process, private investment did not increase, and public investment mainly went into unproductive areas, such as employment in the public sector. Per capita income did not even reach the pre-1993 (Oslo agreements) level.

The second *intifada* and Israel's response to it have led to an additional grave setback in economic development and the standard of living of Palestinians. It will also have a serious impact on future economic development. The reoccupation, curfews and internal closures have not only led to a complete disruption of Palestinian economic activities, mass unemployment, poverty and dependence on humanitarian aid, but have also caused the destruction of the newly built Palestinian infrastructure and administrative capacities, which will hamper reconstruction of the economy. The EU has reacted to the crisis by shifting its support from development activities to humanitarian aid and emergency programmes for employment, reconstruction and rehabilitation of victims of violence.

Emergency support for the Palestinians presents a dilemma: by extending humanitarian and emergency aid to the Palestinians, the EU is actually taking over the humanitarian duties of the occupying power – immense costs that Israel strives to avoid – and is thus helping to prolong the state of reoccupation, closures and curfews rather than working actively against it. There is no question that the EU has to extend emergency and humanitarian aid to the Palestinian population. At the same time, however, it should make it very clear to both parties that this is an emergency measure only, that the EU is not willing to finance either ongoing occupation or violent resistance in the medium term, and that it expects both parties to make serious efforts to resume the political process and to suppress any violence directed against the other side.

² See UNSCO (United Nations Special Coordinator for the Occupied Territories), Quarterly Reports, here Spring 1997 Report, Gaza, April 1997, www.arts.mcgill.ca; Sarah Roy, 'The Palestinian Economy after Oslo', in *Current History*, vol. 97 (January 1998), no. 615, pp. 19-25. With the Interim Agreement of September 1995, the West Bank was divided into areas with different status and competencies for Israel and the PA (A, B, and C areas) which allowed for the introduction of so-called 'internal closures' isolating A, B and C areas from each other and prohibiting movement between them, often in response to a suicide bombing or to prevent unrest on Jewish holidays. Internal closure and the cancelling of (almost) all entry permits to Israel have become a permanent feature since the beginning of the second *intifada*.

Back to direct budget support for the PA

After Oslo, large amounts of European aid went into the establishment of Palestinian institutions of self-government, with the aim of laying the basis for a viable Palestinian state. EU direct budget support was crucial for the setting up and the survival of government institutions in the difficult formative years of the PA. Since 1998, the PA has been (almost completely) able to cover its current budget through taxes, duties and the money transferred by the Israeli authorities under the terms of the Paris Economic Protocol. Thus, the EU has been able to concentrate its efforts on development assistance rather than on direct budget support. However, since the beginning of 2001, Israel has retained the transfers in reaction to the *intifada* - adding up to a sum of approximately \$650-700 million by September 2002 according to International Monetary Fund statistics. As a result of the retention of funds, in combination with the breakdown of the Palestinian economy, and the consequential loss of income from taxes and duties, the PA has been on the brink of financial collapse. The EU has helped to prevent that collapse by providing €10 million per month in order to help enable the PA to pay its operating costs and ensure the payment of wages to civil servants (among them teachers and security forces) and the delivery of basic services.

Budget support to the PA presents another dilemma: it is essential to avoid the complete breakdown of self-government structures in the Palestinian territories, not least to prevent the spread of chaos and anarchy and a further upsurge of violent attacks on Israeli targets. However, the PA should not be allowed to perceive EU budget support as any approval whatsoever of its way of dealing with violence.

Cooperation without rapprochement

The EU has supported projects for regional and bilateral Israeli-Palestinian cooperation aimed at the linking-up of civil societies and cross-border cooperation mainly in the fields of water, economy, trade and environment. But joint projects have not led to rapprochement or reconciliation between the populations. The

projects might have influenced the attitudes and behaviour of individual participants, but they have not had any tangible effect on the broader populations or on the leadership on both sides. This has been because only a very small and specific spectrum of people (usually already convinced of the need for cooperation and dialogue) have participated in these activities. But the underlying problem is that genuine rapprochement and equal cooperation are just not possible as long as the asymmetrical, hierarchical relationship of occupier and occupied continues to dominate people's daily lives.³

The overall impact of European financial and economic support

Overall, the EU's financial and economic support has not had the intended results: the PA has not become independent from foreign financing for its operating budget and reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians has not taken place. In addition, very little progress has been made with regard to economic development, or rather, the little economic progress that has been made has come too late to change people's attitudes in favour of the peace process, and it has been more than reversed by the recent economic breakdown and destruction of infrastructure. Even in the years before the *intifada* it had become obvious that sustainable economic development was not possible in the face of Israeli closure policies and the fragmentation of the Palestinian territories through the ongoing process of settlement and by-pass road construction. Economic losses due to closures have by far outweighed the international donors' disbursements to the Palestinian areas. Thus, the main obstacle to the effective use of European aid has been the continuing occupation. The European approach has been one of post-conflict peace building – as if there were no continuing conflict or occupation hampering economic development, reconciliation and institution building. In its future policy planning the EU should be aware that sustainable development and peace building in the Palestinian territories can only effectively take place once a political settlement has been reached.

3. See Manuel Hassassian and Edward Kaufman, 'Israeli-Palestinian Peace-Building: Lessons Learnt', in *People Building Peace: 35 Inspiring Stories from around the World* (Utrecht: European Centre for Conflict Prevention in cooperation with the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, 1999), pp. 112-23. For an overview and a critique of these projects from a Palestinian point of view, see the EuroMeSCo paper by Ghassan Andoni, 'The People-to-People Programs: Peace Making or Normalisation?', Lisbon, January 2003.

Creating an environment conducive to peace: EU efforts at regional stabilisation and the search for multilateral solutions

The EU has put much emphasis on regional stabilisation and the search for multilateral solutions. It has been active in two main frameworks: the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP), or Barcelona process, and the multilateral working groups of the Madrid process, particularly the Regional Economic Development Working Group (REDWG). On the other hand, the EU's Special Envoy and High Representative contributed actively to multilateral efforts, particularly towards the end of 2000 and the beginning of 2001.

The EMP was never conceptualised as a framework for solving the Middle East conflict and it does not provide specific instruments or forums for doing so. It was rather designed to be complementary to the Middle East peace process by providing a framework through which, among others, parties to the conflict would be able to build up trust and institutionalise their relations in the political, economic and human spheres as well as in the field of security. It was also supposed to serve the aim of peace building and long-term regional stabilisation by laying the foundations for economic development and regional integration.

The Barcelona process has made some achievements with regard to the Middle East peace process, such as the PA's participation as an equal Mediterranean partner – a fact of great symbolic value – and the Arab states' acceptance of Israel as a partner in the process. For some years, the partnership indeed served as a forum for dialogue between the parties to the Middle East conflict, even at times when otherwise violent conflict prevailed between them. This is no longer the case, however, since the November 2000 Marseilles and April 2002 Valencia meetings were boycotted by the Syrian and Lebanese representatives in protest at the Israeli reaction to the *intifada*. It has also become clear that the EMP has not been able to serve as an instrument of crisis prevention. In the end, the EMP has neither helped to prevent the degeneration of the Oslo process and the outbreak of violence nor to de-escalate the violent confrontations. Confidence has not been built up among the southern partners in the absence of a political solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict and in the face of a major imbalance of military and economic power between Israel and its

neighbours. Thus, the projected 'Mediterranean Charter for Peace and Security' has seen no progress for years now. Instead of the Barcelona process leading to an environment conducive to peace and positively influencing the atmosphere and the negotiations between Israel and its partners, the stalemate in the Oslo and the Madrid processes since the Netanyahu era has had negative effects on the EMP and has blocked any progress, particularly in the field of the 'Political and Security Partnership'.⁴

The multilateral working groups

The Madrid process has established five sectoral working groups (on arms control, refugees, water, environment and regional economic development) in the search for solutions to the major problems in the Middle East which exist across borders and can only be tackled effectively in a multilateral framework that takes into account the interests of all concerned parties. In this context, the EU acts as the chairman of REDWG. This group, in following a functionalist approach, is focused on regional economic integration and interdependence. The EU offers its expertise and experience in the realm of economic integration as well as financial and technical support for regional networks of economic cooperation and integration. It has established a permanent REDWG secretariat in Amman which organises workshops and offers expertise. However, as with the other multilateral working groups, the results of REDWG have so far been very modest. Since the late 1990s, there have not been any official working group meetings, and all attempts to reinvigorate the multilateral process have so far failed.

It has become obvious over the past few years, which have been marked by stalemate in the regional forums, that all efforts at confidence building, regional integration and regional economic development can only be successful if there is an ongoing and genuine peace process – or maybe even only after there is an agreement that ends the Arab-Israeli conflict. This is not to dismiss regional and multilateral approaches: problems which exist across borders need to be solved in multilateral frameworks that take into account the interests of all concerned parties and build on expertise in the different sectors. It would therefore be wrong to abandon the regional and multilateral approaches. These forums and their work will serve as a basis in the future search for solutions.

4. The aim here is to look at the impact that the EMP has had on the Middle East Peace process and not to undertake a general assessment of the progress and shortcomings of the EMP. For a recent evaluation of the EMP see Annette Jünemann, 'Six Years After: Reinvigorating the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership', in Christian-Peter Hanelt et. al., *Europe's Emerging Foreign Policy and the Middle Eastern Challenge* (München and Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Foundation, 2002), pp. 59-77; Dorothee Schmid, 'Optimiser le processus de Barcelone', *Occasional Paper 36* (Paris: EU Institute for Security Studies, July 2002). For general information on the EMP, see http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/euromed/.

Direct EU participation in negotiations

In a wider context, Miguel Angel Moratinos, the EU's Special Envoy to the conflict since late 1996, has been present as a point of contact between the parties and the EU, as well as between the parties themselves on certain occasions, and has presented a number of specific constructive proposals. Also, the existence since 1999 of a High Representative has helped to give the EU's CFSP towards the region greater visibility. Moreover, Javier Solana was directly involved, representing the EU, at the Sharm-el-Sheik negotiations towards the end of 2000 and in the Mitchell Commission and the 'Quartet', as will be discussed later. European mediators have also been successful in particular instances of crisis management.

Support for Palestinian state- and institution-building

EU support for Palestinian state- and institution-building has been based on the conviction that 'the creation of a democratic, viable and peaceful sovereign Palestinian State . . . would be the best guarantee for Israel's security and Israel's acceptance as an equal partner in the region', as stated in the EU Berlin Declaration of March 1999. In order to build Palestinian government institutions, financial aid, material assistance and training was provided to key ministries and agencies, the Legislative Council, the police, the statistics bureau, the Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation, the local authorities, etc. The EU furthermore wanted to give the PA democratic legitimacy, therefore it gave massive financial and technical support to the first Palestinian elections in 1996, deployed election monitors and organised the overall coordination of the monitoring of elections.

Building a failed state?

However, the results of Palestinian state- and institution-building are clearly anything but excellent: legitimate, viable, efficient and democratic institutions have not been created in the Palestinian territories. On the contrary, the Palestinian political system is characterised by the prevalence of informal institutional arrangements and clientélism, by authoritarian government practices and human rights abuses, and by an inflated and inefficient public sector in which funds are misused. It is also characterised by the lack of

influence of the elected representatives, transparency and accountability, checks and balances, the rule of law, and an effective monopoly of power.⁵

Over the past few years, the PA has lost a great deal of legitimacy in the eyes of its own population due to the perceived self-enrichment and corruption of its leaders and the lack of opportunities for popular participation. Underlying the Palestinian discontent with its leadership is the PA's failure to secure independence and achieve economic progress. In the course of the *intifada* and the Israeli reoccupation of Palestinian cities, the PA's legitimacy has declined further. Israeli invasions and the destruction of the security services' and PA's infrastructure have also led to a further erosion of the monopoly of power and the PA's capacity to govern, to maintain law and order and to provide basic services.

The EU clearly has to share the responsibility for the shortcomings in Palestinian institution-building: due to its primary interest in short-term stability and the continuity of the Oslo process, the EU has supported Arafat as the strong and reliable Palestinian partner in the peace process in spite of his authoritarian tendencies, his human rights abuses and the lack of popular participation – as long as he efficiently crushed opposition to the peace process. The EU has also focused a significant amount of its aid on the technical and material details of institution-building, rather than on its content. It has insisted again and again on the PA's financial transparency and accountability with regard to the use of EU aid, but it has done so much less vigorously with regard to a democratic decision-making process, local elections or the rule of law.⁶

Reforms and elections

The process of reform of Palestinian governing institutions that has been initiated in the aftermath of Operation *Defensive Shield* tries to remedy some of the shortcomings of Palestinian institution-building. A detailed plan for reform has been worked out, a basic law and the law of the judiciary have finally been adopted by Arafat, and reforms in the financial and security field aimed at unifying PA accounts and security forces respectively, and at clarifying competencies between different government agencies, are under way. Reform of the political system is indeed necessary and has been a Palestinian demand for years.

5. For a detailed analysis of Palestinian state-building after Oslo, see Muriel Asseburg, *Blockierte Selbstbestimmung: Palästinensische Staats- und Nationenbildung während der Interimsperiode* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2002).

6. For an early assessment of European policies towards the Middle East Peace process, particularly in the field of Palestinian state-building, and recommendations to make them more effective, see Muriel Asseburg and Volker Perthes (eds.), *Surviving the Stalemate: Approaches to Strengthening the Palestinian Entity* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1998).

In the context of political reforms, elections for the Palestinian presidency and parliament were scheduled for January 2003 and local elections were planned for March 2003. It was highly doubtful, however, that these elections would lead to a new, more pragmatic and reform-oriented Palestinian leadership. Therefore, there was no strong international pressure on Israel to overcome obstacles to freedom of movement and allow free elections. In the end, they had to be delayed, and other aspects of reform – focusing on the reduction of Arafat’s institutional power and channels of influence – were pushed forward instead. By spring 2003, President Arafat was pressured to accept the introduction of a post of prime minister and a reform-oriented government led by Mahmoud Abbas (also known as Abu Mazen). The changes could indeed give impetus to a renewal of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. But still, general elections for a representative Palestinian leadership will have to take place soon. Only if there is a political perspective that includes an end to occupation in the foreseeable future will Palestinians choose representatives whom they consider capable in building up the future Palestinian political, social and economic system rather than the ones they think are best at resistance and armed struggle.

A more political role for Europe?

Since Oslo the political dimension of the EU’s engagement for peace in the Middle East has largely focused on the support for state- and institution-building in the Palestinian territories, on the multilateral frameworks as well as on declaratory policies. However, since the outbreak of the second *intifada*, the EU and its member states have become increasingly active in crisis management, and have assumed an ever more active role in the search for an internationally supported solution to the conflict.

Crisis management

In the course of the violent confrontations of the *intifada*, the EU has become increasingly engaged in efforts at crisis management. Even though these activities have been less in the limelight of the international media, there have been quite a number of cases in

which the EU has been successful in de-escalating tensions: the local cease-fires that European observers were able to secure early in the *intifada* between Gilo and Beit Jalla, and the mediation between President Arafat and Prime Minister Sharon by German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer after the Dolphinarium bombing (June 2001) which prevented a massive Israeli retaliation and an immediate further escalation. European mediators also facilitated a solution to the crises of the Church of the Nativity and the Muqataa in spring 2002.

Nevertheless, in the absence of political will on the part of the conflicting parties, EU activities in this field have had only limited and temporary impact and have not led to a sustainable de-escalation of the conflict or anything close to a durable cease-fire. On the contrary, the situation on the ground has deteriorated even more and the EU has seemed to be completely powerless in situations, such as the siege and almost complete destruction of the Muqataa compound in September 2002.

Ever better European declarations

The EU can take pride in its very consistent declaratory policy on Palestinian self-determination and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The European standpoint has developed consistently from Venice (1980) and Cardiff (1998) to Berlin (1999) becoming ever more outspoken and well-expressed while being firmly based in international law. Lately, the EU has also developed a clearer outlook as to the question of what a final settlement should look like and the principles it should be based on. According to the EU declaration of Seville (June 2002) a permanent solution should be based on the 1967 borders, rather than just referring to the controversial Security Council Resolution 242. Particularly when compared to US policies on the conflict, EU declarations have been much more concise, progressive and unified – whereas different US government bodies and administrations have expressed different positions on the status of Jerusalem, the Palestinian territories, etc.

However, until today, declaratory European positions have not been sufficiently backed up by concrete or symbolic policies. That is the case with regard to the illegality of occupation, settlement construction and the annexation of East Jerusalem. Often, European politicians have bowed to Israeli pressure not to meet

their Palestinian counterparts in East Jerusalem. Products from Israeli settlements – financially (almost) irrelevant, but politically delicate – are still exported to European countries, mainly under the preferential conditions granted to Israel, even though they clearly do not fall under the Association Agreement's rules of origin. That is also the case for the European Union's rejection of the excessive use of force by Israel in subduing the *intifada* that has been condemned in various European declarations because, despite those declarations, a European decision to freeze arms sales to Israel has not been made or even seriously discussed to date.

Successes in dialogue and diplomacy – lack of implementation

From the beginning of the Oslo process, the EU was able to offer additional forums for dialogue and contact between the parties, often away from the limelight of international attention but nevertheless with an impact that should not be ignored. Most importantly, the EU and its member states have extensively supported 'track-two diplomacy' – the results of which have already fed into negotiations and have been or will in the future be essential in the search for creative solutions on issues such as Jerusalem. The EU has also helped in finding solutions to day-to-day problems between the parties to the conflict. Its Special Envoy has, for example, established an EU-Israeli Joint Dialogue in which European and Israeli practitioners and experts have regularly discussed ways and means to overcome (Israeli) obstacles to economic development in the Palestinian territories.⁷

In addition, in 2002, the Europeans (in this case mainly in the person of the Briton Alistair Crooke) have engaged Palestinian groups in a dialogue that aims at obtaining their agreement on the renunciation of violent attacks against Israeli civilians. Clearly it is the right approach not only to condemn terrorism in countless declarations and to compel Arafat to renounce violence, but also to engage the rank and file of Fatah (as well as the Islamists) in an inclusive process aimed at a change of mind and strategy in such an essential matter. Indeed, it is essential to reach out to the Israeli people, the majority of whom are supportive of peace with the Palestinians and of compromises, such as the dismantling of settlements. The renunciation of violence against civilians by leading representatives of Palestinian society is essential and might help in revising the widespread feeling among Israelis that the current

7. See, in more detail, Joel Peters, 'Europe and the Arab-Israeli Peace Process: The Declaration of the European Council of Berlin and beyond', in Sven Behrendt and Christian-Peter Hanelt (eds.), *Bound to Cooperate: Europe and the Middle East* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Foundation, 2000), pp. 150-71, at p. 161.

conflict is an existential one and that there is no Palestinian partner with whom to talk and to clinch a peace deal.

In general, as the EU has developed new instruments in the sphere of its Common Foreign and Security Policy, it has also been able to achieve a stronger presence in the peace process through the activities of its Special Envoy, and the High Representative, Javier Solana, since 1999, as has been already pointed out. Particularly, the introduction of the office of High Representative has contributed to giving a greater visibility to the EU's CFSP towards the region. The EU was not only present at the Taba negotiations in January 2001, it was also involved in the crisis summit in Sharm el-Sheikh in October 2000, the Mitchell Commission, and lately, the Quartet. However, this has not helped the EU to gain acceptance by both parties to the conflict as a respected third party. In particular, it has not helped to overcome the deep mistrust of Israeli policy-makers, as well as the Israeli public, with regard to Europe's motivations and perceived one-sided pro-Arab stance. European representatives have been repeatedly rebuffed by the Israeli government and have not always been allowed to meet the Palestinian president or Palestinian officials. The Muqataa compound was once shelled even while the EU Special Envoy was visiting President Arafat.

Especially since the beginning of the current *intifada*, albeit after a considerable delay, the EU has assumed a more political role and involved itself directly in the search for a way out of the current crisis and a political solution to the conflict. In publishing a paper on the 2001 Taba negotiations, in the newspaper *Haaretz* on 14 February 2002, detailing the points of agreement as well as the open questions, the EU Special Envoy attempted to shift the public debate in Israel and Palestine back to the issues to be resolved in talks on the final status – building on the European assessment that the Israeli/American 'security first' approach would not work, as there needed to be a political vision in order for all cease-fire efforts to be effective and lasting.

Since the beginning of 2002, discussions from the starting point of the 'Peres-Abu Ala' understanding on a way out of the crisis have taken place within EU circles. In order to 'operationalise' US President Bush's vision for Middle East peace put forward in a June 2002 speech, a three-phase road map was finally agreed upon at the informal meeting of EU foreign ministers in Elsinore on 30 August 2002. It had considerable influence on the Quartet's

statements of September and December 2002 in which the international community led by the United States, the EU, the UN and Russia proposed a plan envisioning a Palestinian State and a peace settlement by 2005. Indeed, the so-called road map brought forward by the Quartet in October 2002 can be seen as an important, albeit partial, success for European diplomacy. The EU was successful in pushing the EU approach, i.e., the need for a realistic political perspective and a clear timetable as well as immediate gains for both parties in order for a cease-fire to be effective and making it a joint US/UN/EU/Russian initiative.⁸ The EU has also kept the United States working on finding a common approach, even though there have clearly been different priorities, at least in parts of the US administration. And the EU has succeeded in convincing the US administration of the importance of protecting Arafat from physical elimination and preventing the total destruction of the PA.

What should be done now?

What is now urgently needed is to translate the diplomatic and declaratory initiatives into progress on the ground. While it is important to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe in the Palestinian territories, to prevent the PA from collapsing lest chaos break loose in the Palestinian territories and to keep open channels of communication, it is most important now to make progress in the political realm. This means the following.

- The Europeans need to overcome their differences, which often prevent them from speaking with a single voice and from effectively backing up their positions with political action and symbolic steps.
- The EU needs to cooperate with the United States, as its policies cannot be effective if it is acting against the superpower, which regional players expect to give guarantees for a final settlement. The EU needs to work on committing the US administration to becoming fully and quickly involved in the implementation of the Quartet's plan.
- The implementation of the Quartet's plan will require massive pressure on both parties to the conflict to commit themselves to the road map as well as to its final objective – as without a clear

8. It must be noted, however, that the Quartet's statement represents a setback from the substantive point of view, when compared to the EU's Elsinore Declaration. It no longer mentions the 1967 borders as a point of reference and makes entry into each of the following phases conditional on the achievement of certain benchmarks. Thus the whole process becomes once again very vulnerable and easy to derail by its opponents, as was the case with the Oslo process.

commitment of both parties the Quartet's plan would quickly suffer the same fate as the Mitchell recommendations and the Tenet cease-fire agreement. One of the major challenges will be how to deal with an Israeli government that is not interested in resuming negotiations on a final status based on the 'land for peace' principle on the one hand, and a Palestinian leadership which has lost much of its legitimacy and capacity to guarantee a cease-fire and implement a possible agreement on the other.

- The EU and the Quartet will need to think creatively about incentives to promote the parties' readiness to engage in the process and commit themselves. This will involve offering help to solve the most difficult final status issues that lie ahead, such as the refugee question, and to offer political and military guarantees for a permanent solution and the steps leading to it.
- Reform of the Palestinian political system is necessary and has been a Palestinian demand for years. It should therefore be supported financially and technically with the aim of building more efficient, accountable and responsive institutions. But reform and regime change should not be made a precondition for the return to the negotiating table and an end to occupation. Indeed, a genuine process of democratisation can only take place after occupation has ended.
- The European Union should build on its experience and give support to Palestinian elections financially and technically. It should also make sure, in advance, that elections can (as in 1996) be conducted in East Jerusalem, and that election monitors can be present throughout the Palestinian territories. Election monitoring is not just a matter of providing democratic legitimacy to a newly elected leadership and parliament; it is also a chance to start creating the nucleus of an international presence in the Palestinian territories that can have a de-escalating effect. Therefore, one of the focal points of the EU's diplomatic activities should be assurance of the necessary conditions for meaningful elections: withdrawal of Israeli troops to pre-*intifada* lines; restart of a serious peace process; participation of East Jerusalem Palestinians in the elections and international election monitoring.
- Meanwhile, until the peace process has truly been restarted it is essential to follow up on activities that aim at promoting the population's readiness to support a future peace agreement. In this regard, the EU should help Palestinians to formulate clear

positions and statements on the questions of terrorism, refugees, coexistence, etc., in order to be able to get through to Israeli society and build a basis for future dialogue and confidence.

- But public diplomacy is also an issue for the EU itself. Up until now, the Europeans have not really taken into account the deep mistrust that exists in Israeli society towards greater European involvement. Public diplomacy is needed to influence Israeli public opinion and explain the European approach. That does not mean acquiescing in the current Israeli government's interpretation of what the EU should or should not do but, on the contrary, explaining the European stance and convictions and underpinning them with consequent, credible policies. This also includes persuading Israelis that it is in their interest to arrive quickly at a solution that allows for an independent and viable Palestinian state.

Europe and the ‘universality’ of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

Dominique Moïsi

The year 2002 ended in the Middle East as it began – in blood and violence. In the space of ten years, from the beginning of the Oslo process to the present time, the mood in the region has swung from hope to despair. In this discouraging context, what can Europe do apart from denouncing the escalation of violence and bemoaning its own powerlessness? The line that it has adopted for a number of years, which consists in passionately supporting the moderates in both camps, is doubtless the only one possible from a moral and diplomatic point of view but, in the absence of tangible results, one that causes much frustration. Yet what chance do the moderates stand when, by its actions, each camp reinforces the extremism of the other? The role that Europe hopes to play today cannot be to counterbalance Washington’s unfailing support for the Israeli government by unilaterally supporting a Palestinian Authority that is neither willing nor able to put an end to terrorism in its most unacceptable form of suicide bombings against civilians. The only consequence of such a temptation, which surfaces regularly, would be to exclude Europe from a peace process that must surely resume in the near future. It would lead to a significant widening of the emotional chasm that already separates the two shores of the Atlantic on the question of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The tensions between Europe and the United States over the question of Iraq that existed before the Iraq war and are still present today are insignificant compared with the crisis that could arise between a Europe fighting for the Arab cause and an America giving unqualified support to the Jewish State. Above all, such a policy would lead to the break-up of Europe.

More than fifty years after the Second World War and over forty years after the end of the war in Algeria, Berlin, Paris and doubtless other capitals, northern Europe and southern Europe perceive the conflict in the Middle East in differing ways. In Berlin and most of northern Europe, not to mention the countries of Central Europe that will join the Union in a little over a year, support for Israel is at

least partly the direct result of a feeling of guilt towards the Jewish people and loyalty towards the United States. In southern Europe, which is geographically closer to the conflict, a feeling of guilt that is the product of former colonialism, equalled by one of fear in the face of the sentiments of an Islamic community that is becoming ever more numerous, explains a greater sensitivity to the Palestinian cause. The only policy that can be truly European, which maintains a more or less harmonious alliance with the United States and allows Europe to be accepted as a valid partner by both parties to the conflict, is therefore the one that has been followed for nearly ten years. Europe should adopt an even-handed attitude towards the two parties alongside the United States, and not an alternative vision as at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, which culminated in the Venice Declaration of June 1980. What, therefore, can Europe, which is managing to maintain the Palestinian Authority thanks to its financial aid, do today?

Given its political and diplomatic impotence, despite its financial weight, should Europe content itself with reminding the two parties about law and justice, and hold itself up as a model of reconciliation, if not offering the possibility to both of integration at some future date, under specific conditions, into our 'haven' of peace and prosperity? At the level of popular emotions, sport and competitions like the Eurovision Song Contest, is not Israel already a part of Europe? Will there not be room tomorrow for a class of actors that are European by their history and culture, if not by geography, who could form a separate category in the greater European family?

What Europe can do to influence the conflict in the Middle East is in the first place to understand, and to get the public to understand, its origins and history. Ignorance lies at the base of intolerance, and intolerance leads all too easily to rejection, if not hatred, of the other.

Action based on understanding

The failure of the peace process does not, as some tend to think today, constitute the inevitable outcome of a disaster that could be seen coming. Nor is it the product of an unfortunate historical accident and human weakness and miscalculation. It is not possible to

comprehend the last decade and the transition from the hope offered by the Oslo process to today's despair without an appreciation of the psychology and history. The view that the Palestinians and no doubt the great majority of Arab countries have of Israel can be summed up in three words: injustice, humiliation, pretext. For the Arab world, the creation of the Jewish State was in itself an historical injustice and a colonial anachronism. Why should the Arab/Muslim world have to pay for the crimes carried out by the Christian West against the Jewish people? The withdrawal of Israel to its 1967 borders in itself already constitutes an historical compromise and a surrender, in the name of historical realism, of half of the land to which the Arab world feels it has a right.

This feeling of grave injustice is accompanied by one of humiliation at Israel's power and success, which contrast painfully with the failure of the Arab and Muslim world to modernise and become democratic. The last ten years have merely reinforced the feeling of decline of a civilisation that had its 'renaissance' while Christian Europe was still in the Middle Ages and whose Renaissance coincided with the beginning of Islam's decline. Melancholy reflection on this has turned into increasingly virulent criticism of a West that is held responsible for the Arab Muslim world's failures and is accused of every evil; a West that keeps in place regimes that are often held in contempt and is not only guilty of imposing a political status quo but perverts the minds of the people by the seductiveness of its model of society. As Olivier Roy has quite correctly remarked, the more Muslim élites become westernised, the greater their hostility towards the 'corrupting' West. Thus, the very existence of Israel becomes a convenient pretext that justifies the sacrifices the people are required to make and the absence of reforms, if not the corruption established as a system of government.

The Israelis view of the Palestinians and the Arab world in general can also be summed up by three expressions: ignorance, indifference and a mixture of insecurity and superiority complexes. It is essential to appreciate this psychological and cultural context if one is to understand the main phases of a tragic story that could well bear the title of a play by Pirandello: *Right You Are (If You Think You Are)*.

Two decisive turning-points, one of them during the last decade, dominate all others. The first of these was the Six Day War in 1967, which transformed the small pioneering state, whose

right to exist was still not recognised by its Arab neighbours, into a major regional power and introduced the poison of the 'occupation' of the West Bank and Gaza. Second was the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin in 1995, doubtless the only man who could have imposed peace and the Israeli equivalent of F. W. de Klerk in South Africa, Arafat, alas, never having assumed the role of Nelson Mandela despite his Nobel Peace Prize.

Shortly after the first *intifada* and the unfortunate alignment of Yasser Arafat with Saddam Hussein's Iraq during the Gulf War, in 1991 the Oslo process was the product, on both sides, of resignation but also hope. Oslo resulted from a reasonable conviction that, to lead a normal life, each had to accept the other's right to exist. By recognising the idea of a Palestinian state in principle, Israel aimed to live in security and complete the series of bilateral peace treaties made first with Egypt and then Jordan. By resigning themselves to the existence of Israel, the Palestinians hoped for greater prosperity and international legitimacy.

This shared hope ended in resounding failure. Each found itself variously frustrated, concerning security on the Israeli side, and legitimacy and prosperity in the Palestinian camp. The extremists on both sides were thus able to hijack the peace process. Moreover, leaders on both sides proved to be too calculating and too weak. Arafat neither could nor wished to put an end to terrorism, which was used as a way of exerting pressure in negotiations with Israel. Successive leaders of the Jewish State did not know how, or did not want, to put an end to the settlements policy.

The Oslo process was the outcome of a direct, and for a long time secret, dialogue between the two parties. Today, nearly three years after the demise of the Camp David accords in summer 2000, the dialectics of hatred and violence between the two peoples has reached hitherto unknown heights. Arafat today is like Mikhail Gorbachev yesterday in the Soviet Union – held in greater esteem by the international community than by his own people, who will one day call him to account for his strategy and leadership. Yet Israel's supremacy on the military level is a Pyrrhic victory. Not only does the country's undeniable power not result in greater security for its citizens: the continually worsening image of Israel contributes to its self-isolation.

Acting in the margins of history

Urging the United States into greater, more even-handed involvement in the conflict is currently the Europeans' primary objective. The moment is not necessarily inopportune. Following the war in Iraq, Washington will have to devote greater energies to the region, and European pressure, if applied discreetly and skilfully, could be welcomed by the Americans. Application of the 'Quartet's' 'road map' may provide a meeting point for Americans and Europeans. In the same way, if the opinion polls are to be believed, after two years of suicidal escalation both the Israelis and Palestinians are beginning to show signs of exhaustion. In December 2002 the non-governmental organisation Search for Common Ground published its findings on opinion surveys showing that a majority of Israelis and Palestinians alike wanted peace and mutual recognition on the basis of the 1967 borders. The Palestinians can only note the bloody failure of the second *intifada* and the lurch towards barbarity and the sacrifice of human lives among a people who were reputed to be one of the most cultivated in the Arab world. They are beginning to realise that a strategy of Gandhi-style non-violence would no doubt have been more advantageous and less costly for their people. In their heart of hearts, a majority of Israelis, too, know that the security of their country requires that Israel should be seen as legitimate by its neighbours. The existence of a viable and ideally democratic Palestinian state is a necessary, if not sufficient, condition for Israel's long-term survival. Neither people any longer has any confidence in the other, but they are once again, like ten years ago, beginning to try to create the conditions for a reasonable compromise that will enable them to live a normal existence, if not together then at least side by side.

In reminding the two peoples of respect for the rule of law and human rights, Europe's role consists specifically in encouraging this tendency to compromise that once again exists, working in a timeframe that extends beyond the 'infernal' Sharon-Arafat duo, and pointing out that, while today peace may not appear to be an option, there is no alternative to peace, as all the other possibilities are much worse. In the course of civil wars, exhaustion is very often the final stage before common sense prevails. Europe's dual role is

to extricate the Palestinians from their despair and free the Israelis from this fear that makes them embrace a suicidal policy. Because the European continent is the cause of the problem, it has a duty to be involved in its solution, even if only in the margins of a decisive intervention by the United States.

The European Union's priorities should include unambiguous condemnation of any resort to terrorism or violence and the systematic humiliation of the other side (for example in the form of new settlements), denunciation of all forms of incitement to racial hatred in school books and television programmes, and making even more determined efforts to reform the Palestinian Authority. These priorities must be pursued with the consensus of today's 15, and even tomorrow's 25, member states.

Conclusion

What, in practical terms, do the imperatives of sticking to its principles, not despairing in the short term and not allowing the two peoples to pursue a suicidal course mean for Europe? First, they imply reminding the Israelis that, in attaching greater importance to the value of land than to human life, they are betraying the strong values that should be theirs, given their history. They also mean reminding the Palestinians, without the slightest ambiguity, that their ends do not justify the use of certain means. If the Israeli government is not more isolated internationally, and if Prime Minister Sharon was re-elected in January 2003, that is very much because Palestinian terrorist acts 'leave the Israeli public no other choice'. Since it has few means, Europe must employ high-principled language in its dealings with the two sides. Nothing would be worse for the Union than a combination of impotence and cynicism, small-minded motives and large-scale cowardice. The moral authority that Europe is able to establish in the Middle East tomorrow will help to define its international role in the decades to come far beyond the region itself.

A European view of the US role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

Gerd Nonneman

There have long been a variety of judgements on the role of the United States in the Middle East. The main strands in these views could be classified under the headings (a) benevolent; (b) blundering; (c) conspiracy: oil and Israel; and (d) rational calculation of national interests. These differing interpretations are present also in Europe. They need not, of course, be mutually exclusive, although those most vociferously advocating any one of them usually argue otherwise. Even (or especially) for critics of US policy on the Arab-Israeli dispute, it is important to steer clear of simplistic conspiratorial analyses, and instead recognise the complex dynamics that have always characterised US foreign policy-making in general, and its Middle East policy in particular. Yet it will be argued that the overall effect, especially under the Bush Jr administration, has nevertheless ultimately been harmful.

Determinants of US policy

In the United States, as much as in other countries, there is no one 'national interest' that underlies policy: there are various interests, which often clash with each other. Such clashing interests may be held by rival actors and groups, but just as often they fight for attention within such groups and actors. Added to this multiplicity of actors and interests there is inevitably a plurality of views about principles and implementation. This has been true for US Middle East and Palestine policy as much as elsewhere.

Nevertheless, a number of general determinants of US Middle East policy, including policy on the Arab-Israeli question, can be identified. A first important set of determinants comes under the heading of the changing external environment. Key factors in this since the end of the Second World War have been:

- the various phases of the Cold War, along with a range of global strategic issues;

- the dynamics of the UN system;
- the implications and opportunities deriving from the US relationship with NATO and Europe;
- specific Arab/Middle Eastern attitudes on policy issues, including attitudes towards and views of the role the United States could, should, or did play; and, finally,
- the impact of Palestinian and Israeli attitudes and influence.

Secondly, in so far as there have been ‘national’ – as opposed to group or individual – interests at play in helping to determine US policy in the Middle East and on the Arab-Israeli conflict, these have essentially been strategic and economic. National economic interests (markets, energy supply to the United States and, more widely, the world economy; financial flows and stability), while at times clashing with the pursuit of ‘strategic’ interests, have often formed the very basis of the latter. Of course, the putative existence of ‘objective’ interests says little about how they will be perceived and interpreted, and what prescriptions will emerge for pursuing them.

Thirdly, there is the crucial importance of the domestic environment. Quite apart from economic factors such as the thirst for cheap energy, three main factors merit highlighting. The first domestic factor is the overwhelming role played by a small group of top policy-makers when it comes to foreign policy-making, and in particular Middle East policy. From this derive, in turn, three features: the importance of the views/biases/knowledge of those individuals; the importance of access to/influence over those policy-makers; and the importance of the views and interests of those with such access. The composition of the policy élite around George W. Bush is of particular interest in this respect.

The second domestic factor, linked to the first, is the role of lobby groups in the US policy process. In the context of Middle East policy, it is worth highlighting the contrast between the well-organised, well-financed, and well-connected pro-Israel lobby (combining Jewish organisations with, since the 1980s and 1990s especially, the Christian fundamentalist right, and a number of other forceful sympathisers), and the pro-Arab lobby: the latter simply is no match for any of the former’s strengths. One underlying reason for this – apart from those of economic base and position in the political and economic establishment – is the contrast between the relative unity of purpose among Jewish supporters of

Israel, and their sympathisers, and the lack of political or religious unity among Arab-Americans (a disproportionate share of Arab-Americans are Christian). It should also be noted, of course, that America's Jewish population has a far higher political participation rate than the average, and that it has traditionally raised half the Democratic Party's funds, and about a quarter of the Republican Party's.¹

The role of the pro-Israeli lobby blurs into the first domestic factor listed above when individuals active within this lobby enter the government apparatus at various levels – from advisory bodies such as the Pentagon's Defence Policy Board, over ambassadorial appointments, to the National Security Council and the Administration proper. This has been particularly evident under the Clinton and the G.W. Bush administrations, achieving its most striking extent under the current Administration.

The new National Security Council (NSC) director of Middle East Affairs, Elliott Abrams, appointed in December 2002, has long been an advocate of views close to Likud's – and has in the past opposed the Oslo agreements and US mediation. Richard Perle, a member of the Defence Policy Board, is a long-standing pro-Israel lobbyist, and member of the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA) – a think tank established specifically to push Israel's security concerns to the top of the US policy agenda.² Deputy Defence Secretary Paul Wolfowitz is a long-standing Perle associate, and the department's number three, Douglas Feith, co-wrote the 1996 paper with Perle, as well as other strongly pro-Likud pieces, defending Israel's claim to the West Bank and Gaza. Vice-President Cheney was a member of JINSA prior to becoming George W. Bush's running mate. Secretary of Defence Rumsfeld's reference in August 2002 to "the so-called Occupied Territories", reflects a similar mindset.³

This picture has distinctly moved beyond that of the Clinton presidency, although there too, Martin Indyk, the NSC's Director for Middle East Affairs, had come from positions as deputy director of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) – the main pro-Israeli lobbying organisation – and director of the Israeli-leaning Washington Institute for Near East Policy. The apparent paradox that a Republican administration – traditionally less beholden to the Jewish lobby – should move so far in this direction, is in part explained by the de facto, relatively recent

1. George Joffé, 'American Policy in the Middle East and the Arab-Israeli Peace Process', in *The Middle East and North Africa 1994* (London: Europa Publications, 1993), pp. 3-10.

2. Perle in 1996 headed a study group that wrote a policy paper for incoming PM Benyamin Netanyahu which suggested ways in which Israel could escape US leverage, and which pleaded for discarding the land-for-peace principle underpinning the peace process. Strikingly, the report, many of whose recommendations are currently at the heart of the Sharon government, was in part written in the form of a suggested speech by the Israeli prime minister ('We in Israel . . . 'We live in a dangerous neighbourhood . . .', etc.); R. Perle et al., 'A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm', report of the Study Group on a New Israeli Strategy Toward 2000, Institute for Advance Strategic & Political Studies, Jerusalem, 1996 (available on the Institute's website: israeleconomy.org).

3. For a recent commentary, see Robert Kaiser, 'Bush and Sharon Nearly Identical on Mideast policy', *Washington Post*, 9 February 2003, p. A01.

4. One of many US observers to have pointed this out is William Quandt, the NSC Director of Middle East Affairs under the Carter administration, at the Annual Conference of the Middle East Studies Association of North America, Washington (Wardman Marriott Hotel), 26 November 2002. One senior government official has been quoted as saying: 'the Likudniks are really in charge now'. Representatives of both sides of this de facto coalition have been quite open about their satisfaction with these trends (see Kaiser, *op. cit.* in note 3). For an illustration, see the Christian Coalition's press release of 18 June 2002: 'Christian Coalition of America Opposes Creation of a Palestinian State' (<http://www.cc.org/becomeinformed/pressreleases061802.html>).

5. In the 2002 Democratic primaries for Congress in Alabama (June) and Georgia (August), Earl Hilliard and Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney, who had been critical of Israeli policy and sympathetic to the Palestinians, were defeated. *The Economist* (17 August 2002, p. 37) commented: 'The mathematics of bashing Israel in American politics remain clear. Although Arab-Americans have given generously to both the Hilliard and McKinney campaigns, their efforts have been dwarfed by the Israeli lobby.'

6. One insider's estimate is that there are about 19 million votes to be had from the evangelical Christian right, of which the vast majority went to Bush in the Presidential elections.

7. An excellent analysis of this phenomenon is given by former CIA analyst Kathleen Christison's *Perceptions of Palestine: their influence on US Middle East Policy* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1999). The combination of misunderstanding and ignorance is also explored in Douglas Little's *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East since 1945* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press/I. B. Tauris, 2002).

alliance between neo-conservatives and the Christian evangelical right (exemplified by, for instance, the Christian Coalition) on the one hand, and the Jewish lobby on the other.⁴

The comparative effectiveness of the pro-Israeli lobby further derives from — and feeds back into — a third and crucial domestic factor. This is the wider socio-political environment within which opinion-forming and policy-making on the Arab-Israeli question takes place. In essence this means the interaction between political-electoral calculations of politicians, and a certain 'familiarity' regarding Israel. When it comes to Israel and the Palestinians (or indeed the Arabs), there simply is no significant countervailing force to the positive commitment by key groups and actors to Israel's cause, whether from conviction or political calculation. The perceptions in wider society, where Palestinian grievances simply do not appear on the radar screen, are reflected among policy-makers themselves — from Congress to the White House — and even where they are not, there is, given those prevailing perceptions, little political capital to be made by moving to a position visibly outside the consensus. To the contrary: especially given the impressive record of mobilisation by the pro-Israeli lobby against those seen as insufficiently supportive of Israel, there is considerable political risk in giving political rivals the opportunity to make that charge stick.⁵ The hold of the Christian-fundamentalist right over significant parts of US popular opinion only further deepens the popular well of support for Israel.⁶ Widespread ignorance of the Arab world and of the emergence and evolution of the Arab-Israeli dispute, contrasted with the sense of familiarity with Jewish culture both ancient and present, and combined with periodic exposure to dramatic stories of violence (1967, 1973, terrorist attacks), all reinforce this lopsided perception and its effects.⁷

Amidst all these factors and their effects, and while keeping in mind the diversity of views and interpretations already referred to, it is possible to identify a recognisable general set of *interests and policy aims* in the Middle East that have by and large been pursued since the early days of the Cold War:

- containment of the Soviet Union;
- containment of other regional threats;
- securing energy supplies at acceptable prices (to the world economy at large);
- protection of friendly regimes;
- protection of Israel.

Tension between these various interests and aims has been as much a feature of US policy-making and output as has mutual reinforcement between them. The balance between them and the ways in which they have been pursued has fluctuated along with changes in the external environment, and depending on the composition of the Administration and the President's position and inclinations. In this sense, of course, the prominence of pro-Israeli figures in and around President George W. Bush's administration is an important factor — although not the single determining one.

Policy output on the Arab-Israeli conflict

It should be clear, then, that US policy on the Arab-Israeli conflict has not simply been 'driven by Israel', nor has it been merely a question of unconditional support for Israel. Rather, evolving and cross-cutting patterns have been in evidence.

Support for Israel increased gradually (jumping exponentially in the period 1967-73). But this has been partly balanced through-out by varying levels of concern for Arab regime perceptions and stability, both because of the aim of protecting friendly (anti-Soviet or otherwise *de facto* allies) and because of concern over the security of energy supplies.

The wars of 1967 and 1973 brought a double shift: while triggering a huge increase in material, military and political support for Israel, they also generated an intensification of the search for solutions to Palestinian-Israeli and more generally Arab-Israeli conflicts. Initially, this meant dealing actively with the concerns of Arab regimes as well as Israel in disengagement negotiations and suggestions of longer-term solutions — e.g. the Rogers Plan, accepted in principle by Nasser shortly before his death (but to which there was strong internal US opposition, not least from Henry Kissinger). It was not until 1988, however, and the PLO's acceptance that year of the two-state solution, that a further US policy shift led to dealing with Palestinian representatives and concerns directly.

The Gulf War of 1990-91 brought a renewed focus on finding a solution to the Palestine question, because the US (and Western) interest in wider regional stability, and the need to maintain support in the Arab and Muslim world, required a demonstration that the War was not simply an anti-Arab or anti-Muslim affair, and

that Arab grievances, too, resonated in Washington. At the same time, the emerging post-Cold War order meant that such a search for resolution would no longer be shackled by the earlier Cold War dynamic. Crucially, too, the PLO leadership was much weakened following its failure to embrace the international action against Iraq, while Israel itself was in some quarters being described as a strategic liability rather than an asset. The result was the Madrid peace process, and a rare instance of US pressure on Israel's Likud-dominated government under Yitzhak Shamir, when the Bush-Baker Republican administration withheld \$10 billion of loan guarantees over Israel's policy on settlements. Arguably this helped the Labour Party under Yitzhak Rabin emerge victorious from its election campaign on a peace platform.⁸

The negotiations in the Madrid process proceeded very haltingly at best. It is striking that in the much more successful alternative secret channel that was created by Palestinian and Israeli negotiators, the 1993 Oslo channel, the US was *not* involved at all. Only once the Oslo framework had already been agreed was the United States brought back in. President Clinton put his and US prestige and weight behind the agreement through the signing ceremony on the White House lawn in September 1993.

When implementation of Oslo began to slip and falter, especially since the 1996 election of Benjamin Netanyahu in Israel, Clinton facilitated and cajoled to save the process and arrive at a series of incremental agreements, each starting from a lower level of expectation than the one before. On the ground, this did little to stem the slide in confidence in the process, or to slow down the continued expansion in settlements. To the contrary, between 1993 and the end of the decade, the settler population doubled⁹ – without question a central cause of the collapse of popular Palestinian confidence in the peace process. By 2002, some 42 per cent of the West Bank had been appropriated by settlement. It was in fact under Clinton that US policy was formally changed to permit the expansion of existing settlements – until then seen as illegal and an obstacle to peace.¹⁰

Renewed hope of a deal under the Barak government in Israel revitalised Clinton's personal involvement. Building on internal Palestinian-Israeli dynamics, he pushed hard, at the Camp David negotiations from July 2000, to achieve a final status deal. When the Camp David talks collapsed, the President's involvement

8. See also the lucid overview by Joffé, *op. cit.* in note 1.

9. This is confirmed by the Israeli human rights organisation B'Tselem: *Land Grab: Israel's Settlement Policy in the West Bank* (Jerusalem: B'Tselem, 13 May 2002). See also Nadav Shragai, 'B'Tselem: Settlements control 42% of West Bank', *Haaretz*, 14 May 2002.

10. Joffé, *op. cit.* in note 1, p. 9. See also 'West Bank Settlements: Swallowing all before them', *The Economist*, 2 November 2002, p. 62.

continued and led to the tabling of the so-called ‘Clinton parameters’ in December 2000, which took things beyond Camp David and proved an acceptable basis for further negotiation by both sides.¹¹

Although the US input to the shape of the December 2000 proposals had been important, it was notable that in the semi-official talks at Taba in January 2001, at which these ideas were further developed, there was again no US presence. Indeed, the only close outside observer was the EU’s Special Envoy to the Middle East, Miguel Moratinos. Even though there was no formal endorsement of the results of these talks, the negotiators nevertheless agreed that they had come closer to agreeing on a settlement than ever before, and the resulting Moratinos ‘non-paper’ became the jointly recognised record.¹²

These various nuances and an often genuine commitment to reaching agreement notwithstanding, overall the United States arguably retained a heavy bias towards Israel. This must be explained in the context of the domestic environment summarised above, and thus must not be expected to change. Further evidence of such a general bias can be found in, among other things, the frequent blocking of UNSC and UNGA resolutions that are critical of Israel, and the exertion of sustained pressure to reshape those that do pass; the privileged contacts of US officialdom and politicians with Israeli representatives; the close relationship with pro-Israeli actors (whether officially active as lobbyists or not); and the close prior coordination with Israel over proposals to be offered for negotiation between the parties (including at Camp David). The underlying bias was arguably visible also in Clinton’s interpretation of events at and after Camp David, blaming Arafat for the failure: this mirrored Ehud Barak’s views.¹³ It was certainly evident in the argument, subsequently advanced by Clinton and Bush (and more generally held in the United States), that ‘Arafat chose terrorism after rejecting Camp David’ – although this is flatly contradicted by the explicit findings of the Mitchell Commission sent to investigate the causes of the second *intifada*.¹⁴

One final feature that stands out and follows from the above, has been US unwillingness, by and large, to countenance any European involvement apart from financial contributions and in support of US initiatives – except to some extent for the period from

11. See *Haaretz*, 31 December 2000. Also International Crisis Group, *Middle East Endgame II: How a comprehensive Israeli-Palestinian peace settlement would look* (ICG, 16 July 2002), pp. 28-30.

12. *Haaretz*, 14 February 2002. Also ICG, *Middle East Endgame II*, pp. 31-6.

13. See Robert Malley and Hussein Agha, ‘Camp David: The Tragedy of Errors’, *New York Review of Books*, 9 August 2001; and the exchanges between Ehud Barak and Benny Morris on the one hand, and Robert Malley and Hussein Agha on the other, on 13 June and 27 June 2002 in the same publication (‘Camp David and After—An Exchange’).

14. British cabinet minister Claire Short, commenting on the difficulty of moving towards a more effective policy on the Palestine question, in the context of the War on Terrorism and the stand-off with Iraq, said: ‘The US is the weak link here . . . We can’t tell them what to do, and it’s a completely different conversation there about the Middle East.’ (‘How to make enemies and still influence people: Jackie Ashley meets Clare Short, the international development secretary’, *The Guardian*, 18 November 2002.)

summer 2000 to February 2001. This fits in, of course, with Israel's scepticism towards EU involvement, grounded in a suspicion that the EU is pro-Palestinian and does not understand Israel's concerns.¹⁵

Under the George W. Bush administration, most of the features discussed have remained highly visible – including the long-standing pattern of conflicting interests and differing voices. What has changed, however, is the increasing predominance of unilateralist instincts among decision-makers. This has been reinforced by 9/11 and the war on terrorism – even though it has at times been adjusted towards multilateral forms for pragmatic purposes. Clearly some in the Administration remain more multilateralist, but in essence multilateral elements of policy have been largely tactical.¹⁶ At the same time, the failure to register, let alone understand, Palestinian grievances¹⁷ (embedded in the wider social environment referred to earlier) has only become more striking. This too was exacerbated by 9/11.

Following on from the Bush assessment that 'Ariel Sharon is a man of peace', there has been little serious challenge to hard-line Israeli policies under the Likud-dominated government, even where such policies have run counter to established US policy – be it on settlements or Jerusalem. This is recognised by the pro-Israeli lobby; Thomas Neumann, JINSA's Executive Director, commented in February 2003 that 'this is the best Administration for Israel since Harry Truman'.¹⁸ Most recently, the Administration refused to push ahead with the Quartet's 'road map' before the Israeli elections of January 2003 and only did so after the end of the war in Iraq – although the Administration had previously agreed to do so by 20 December 2002. While some close to the Administration have claimed that this was to avoid the perception that Israeli voters would kill the plan off by re-electing Sharon, it is also clear that the Administration was unhappy with the plan's proposed stipulation that Israeli settlement building should stop immediately and unconditionally.¹⁹

There is little doubt that, contrary to the hopes of European policy-makers, the Bush administration's commitment to the Quartet mechanism and the 'road map', while perhaps genuinely held in parts of the State Department, is essentially a means to maintain the appearance of concern and to send out positive signals both to the Arab world and to European allies and Russia –

15. See Joseph Alpher, 'The Political Role of the EU in the Middle East: Israeli Aspirations', in Sven Behrendt and Christian Hanelt (eds.), *Bound to Cooperate: Europe and the Middle East* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Foundation Publishers, 2000), pp. 193-206.

16. This view is confirmed privately by a number of British, other European, and NATO officials, including some with direct experience of working within the US administration.

17. See, for instance, the report by Catherine Bertini, Personal Humanitarian Envoy of the UN Secretary-General, released in August 2002, which went almost unnoticed in the American media.

18. Kaiser, *op. cit.* in note 3.

19. Graham Usher, 'Road Ahead Blocked', in *Middle East International*, 20 December 2002, p. 13.

but little more. This certainly appears to be the private view among Washington insiders.²⁰ None of this is to say that such pro-Israeli voices alone have determined US policy: the countervailing views and interests referred to earlier remain present and have a significant impact. Yet the general tenor has unquestionably been one of a strong, if not unquestioning, pro-Israeli bias, most visibly so in the current Bush administration since 2002. Indeed, European (including British) policy-makers' hopes of persuading US policy-makers of the merits of alternative approaches have looked increasingly forlorn, as the sympathetic interlocutors they (often rightly) claimed to have in the US State Department proved to have very limited decisive influence.²¹

Assessment

Without a doubt, the United States has played a role at times in pushing forward possible ideas for partial resolution or at least crisis management. It is also true that Washington helped push through, and/or guaranteed, a number of important deals, be it the disengagements after 1973 of Egypt and Israel, and between Syria and Israel; the Camp David Agreements between Egypt and Israel; the Madrid peace process; and the Oslo process. Although unsuccessful, President Clinton was instrumental in moving the Barak-Arafat talks at Camp David forward and, notwithstanding the latter's failure, providing much of the basis for the subsequent Taba talks, through his 'parameters'. European diplomats since late 2002 also privately claim to have scored a success by getting the United States on board in support of the Quartet's 'road map'.

Clearly, too, there has always been a concern among US policy-makers to balance support for Israel with at least some consideration for Arab views, because of the linkage to US interest in the stability of friendly regimes and security of energy supplies.

Yet under the current Bush administration this concern has equally clearly been shunted further into the background²² — as illustrated by the dismissive approach to Crown Prince Abdullah's peace plan of 2002, even though this for the first time delivered a collective Arab commitment to normalising relations with Israel if a viable Palestinian state in the Occupied Territories were conceded. In part, this followed from the nature of the new

20. Indeed, the Quartet format itself, one observer close to the Administration privately opined, was almost designed to send the contrary message to the domestic US audience that the exercise should not be taken very seriously, as it involves three of the least respected actors imaginable: the UN, Russia and the EU.

21. This is not new. After all, the US decision to support the proposed UN Partition Plan of 1947 came after President Truman overruled the advice from the State Department; and even during the relatively more even-handed days of the first Bush-Baker administration, Palestinian negotiators had come to realise how limited the State Department's influence on US policy on Israel was (see Joffé, *op. cit.* in note 1, p. 9).

22. See for instance 'The Mideast's tactics of tragedy', *Financial Times*, 1 April 2002, p. 10; Richard Wolfe, 'Bush's stance remains in Israel's favour', *Financial Times*, 14 April 2002, p. 3; and Bronwen Maddox, 'The missing third pillar of Bush's foreign policy', *The Times*, 11 September 2002, p. 14.

Administration when it came to power: among other features, it was characterised by a relative disregard for foreign policy, a strong disinclination to engage in the Arab-Israeli conflict again after what was seen as Clinton's failure, the increased links between the Republican Party's right and the Christian fundamentalist movement, and the latter's fairly recent de facto alliance with the pro-Israel lobby. It was reinforced by the experience of 9/11, which, although drawing the Administration into a new international role, did so by focusing attention on terrorism, Afghanistan and Iraq instead. At the same time, the post-9/11 atmosphere strengthened the association, in the American public's mind, of 'the Palestinians' with violence and global terrorism.²³ President Bush's statement in support of the principle of a Palestinian state came against the background of attempts to build a coalition against terrorism, and then against Iraq; it was quite possibly helped along by British Prime Minister Blair's urgings. Yet it was never filled out or effectively followed up. Regardless of sustained pressure from Mr Blair and from the US's other partners in the Quartet, the attitude of the Bush team continues to be ambiguous in this sense.

Former US President Carter recently observed:

Tragically, our government is abandoning any sponsorship of substantive negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis. Our apparent policy is to support almost every Israeli action in the occupied territories and to condemn and isolate the Palestinians as blanket targets of our war on terrorism, while Israeli settlements expand and Palestinian enclaves shrink.²⁴

These characteristics of the present Administration with regard to the Arab-Israeli dispute are in many ways merely the latest and most serious instance of the underlying failure of US policy on the question. Such an assessment may seem overly harsh, given the earlier 'positives', but is, I would argue, justified because of the ultimate outcomes – not only in the Arab-Israeli theatre itself but with regard to US interests elsewhere in the region, not least the Gulf and Iraq:

■ More than half a century after the creation of Israel and of the Palestinian refugee problem, there is still no settlement – indeed,

23. This is reflected in, and reflects, the beliefs not only of the public but of key personnel and advisers in and around the Administration. These are replicated in the new book by Canadian neo-conservative David Frum, *The Right Man: The Surprise Presidency of George W. Bush* (New York: Random House, 2003): when it comes to the Middle East, as a review in *The Economist* points out (18 January 2003, p. 81), the book turns into a rant where '“Palestinian” seems always to be coupled with “terrorism” and “Israeli” is never followed by “settlements”.' It is in that sense not dissimilar to the language and convictions of many of the personnel concerned (and indeed many among the US public).

24. Jimmy Carter, 'The Troubling New Face of America', *Washington Post*, 5 September 2002, p. A31.

with 42 per cent of the West Bank now under continually expanding settlements, the remainder cut across by Israeli corridors, Gaza festering, and violence far from spent, the likelihood of a resolution seems to be receding, and none appears possible under the current asymmetrical approach.

- The resentment stirred up among Middle Eastern populations, especially since the collapse of the peace process under Ariel Sharon, is causing fears of instability among US-friendly regimes.
- Perceived US double standards have caused wholly unnecessary difficulties for policy on Iraq and the 'war on terrorism.'

There is no longer any doubt that there is an increasingly deep-seated distrust and anger with the United States in the Arab world, and indeed large parts of the Muslim and Third World in general. Coupled with population explosions and festering economic problems, together with resentment of ineffective but repressive governments supported by the United States, this holds serious long-term threats to US (and Western) interests. Further radicalisation of populations through what could be called 'empowerment of violence' is a clear possibility.

Notwithstanding attempts to separate the question of Israel from other issues in the region or in US policy, the evidence on the ground, whether among regimes, elites, or the wider public, is that the United States and US policy are overwhelmingly associated with, and interpreted in the light of policy on, Israel. That policy is seen as contradicting all the principles proclaimed in justification of policy on, for instance, Iraq. Moreover, these perceptions of the United States, and Arab regimes' sensitivity to them, will also hugely complicate efforts to deal with other current or future security threats.

There is clear evidence from public opinion polls, moreover, that such negative perceptions and their consequences for US interests are not inevitable. Arab populations by and large do not hate the United States for its own sake, nor for its democratic values: it is US policy that quite specifically draws fire.²⁵ Extremist voices who condemn all things American (or Western) remain a small minority, but they have disproportionate resonance because of the more widespread anger over US policy.

25. This is argued forcefully by, for instance, Fahed Fanek, 'Powell underestimates Arab anti-US anger', *Daily Star* (Lebanon), 19 December 2002. It is backed up by a range of opinion survey data from Gallup, the National Society of Public Opinion Studies, the World Values Survey and others; for summaries see 'Muslim Opinion Polls', *The Economist*, 19 October 2002, p. 65.

Policy implications

A US role remains crucial, because (1) it alone has the means to guarantee any solution arrived at, and (2) it has the confidence of Israel. Yet this makes it all the more urgent that the United States becomes more constructively involved again in a way that does not simply mirror Israeli demands and attitudes, and credibly offers the renewed prospect of a final aim that fulfils at least the minimum of Palestinian, as well as Israeli, needs.

A hands-off, 'let the parties decide between themselves' approach is by definition biased towards Israel and thereby fails to fulfil either part of the above requirement – especially under the current Israeli government.

Similarly, a re-engagement on Israel's terms, as has seemed to be the dominant trend when the current Administration has engaged, can only end in failure, as did previous ones: either the Palestinian leadership that would negotiate the matter would be unable to do a deal, or if it moved in that direction it would lose any remaining legitimacy and thus its power both to deliver an agreement and to control its domestic base.

The outlines and many of the details of what any viable final deal must look like are there for the taking. They are built on the *acquis* of the Taba negotiations of January 2001, observed and noted down by the EU's Special Representative, Miguel Angel Moratinos. Even Barak, prior to his defeat, gave his imprimatur to the joint declaration by the two negotiating teams that 'they have never been closer to reaching an agreement and it is thus our shared belief that the remaining gaps could be bridged with the resumption of negotiations following the Israeli elections.'²⁶ Easily the most detailed and realistic elaboration of what such a deal should comprise – and indeed a suggested route for getting there – is found in the three-part report by the International Crisis Group (ICG) of July 2002, which suggests an 'endgame' strategy: an international push for a guaranteed final status settlement most of whose details are laid down in advance.²⁷ Some of the elements of Taba and the ICG report have surfaced in the Quartet's 'road map' – although not the crucial need to move swiftly beyond the incrementalism of the past.

Given the urgency, both for the region itself and for US and European interests, of reaching a settlement, and the Sharon government's point-blank refusal to consider even the Oslo accords,

26. The statement can also be found on the media section the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, where the Moratinos 'non-paper' is reproduced: <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/go.asp?MFAH0j7o0>.

27. International Crisis Group, *Middle East Endgame I: Getting to a Comprehensive Arab-Israeli Peace Settlement*; II: *How a comprehensive Israeli-Palestinian peace settlement would look*; III: *Israel, Syria and Lebanon – How Comprehensive Peace Would Look* (all Amman/Brussels: ICG, 16 July 2002).

let alone Camp David or Taba, as the basis for a solution, it seems self-evident that a major effort on the part of the United States to persuade Israel in this direction would be of the essence. Given the make-up of the current Administration, developments since 9/11 and the wider perceptions among the American public, that does not seem a very likely prospect.

All the more reason, then, for Europe to be proactively involved both in a concerted effort of persuasion in the United States and in the region. As Javier Solana has put it, the region should become a playing ground, not just a paying ground for the EU. The EU has leverage over and influence with the Palestinians too, and clearly should exert this to foster better governance as well as help to bring about a Palestinian discarding of violence as a policy. But this is a futile pursuit in the absence of any prospect of a credible final status – indeed, while such a solution is being explicitly ruled out by the Israeli leadership (in words and deeds), without any real challenge from the United States.

Hence the EU, and EU member states, while being careful to coordinate as much as possible with their US ally, should not shy away from forcefully putting forward their views and policy proposals to all parties.

It is true that such a European role has in the past been constrained, and will remain constrained, by several considerations: (1) Europe's own divisiveness in foreign policy interests and roles; (2) the lack of effective CFSP mechanisms; (3) Europe's limited military significance; (4) in particular, German and Dutch reluctance to criticise Israel; and (5) the importance of avoiding upsetting the overall transatlantic security alliance/NATO.

Yet Europe's own interests too are being threatened by the continued festering of the Israel/Palestine sore. As of 2003, the threat of terrorism inspired by Middle Eastern problems only accentuates this.

The refrain that nothing must be done without US approval (or even invitation), in order not to scupper the chances of larger US-sponsored peace initiatives, cannot any longer be sufficient, given that current US policy is failing – with severe implications for the security interests of both Europe and the United States. Advice and persuasion are important, but concerted European action in line with the spirit of the Taba agreements may well be the most effective form of persuasion. Unless the Quartet's 'road map' mechanism can demonstrate real results soon, European

policy-makers must be prepared to revisit their assumptions. Indeed, simply guarding the *acquis*, which is sometimes presented as Europe's key contribution,²⁸ becomes quite pointless if it is clear that no political capital will be spent to assure implementation of that *acquis*.

Ultimately the US role, apart from persuading Israel that it is in its interests to adopt such a peace deal, would lie in being the facilitator and guarantor of such a settlement, not least through providing a military guarantee; in providing observers and manning listening posts in the Jordan Valley and on the Golan Heights; and in helping the Palestinians develop their own security institutions. All this may seem a distant prospect, but European and US inaction will not bring it any closer; and there is no serious alternative if US and European interests, and the values the EU claims as its own, are to be safeguarded.

28. Discussion with senior European diplomats dealing with the Middle East, in the course of 2002.

The European Union, the United States and the Middle East: some scenarios

Stefano Silvestri

The European Union's policy towards the Middle East poses a number of complex problems, the more so because this policy has an important transatlantic dimension.

Traditionally there has been a 'positive' division of labour between the EU and the United States. The United States has guaranteed the security of Israel and of the moderate Arab governments (as well as the security of the main oil and gas transit lines). The EU has in general given political backing to the United States, while also keeping open a number of channels with more 'problematic' countries and governments. At the same time the EU, together with other US allies such as Japan, all of whom depend on oil supplies from the region, have contributed heavily to offsetting the costs of the American commitment, have provided a benign economic international environment for the countries of the region and (in the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict) have financially supported the Palestinian Authority. In the longer term, the EU Mediterranean dialogue, or Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, is supposed to establish a multilateral community of interests among all countries in the region, under the protective deterrence of the United States.

According to this division of labour, during major crises generally the United States was welcome to use its military force, with the backing of its allies, while the EU supplemented the necessary 'stabilising' investments and/or presence and good offices.

This arrangement has come to an end. Under the new constraints created by the post-9/11 scenario (the war against terror), the United States continues to be present and to intervene militarily, but the moderate states in the region, instead of being reassured, feel threatened, because the United States is pursuing a different agenda and different priorities. It could be said that the United States no longer acts on the basis of the need to ensure global stability but according to its own national security priorities. At the same time, Europe's attempts to conduct a meaningful

dialogue with a number of 'problematic' powers have failed to produce significant results. Meanwhile the EU's Mediterranean policy has become hostage to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the war against terror.

Technically, the EU's task of increasing stability in the region has been made more difficult by the fact that it must be carried out during the postwar phase in Iraq. This implies a growing uncertainty over the objectives and priorities of US policies and about the possible future use of military force, as well as higher costs.

Bearing in mind the present situation in postwar Iraq and the Middle East region as a whole, we can identify a number of possible scenarios.

A. Looking at Iraq:

1. **Hit and run:** after toppling the regime and occupying Iraq briefly, the United States-led coalition leaves Iraq as soon as possible, without bothering too much about the aftermath.
2. **Conquer and democratise:** the United States remains in Iraq in order to build a new, more democratic society and influence the future of Middle Eastern geopolitics. Iraq becomes something like Germany or Japan after the Second World War.
3. **Win and patch up:** at some point in time, and despite the fact that the war effort was led by the United States, the Americans promote a multilateral effort to establish a new government with the help of all other interested parties, and with the backing of the UN Security Council, beyond Resolution 1483.

B. Looking at Palestine and Israel:

1. **The ordeal:** Israel and the Palestinians have to continue their confrontation as they see fit, including all forms of escalation (WMD may come into the picture as well) up to the total victory of the stronger, who dictates his terms.
2. **Democratic peace:** a mixture of political pressure, and military and economic commitments, are brought to bear on the parties in conflict, obliging them to agree on peace compromises including democratic political developments, regional disarmament measures and major economic development projects, under strong international guarantees.
3. **Divorce:** an agreement to disagree is reached which will allow for the complete physical separation of Israel and Palestine,

including some (forced?) transfers of population, with compensatory measures and other international guarantees.

C. Looking at developments in the war against terror:

1. **Total prevention:** (could also be called total intervention) the United States intervenes when, where and how it sees fit, according to its national perceptions of the threat, promoting various international alliances.
2. **Global repression:** the United States and its major allies cooperate closely to establish a multilateral and largely integrated security system to curb terrorism and impose measures to ensure law and order both domestically and internationally, modifying accordingly international and constitutional legal principles.
3. **Enforcement-plus-stability missions:** a mix of preventive and defensive military interventions, mainly (but not exclusively) conducted by the United States, in agreement or with the consensus of the international community, address a number of crises (but not all of them) and are followed by more or less effective multilateral stability operations, generally under the auspices of the United Nations.

These various scenarios can vary according to the options open to American foreign policy, which at present also includes security and defence policy and could take different turns. Accordingly, it could be seen as leading to three possible outcomes in the coming months and years.

I. Unilateral power

American policy takes on a decidedly unilateral dimension, disregarding the interests of the allies and concentrating first and foremost on national priorities (the domestic political debate completely overrides the foreign policy debate). Of the above scenarios, A1, B1 and C1 are consistent with such a policy.

II. Imperial power

The United States accepts the burden and responsibilities of building a kind of modern empire, including elements of multilateral cooperation, convincing or forcing the rest of the world to fall in line. Such a choice would be needed for some of the above scenarios to be possible, in particular A2, B2 and C2.

III. Limited power

The United States, of its own volition or under the pressure of events, recognises the limits of its power (more or less according to the consideration put forward by Joseph Nye in his book¹). Accordingly, it continues to use its powerful military forces but makes extensive use of multilateral institutions and alliances, consequently accepting various forms of division of burdens and responsibilities. Such a choice would be compatible with scenarios A3, B3 and C3.

A prudent assessment of present trends seems to suggest that two of these choices (I and III) are more likely to be acceptable to American society than II, which would require enormous human, economic, political and military resources, as well as the active and willing cooperation of a number of important countries.

Of course, all these scenarios simply project a one-sided vision of the future that is just one possibility. The reality will be an unforeseen combination of these different trends and options. Nevertheless, this schematisation could help us in defining where the best interests of the European Union may lie.

Options for the European Union

It is quite clear by now that the traditional means in the hands of the European Union as a 'civilian power' are not effective when dealing with Middle Eastern crises. The traditional economic approach of the EU is clearly inadequate to deal with both the Palestinians and Israel. Moreover, economic sanctions did not curb Iraq and are even less likely to defeat terrorism. At the same time, the EU's future ability to conduct Petersberg-type missions will mean it can restore stability in some cases, but certainly not undertake tasks requiring expeditionary forces.

Therefore, the European Union should look favourably on a greater military commitment by the United States in the region, provided that it leaves its allies some room for manoeuvre, as would happen especially if the Americans recognised some limitations on their power (the third outcome suggested above, with its related regional scenarios).

This option, however, requires a growing and important commitment from the European side, as well as special new forms of political management of Europe's relationship with the United States.

1. Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *The Paradox of American Power. Why the World's Only Superpower Can't Go It Alone* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

The EDSP should go beyond the present Helsinki Headline Goal and the agreement on the Petersberg tasks, to include the means to conduct (or to cooperate with the Americans on) expeditionary warfare. Unless the Atlantic Alliance undergoes a major strategic and institutional reform that allows it to become the operational centre of future Allied operations worldwide (something that the Americans themselves may not wish), it would be necessary to establish some new form of joint political steering committee (such as a new Contact Group, an evolution of the present Quartet – and perhaps other possibilities should be explored).

Meanwhile, with regard to the Middle East (and taking into account the desirability of establishing a more productive link with Russia too), it would be in the best interest of the European Union to strengthen its ties with some key countries bordering the major crisis areas, such as Egypt, Iran, Turkey, and possibly India, Pakistan and Morocco as well. In addition, the Europeans should start working out a common European strategy on the Black Sea region and the Caucasus in order to increase cooperation on security and stability with Moscow.

To conclude, the European Union should work closely with the United States in order to find pragmatic solutions to the many problems in the Middle East region. Implementation of the ‘road map’ will provide a good opportunity to verify that both mediators have established the right synergy between themselves. It remains to be seen what kind of global policy the US government pursues between now and the November 2004 presidential election. In the meantime, the Europeans should realise that their traditional ‘civilian power’ means for conducting foreign policy are not totally ineffective in dealing with serious crises such as those in the Middle East.

Conclusion: peace lies in their hands

Martin Ortega

It is always difficult to bring an intelligent dialogue to a close. The richness and variety of the contributions to this paper demonstrate that four Europeans can make assessments that are pertinent albeit different. Nevertheless, they contain common elements, making it possible to speak of a common European viewpoint. These contributions do not of course cover all possible European views, and the aim of this concluding section is not to elucidate that 'European point of view'. Rather, this conclusion represents a personal comment on the main ideas put forward by authors, together with a no less subjective look at how the European Union might help bring about a peaceful solution to the crisis in the Middle East. It is perhaps worth recalling that the objective of this *Chailot Paper* has not been to propose ways of resolving the conflict but to contribute to thinking on the EU's role in its pacification.

The following pages cover four main topics: (1) lessons from the European approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since summer 2000; (2) lessons from the relationship between the Union and the United States as mediators in the conflict; (3) prospects of a future EU role in the resolution of the conflict; and (4) the importance of the determination of the two protagonists to attain peace. Indeed, the final argument is that mediation by external actors can achieve little if Israelis and Palestinians do not themselves desire peace.

The EU's role during the conflict

The general opinion is that the EU's presence has had three positive aspects. One should first stress that, from an historical perspective, the EU has confirmed its gradual involvement in the search for a peaceful solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, following the

creation of the CFSP in the Maastricht Treaty, the launching of the Barcelona process in 1995 and the strengthening of the CFSP by the Treaty of Amsterdam. The Union has supported or participated in all international initiatives aimed at a peaceful solution of the dispute between Israelis and Palestinians, even when the peace process changed into a crisis, as from summer 2000, and then open conflict. The EU has worked out a clear, consistent position on resolution of the conflict based on principles agreed by the wider international community, principles that have been established during the whole peace process, since the 1991 Madrid Conference: the acceptance by all neighbouring countries of Israel's right to live in peace and security, the creation of a Palestinian state, which would allow the two states to coexist within stable borders, and negotiation between the parties on the basis of the 'land for peace' formula. EU member states have made strenuous efforts to align their views, thus allowing the Union to come to a common position, which has been set out in important statements, in particular those made at every European Council since Berlin (March 1999). It has done everything it could to ensure that this common position is a balanced one, condemning any violence by either party and insisting on the resumption of negotiations.

Secondly, direct action by the EU has been made possible by the presence of the Union's High Representative and its Special Envoy. Their intervention has been constructive in all four phases of the crisis: in the Sharm-el-Sheik and Taba negotiations in winter 2000-01, the Mitchell Commission, the dialogue on security and humanitarian matters during the most serious period of the conflict in spring 2002 (which was particularly effective in bringing an end to the siege of the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem) and active participation in the 'Quartet' since its creation in April 2002, leading to preparation of the 'road map'. The presence of Javier Solana as representative of the Union as a whole rather than any particular member state is a novel concept that has helped to raise the profile of Europe's policy on the conflict.

Thirdly, the Union has clearly understood that violence on the ground has had very damaging economic and social consequences for both parties. It has therefore done its best to offset, or at least not to aggravate, the negative consequences of what has become a war of attrition. The Union has therefore given emergency aid to

the Palestinian Authority (in order to avoid its collapse leading to further violence) and has ruled out economic sanctions against either party. The Commission has made sure that economic and trade relations have not been affected by the crisis, and has also insisted on the need to halt the violence.

To a large extent the negative aspects of action taken by the Union throughout the duration of the conflict are the other side of the same coin, as criticism of the Union reflects a certain dissatisfaction with the progress made. Basically, this criticism amounts to saying that, despite the positive elements mentioned, the Union has done too little and should go much farther in future. The Union has been content to adopt a 'declaratory policy' that has, according to its critics, had no practical consequences. There is a gulf between the EU's decision in principle on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict — which is a proper one — and its action in practice. In the 1990s, the Union spelt out a very clear vision of a resolution of the conflict based on the existence of two states and a negotiated and not unilateral solution. When, however, it had to support this political approach in the face of an escalation of violence on both sides that made a negotiated solution almost impossible, the EU was incapable of doing so. The European Union was thus not sufficiently steadfast in defending the idea of a significant international intervention, in which it would have an important role to play. That is particularly true regarding defence of human rights, an area in which the EU has not been totally efficient. From now on, therefore, the Union should make its voice heard more on political aspects of the conflict (even if is not of the same opinion as the United States) and not simply on economic matters.

Furthermore, in assessing Europe's presence in the conflict, it is generally recognised that individual contributions by EU member states have not had any appreciable effect, despite the goodwill patent on the part of those countries. From an historical perspective all initiatives, whether French Foreign Minister Hubert Védrine's idea of setting up an interposition force (in spring 2002), actions by successive presidencies (even if they were acting as the rotating EU presidency), visits by the German foreign minister (in August 2001) or ministers of many other countries or the conference on reform of the Palestinian Authority convened by the British government in January 2003, were relatively weak. It would appear that initiatives undertaken by individual states

stand little chance of success if they are not supported by other members of the EU. Yet it must be recognised that, going beyond agreement on general principles contained in the Union's declarations, it is difficult to obtain the support of all member states when it comes to drawing up practical measures.

That brings us to the last lesson on the Union's role in the peaceful resolution of the conflict in the Middle East. What stands in the way of more determined action by the EU is the divergence of points of view on how to *apply* the principles governing solution of the conflict. The Council's deliberations are not public but there are many pointers suggesting that there has been within the Union a majority in favour of adopting specific measures in an effort to increase the pressure on both parties. The decision by the European Parliament, on 10 April 2002, adopted by a majority of 269 votes to 208 with 22 abstentions, advocating economic sanctions against both parties is perhaps proof of that. The Commission's position, as set out in particular in declarations by its President, Romano Prodi, and by External Affairs Commissioner Chris Patten during the most difficult periods of the crisis, also implies a willingness to become more involved politically. One can therefore conclude that unanimity as a preferred method of deciding the Union's foreign policy, which prevents strengthening of the CFSP in other areas, is also an obstacle in the way of a greater EU role in ending the Middle East conflict.

Lessons from the relationship between the Union and the United States as mediators

The starting point is that the United States is the only mediator capable of gaining the confidence of both parties, and the only one that can guarantee that any agreement will be respected. However, while President Clinton made an effort to be an objective mediator, President Bush has taken a different approach and has from the outset shown his disinclination to become involved in too heated controversy. Some have seen in this a *laissez-faire* attitude towards the stronger party, Israel, and an unwillingness to understand the Palestinian point of view. From the evidence, President Bush has accepted many of Ariel Sharon's claims and ideas.

In the three years that have elapsed since summer 2000, there have been negotiations in various frameworks. When the Union participated in the search for a negotiated solution (winter 2000-01) it played an important, complementary role alongside the United States. Yet when the United States opted for a policy of abstention and dropped the idea of any mediation, the Union was unable to play an independent role and offer to mediate between the parties. True, Union representatives continued to dialogue with the Israelis and Palestinians (and indeed there was a profusion of initiatives by individual European states at the time), but the Union's presence failed to produce the desired results. Specifically, at the height of the conflict the Israelis made it quite plain that they were rejecting any EU role, for example when the Israeli Army shelled Arafat's headquarters at the very moment that Special Envoy Miguel Moratinos was holding discussions with him on 6 March 2002, flouting the most sacrosanct rules of diplomacy, and again when Ariel Sharon declined to meet Javier Solana at the same period. A third setting for cooperation appeared with the creation of the 'Quartet', and thereby the appropriate synergy has possibly been found: the 'road map' is a sound plan that deserves the strong support of all mediators.

Consequently, the main lesson on the relationship between the United States and the EU as mediators is that their influence is most effective when they act together. Nevertheless, the Union should be willing to play a more determined role when the United States abstains. That is perhaps the most important conclusion in the chapters by Muriel Asseburg and Gerd Nonneman, is recognised by the editor of this paper and has the support of a majority of European experts and European public opinion as a whole. A further lesson is that, even if the most capable mediator continues to be the United States, the most objective mediation that has the greatest chance of being successful in the long term is multilateral, specifically mediation by the Quartet, in which the United States shares responsibility with the United Nations, Russia and the EU. Mediation by neighbouring countries, Egypt in particular (for example during the crisis in order to maintain contact with the various Palestinian factions), has also proved very useful. In short, impartial mediation offers the only guarantee of lasting peace and security for both parties in the long term.

Possible EU roles in resolution of the conflict

Through determined negotiation among member states over the years, the European Union has developed a coherent view of the question of resolving the Middle East conflict. Its approach is based on the importance of negotiation and not armed confrontation, the creation of two states and observance of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 in order to reach agreement on the central issue – the allocation of land. These ideas were also present in the Clinton plan and the negotiations in winter 2000-01. And in October 2001 President Bush finally recognised that the creation of a Palestinian state alongside Israel was in the end the only event that would bring the conflict to an end, as Security Council Resolution 1397 of 12 March 2002 also stressed. History will therefore record that the Union kept to a consistent view of the solution to the conflict, the merits of which are gradually being acknowledged. The principles mentioned thus form a solid basis for European peace efforts.

The Union should assert its point of view as a matter of principle but also for more practical reasons. It is of course in the immediate interests of the Union and its member states to contribute to a peaceful solution through an agreement based on those principles. Continued violence in the Middle East has negative consequences for Europe because violence spreads instability throughout the Mediterranean region, because the dispute is, in the mind of Arabs, a source of discontent that leads to terrorism, and because the conflict can also have economic ill-effects, as has happened in the past. In a worst-case scenario, violence could also lead to political instability in other countries in the region, and to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Conversely, resolution of the conflict would probably involve a change of political and economic trends in the region – from which the Union could benefit (and certainly an improvement in the lives of the population on both sides). Moreover, public opinion in Europe is strongly in favour of a just and lasting solution.

While it is clear that the Union *should* contribute to resolution of the conflict, it remains to be seen if it *can*, and whether it has the necessary means. The Union could make a contribution if it had the political will to do so, since it could employ three types of

instrument: diplomatic, economic and military. Following its direct participation in negotiations, notably as a member of the Quartet, the Union has shown that it has a specific diplomatic capability; all that is needed is agreement among member states to give an appropriate mandate to the High Representative, or to the competent institutions after the 2004 intergovernmental conference. On the economic front, as a civil power the Union should be aware of the considerable importance of the tools it could use. The Palestinian Authority depends to a large degree on EU aid, while Israel's trade with the EU amounts to 30 per cent of its exports and 40 per cent of its imports. The Union should not impose economic sanctions on either of the two parties in conflict irresponsibly or arbitrarily, but neither should it exclude use of this instrument. By ruling it out the Union would reduce its possible influence over the parties and would not exercise the responsibility it has to help resolve the conflict, with all the benefits that would bring to the region and Europe. Finally, the Union also has military instruments: in any future agreement supported by the international community, it will be able to make available to the parties a European military force for interposition or peacekeeping.

The EU's impartiality and objectivity vis-à-vis what is a very complex dispute is another great European asset, and it would be hard to imagine what other mediator could be a more honest broker. Over the years, the Union has amply demonstrated its understanding of the points of view of both sides, and has condemned violence from either with the same vigour. The Union cannot be accused of supporting violence. For example, where there has been any doubt about this the Commission and the European Parliament have carried out investigations and verified with the greatest care that funds destined for the Palestinian Authority have not been used for such a purpose.¹ In fact, the Union's aim is not to support politically one or other of the parties but to promote a peaceful solution. The EU seeks a solution that is the fairest possible, which also means the most lasting, the most stable and the only one that ensures the security and prosperity of both parties.

There is still one major problem in the Union's future role in resolution of the conflict: creating the political will necessary for a more active presence. If Europe has a certain vision of the solution, if it has the means to act and if at the same time its impartiality has every chance of leading to a peaceful solution that ensures the

1. The European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and the European Parliament have done exhaustive research on the subject. See reply by Commissioner Chris Patten to MEP Armin Laschet, 5 February 2003.

security and prosperity of both parties, why does it not react by embarking upon a more determined and responsible intervention? The apparent reason – the absence of agreement among all member states – can also be put another way: the real obstacle is a lack of self-confidence on the part of the EU. Both the states most eager to act and the most hesitant think that the Union lacks the power to influence the parties, in particular the stronger – Israel. The reluctant member states are also concerned that a more determined position on the part of the Union would run counter to US intentions. The Union's handicap is therefore not functional but psychological. The most powerful member states want to intervene in the conflict but cannot: they are too 'weak'. The Union does not want to intervene (certain states prevent it), yet it is the only player that can: it is strong enough and its 'weakness' is merely apparent. The EU thus underestimates its own capabilities. As a result, the principles and values that it (and its individual member states) say they uphold are harmed, the Israelis and Palestinians continue to suffer the consequences of violence and the citizens of Europe continue to regret the ineffectiveness of their countries and the Union in the face of this murderous conflict.

Even if the probability of a heightened EU presence in the conflict does not seem strong at present, the Europeans should consider that possibility and understand that it could be necessary in the future. The various frameworks for cooperation listed in the previous section are very varied, and there may be situations in which a Union presence would be desirable, indeed unavoidable. The Quartet should not be seen as the definitive framework for cooperation, nor should one expect a permanent, unshakeable agreement among the four mediators. In at least two opposing scenarios, the Union is likely to be more involved in resolution of the conflict. In one case, if between now and autumn 2004 the 'road map' has not been followed up satisfactorily, from a European point of view, because *inter alia* of lack of support from the American government, and if President Bush, following re-election in November 2004, reverts to a policy of abstention, it could well be that the Europeans will demand a more active part in settlement of the conflict, especially if European public opinion feels that developments on the ground are unacceptable. If, in the other case, following months of frustration, the Democrats win the elections in the United States, and if the new President wishes to

resume a policy of involvement in negotiations, the Union could then be invited to participate actively, not only in negotiations but also in the implementation of any agreement, including in the political, economic or even military spheres.

To achieve peace, both sides must want it

This concluding chapter has up till now been a consideration of the past, present and future role of the EU in resolving the Middle East conflict, but the real impact of external actors has not been analysed. One should not delude oneself: all the mediators have merely a limited role. History shows that even the most influential actor, the United States, cannot impose its viewpoint in every instance. The beginning of the peace process in 1991 was accompanied by strong pressure from the United States on both parties that bore fruit only because of other factors. The same applied to the role of 'facilitator' played by Norway at the Oslo accords in 1993. The dispute is so firmly rooted in the past, so difficult to rationalise and experienced in such an acute way by the parties involved that external actors must be under no illusions as to the extent of their influence. That applies especially to the European Union, since it is very much a newcomer on the international scene, lacks self-confidence and its mediation is not readily acceptable to both parties.

What effect do mediators have on the two parties? In other words, what are the chances that they can contribute effectively to a resolution of the conflict? It is obviously impossible to quantify the effectiveness of mediation and other influences, but there have been very interesting analyses that make it possible to put external influences into perspective. For instance, a very revealing study by Karen Ressler² shows that external pressure was only one element among others during the phases of appeasement, since four factors came into play simultaneously: (1) an event that was a shock to one or both parties (such as the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, the 1987 *intifada* or the Gulf War of 1991) that paves the way for a change in attitudes; (2) the part played by charismatic, entrepreneurial leaders who are bold enough to make new moves towards a peaceful solution (like Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin in 1993); (3) negotiation between the two parties that leads to real reciprocity; and (4) pressure from external actors on the parties

2. Karen Ressler, 'Shocks, expectancy revision and the de-escalation of protracted conflicts: the Israeli-Palestinian case', *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 37, no. 6, November 2000, pp. 699-720 (includes an extensive bibliography).

that helps them arrive at an agreement (for example, mediation by US Secretary of State James Baker in 1991).

This observation means there has to be a certain amount of modesty on the part of external actors when contemplating mediation or intervention. Most probably, the war in Iraq has been an 'indirect' shock to both parties. It is also probable that the American government will decide to exert pressure on both sides in order to launch a new phase of negotiation between them in summer 2003. However, it is not clear whether Israelis and Palestinians are ready to accept the peaceful way. Faced with this uncertain situation, the United States, the Quartet or the European Union alone should renew their commitment, with the aim of convincing the parties. Even if the circumstances are far from ideal, the will and determination of external actors, the EU at least, should be strong, since in the case of the Union intervention is not a case of political opportunism but a course of action that is unavoidable on the grounds of principle and interests.

The preceding argument implies that the main responsibility to reach agreement lies in the hands of the two protagonists. The European Union and its individual member states (or the United States or other mediators) can offer their services in negotiations and the search for a peaceful solution, but they cannot replace the parties in conflict. If the latter choose to pursue the struggle, the Union will continue to insist on the principles on which a peaceful solution should be based and must increase the pressure on the two sides.

In the introduction to this *Chaillot Paper* it was indicated that the aim was not to suggest specific terms for resolution of the conflict. Indeed, that is not necessary, as many proposals already exist. Plans drawn up in official circles and proposals put forward by experts and academics prove that it is not ideas that are lacking but rather the political will of the parties to apply them. At the official level, the negotiations in 2000-01, the 'non-paper' by Miguel Moratinos, the Mitchell Report, the Tenet cease-fire plan and the Quartet's 'road map', with their various suggestions, all have the same end in view.³ In academia and think tanks, there is also a plethora of projects and proposals dealing with the underlying reasons for the conflict and intervention by external actors.⁴

There is thus no shortage of ideas; now is the time to act. The two parties must realise that violence will not help their respective

3. A useful list of available official documents can be found on the websites of the following organisations: Bitterlemons: (<http://www.bitterlemons.org/docs.html>), Mideast Web (<http://mideastweb.org/history.htm>), UNISPAL (<http://domino.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF>) and Yale Law School (<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/mideast/mideast.htm>).

4. See, for instance, Michael Emerson and Nathalie Tocci, 'Road Maps and final destinations for Israel and Palestine', *Working Paper 12*, CEPS, April 2003; 'Planning considerations for international involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict', Experts' Forum convened by Jarat Chopra and Yezid Sayigh, April 2003; Robert Malley (Rapporteur), *A Middle East Roadmap to Where?*, International Crisis Group, 2 May 2003; Felix Neurgart, *Conflict in the Middle East – Which Role for Europe?*, Bertelsmann Stiftung, 17 February 2003; Denis Ross et al., *Winning the peace in the Middle East, A bipartisan blueprint for postwar US policy*, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, April 2003. Muriel Asseburg's chapter also contains some interesting ideas on this issue.

positions, and that they must rather follow the path of peace and negotiation. They must view the conflict with a long-term historical perspective and take a truly strategic approach. Otherwise there is a real risk that they will for years continue killing each other and become weaker, entering into a spiral of political, economic and moral decline and unable to make progress on their respective positions.

For the Palestinians it is time to act because they must renounce violence and seek a peaceful solution to their claims. There is no doubt that they intend to fight for their rights, and that they will not accept just any agreement, but employing peaceful methods of political protest will not harm their cause. On the contrary, violent methods are likely to damage their demands and could ultimately lose them the attention of mediators' – both those who are nearer to their point of view, like Arab countries, and those who are more neutral. History suggests that there will always be Palestinian elements who will refuse to turn their backs on violence, but the government and the majority of Palestinians should impose their preference for a peaceful solution and keep terrorism in check.

For the Israelis it is time to act because now is the moment to create a state with stable, secure borders. The Israeli people have a right to live in peace in their historic homeland, something that was recognised by the international community in 1948. That right was confirmed by the new, post-Cold War international community at the 1991 Madrid Conference and throughout the 1990s. The noble struggle of the Israeli people to defend their territory since 1948 has been transformed during the period of the peace process into an historic opportunity to consolidate the state. The Israelis should always bear that in mind and not try to turn their defence into a conquest of new territories. This desire to extend their territory is a mistake and could lead to permanent instability and insecurity. Of course there will always be a minority of Israelis who would like to continue the process by violent means, but the majority should curb these negative instincts.

These reasonable demands come up against two problems. On the one hand, they should be heard and carried out simultaneously. In the present situation it is essential that both parties recognise that a certain amount of reciprocity is necessary, which means making concessions. The second difficulty is knowing how to react if it turns out to be a majority rather than a 'minority' of

Palestinians and Israelis that wish to continue the armed struggle. There is certainly no doubt that the moderates in both camps must be supported but, as Dominique Moïsi indicates in his contribution to this paper, in the absence of moderates there must be no abandoning of principles, so that the two peoples are not allowed to become stuck in a suicidal course. If the majority of the population on both sides prefer the violence to continue, the role of external actors will assume even greater importance, as they alone will be able to preserve some sort of rationality.

The European Union, which is the living proof of political and economic success through dialogue and cooperation, must now play a decisive role in convincing the two sides that violence is a dead end and that the only solution to the conflict is peaceful coexistence between two states, within stable frontiers.

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Chronology

(July 2000 – May 2003)

July 2000

- 2-3 PLO issues communiqué envisaging the declaration of a Palestinian state on 13 September
- 25 Failure of negotiations at Camp David between Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat under the auspices of US President Bill Clinton

September 2000

- 9-10 Under diplomatic pressure, Palestinians delay indefinitely the declaration of statehood
- 28 Israeli opposition leader Ariel Sharon visits Haram-al-Sharif (Temple Mount), inciting rioting in Jerusalem; beginning of the Al-Aqsa *intifada*

October 2000

- 6 Collapse of tentative cease-fire agreement; Israel closes borders; Hamas calls for 'day of rage' against Israeli troops
- 12 Lynching of two Israeli soldiers provokes retaliatory attacks on residence and offices of President Arafat in the Gaza Strip
- 17 Sharm el-Sheikh summit concludes with fragile agreement to end violence on both sides
- 22 Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak announces that his government would take a 'time out' from peace process, expressing anger over communiqué of the Arab leaders' summit

November 2000

- 2 Car bomb explodes in Jerusalem market, killing two Israelis and injuring ten; Islamic Jihad claims responsibility
- 7 US presidential elections

- 8 Nomination of committee headed by US Senator George Mitchell to investigate the outbreak of the *intifada*
- 14 Israeli government imposes travel ban on Palestinians following intensification of violence
- 20 Three Palestinians detonate bomb next to school bus in Jewish settlement, provoking Israel to launch series of artillery and helicopter raids against Fatah targets

December 2000

- 7-8 Nice European Council
- 8 Seven Palestinians and three Israelis killed in West Bank in series of attacks
- 9 Ehud Barak announces his resignation as Prime Minister and calls for elections to be held on 6 February
- 13 US Vice President and Democratic presidential candidate Al Gore concedes disputed November presidential election to his Republican opponent George W. Bush
- 14 President Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Shlomo Ben-Ami open new round of high-level talks
- 23 US President Bill Clinton presents both sides with a series of proposals for a permanent settlement of the conflict

January 2001

- 8 Palestinian authorities announce that they do not accept the Clinton proposals without detailed agreement setting out timetable for implementation
- 12 US President Bill Clinton leaves Middle East peace efforts to incoming US administration
- 20 George W. Bush inaugurated as 43rd US President
- 27 Additional 'final status' talks in Taba, Egypt, between Israelis and Palestinians break down

February 2001

- 6 Likud candidate Ariel Sharon elected Prime Minister of Israel
- 14 Palestinian bus driver who works in Israel drives his bus into crowd of Israeli civilians and soldiers in Tel Aviv, killing eight and injuring 20
- 26 EU announces €60 million package of economic measures aimed at preventing collapse of Palestinian National Authority (PNA)
- 26 US Secretary of State Colin Powell makes first official visit to Middle East, meeting face to face with both Arafat and Sharon

March 2001

- 13 EU Commissioner for External Relations Chris Patten leads EU delegation to the region and urges Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to relax blockade against Palestinians
- 19-20 Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon visits Washington
- 23-24 Stockholm summit of the EU Council
- 27-28 Arab Summit in Amman, Jordan
- 29 Israeli forces attack headquarters of Arafat's personal bodyguard in Gaza City and Ramallah in response to suicide attack in Israeli settlement in West Bank

April 2001

- 4 Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and his Palestinian counterpart Nabil Shaath meet in Athens in first high-level diplomatic contact since Israeli elections
- 5 Israeli Housing and Construction Ministry announces auction of new West Bank land for Jewish settlement
- 6 Swedish EU presidency issues statement qualifying planned Israeli settlement activities as illegal

11-17 Israeli army ordered into PNA-controlled territory; heavy fighting

May 2001

17 Israel announces plans to hold on to some positions it might seize in Palestinian-controlled territory, following days of serious violence

18 Hamas carries out suicide bomb attack in Netanya, leaving five Israelis dead; Israel responds with series of F-16 air-strikes against targets in West Bank which kill 12 Palestinians

19 Eight Arab states announce end to all 'political' contacts with Sharon government

21 Release of Mitchell inquiry report

25-30 Series of Palestinian suicide attacks and car bombs

June 2001

1 Suicide bomb attack outside Tel Aviv discotheque kills 20 Israelis and injures around 120; Hamas claims responsibility

2 Palestinian President Yasser Arafat announces 'immediate and unconditional real and effective cease-fire'

13 CIA director George Tenet, visiting the region, finalises cease-fire agreement between Israeli and Palestinian security officials

14 Israel starts pulling back from flashpoints in West Bank and Gaza Strip

15-16 Gothenburg summit of the EU Council; Javier Solana's report on the EU's role in the crisis

27-28 US Secretary of State Colin Powell visits Middle East to elaborate confidence-building measures

July 2001

- 22 G-8 leaders call for third-party monitoring to aid implementation of Mitchell report and 13 June cease-fire

August 2001

- 9 Hamas member carries out suicide bomb attack in pizza parlour in central Jerusalem, killing 15 Israelis, including 6 children, and wounding 90 people
- 10 Israel takes control of nine Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem and destroys Palestinian police headquarters in Ramallah
- 27 Assassination of Abu Ali Mustapha, deputy leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)

September 2001

- 11 Terrorist attacks on New York and Washington
- 16 Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon announces that there would have to be 48 hours of 'complete quiet' for a new Arafat-Peres meeting
- 18 Under US and EU pressure, Ariel Sharon agrees to withdraw from Palestinian-controlled areas seized in West Bank
- 26 Yasser Arafat and Shimon Peres meet in Gaza Strip, agreeing to reactivate 13 June cease-fire

October 2001

- 2 Statement by US President George W. Bush in favour of independent Palestinian state
- 4 Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon warns US not to appease Arab states at the expense of Israel
- 7 US and UK armed forces launch military operations against Taliban military targets and al-Qaeda camps in Afghanistan

- 8** Intra-Palestinian violence erupts as protestors against US-led air-strikes in Afghanistan clash with Palestinian police officers
- 15** Two hard-line right-wing members of Ariel Sharon's cabinet, Avigdor Liberman and Rehavam Ze'evi, announce their resignation
- 17** Assassination of Israeli Tourism Minister Rehavam Ze'evi by PFLP in Arab East Jerusalem
- 18-28** Israeli forces push into Palestinian-controlled areas, including Jenin, Ramallah, Bethlehem, Beit Jala, Beit Sahour and Beit Rima before withdrawing
- 29** EU declaration on the Middle East

November 2001

- 12-13** US-backed Northern Alliance takes Kabul
- mid-November** EU High Representative, Javier Solana, Belgian Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt and President of the European Commission Romano Prodi visit Middle East
- 19** Keynote speech by US Secretary of State Colin Powell, calling both sides to break cycle of violence
- 20** Second EU-Israel Association Council in Brussels
- 22** Five Palestinian boys, aged between seven and fourteen, killed by Israeli explosive booby-trap device
- 23** Assassination of Hamas leader Mahmoud Abu Mahmoud in Israeli missile attack in West Bank
- late November** US envoys General Anthony Zinni and William Burns visit region for talks with Arafat and leading Israeli officials

December 2001

- 1-2** Hamas suicide bomb attacks in Jerusalem and Haifa kill at least 25 Israelis

- 5 Bonn accords create 29-member interim government for Afghanistan
- 10 EU declaration on Middle East
- 11 EU High Representative for CFSP travels to region to support efforts by US envoy General Zinni
- 12 Palestinian guerrillas carry out armed raid on Israeli bus in West Bank, killing ten
- 13 Israeli forces attack and occupy Ramallah, placing Arafat under siege
- 14-15 Laeken European Council
- 24 Israel refuses to allow Yasser Arafat to travel to Bethlehem to attend midnight mass

January 2002

- 4 Israel seizes Palestinian ship in the Red Sea, *Karina-A*, carrying some 50 tonnes of arms intended for the PNA
- 19 Israeli troop destroy headquarters of Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation in Ramallah
- 21 Occupation of Tulkarm in West Bank by Israeli forces
- 27 First female suicide bomber blows herself up in central Jerusalem, killing another person and injuring 125

February 2002

- 7 Sharon-Bush talks in Washington, DC
- 19 Palestinian gunmen shoot dead six Israeli soldiers in Ramallah; Israel responds with naval and air attacks on Arafat's Gaza headquarters
- 26 Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia introduces peace proposal offering full normalisation of Israeli-Arab relations in return for full withdrawal from Palestinian territories
- 28 Israeli troops invade and occupy two refugee camps, causing death of ten Palestinians

March 2002

- 2-3** Palestinians launch wave of attacks in Jerusalem, West Bank and the Gaza Strip, killing 22 Israelis
- 6** Israeli bombing of Yasser Arafat's headquarters during his meeting with EU special envoy Miguel Angel Moratinos
- 11-12** Israel pushes into Ramallah as well as three Palestinian refugee camps in its biggest military operation since 1982 invasion of Lebanon; at least 31 Palestinians are killed
- 12** UN Security Council passes Resolution 1397 endorsing idea of a Palestinian state
- 14** US envoy General Zinni returns to region
- 15-16** Barcelona European Council; Middle East declaration
- 26** Israel refuses to allow Yasser Arafat to travel to upcoming Arab summit in Beirut
- 27** Hamas suicide bomber blows himself up in hotel in Netanya, killing at least 22 and injuring 100
- 27-28** Beirut Arab summit; Arab leaders approve Saudi 'land-for-peace' initiative in final communiqué
- 29** Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon declares Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat to be 'enemy' who had to be 'isolated'
- 30** UN Security Council passes Resolution 1402 expressing 'grave concern' over the escalation of violence
- 31** Suicide bomb attacks kill 15 Israelis

April 2002

- 1-4** Israeli forces move into Tulkarm, Qalqilya, Bethlehem, Nablus and the Jenin refugee camp

- 2 Mary Robinson, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, proposes the dispatch of a mission ; France's Foreign Minister Hubert Védrine refers to an 'interposition' force
- 3 EU foreign ministers convene urgent meeting in Luxembourg; Commission President Romano Prodi asks for international conference on Middle East conflict
- 4 Keynote speech by US President George W. Bush on Middle East
- 8-17 US Secretary of State Colin Powell tours region in failed attempt to force Israeli withdrawal from West Bank and arrange cease-fire
- 9 Heavy fighting in Jenin refugee camp
- 10 Declaration of the 'Quartet' (EU, Russia, UN, US) in Madrid
- 10 European Parliament resolution suggests economic sanctions against Israel and PNA
- 15 Israelis arrest Marwan Barghouti, leader of Fatah, in West Bank; international relief agencies enter Jenin refugee camp amidst Palestinian allegations of Israeli massacre
- 20 UN Security Council agrees to investigate recent events in Jenin (Resolution 1405) and asks for humanitarian relief
- 21 Israeli forces begin withdrawing from some parts of West Bank
- 22 Fifth Euro-Mediterranean conference in Valencia, Spain
- 24 EU High Representative for CFSP, Javier Solana, and EU Special Envoy Moratinos meet with Arafat

May 2002

- 1 UN disbands fact-finding team for Jenin following Israel's lack of cooperation
- 2 Yasser Arafat freed under surveillance following seven months of confinement
- 7 Palestinian suicide bomber attacks club near Tel Aviv killing 16 Israelis and injuring 57
- 10 End of Israeli siege of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem
- 28 Israel withdraws from Jenin

June 2002

- 5-6 17 people killed in Islamic Jihad suicide bomb attack against a bus near Jenin; Israeli air raid against PNA headquarters in Ramallah
- 7-8 Egyptian President Mohammed Hosni Mubarak visits US President George W. Bush at Camp David to discuss support for Palestinian statehood
- 12 Likud party approves resolution precluding creation of a Palestinian state
- 17 EU includes PFLP, Al-Aqsa Brigades and Kach in its blacklist of terrorist organisations
- 18-19 Two Hamas suicide bomb attacks against buses in Jerusalem kill at least 26 Israelis and injure over 80; Israeli retaliation strikes kill nine
- 21-22 Seville summit of EU Council; EU declaration on the Middle East
- 24 Landmark address by US President George W. Bush announcing that Palestinian people would only achieve statehood if they instituted new leadership, institutions, and security arrangements
- 26 PNA announces presidential and legislative elections for January 2003

- 27 Israeli forces storms PNA headquarters in Hebron

July 2002

- 23 Salah Shihada, leader of Hamas military wing, is killed in Israeli F-16 missile attack in Gaza City; 12 other people die in assault, 140 are injured; riots follow
- 31 Seven people, including five foreigners, are killed in bomb explosion in cafeteria of Jerusalem's Hebrew University

August 2002

- 1 UN releases report describing circumstances surrounding Israeli reoccupation of Jenin in April
- 8-9 US Secretary of State Colin Powell and National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice meet with Palestinian cabinet ministers in Washington
- 18 Palestinians and Israelis agree on implementation of 'Gaza first' security arrangement; Israeli forces withdraw from Bethlehem
- 19 Ms Catherine Bertini, Personal Humanitarian Envoy of the UN Secretary-General, releases mission report on humanitarian situation in Middle East
- 26 Israel suspends withdrawals in response to continued violence
- 29 Hezbollah attack along Israeli-Lebanese border injures three Israeli soldiers

September 2002

- 11 Palestinian Legislative Council forces resignation of PNA Cabinet
- 16 Iraqi government agrees to unconditional return of UN weapons inspectors
- 17 Middle East 'Quartet' (EU, Russia, UN and US) proposes timetable for establishing Palestinian state

- 19 Israel sends tanks and troops into Arafat's compound
- 20 Terje Roed-Larsen, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, briefs UN Security Council
- 22 President Yasser Arafat calls for international intervention
- 24 Israeli raid into Gaza Strip kills nine Palestinians
- 24 UN Security Council passes Resolution 1435 sponsored by UK and France demanding that Israel withdraw from Palestinian-controlled areas to positions held prior to September 2000
- 29 Israel lifts siege of Arafat's compound
- 30 US President George W. Bush signs into law symbolic commitment to recognise Jerusalem as the Israeli capital

October 2002

- 7 15 people killed as Israeli helicopter fires rocket into crowd of Palestinians
- 10 US Congress authorises President Bush to take military action against Iraq
- 21 Palestinian bombers detonate explosives near bus in northern Israel, killing at least 14 and injuring more than 50
- 21 Third EU-Israel Association Council in Luxembourg
- late October** US Assistant Secretary of State for the Middle East, William Burns, visits region to discuss three-phase 'road map' proposed by the Middle East 'Quartet' (EU, Russia, UN, US)
- 29 Palestinian Legislative Council approves new PNA Cabinet
- 30 Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's Likud-led 'national unity' government collapses as Labour Party withdraws from coalition

November 2002

- 3 Binyamin Netanyahu agrees to serve as new Foreign Minister, replacing Shimon Peres; Shaul Mofaz replaces Binyamin Ben-Elizer as new Defence Minister
- 8 UN Security Council unanimously approves Resolution 1441 urging President Saddam Hussein of Iraq to disarm or face 'serious consequences'
- 15 12 Israelis killed and 20 injured in Hebron after Palestinian gunmen fire on Israeli soldiers
- 17 Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon calls for expansion of settlements around Hebron
- 28 Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon swept to victory in Likud party leadership elections

December 2002

- 6 Ten Palestinians killed as Israeli forces sweep into Bureij refugee camp in Gaza Strip
- 12-13 Copenhagen summit of the EU Council
- 20 Meeting of the Quartet in New York
- 22 Palestinian officials announce indefinite postponement of elections due to continued Israeli 'occupation'

January 2003

- 5 22 people killed in double suicide bomb attack in Tel Aviv
- 14 London conference on Palestinian reform
- 25-26 At least 12 Palestinians killed in Gaza Strip during Israeli raid
- 27 First UN weapons inspectors' interim report on Iraq to UN Security Council
- 28 General elections held in Israel, resulting in victory for Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's Likud party

February 2003

- 5 US Secretary of State Colin Powell presents evidence against Iraq to UN Security Council to make case for military action
- 6 European Commission's anti-fraud office (OLAF) and European Parliament investigate EU payments to the Palestine National Authority following allegations that funds have been channelled into supporting terrorist activities
- 14 Second UN weapons inspectors' interim report on Iraq to UN Security Council
- 17 Emergency meeting of EU Council in Brussels on Iraq crisis
- 19 At least 13 Palestinians killed in Gaza Strip and West Bank during Israeli raids
- 23 Israeli Labour Party pulls out of coalition talks with Likud Party

March 2003

- 5 17 killed, 53 injured by suicide bombing on bus in Haifa
- 7 Palestinian President Yasser Arafat nominates Mahmoud Abbas as Prime Minister of the Palestinian Authority
- 8 Third UN weapons inspectors' interim report on Iraq to UN Security Council
- 18 US President George W. Bush gives Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein 48-hour ultimatum to leave country or face war
- 20 US-led military coalition attacks Iraq

April 2003

- 9 US forces advance into central Baghdad

- 16 Athens European Council; signature of EU enlargement
- 29 Palestinian Legislative Council approves Mahmoud Abbas as Prime Minister of the Palestinian Authority
- 30 President George W. Bush releases 'road map' of the Middle East 'Quartet' (EU, Russia, UN, US) for 'a permanent two-state solution' by 2005

May 2003

- 1 President Bush declares victory in the Iraqi war
- 1 Israeli troops raid home of Hamas bomb maker in Gaza, killing ten Palestinians
- early May** Colin Powell and Javier Solana trips to the Middle East region to support the 'road map'
- 12 Al-Qaeda terrorist attack in Riyadh
- 17 Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon meets for first time with newly appointed Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas
- 18 Terrorist attacks in Casablanca
- 17-19 Series of suicide attacks in Israel
- 26 Ariel Sharon's government announces conditional approval of the 'road map'

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Middle East peace process

The Heads of State or Government of the European Union reaffirm its support for a negotiated settlement in the Middle East, to reflect the principles of “land for peace” and ensure the security both collective and individual of the Israeli and Palestinian peoples. In this context, the European Union welcomes the decision by the Palestinian National Council and associated bodies to reaffirm the nullification of the provisions in the Palestinian National Charter which called for the destruction of Israel and to reaffirm their commitment to recognize and live in peace with Israel. However, the European Union remains concerned at the current deadlock in the peace process and calls upon the parties to implement fully and immediately the Wye River Memorandum.

The European Union also calls upon the parties to reaffirm their commitments to the basic principles established within the framework of Madrid, Oslo and subsequent agreements, in accordance with UNSC Resolutions 242 and 338. It urges the parties to agree on an extension of the transitional period established by the Oslo agreements.

The European Union calls in particular for an early resumption of final status negotiations in the coming months on an accelerated basis, and for these to be brought to a prompt conclusion and not prolonged indefinitely. The European Union believes that it should be possible to conclude the negotiations within a target period of one year. It expresses its readiness to work to facilitate an early conclusion to the negotiations.

The European Union urges both parties to refrain from activities which prejudice the outcome of those final status negotiations and from any activity contrary to international law, including all settlement activity, and to fight incitement and violence.

The European Union reaffirms the continuing and unqualified Palestinian right to self-determination including the option of a state and looks forward to the early fulfilment of this right. It appeals to the parties to strive in good faith for a negotiated solution on the basis of the existing agreements, without prejudice to this right, which is not subject to any veto. The European Union is convinced that the creation of a democratic, viable and peaceful sovereign Palestinian State on the basis of existing agreements and through negotiations would be the best guarantee of Israel’s security and Israel’s acceptance as an equal partner in the region. The European Union declares its readiness to consider the recognition of a Palestinian State in due course in accordance with the basic principles referred to above.

The European Union also calls for an early resumption of negotiations on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks of the Middle East Peace Process, leading to the implementation of UNSCRs 242, 338 and 425.

Cologne, June 1999

Middle East

86. Following the elections in Israel the European Council reiterates its Berlin Declaration (25 March 1999) and stresses the importance of a negotiated solution in the Middle East. It calls on the Israeli and Palestinian sides to implement the Wye River Memorandum fully and without delay and to resume negotiations on final status as soon as possible with a view to establishing a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region.

87. The European Council also welcomes the intention expressed by the newly elected Israeli Prime Minister to resume negotiations with the Palestinians and Syrians and his plans to seek a rapid solution to the problem of the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanon. The European Council also supports the multilateral level in the peace process and encourages the Working Parties to orientate their work towards the development of regional cooperation and integration. The European Council reaffirms the European Union's resolve fully to assume its role in the peace process and commends the work being done by the European Union's Special Envoy, Mr Moratinos.

Helsinki, December 1999

Middle East peace process

66. The European Council welcomes the renewed momentum towards just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East and reaffirms the Union's full support for it.

67. The European Council particularly welcomes the courageous decision of President Assad and Prime Minister Barak to resume negotiations on the Syrian track in Washington in mid-December. It looks forward to early agreement between Israel and Syria which should pave the way for resuming negotiations and for a solution also on the Lebanese track.

68. The European Council emphasises the importance of the measures taken so far by Israel and the Palestinians to implement the Sharm El-Sheikh Understanding. Steady progress should be secured with timely implementation of all the obligations taken by the parties to the agreement. The European Council calls on both parties to refrain from all unilateral acts.

69. All parties to the Multilateral Track of the Peace Process are invited to work for full and early resumption of activities in that field. Parallel progress on all the tracks should be in the interests of all in the present phase of the peace process.

Santa Maria da Feira, June 2000

Middle East peace process

59. The European Council considers that a real opportunity exists to attain a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, based on the principles established within the framework of Madrid, Oslo and subsequent agreements and in accordance with relevant UN Resolutions.

60. The European Council appeals to Prime Minister Barak and to President Arafat to intensify their efforts with a view to concluding, within the agreed time-frame, a comprehensive agreement addressing all Permanent Status issues, thus bringing the conflict to an end and paving the way to reconciliation.

61. In this endeavour the personal engagement of the leaders of Israel and of the Palestinian Authority and their continued mutual confidence have the utmost importance. The European Council therefore stresses the need for full implementation of agreements entered into, such as the third further redeployment, and recalls the Council Declaration of 22 May.

62. The European Council also recalls its declaration of 25 March 1999 in Berlin. It is particularly important in the discussion of Permanent Status issues now taking place that the viability of any resulting Palestinian State is fully taken into account.

63. At Helsinki the European Council welcomed the courageous decision of the late President Hafez al-Assad and Prime Minister Ehud Barak to resume Israeli-Syrian negotiations. The European Council urges the new Syrian leadership and the Israeli Government to pursue the strategic choice of peace.

64. The European Council welcomes the recent Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon in accordance with Resolution 425 and the fact that it has satisfied the conditions laid down by the UN Secretary-General in his report of 22 May 2000. It appeals to all parties involved to cooperate with the UN and UNIFIL and to refrain from acts and declarations that might imperil their endeavours.

65. The European Council invites the Council to examine, on the basis of proposals from the Secretary-General/High Representative, assisted by the Special Envoy, and the Commission, how the European Union can assist and contribute to Lebanon's efforts towards reconciliation and rehabilitation.

Biarritz, October 2000

Declaration by the Heads of State or Government of the European Union on the situation in the Middle East

Given the real danger of a general flare-up, we address a solemn appeal to the Israeli and Palestinian leaders and peoples to stop the escalation and bring an immediate end to all violence.

All parties must demonstrate political courage and responsibility so that reason and tolerance prevail over fear, hatred and extremism before the point of no return is reached.

There is for the Prime Minister of Israel and the President of the Palestinian Authority no other way than that of peace and negotiation on the basis of what has been achieved at Camp David, which it is essential to preserve. The peace process must be saved.

Time is running out. We call on the parties to participate, in a constructive spirit, in a summit meeting, in order to secure the urgent resumption of the dialogue.

The European Union, which more than ever remains committed to peace, fully supports the efforts of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. We are requesting Mr Javier Solana, Secretary-General/High Representative for the CFSP, to continue his mission in the region.

Nice, December 2000

Declaration by the European Council on the Middle East

The prospect of peace must return to the Middle East.

Nobody can tolerate violence, the suffering of populations or hatred between peoples.

The negotiations must resume. The European Union considers the following essential in this connection:

- the personal commitment of the Israeli Prime Minister and the President of the Palestinian Authority;
- full and immediate compliance with the undertakings which they entered into at Sharm el-Sheikh and Gaza;
- concrete gestures by both parties, with respect, inter alia, to the renunciation of violence and, as regards Israel, the settlements issue;
- the establishment of a mechanism for confidence-building measures;

- the commencement of work on the spot by the Fact-Finding Commission, in which Mr Solana, Secretary-General/High Representative for the CFSP, will take part;

- an agreement on the setting up of an observer mission.

The European Union has major interests in the Middle East. Its positions have been clearly defined, inter alia at the Berlin European Council meeting in March 1999 and in the European Union's Declaration of 12 September 2000. It is willing to consult with all parties on the means of achieving these objectives with a view to the resumption of negotiations for a peace agreement.

Stockholm, March 2001

Middle East peace process

63. The European Council, recalling its March 1999 declaration at Berlin, reaffirms the Union's determination to make its contribution to peace, stability and future prosperity in the Middle East. As an immediate step, in order to avoid economic and institutional collapse in the Palestinian territories, it calls on other international donors urgently to join the European Union in pledging funding in support of the Palestinian budget. To the same end, Israel must lift closures and pay overdue revenues and the Palestinian Authority must adopt without delay an austerity budget and take effective measures against corruption and towards more democratic transparency.

64. The Union will work with the parties, as well as with the United States and other international actors, in seeking a way forward which will see an end to the violence and the resumption of negotiations for an agreement in the framework of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. To that end, it invites High Representative Javier Solana to remain in close touch with all the parties involved and to report in full association with the Commission at the latest by the Göteborg European Council on how the European Union can play an enhanced role in promoting the resumption of the peace process.

Göteborg, June 2001

Middle East

71. The European Council gives full support to the recommendations of the Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee. Both parties having accepted them in their entirety, they provide the best basis for the resumption of the peace process. It is essential to agree rapidly on the steps to be taken and on a timetable for their full implementation for the sake of the parties and the stability of the region.

72. After so many tragic events, there is now a window of opportunity. The European Council welcomes the Palestinian-Israeli Security Implementation Workplan. This requires an effective commitment to bring about sustainable progress in the security situation and the lifting of closures. The European Council also calls for a complete freezing of settlements activity.

73. A “cooling-off period” should start as soon as possible in order to allow the implementation of additional confidence measures leading to resumption of full and meaningful negotiations for the Final Status Agreement on the basis of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

74. The European Council welcomes and congratulates the High Representative on his report, and pays tribute to the contributions he has made. It shares his views that:

- rebuilding confidence needs urgent improvement of the situation on the ground;
- rebuilding faith in peace needs our support for the restoration of cooperation between civil societies;
- aid to the Palestinian institutions and economy remains a European commitment we should maintain, as part of an international effort.

The European Council attaches priority also to stability and prosperity in the whole Mediterranean region. To that end, the European Union will continue to make full use of the Barcelona Process including the Association Agreements.

The European Council invites the High Representative to pursue his efforts in close cooperation with the Presidency and the Commission as well as with the parties, the United States and other actors, with a view to a continuing active EU role. It invites him to make new policy recommendations as appropriate.

Laeken, December 2001

Declaration on the situation in the Middle East

The extreme gravity of the situation in the Middle East requires each side to face up to its responsibilities: it is imperative to put an end to the violence.

The only basis for peace is UN Resolutions 242 and 338 and:

- reaffirmation and full recognition of Israel’s inalienable right to live in peace and security within internationally recognised borders.
- the establishment of a viable, independent and democratic Palestinian state and an end to the occupation of Palestinian territories.

Israel needs the Palestinian Authority and its elected President, Yasser Arafat, as a partner to negotiate with, both in order to eradicate terrorism and to work towards peace. Its capacity to fight terrorism must not be weakened. The

European Union renews its appeal to the Palestinian Authority to do everything to prevent acts of terrorism.

The European Union would remind the parties of the pledges demanded of them:

■ The Palestinian Authority: the dismantling of Hamas' and Islamic Jihad's terrorist networks, including the arrest and prosecution of all suspects; a public appeal in Arabic for an end to the armed intifada.

■ The Israeli Government: withdrawal of its military forces and a stop to extrajudicial executions; the lifting of closures and of all the restrictions imposed on the Palestinian people; a freeze on settlements and an end to operations directed against Palestinian infrastructures.

Implementation of these commitments requires resolute action by both the Palestinian Authority and Israel.

Immediate and unconditional implementation of the Tenet cease-fire plan and the

Mitchell Committee recommendations remains the only way to resume political dialogue.

The European Union remains convinced that setting up a third-party monitoring mechanism would serve the interests of both parties. It is prepared to play an active role in such a mechanism.

Resolute and concerted action by the European Union, the United Nations, the United States, the Russian Federation and the Arab countries most concerned is essential and urgent. The European Council has mandated High Representative Javier Solana to continue appropriate contacts to this end.

The Union attaches great importance to an economic recovery programme focused on Palestine as a way of encouraging peace.

The European Union will continue its efforts to ensure that both States, Israel and Palestine, can live side by side in peace and security.

Peace in the Middle East can be comprehensive only if it includes Syria and Lebanon.

Barcelona, March 2002

Declaration of Barcelona on the Middle East

1. The Middle East is in the grip of an extremely grave crisis. The European Union calls on both sides to take immediate and effective action to stop the bloodshed. There is no military solution to this conflict. Peace and security can only be achieved through negotiations.

2. To find a way out of the present situation it is essential to address the security, political and economic aspects as inseparable and interdependent elements of a single process. There is a need to restore a sound political perspective and to implement in parallel political and security measures in a mutually reinforcing way. The European Council warmly welcomes the adoption of UNSC resolution 1397, which reflects the strong commitment of the international community in this regard.

3. This Resolution must be urgently implemented, in particular the demand for an immediate cessation of all acts of violence, including all acts of terror, provocation, incitement and destruction; and the call for the Israeli and Palestinian sides and their leaders to cooperate in the implementation of the Tenet Plan and the Mitchell Report recommendations with the aim of resuming negotiations on a political settlement.

4. The indiscriminate terrorist attacks over the past weeks killing and injuring innocent civilians must be condemned. As the legitimate authority, the Palestinian Authority bears the full responsibility for fighting terrorism with all the legitimate means at its disposal. Its capacity to do so must not be weakened. Israel, notwithstanding its right to fight terrorism, must immediately withdraw its military forces from areas placed under the control of the PA, stop extra-judicial executions, lift the closures and restrictions, freeze settlements and respect international law. Both parties must respect international human rights standards. The use of excessive force cannot be justified. The actions against medical and humanitarian institutions and personnel are absolutely unacceptable. They must be able to fully perform their function.

5. Taking note of the decision by the Government of Israel to release Palestinian Authority President Arafat from his confinement in Ramallah, the European Council demands that all remaining restrictions on his freedom of movement be immediately lifted.

6. The European Council welcomes the decision of the US President to send Special Envoy Zinni back to the region. The European Union, notably through the EUSR Ambassador Moratinos, is ready to combine its efforts with him, with the Special Envoy of the Russian Federation and with the UN Special Coordinator.

7. The European Council remains convinced that a third party monitoring mechanism would help both parties to pursue their efforts to that end and urges them to consider proposals to accept observers. The European Union and the Member States are prepared to participate in such a mechanism.

8. The European Union is determined to play its role together with the parties, the countries in the region, the US, the UN and Russia in the pursuit of a solution, based on UNSC Resolutions 242, 338 and 1397 and on the principles of the Madrid Conference, Oslo and subsequent agreements, which would allow two states, Israel and Palestine, to live in peace and security and play their full

part in the region. The High Representative, Javier Solana, will continue his regular consultations with all international actors involved.

9. On the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the overall objective is two-fold: the creation of a democratic, viable and independent State of Palestine, bringing to an end the occupation of 1967, and the right of Israel to live within safe and secure boundaries, guaranteed by the commitment of the international community, and in particular the Arab countries.

10. The European Council welcomes the recent initiative of Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, which is based on the concept of full normalisation and full withdrawal in accordance with UN resolutions, and offers a unique opportunity to be seized in the interest of a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. It looks to the forthcoming Summit of the Arab League in Beirut to take this forward and to the Government and people of Israel to respond positively.

11. The European Council recognises and praises those who continue to work tirelessly for peace within the peace camps of Israeli and Palestinian society and supports the direct contacts and dialogue that both parties are conducting.

12. Following on its present effort, the European Union will make a full and substantial economic contribution to peace-building in the region, with the aim of improving the living conditions of the Palestinian people, of consolidating and supporting the PA, of strengthening the economic basis of the future State of Palestine and of promoting development and regional economic integration. In this perspective, the European Union stands ready to contribute to the reconstruction of the Palestinian economy as an integral part of regional development.

13. The European Union remains convinced that, in order to be durable, peace in the Middle East must be comprehensive.

Seville, June 2002

Declaration on the Middle East

The crisis in the Middle East has reached a dramatic turning point. Further escalation will render the situation uncontrollable. The parties on their own cannot find a solution. There is an urgent need for political action by the whole international community. The Quartet has a key role to play in starting a peace process.

The European Council supports the early convening of an international conference. That conference should address political and economic aspects as well as matters relating to security. It should confirm the parameters of the political solution and establish a realistic and well-defined timescale.

The European Council strongly condemns all terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians. The peace process and the stability of the region cannot be hostage to terrorism. The fight against terrorism must go on; but so at the same time must the negotiation of a political solution.

A settlement can be achieved through negotiation, and only through negotiation. The objective is an end to the occupation and the early establishment of a democratic, viable, peaceful and sovereign State of Palestine, on the basis of the 1967 borders, if necessary with minor adjustments agreed by the parties. The end result should be two States living side by side within secure and recognised borders enjoying normal relations with their neighbours. In this context, a fair solution should be found to the complex issue of Jerusalem, and a just, viable and agreed solution to the problem of the Palestinian refugees.

The reform of the Palestinian Authority is essential. The European Council expects the Palestinian Authority to make good its commitment to security reform, early elections and political and administrative reform. The European Union reaffirms its willingness to continue to assist in these reforms.

Military operations in the Occupied Territories must cease. Restrictions on the freedom of movement must be lifted. Walls will not bring peace.

The European Union stands ready to contribute fully to peace-building, as well as to the reconstruction of the Palestinian economy as an integral part of regional development.

The European Union will work with the parties and with its partners in the international community, especially with the United States in the framework of the Quartet, to pursue every opportunity for peace and for a decent future for all the people of the region.

Copenhagen, December 2002

European Council Declaration on the Middle East

Peace in the Middle East is an imperative. The European Council calls upon the Israeli and Palestinian people to break the endless cycle of violence. It reiterates its strong and unequivocal condemnation of all acts of terrorism. Suicide attacks do irreparable damage to the Palestinian cause. The European Union supports the efforts of those Palestinians seeking to take forward the reform process and to bring an end to the violence. It appeals to Israel to facilitate those efforts. While recognising Israel's legitimate security concerns the European Council calls upon Israel to stop excessive use of force and extra-judicial killings, which do not bring security to the Israeli population.

Violence and confrontation must give way to negotiations and compromise. The international community, including the parties, share a common vision of two States, Israel and an independent, viable, sovereign, and democratic Palestine, living side by side in peace and security on the basis of the 1967 borders. All efforts should now be directed at translating this vision into reality.

As a result the European Council attaches the highest priority to the adoption on 20 December this year by the Middle East Quartet of a joint road-map with clear timelines for the establishment of a Palestinian State by 2005. The implementation of the road-map must be based on parallel progress in the security, political and economic fields and should be closely monitored by the Quartet.

In this context, the European Council is alarmed at the continuing illegal settlement activities, which threaten to render the two-State solution physically impossible to implement. The expansion of settlements and related construction, as widely documented including by the European Union's Settlements Watch, violates international law, inflames an already volatile situation, and reinforces the fear of Palestinians that Israel is not genuinely committed to ending the occupation. It is an obstacle to peace. The European Council urges the Government of Israel to reverse its settlement policy and as a first step immediately apply a full and effective freeze on all settlement activities. It calls for an end to further land confiscation for the construction of the so-called security fence.

Decisive steps must be taken to reverse the sharply deteriorating humanitarian situation in the West Bank and Gaza, which is making life increasingly intolerable for ordinary Palestinians and fuelling extremism. Humanitarian access and the security of humanitarian personnel and their installations must be guaranteed.

With the aim of supporting the reforms in the Palestinian territories, the EU will continue its budgetary support to the Palestinian Authority with clear objectives and conditions. The EU calls on other international donors to join this commitment also with a view to coherent efforts for reconstruction. Israel for its part must resume the monthly transfers of Palestinian tax revenues.

The European Union is determined to continue the work with its partners in the Quartet to assist Israelis and Palestinians alike to move towards reconciliation, negotiations and a final, just and peaceful settlement to the conflict.

Brussels, March 2003

Middle East

71. The Iraqi crisis makes it all the more imperative that the other problems of the region be tackled and resolved.

72. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in particular, remains a cause of great concern. Both sides should act with the utmost restraint. These are times for negotiation, compromise and reconciliation, not for the vicious circle of hatred, confrontation and violence.

73. We repeat our full support for the international community's vision of two States living side by side in peace and security, on the basis of the 1967 borders. All those involved share a historic responsibility for turning this vision into reality.

74. The roadmap endorsed by the Quartet on 20 December 2002 shows the way towards the achievement of a final, just and comprehensive settlement. It must be published and implemented immediately, with parallel progress in the security, political and economic fields. We continue to stand ready to assist the parties to implement the roadmap, alongside the US, Russia and the UN.

75. In this spirit, we welcome President Bush's statement of 14 March announcing his intention to take the roadmap forward.

76. The European Union welcomes and supports the ongoing debate in the Palestinian Authority and civil society concerning the promotion of far-reaching political reform. The appointment of a Prime Minister entrusted with substantial competencies is a fundamental first step in this regard and will provide a major boost to the Peace Process. The European Council welcomes the signing, by President Arafat, of the legislation which creates the post of Prime Minister, as well as his decision to appoint Mahmoud Abbas to this post.

77. The Union will continue its engagement and calls on all sides to support coherent efforts for reform and reconstruction of the Palestinian Authority. Measures are required urgently to bring to an end the humanitarian tragedy in the Palestinian territories.

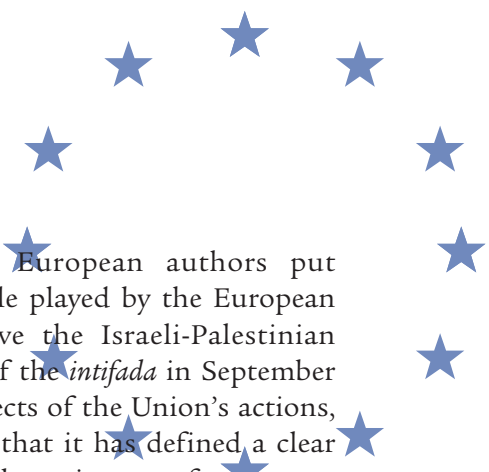
78. The EU repeats its appeal to Israel to reverse its settlement policy. This constitutes an obstacle to peace both in the short and longer term. Israel should also contribute effectively to efforts aiming at Palestinian reform. All parties should try to put an end to the violence.

79. The European Union has and will continue to spare no effort to achieve peace in the Middle East, to the benefit of the peoples of the region but also of international peace and stability.

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In this *Chaillot Paper*, five European authors put forward their views on the role played by the European Union in attempts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since the beginning of the *intifada* in September 2000. Among the positive aspects of the Union's actions, it should first be emphasised that it has defined a clear position based on the peaceful coexistence of two states within stable borders and respect for international legislation. That position, as well as a vigorous condemnation of violence, has been expressed in successive European Council statements. Second, the existence of the High Representative and a Special Envoy on the Middle East has made it possible for the Union to participate directly in various negotiating frameworks, including the Quartet, which has prepared a 'road map' for peace. The Union has also continued to maintain economic relations with both parties in order to avoid aggravation of the negative consequences of the conflict.

Despite these positive aspects, however, the Union should play an even greater role, because both the principles and values that it upholds and its interests, like those of its member states, are endangered by the continuation of the conflict. As a result, the Union should work together with the United States, which is the principal mediator, in implementing the 'road map', and it should be prepared to use all instruments at its disposal to demand that the two parties renounce violence in favour of negotiation.

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