

An abstract artwork featuring a dark, textured background of black and grey. Two prominent, bright yellow, brush-stroke-like shapes are positioned diagonally, one in the upper left and one in the lower right. The overall composition is layered and expressive, with visible brushwork and some white lines or scratches across the surface.

Mercator Professor 2007 Hanan Ashraoui

Universität Duisburg-Essen
Mercator-Professur 2007

Hanan Ashrawi

Friedenspolitikerin

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Prof. Dr. jur. Lothar Zechlin

Rektor der Universität Duisburg-Essen (2003 bis 2008)

Vorwort

Seit nunmehr zehn Jahren verleiht unsere Universität die Mercator-Professur jährlich an herausragende Persönlichkeiten, die sich wie der Namenspatron Gerhard Mercator (1512–1594) selbst wegweisend mit Themen und Fragen des zeitgenössischen kulturellen und gesellschaftspolitischen Lebens auseinandersetzen. Das Spektrum von Persönlichkeiten, die wir bislang für diese Gastprofessur gewinnen konnten, ist äußerst facettenreich, da sie unterschiedlichste Bereiche aus Kultur, Politik, Wirtschaft oder Wissenschaft repräsentierten.

Die Mercator-Professorinnen und Mercator-Professoren in den Jahren 1997 bis 2007 waren:

- Bundesaußenminister a. D. Hans-Dietrich Genscher (1997),
- der Schriftsteller Siegfried Lenz (1998),
- der Sozialwissenschaftler Prof. Dr. Jan Philipp Reemtsma (1999),
- die ehemalige Präsidentin des Bundesverfassungsgerichts Prof. Dr. Jutta Limbach (2000),
- der Filmregisseur Volker Schlöndorff (2001),
- der Journalist Ulrich Wickert (2002),
- der Ex-Topmanager und Autor Daniel Goeudevert (2003),
- der Schriftsteller und Chronist Walter Kempowski (2004),
- Bundespräsident a. D. Dr. Richard von Weizsäcker (2005),
- die Soziologin und Publizistin Dr. Necla Kelek (2006).

Zum zehnjährigen Jubiläum im Jahr 2007 haben wir die Mercator-Professur erstmalig an einen internationalen Gast verliehen, und ich freue mich außerordentlich, dass wir mit der Literaturwissenschaftlerin Frau Professor Dr. Hanan Ashrawi eine der bedeutendsten palästinensischen Politikerinnen gewinnen

konnten, die sich stets intensiv für die Menschenrechte und die Gleichberechtigung von Frauen einsetzt und seit mehr als dreißig Jahren für den Frieden in Nahost und für die Selbstbestimmung des palästinensischen Volkes kämpft.

Im Rahmen der Mercator-Professur hielt Hanan Ashrawi zwei Vorträge an der Universität Duisburg-Essen. Am 19. November 2007 startete sie mit einem Vortrag unter dem Titel „The Palestine Question: Narratives and Legitimacies“, und am 29. Januar 2008 folgte ihr zweiter Vortrag zum Thema „Internal, Regional and Global Contexts for Peace in Palestine“. Zwei brisante Vortragsthemen, die angesichts der kurz zuvor in Annapolis (USA) zu Ende gegangenen Nahostfriedenskonferenz aktueller nicht hätten sein können und die nun auch in der bewährten Schriftenreihe zur Mercator-Professur nachzulesen sind.

Skarlett Brune-Wawer

**Persönliche Referentin des Rektors der
Universität Duisburg-Essen**

Einführung

Hanan Ashrawi, geborene Mikhail, kommt 1946 in Nablus zur Welt. Die Akten vermerken als Geburtsland noch Palästina, das jedoch nicht einmal zwei Jahre später aufhört zu existieren. 1947 endet das britische Mandat über Palästina. Der Teilungsplan der UNO für das Territorium führt 1948 zur Gründung des Staates Israel, die restlichen Gebiete – Westbank und Gaza – fallen an Jordanien und Ägypten. Die Familie Mikhail flüchtet nach Ramallah, Westjordanland, wo Hanan in einem bürgerlichen Elternhaus aufwächst. Ihr Vater ist ein anerkannter Arzt, die Mutter sorgt sich um die christliche Erziehung der Tochter. Politisches Engagement lernt Hanan Ashrawi schon früh von ihrem Vater, der für Frauenrechte eintritt und an der Gründung der 1964 proklamierten Palästinensischen Befreiungsorganisation PLO mitwirkt.

Nach dem Abitur studiert sie an der Amerikanischen Universität von Beirut englische Literatur. In die Zeit ihres Studiums fällt der Sechs-Tage-Krieg von 1967. Ihre Familie in Ramallah lebt nun unter israelischer Besatzung, und da Israel „Abwesenden“ die Rückkehr ins Westjordanland verbietet, wird Hanan Ashrawi nach ihrem Master-Abschluss an der Universität in Beirut die Rückkehr in die Heimat von den israelischen Behörden verweigert. Ein Stipendium ermöglicht ihr schließlich die Ausreise in die USA, wo sie an der University of Virginia, Charlottesville, mit einer Dissertation über die englische Literatur des Mittelalters die Doktorwürde der Philosophie erwirbt. Sie wird Mitglied der General Union of Palestinian Students und schon bald deren Sprecherin.

Erst 1973 darf Hanan Ashrawi zurück zu ihrer Familie. An der Bir-Zeit-Universität nahe Ramallah lehrt sie als Professorin für englische Literatur. In ihrer Zeit als Direktorin und Dekanin der Fakultät der Künste baut sie die Anglistik-Abtei-

lung auf. Bis 1995 ist sie Fakultätsmitglied und veröffentlicht Gedichte, Kurzgeschichten sowie Artikel über englische und palästinensische Kultur, Literatur und Politik.

Vom ersten Tage ihrer Rückkehr aus den USA setzt Hanan Ashrawi sich aktiv für ein neues Miteinander und Nebeneinander von Israelis und Palästinensern ein. Zunächst im Bereich ihrer Universität, wo sie ein Rechtshilfe-Komitee gründet und ein Projekt zur Wahrung der Menschenrechte leitet.

Ihre politische Arbeit wird auf einen Schlag bekannt, als sie 1988 dem Politischen Intifada-Komitee beiträgt. Mit Eröffnung der Nahost-Friedenskonferenz 1991, steht Hanan Ashrawi als Sprecherin und Mitglied des Führungs- und Exekutivkomitees der palästinensischen Delegation im Blickfeld der Weltöffentlichkeit.

Zwischen 1993 und 1995 werden mit der Unterzeichnung des Friedensabkommens durch Yasir Arafat und Jitzchak Rabin die Grundlagen für eine palästinensische Selbstverwaltung geschaffen. In den Osloer Verträgen, die unter der Regie von Bill Clinton 1995 in Washington besiegelt werden, erkennt Israel das Ziel eines palästinensischen Staates an, und es werden Autonomieregelungen für das Westjordanland und Gaza festgelegt. Hanan Ashrawi ist Vorsitzende des Vorbereitungskomitees für die Unabhängige Palästinensische Menschenrechtskommission in Jerusalem, später dann gewähltes Mitglied des palästinensischen Legislativrats.

Im Jahre 1996 wird sie zur Ministerin für Bildung und Forschung berufen. Doch zwei Jahre später, 1998, legt sie dieses Amt aus Protest gegen die politische Korruption in der von Arafat dominierten palästinensischen Führung nieder und gründet im gleichen Jahr MIFTAH – eine palästinensische Initiative zur Förderung des globalen Dialogs und der Demokratie. Bis 2006 ist sie deren Generalsekretärin; seitdem sitzt sie dem Exekutiv-Komitee vor und berät u. a. verschiedene internationale Organisationen wie die Weltbank, die Vereinten Nationen und den UNO Menschenrechtsrat.

Ihr Beitrag für den Frieden wird im Jahr 2002 mit dem Olof-Palme-Preis gewürdigt. 2003 erhält sie den Sydney Peace Prize der Universität Sydney; 2005 den internationalen Mahatma Gandhi Preis für Frieden und Versöhnung. Und bereits sieben Mal ist ihr von international anerkannten Universitäten die Ehrendoktorwürde verliehen worden.

Neben ihren zahlreichen literarischen und literaturwissenschaftlichen Publikationen veröffentlicht Hanan Ashrawi 1995 mit „This Side of Peace: A Personal Account“ ihre Autobiografie, die zwei Jahre später auch in deutscher Übersetzung erscheint unter dem Titel „Ich bin in Palästina geboren: Ein persönlicher

Bericht“. Hier handelt es sich um ein sehr persönliches, zugleich aber auch um ein sehr politisches Buch, in dem Hanan Ashrawi über ihr eigenes Leben erzählt und dem fortdauernden Kampf der Palästinenserinnen und Palästinenser um Freiheit und Gerechtigkeit ein menschliches Gesicht verleiht.

Ein Ende des nun seit mehr als sechzig Jahren andauernden Konflikts im Nahen Osten scheint auch nach der Nahostkonferenz in Annapolis, USA, im November 2007 und der Wiederaufnahme der Friedensverhandlungen noch in weiter Ferne. Obwohl in den vergangenen zahlreichen Bemühungen um Frieden im Nahen Osten bereits einiges erreicht worden ist und jede neue Chance auf einen nachhaltigen Friedensprozess genutzt werden muss, bleiben die zentralen Streitpunkte unverändert: der endgültige Grenzverlauf zwischen Israel und dem Palästinenserstaat, der Status Jerusalems oder das Rückkehrrecht für die seit der Staatsgründung Israels geflüchteten Palästinenser.

Dennoch haben sowohl die Israelis unter der Leitung ihres Ministerpräsidenten Ehud Olmert, als auch die Palästinenser unter Leitung ihres Präsidenten Mahmud Abbas bei der Nahostkonferenz in Annapolis Kompromissbereitschaft signalisiert und sich auf ein Grundlagenpapier für umfassende Friedensverhandlungen geeinigt. Bis Ende 2008 soll eine friedliche Zwei-Staaten-Lösung gefunden werden. Doch werden die realpolitischen Machtverhältnisse zeigen, ob die Ergebnisse der Nahostkonferenz mehr sind als ein Symbol und ob diese neue Chance für den Frieden tatsächlich genutzt werden kann.

Skarlett Brune-Wawer

**Persönliche Referentin des Rektors der
Universität Duisburg-Essen**

Introduction

(Translation: Shawn Christoph)

Hanan Ashrawi was born Hanan Mikhail in Nablus in 1946, and her country of birth was duly recorded as Palestine. However, that country was to cease to exist in less than two years. The British Mandate over Palestine ended in 1947 and the UN Partition Plan for the region led to the foundation of the State of Israel in 1948. The remaining territories – the West Bank and Gaza – fell to Jordan and Egypt. The Mikhail family fled to Ramallah, West Bank, where Hanan grew up in a good middle-class home; her father was a respected doctor; her mother ensured that her daughter got a Christian education. From an early age onwards, she learned the essence of political commitment from her father, who not only supported women's rights but who was also involved in the foundation of the PLO, the Palestine Liberation Organization, proclaimed in 1964.

Following her matriculation exams at senior high school, she studied English Literature at the American University of Beirut and it was during her studies that the Six Day War took place in 1967. Her family in Ramallah now lived under Israeli occupation and, since the Israel authorities had banned “absentees” from returning to the West Bank, Hanan Ashrawi was refused permission to re-enter her home country after completion of her M.A. at the university in Beirut. A scholarship subsequently enabled her to travel to the U.S. where – at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville – she obtained her Ph.D. with a dissertation entitled “Medieval and Comparative Literature”. Soon after joining the General Union of Palestinian Students, she became its spokesperson.

It was only in 1973 that Hanan Ashrawi was allowed to return to her family. As Professor of English Literature, she taught at the University of Birzeit which is located near Ramallah. During her periods of office as Chair of Department

and Dean of the Faculty of Arts, she succeeded in building up the Department of English. She remained a member of the faculty until 1995, publishing poetry, short stories and various articles about Palestinian and English culture, literature and politics.

From the first days after her return from America, Hanan Ashrawi was to work actively for a new sense of community and neighborliness between Israelis and Palestinians – this, initially in the context of the university where she set up a legal aid committee and a human rights action project.

She became renowned for her political work virtually overnight when, in 1988, she joined the Intifada Political Committee. With the start of the Middle East peace process in 1991, she caught the world's attention as the official spokesperson of the Palestinian Delegation and a member of the Leadership/Guidance Committee and Executive Committee.

In the 1990th, with the signing of the Peace Treaty by Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin, Palestinian self-government was established. As a result of these Oslo Accords signed in 1995 in a Washington ceremony hosted by President Bill Clinton, Israel recognized the goal of a Palestinian state, and a framework for autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza was drawn up. Hanan Ashrawi chaired the Preparatory Committee of the Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizens' Rights in Jerusalem. She was later elected to the Palestinian Legislative Council.

In 1996, she was appointed Palestinian Authority Minister of Higher Education and Research. However, only two years later, in 1988, she resigned in protest at the political corruption in the leadership team dominated by Arafat. In the same year, then, she founded the MIFTAH – the Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy. She remained its General Secretary until 2006, is still a member of the executive committee and now also advises various international organizations such as the World Bank, the United Nations and the UN Human Rights Council.

In recognition of her unique contribution to peace, Hanan Ashrawi was awarded the Olaf Palme Award in 2002. A year later, in 2003, she received the Sydney Peace Prize from the University of Sydney. In 2005, she was awarded the Mahatma Gandhi Prize for Peace and Reconciliation.

In addition to her numerous publications in the fields of literature and criticism, Ms. Ashrawi brought out her autobiography in 1995: *This Side of Peace: A Personal Account*. The German translation appeared two years later under the title of: *Ich bin in Palästina geboren: Ein persönlicher Bericht*. This is at once a very personal and a very political book in which the author narrates her life story and

lends a human face to the ongoing struggle of the Palestinians for freedom and justice.

After the Middle East Conference in Annapolis, USA, in November 2007 and after the beginning of new peace negotiations, following a conflict that has now lasted more than sixty years, an end to hostilities still seems remote. Although the numerous attempts to find a peaceful solution in the Middle East have made some headway and although each new chance to implement a sustainable peace process must be taken, the central points of disagreement are basically unresolved: a final border between Israel and Palestine, the status of Jerusalem, and a right of return for the Palestinian refugees who have left the country since the founding of the State of Israel.

Nevertheless, during the Annapolis Conference, the Israelis under the leadership of Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and the Palestinians under the leadership of President Mahmud Abbas did signal a new readiness to compromise: they have agreed a Joint Understanding as to wide-ranging peace negotiations. The overall aim is to find a peaceful two-state solution by the end of 2008. As to whether the results of this Middle East Conference are more than merely symbolic and whether the new chance for peace can indeed be exploited ... only time and power politics will tell.

Prof. Dr. Hanan Ashrawi

The Palestine Question: Narratives and Legitimacies

Let me thank you. First of all I would like to thank you for coming this evening to listen to my lecture in English and for braving the weather and the rain. I was just telling that people in Palestine were very happy when it rained. We need more rain and we think rain is a good omen, it means plenty. There are so many people I wish to thank for this honour and for all the efforts that they made in bringing me here. I would like to apologise if I make mistakes in pronouncing names: Mr. President, the Rector of the University, Professor Dr. Lothar Zechlin and so many people who have been just wonderful, Skarlett Brune-Wawer and Sabine Zix and Beate Kostka and, of course, Dr. Jochen Hippler, who will be taking the questions and answers and who will be moderating the discussion, later.

It is indeed an honour for me to be awarded this professorship and I am deeply grateful and I feel also privileged and humbled by your warm welcome and reception. As stated in the introduction, today, actually this month and this year, are significant dates. November 29, 1947, sixty years ago, the partition of Palestine took place. UN Resolution 181 was adopted, 56 percent of Palestine was given to create the State of Israel and 44 percent for the Palestinians. So, later, this date was adopted by the UN as the “International Day of Solidarity” with the Palestinian people.

So, I am grateful for your solidarity and for being here today. Again, November frames another event, November 27, 2007: two days ago, at Anapolis yet another international or multilateral meeting or conference took place to attempt yet another resolution. And it gave rise to some questions, namely: have we come really full circle? Has the partition of Palestine finally taken hold?

And, are we going to see the Two-States-Solution as a result of what happened two days ago in Anapolis and of the talks that were launched yesterday actually in the United States?

Have we come full circle? That is a question I would like to address. Now, I am going to give you just a very brief summary of what is important in the month of November primarily in Palestinian chronology. I do not expect you to remember all the dates and you are not going to be quizzed on them. Just to give you an idea: ninety years ago, November 2, 1917, there was the Balfour Declaration, in which Palestine was pledged to create a homeland for the Jews. With it began a process of injustice and denial for the Palestinian people which I will explain later.

And sixty years ago, November 29, there was the partition. Forty years ago, there is an exception: because on June 5, 1967, it was Israel who occupied the rest of Palestine, the West Bank including Jerusalem and Gaza. But on November 22, 1967, the UN adopted resolution 242. This resolution has become the basis for all subsequent talks on Palestine. UN resolution 242 deals on the one hand with the possibility of acquiring the territory by war and on the other hand it is concerned with the return of the territory which Israel occupied in 1967.

Thirty years ago, November 19, 1977, the Egyptian president Sadat visited Israel and laid the foundations of the Egyptian-Israeli peace agreement, defining at the same time the framework for a Palestinian-Israeli settlement at Camp David. So it is called the Camp David Approach. Nineteen years ago, November 15, 1988, was again a significant date for the Palestinians in which the Palestine National Council, which is our parliament in exile, issued a Declaration of Independence in which we recognised UN resolutions 181 and 242 and the partition of Palestine.

Again, this declaration laid down the foundations and principles of Palestinian statehood, i.e. the principles that should govern the nascent Palestinian state. This was a historical date for all of us and November 15 became associated with the Independence Day of Palestine, even though we are still not independent. Sixteen years ago, in the first week of November 1991, we began bilateral talks in Madrid, following the opening of the Madrid Conference on October 31.

And that was the beginning of the legitimisation of the language of peace which led, indirectly perhaps, to the Oslo Accords that were signed in September 1993. Three years ago, November 11, 2004, President Arafat passed away. Most of us believe that he was assassinated. That ended an era in Palestinian history, an era in which we had a national symbolic figure that framed and formed actually the address of Palestinian resistance and the national struggle or cause.

Now, given all these dates, it seems as if the Palestinian narrative has always been one of trauma, one of pain, one of dispossession, destruction, denial and dispersion. Yet, at the same time it remains a remarkable tribute to the versatility, endurance and generosity of the human spirit and also to the phase of overwhelming adversity and injustice. We still have a deep abiding commitment to a negotiated settlement, to a peaceful resolution and, of course, to the rule of law and to building a Palestinian state which is based on respect for human rights and human dignity.

From the beginning as a people we were slated for what we call national obliteration. Cast outside the course of history we became the victims of a myth, and I am sure you have heard of this myth: of the land without a people for a people without a land. So this statement, this myth somehow dismissed our very existence, as though our land was empty. And this type of negation, exclusion and denial in a sense started us on a process of victimisation. We became victims of the victims, as a friend of mine says. So we were cast into a tunnel of double vision.

It is a double vision along with double standards, whether moral standards or legal standards to assuage the guilt of the West, to solve the Jewish problem and not to compound the guilt. From the beginning there was a systematic process of devaluation of Palestinian rights and dehumanisation of Palestinian lives. This was the starting point of a process whereby Israel became a country above the law and Palestine a country or a nation deprived of the protection of the law. We became the absent people, our land without a people.

Later we were subject to a myth of Israel making the desert bloom, as though Palestine was a desert which it never was. But if you can make a desert bloom, then you can lay claim to it, which means, there is no claim to sovereignty. Our voices were silenced, our land maligned and our narrative erased and later distorted. To reassert this narrative, to reaffirm our humanity and to reclaim our rights and legitimacy – these demands became the central driving forces of the Palestinian National Movement, along with the liberation of our land and our people.

And the deep abiding principle underlying the struggle has always been the affirmation of the integrity of our identity. Not just as people who exist, not just as people who have a history and a culture, but as a people who have a genuine identity that has to be translated into such a determination and into freedom. So we engaged in a perpetual quest for historical validation. Then the dispossession and dispersion and exile of 1948, the war of 1948, led to a refugee question – and I will talk about that later – that was augmented in 1967 with occupation, oppression and subjugation of the whole nation.

Thus, we suffered from the dual injustice of dispossession and exile on the one hand and of oppression and occupation on the other. Consequently, the narrative of victimisation became dominant and it came to a direct confrontation with the Israeli claim to victimisation. It was a confrontation and a competition. We always said that there was no monopoly on pain and no one-upmanship on suffering. We underlined that one people's victimisation does not give them the excuse to victimise others and that one's sense of victimisation and pain does not give you license to do to others what was done to you.

And this is something we have to deal with, personally. The clash of mutually exclusive narratives began there. The creation of the state of Israel represented to the Palestinians a grave historical injustice. We call it the "Nakba", a catastrophe, and not a glorious war of liberation or a biblical return as it is presented in traditional Zionist literature. The Palestinian refugees' right of return became a basic component or motif of the Palestinian narrative, both for nostalgia and yearning on the one hand, but also as one of the fundamentals of the cause. And therefore, their right of return is also a fundamental key to the solution of the problem with all its political, legal and human ramifications and dimensions.

Since 1948 the refugee population grew from around 58.000 to more than five million Palestinian refugees. They became the largest refugee population and the longest-standing refugee question in modern history. If you ask any Palestinian, you will learn that we are tired of being victims of superlatives, we just want to be ordinary, we do not want to be superlative in any way. The question of the refugees was moved to permanent status negotiations during the Oslo Process and in the Declaration of Principles and it became a point of contention and an issue in the public discourse on both sides. For a long time the Israeli version claimed that the refugees left of their own free will or at the invitation or the quest or behest of the Arab countries and leadership. Only with the new historians, people like Benny Morris and Tom Segev, but more importantly with Avi Shlaim and Ilan Pappé, people of courage and wisdom, the truth begins to emerge, the true narrative of 1948 and what happened to the Palestinians.

They investigated intelligence archives and they wrote accounts of deliberate intimidation and series of massacres, mass evictions by force, forced collective expulsion and the total eradication of over 500 villages in Palestine. These incidents led to the refugee question. It was not a matter of will that the Palestinians woke up and decided to flee or to listen to the Arab leadership. Their narrative as described very amply by Ilan Pappé's book "The ethnic cleansing of Palestine" set the record straight, but still failed to frame Israeli policy, particularly in negotiations. It did not influence the ways in which the refugee question was being dealt with.

And the 1948 displacement and replacement paradigm – you displace a people and replace them with others – extended into the narrative and into the apocrypha, as well. There was one narrative attempting to displace and replace the other. This is why people like Ilan Pappé and others were trying to regain the integrity, not just of the Palestinian narrative, but actually of the historical narrative of what happened. All Israeli government which was engaged in negotiations – and I have been involved in all of them – insisted on denying the right of return and of UN resolution 194 which guaranteed the Palestinian refugees their right of return and/or compensation. They used the issue of the refugees as a test of legitimacy and as a qualifier, as a test of qualification for any Palestinian interlocutor.

However, any Palestinian who adhered to the right of return or even mentioned UN resolution 194 was immediately disqualified as his or her motives were rendered suspect. And we were described or anybody was described as an extremist, seeking the destruction of the State of Israel by demographic means. That is, if you insist on the right of the return of the refugees, then you are insisting on taking over Israel by bringing back an influx of non-Jewish citizens or Palestinians. Thus, in order to be “legitimate” in the eyes of Israeli leaders, Palestinian leaders or interlocutors must first de-legitimise and disqualify themselves in the eyes of their own constituency, abandon international law and legality and consequently adopt the Israeli narrative or adopt Zionist ideology.

To the Palestinians the solution of the refugee question – and I do not want to negotiate here, but I will give you the quick components – is triple-tiered. First: there must be the recognition of their plight, their narrative, their pain, their suffering, the fact that they were expelled and that they did lose their land, their security and their heritage. This affirmation of their narrative has also to be accompanied by an admission of guilt and accountability by Israel and, hence, responsibility. This would lead to the validation of the refugee narrative, their experience and suffering.

Two: there has to be a recognition of their rights. It is not enough that there exist UN resolution 194 and international law, but the Palestinians must be treated like other people in the world. They must have the protection of the law and there must be parity before international law, just as all other refugee populations are being addressed in terms of their right to return to their country. There is an imperative to return, except for the Palestinians. We are being asked to abandon that right if we are to qualify as negotiators. So, the second step is to recognise that right that Palestinians have been denied so far.

Then you go to the third step, which are the negotiations. Negotiations do not involve principles, they do not involve basic rights, they do not involve laws.

We do not negotiate the law. But you rather negotiate the implementation of that law or of a right. The third step is the negotiations and you discuss the implementation with all sorts of permutations and options, guaranteeing the refugees' right to choose. You cannot start with step three if you do not have one and two in place. Only after having done steps one and two will the Palestinians be given options, then you will look at different permutations and combinations, which is what is being done. But first the recognition of their plight, their responsibility as well as their rights must take place.

Most recently, there is a demand by Israeli leaders – and this is new – that the Palestinians should recognise not just Israel as a state like all other countries, but Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state. This is a new introduction in Israeli political discourse, because to the Palestinians this is a demand for the wholesale adoption of the Israeli narrative and ideology. It is a call for the abandonment of the refugees' narrative and plight, as well as the rights of the refugees. And it is a denial of the remaining indigenous Palestinians in the State of Israel, not just their history, not just the fact that they are the original Palestinians, but also their rights and their demand for equality before the law.

And this equality and non-discrimination, which has been a constant demand by the Palestinians in Israel who have been treated like second, third class citizens, not like the original, indigenous population of historical Palestine, this equality became the argument within Israel. It was superimposed on the political discussions, because now, Israel had to define itself whether it is an exclusively or predominantly or only Jewish state versus a state for all its citizens.

When the Palestinians in Israel said it has to be a state for all its citizens, they were accused of treason. And to me this is very strange, because all states have to be states for all their citizens, regardless of their religious or ethnic affiliation or whatever. But if you are an Israeli and you say the state has to be a state for all its citizens, it is very strange to me that you are seen as being unfair or as wanting to destroy the state. But if we accept that version, it means we are also denying the rights of the Palestinians of 1948 in Israel. Besides, the PLO has already recognised Israel.

My question now is: why again and why now? Why insist on this, on defining Israel? There is a certain degree of insecurity, a certain sense that they have to keep hammering the point home, not just the fact that we recognise the state of Israel, but that we have to recognise the state of Israel only as Israel defines itself. Well, Israel can decide for itself, by itself. It can demand this type of definition of its citizens, but it cannot demand this definition of the rest of the world. I mean, the kind of system that you have is internal, domestic. It is not something that you demand recognition for from the rest of the world. And while we, the majority of Palestinians, are striving for a democratic, pluralistic,

tolerant and inclusive state in Palestine, we are being asked to adopt an exclusivist ideology for Israel. This is really a conflict of principles.

But we reject other people's claims, we reject any ideological claim, for example Hamas' claim that Palestine has to be an Islamic state. Why should we accept the Israeli government's claim that Israel has to be a Jewish state? This raises a serious question about the nature of the state and the religion of the state. Is there such a thing? In contemporary politics this has to be really addressed in a serious manner. And a point of discussion must be if Israel is an exception regarding this matter.

Why is it the case that people are up in arms if Iran talks about Iran as an Islamic state, but still find it imperative that Israel safeguards its exclusivity as a Jewish state. This is another question. This is a 19th century concept and it poses the question if we are beyond Zionism now, as some of the post-Zionists are saying. Is that a new narrative which is valid, or are we being taken back to the 19th century constantly to define the type of nation state or religious state that is being formed?

Ironically actually, it is the so-called demographic threat which is the underlying fear that motivated extreme, hard-line politicians in Israel even to adopt a Two-States-Solution. Before his coma, Sharon adopted the Two-States-Solution and the demographic fear was his underlying motivation. It was not an awakening of a sense of justice, or a sense of fairness or the need to end Palestinian suffering, to end the occupation and to liberate both peoples, no, but it was an attempt at getting rid of the demographic threat.

This was the reason why he adopted the unilateral disengagement from Gaza. He adopted this concept to drop the demographic threat and at the same time he is dropping one and a half million Palestinians. That was his reason for unilateral disengagement in Gaza. He said he wanted to get rid of a demographic and security threat, because Gaza is the most densely populated area. And of course he maintains security control, territorial control in terms of the crossing points, the control over the airspace, the control over the waters and so on. That meant that Israel had security control in Gaza. But unilateralism has had a disastrous outcome in Palestine, constantly. Unilateralism is a modern, also American post-September 11 tool.

In my next lecture I will talk about this and about the impact of the so-called US "War on Terrorism" on the region and the adoption of unilateralism, the adoption of the strategic doctrine of preemptive strikes, the adoption of militarism as a means of dictating the will of the strong on the weak again. So, here we have unilateralism which has weakened the voices of peace and moderation in Palestine and which has strengthened extremism, because, if Israel decided

to withdraw, it would not withdraw as a result of negotiations, but as a result of violence. And therefore it increases violence.

But Israel continued to pursue its policy of maximum geography with minimum demography. Had it been able to empty out the West Bank and Gaza and carry out the complete ethnic cleansing, as Benny Morris recently said, Israel's problem would not have been that it attempted ethnic cleansing in 1948. The problem is that it failed to completely evict all the Palestinians. That is the problem. Now we are saddled, Morris says, with the problem that the Palestinian population is not disappearing. And certainly we are not going to disappear. Consequently, Israel's attempt at swallowing up all the land meant that they had to swallow up all the people. And they could not digest this big bite. So they had to accept the Two-States-Solution as a way of maintaining Israel as a predominantly Jewish state without the Palestinians who are non-Jews. Well, there are Jewish Palestinians, of course.

The West Bank with the settlements, the increasing settlements, the building of the wall, the changing of the character of Jerusalem and so on are all parts of a policy of attempting to take maximum geography with minimum demography. If you add to that a rising ideology, you will perceive that this is a lethal combination. However, the Palestinians, by accepting the Two-States-Solution frankly in 1988, have made a historical compromise. But actually people do not understand and do not appreciate this compromise. Fact is that we have accepted that 78 percent of historical Palestine would become Israel and 22 percent, which is Gaza and the West Bank including Jerusalem, would be Palestine.

In 1947 the partition plan had given the Jewish population 56 percent of Palestine and 27 or 28 percent of the population lived there. Before, the Jewish population had owned only 7 percent of the land. Then, after the 1948 war they annexed 22 percent more of the land, so they had 78 percent of the land. In 1967 they occupied the rest. However, now we say that the boundaries of the land occupied in 1967, which is 22 percent, can be the territorial dimensions of the Palestinian state, with East Jerusalem as the capital. We shifted from UN resolution 181 to resolution 242 and accepted this kind of sharing of the land and hoped that it would work.

And it became a conscious choice, a political choice, a legal choice. Instead of adhering to the concept of the homeland, the historical homeland of our parents and grandparents, of generations and centuries of people, we will accept statehood instead. And we accept that all of Palestine as a homeland may be part of our historical reality, of our culture, of our identity, but that it will not be part of our political future, due to the fact that the state of Israel exists and that we have to live side by side. This kind of compromise was also very existential, very emotional. People do not understand what that means.

I mean, I still have land deeds, we still have land where my parents lived, we all have historical memory of Palestine. It is not something in the distance. To be able to accept this compromise is something that is extremely serious and must not be done very simply or easily. It took a lot of painstaking and painful political discussions and sometimes even personal discussions. And in this context, I think, the permanent status issues which were converted into a permanent status in the Declaration of Principles in what is called the Oslo Agreement must be addressed. These are issues like the boundaries, Jerusalem, settlements and then, of course, water and security. These matters, in addition to the refugees, have to be understood in this context.

The West Bank, including Jerusalem and Gaza had been occupied in 1967, they are occupied territory by law, they are governed by UN resolution 242 and by the land for peace equation. Israel must relinquish the land that does not belong to it and it must end the occupation that began in 1967. This is the basis of the discussions in Anapolis and other places. The territorial integrity, contiguity and viability of this land are important if we are to have a workable, permanent Two-States-Solution. Jerusalem is still governed by UN resolutions 181 and 194 which designated Jerusalem as a corpus separatum with its own standing.

By the way, we still own more than 70 percent of West Jerusalem, which Israel declared as its capital, be it private property or church property or our Kaf property, we still own it. So, in order to discuss the status of Jerusalem, we must discuss both East and West Jerusalem. If we are going to move away from UN resolutions 181 and 194, it means we have to discuss both sides of Jerusalem and we have to come to an understanding that this one city has to become two capitals for two states, that religious affiliation does not give you any claim for sovereignty and that, on the contrary, Jerusalem must be demystified. We must deal with it as a terrestrial city, not as a celestial city. It is subject to international law, to legality and, of course, to political compromise. And East Jerusalem must not be besieged with settlements.

There are three rings around Jerusalem: the settlements and the checkpoints, military besiege and now the wall. All of these boundaries are extracting East Jerusalem from its Palestinian context, from its Palestinian environment. The integrity and authenticity of its own history and culture, of its own identity must be safeguarded. And also, of course, the population of Jerusalem, the Palestinian population and its continuity must be safeguarded, because Jerusalem has always been a city greater than itself, as I wrote in my Madrid speech. It must not be subject to greed or to acquisition, but it must become a genuine symbol of peace, coexistence and harmony.

In that context, as well, settlements are a violation of international and humanitarian law, of the Fourth Geneva Convention and they have become an expres-

sion of expansionism, territorial acquisition and demographic imposition. There is a spurious narrative there for the settlers and the settlement. It is a superimposition of a false grid, an infrastructure on Palestinian territory, on Palestinian realities that is attempting at marginalising the authentic Palestinian reality. There are roads now being built in the West Bank – we call them apartheid roads, racist roads.

The Israelis take away our land, they confiscate Palestinian land and then they build roads to connect the settlements to each other. And by doing so, they marginalise the Palestinian towns, cities and villages, because these roads are purely for the settlers. That means we cannot even use the roads that were built on our own land. Only settlers can use these roads. They connect the settlements to each other and they also connect the settlements to Israel. So, they become an infrastructure which expresses Israeli extraterritoriality. And this expresses again the intentions of annexation and expansion of Israel.

In this way they created an apartheid condition in the West Bank along with the wall. I do not know how many of you have seen the wall or have seen pictures of the wall of separation and annexation. The worst thing about the wall is not that it is built on our land. I mean, if you want to build walls – you all know that walls are historical failures, from China to Berlin, walls have never succeeded in preventing or resolving conflicts or wars – but even if you suffer from that mentality and build a wall, you cannot build it on other people's lands. You build it on your own land! But, at the same time, if you build that wall, you are not only robbing the others, the Palestinians, of their horizon and of their vision, you are also robbing the Israelis of their horizon and their vision.

People who live behind walls develop closed mentalities, besieged mentalities. This is not something that I want for the Palestinians or for the Israelis for the future. This is a preparation for future conflict and hostility. The wall is not just ugly, it also robs both peoples of the necessary needs to communicate, to see each other and to see the horizon and the sunlight. And, of course, we have an advisory ruling of the International Court of Justice about the wall, which says that it should be removed, that people should be compensated and that all countries must do whatever possible in order to bring Israel to compliance. But so far nothing has been done.

However, in any negotiations we cannot give any legality or legitimacy to settlements in the same way that we cannot accept the wall. It must be part of what I call the devolution of occupation and the evolution of statehood. These two developments must proceed simultaneously. Not ironically they are opposite developments just like there are opposite parties on the ground. And we have the occupation, the inventing of oneself, evolving into a new system of control

without responsibility and we have Palestinian statehood undergoing devolution in the form of deconstruction and degression.

So, the process which we needed is one of devolution of occupation and evolution of statehood, not the other way round. That means we should not have an evolution of occupation and no new means of control and security. And there should not be devolution of Palestinian statehood through economic strangulations, through the siege, through the total dismantlement of institutions. But what must be deconstructed now is the narrative of occupation, not Palestinian realities, economic, territorial, historical and human realities, and also not the substitution of the demographic, geographic, historical and cultural narrative of Palestine as Ilan Pappé said.

In 1991 when we went to the Madrid talks – I am not going back in history, but just to remind you, that there was a real change in the course of history from inevitable, continued conflict and confrontation to the promise and potential of peace and reconciliation for both peoples. And this was an act of positive intervention which came as a result of self-confidence, because, believe me, the myth that people make peace as a result of exhaustion, as a result of despair, is a myth. Only the strong and the confident ones can make peace. It takes tremendous courage to commit to a peaceful resolution to conflict.

And it takes a great deal of cowardice to immediately resort to military means and to military control and oppression. We have attempted the shift from mutually exclusive narratives and legitimacies to mutually inclusive and interdependent realities, replacing the lethal relationship of occupier and occupied, a “dance macabre” as we say, with a very constructive attitude of good neighbourly relations. Nevertheless, the last seven years have been suicidal in more than one way, literally suicidal. But they have been suicidal for both peoples. Both realities are unravelling, of course Palestinian realities more than others. And the walls of hostility and distrust have been erected as well as the physical, ugly wall which we are seeing. Violence and extremism have prevailed.

The failure of the Oslo Process or the Declaration of Principles also represented a failure of vision, a failure of will, a failure of moral fibre with the occupation on the rampage without any kind of accountability or positive intervention or curbs and a failure of moral fibre with the Palestinians deprived of any type of protection. We can discuss later all the reasons for the failure of the process, but, basically, it became a process for its own sake. Rather than a means to an end it became an end in itself. It lost its substance, its validity, it lost its relationship to reality, it did not influence behaviour on the ground and therefore it was weakened systematically.

And those who adhered to the peace process were weakened along with it. It did not provide any kind of restraints in terms of behaviour. People were saying we lost more land with the peace process than before. And more lives were lost with the peace process than before, more settlements were being built. So, the peace process had a life of its own which was totally abstracted and separated from reality. Besides, reality on the ground proceeded in ways which contradicted the very essence of the requirements of peace. And this is one reason why we have the rise of Hamas and other ideologies in Palestine.

There are many reasons why Hamas came up, why Hamas gained such numbers and votes. There are internal and external reasons. Whether it is due to the Palestinian Authority's corruption and ineptitude or the Fatah corruption and sense of entitlement. This has been a criticism and I personally was founder of many reform committees, were they national committees or civil society committees or coalitions like Aman and so on. But this is something to which Palestinian people reacted. They do not take kindly to corruption, they do not accept it and they have not internalised corruption, all our studies show that.

The Palestinians despise corrupt people. And one reason why Hamas was elected was the corruption. And they ran on a platform of change and reform. But they also had money, they also had weapons and so they had other sorts of artificial sources of power. And again, the rise of unilateralism and extremism and violence in Israel and also of their ideology gave rise to the counterparts in Palestine. The lack of any prospect for peace also gave rise to more militant ideologies in Palestine, and therefore, and with the siege, the incursions and the settlements, Hamas got the revenge vote, the angry vote, the protest vote, the despair vote in addition to the ideological vote and the support vote.

Right now, if you look at the public opinion, this has shifted, but still this is a transformation in terms of external realities and internal realities producing a political shift in Palestine. The disempowerment and the letdown of the nationalist and secular factions and currents, led by the PLO and Fatah, led to the vindication of the Islamic response and the ideological agenda versus the agenda of national self-determination. And you have the same thing in Israel: there exists the even more extreme messianic ideology, particularly of the settlers who are pulling back the discourse into anachronistic and absolutist dimensions.

On both sides, the systematic rejection of the other, the negation of partnership and the revival of labels, stereotypes, racism and attempts at de-legitimising the other, the adversary, have led to a new phase of dehumanisation and justification of atrocities and violence. The revival of existential distrust and the misleading of motives have led to two things in Israel: they are talking about Palestinian irredentism, that Palestinians still want to destroy Israel by demographic

means and other means. And in Palestine, public opinion feels that Israel is completing the war of 1948, the ethnic cleansing of Palestine and the total destruction of Palestine by their will. And we Palestinians also feel that Israel annexes the land without a people and that we become population centres, isolated under siege, and that they are dissolving and destroying the national components.

That is why I am calling it the deconstruction of Palestine. So, in 2006, when we had our elections and Hamas got the majority vote, we could say that these were technically free and fair elections. There was no intimidation, there were no flaws, there was no fraud. Still, the elections were tainted by the occupation, by the measures and the atmosphere of occupation. This is why we are saying that it is very hard to talk about normal conditions in an abnormal setting and atmosphere. You have a traumatised people with a sense of victimisation, with a sense of pain, being motivated to vote in ways that would affect the outcome of the vote.

And therefore the occupation did affect the outcome. And of course there was another negative intervention, namely the boycott and the sanctions exercised not just against Hamas, but also against the Palestinian people. Ironically, we found ourselves as a people under occupation being subject to international sanctions and boycott, when for decades we have been saying, Israel has been violating international law, international humanitarian law. Then everybody said, don't even dream of sanctions against Israel or of any type of boycott. But because the Palestinians elected the so-called wrong people, everybody was punished and we were the first people under occupation to be sanctioned, to be boycotted. This did not weaken Hamas, this punished the Palestinians. This even strengthened Hamas, because now Hamas is perceived as a victim, it did not have the opportunity to govern.

Not only that, it also made it very difficult for the Palestinian opposition to exercise its democratic right to oppose Hamas, because Israel, the US and Europe have already decided to usurp the role of the opposition. So what does this do to democracy, or to the American exportation of the democratic revolution? So, this also created a situation of extreme polarisation: the Fatah sense of entitlement and its lack of will or ability to relinquish power and Hamas's inability to create a system of governance. And we have to face this – both victimised the Palestinian people. Since Hamas has resorted to violence in Gaza, there is now a clear split: we have an extreme polarisation between Gaza and the West Bank and Hamas and Fatah or the PLO and it is the people who are paying the price. This is a power struggle of the worst kind, because they are fighting over nonexistent power and that is why most Palestinians are saying 'a pox on both their houses'. They are quite upset.

But, clearly, the Palestinians also do not take kindly to any kind of oppressive system that confiscates their freedom and their rights. We do not take kindly to the burning or banning of books. We do not take kindly to censorship or to the blowing up of internet cafés. We do not take kindly to the intimidation or the use of weapons against civilians. So, there has been, in a sense, a battle over the soul of Palestine and we feel that we have gone back to the traditional Arab polarisation between a corrupt, inept national system and an extremist or ideological Islamist opposition. It is the democratic forces, the pluralistic nature of Palestine which must be safeguarded and which must move. That will be the salvation I think. Palestine must be restored as a cause of justice, integrity, liberation and self-determination, not as a question of charity and relief. And of course, we must heal the rift democratically. There is no military solution to domestic realities in Palestine.

Nobody can defeat the other just in the same way as we said that there is no military solution to the Palestinian-Israeli or Arab-Israeli conflict. There is no military solution internally. Resorting to violence is criminal in Palestine. It must be done by democratic means and there must be a consensus to have new elections. Without consensus we cannot have elections, unfortunately. And we must activate the national institutions, whether the Parliament, the Palestinian Legislative Council and others as well as the traditions. We must not be part of the attempt at the dissolution and the deconstruction or destruction of Palestinian institutions. And at the same time you cannot make peace with just a part of Palestine. We have to make peace with all of Palestine and all the Palestinians. Therefore, we do need internal empowerment. Besides, Israel must understand the limits of its own power. You cannot use military power to subdue a nation under occupation which is bent on getting its freedom.

Well, to complete this circle and to conclude: we are now in the post-Anapolis era, as Mahmoud Abbas said. Again, I would like to advocate the triple-tiered approach to the post-Anapolis era: on the one hand there must be attempts at dealing with Israeli measures and policies on the ground, whether it is the siege that must be lifted internally as well as externally, the wall that must be stopped, the settlements, the land confiscation, the institutions of Jerusalem which must be reopened. All the illegal measures which Israel has taken must stop, including the incursions, the killings and the abductions and, furthermore, there has to be a release of prisoners and a prisoner exchange with the abducted Israeli soldiers.

This has to be done not as part of a negotiating process, and not, as they say, as confidence-building measures, but as a right, as compliance with law and order to create a proper atmosphere for genuine negotiations and to show that there is a commitment. The second tier must also proceed simultaneously and Tony Blair is dealing with this aspect which is the economic reconstruction of Pales-

tine. We do need an economic reconstruction, we do need a rebuilding of institutions which have been destroyed and we do need the empowerment of Palestine.

But both these aspects cannot proceed without having the political and legal framework. If there is no political, legal framework – I am not talking about a process, but I am talking about an endeavour now – that would adopt the comprehensive and integrated approach, the first and the second tier cannot be used in isolation of the political dimension. Certainly, we do have a binding time frame now, I hope it is binding: 2008.

We have to have a workable plan of implementation. And we do not need any more generalisations, statements of principles defining the issues, we all know what they are. What we need is a work plan which is applicable, which can be implemented on the ground. We do not need any more transitions or phases, because we know from historical experience that any transition, any phase is used by Israel to create facts on the ground which are detrimental to permanent status issues. So, any unilateral measures must stop, no more transitions and phases, we must deal with the permanent status issues, as I said, in a comprehensive and integrated way, rapidly and decisively.

We must not deal with what Zipi Livni and Condee Rice called the virtual state. We are not interested in a virtual state. When you build a state you look at the territory, you look at the terrain. There is no state hovering up in the air. We need a real state on the ground with the territorial dimension clearly delineated. And the boundaries of 1967 are the minimal boundaries which can make a Palestinian state viable. We also do not need shelf agreements, as Olmert described them, which means that you can have agreements, sign agreements, but do not implement them, but rather put them on the shelf, wait till later to implement them.

What we need are agreements which are applicable. We need monitoring and verification mechanisms, we need both, mediation and arbitration. Even bilateralism does not work, frankly speaking, because of the asymmetry of power. So, unilateralism does not work, because it is power politics, bilateralism does not work, when you have one weak and one strong adversary or component. And of course we need to have international legality, UN resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative as being the foundations of any agreement.

A post-Anapolis era must embody parity and justice and must work towards mutual validation with assurances of identity. The principle of sharing rather than exclusivity or exclusion must be embodied. Sharing the land should lead to a shared legitimacy and to the prospect of a future shared narrative. This must be based on a redefinition of security, not in military terms, but in human

terms. So, it must be based on human security which is all-encompassing. It must affect a pervasive paradigm shift and a way in favour of the right choices. However, if this fails, it would signal the end of the Two-States-Solution, frankly. And then the circle will complete itself in a self-destructive spiral, because, if the Two-States-Solution is no longer possible, there will be a de facto One-State-Option.

In fact, this would place us in perpetual conflict for a long time. Or the solution could bring about the two states, could mark the end of the secular, nationalist movement and dominance and bring about the dominance of the Islamic political parties. This would entail a new type of identity, not just for Palestine, but for the region. Or it could vindicate the search for an inclusive, tolerant democracy in Palestine. It could bring the whole region to new realities and new regional dynamics through the Arab Peace Initiative and it could unleash the forces and creativities of the region.

Dear friends, 2008 promises to be a fateful year, December 12 launches again the process of Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, December 17 launches an economic nation-building endeavour in Paris, the Paris Conference. And a public promise was made at Anapolis, to achieve peace by the end of 2008. Let's hope that all concerned will demonstrate their wisdom, their courage and their will to do so. Thank you very much!

Prof. Dr. Hanan Ashrawi

Internal, Regional and Global Contexts for Peace in Palestine

That was a lovely introduction, what I understood of it. I think that was one of the longest biographical introductions I have ever listened to and I am glad you are still here. Thank you very much, I am really flattered and humbled by this and I think there is very little that you do not know about me anymore, right? Anyway, I have given probably thousands and thousands of lectures in my life and have received many, many awards, but I hold this as a very special award, the Mercator Professorship. But I also would like to say that I have rarely seen such efficiency and professionalism in preparing for these visits, for the lectures and in the follow-up and that is why I want to make sure that I mention everybody who has been involved in this preparation, all the wonderful people here.

And of course I will start with Professor Dr. Eckard Hasselbrink and – forgive me if I mispronounce names or if I do not follow university hierarchy – of course Professor Dr. Jochen Hippler and Scarlett Brune-Wawer and of course Dr. Ingrid Lotz-Ahrens and Professor Dr. Michael Kerres and Dr. Sabine Zix and Ms. Beate Kostka and of course Julia Harzendorf. All these people have been working very hard to bring me here and I am very grateful. It is just this combination of warmth and professionalism that I really enjoy.

And many people said, and I appreciate that, many people said, how come you are going to Germany even though the situation at home is so bad. And things are really disastrous. And I said I think there are two things that all politicians have to learn and I pride myself on being an academic before I am a politician. One thing is that nobody is indispensable and this is a very important lesson. I wrote about the graceful exit, sometimes people have to know when to leave,

not just when to get involved. But, anyway, nobody is indispensable and that is really important, because every politician thinks he or she has a lifetime mandate in the office and in the chair. And two: when you make a commitment you have to honour it. I made this commitment and I am going to honour it. Many politicians seem to think that commitments are made just as verbal exercises, not in order to be implemented. So, I am happy to be here again, in the Essen part of the University and it is wonderful to be with you. So, it is a privilege and an honour to be awarded the professorship.

Well, two months ago, the lecture focused on narratives and legitimacies and, therefore, it was rather introspective and historical, with an assessment of the intrinsic components of the Palestinian question, including issues of integrity, identity – the basic components – historical affirmation and even redemption. As someone said with regard to the peace process: we saw a lot of process but very little peace. But we are talking about a redemptive process. We talked about the dual injustice of dispossession, dispersion and exile on the one hand and the repression and oppression or captivity of the occupation the other hand. And these two mark the two major stations in Palestinian contemporary history in relation to Israel.

In 1947, the establishment of the state of Israel was laid down in UN resolution 181. It gave Israel 56 percent of historical Palestine. By 1949, after the war of 1948, Israel had taken 22 percent more, so that it had 78 percent of what was historical Palestine sixty years ago. Then we had the war of June 5, 1967 with the occupation of the rest of Palestine, the remaining 22 percent, which is now referred to as the West Bank including Jerusalem and Gaza. We also discussed the need to move from mutual negation, mutual exclusion, de-legitimation to a situation of mutual affirmation, inclusion and re-legitimation, particularly in relation to the Palestinian narrative and we also talked about the urge to realise this. And we addressed the essential instruments, the required instruments for this which would be a viable, substantive, credible, effective peace initiative that would lead to the evolution of statehood and the devolution of the occupation.

I am just trying to recap some of the things we discussed, so that I am not speaking in a vacuum. And we also discussed the permanent status issues which would have to be resolved if there was to be a just peace, if there was to be a real resolution of the conflict. And the permanent status issues include the refugees, Jerusalem, boundaries, settlements, water and regional security, as well. These issues form the agenda for permanent status negotiations and – according to all involved – there should not be unilateral actions to pre-empt, prejudice or prejudice the outcome of these issues which are supposed to be negotiated. We talked about “no unilateral measures”, “no power politics” and “no violations of international legality or humanitarian law”.

Both, in substance and procedure, peace requires a political will, courage and a vision as well as the positive, constructive third party engagement. Last time we said, an engagement cannot be unilateral, because unilateralism is the imposition of the will of the strong on the weak and it cannot be bilateral, either, because we have an asymmetry of power, since we are occupier and occupied. We are not two independent, sovereign states, negotiating a border dispute, but we are a people under occupation, being subject to the most extreme measures of violence, land confiscation and others. Negotiations cannot be anything but multilateral, because there is an international responsibility as it is a global endeavour and therefore it must be based on international law and UN resolutions.

This leads me to the subject, to the focus of my talk this evening, which is context. I am not just doing this to spite the “neocons” – everybody knows that I have a running dispute with the neo-conservatives in the United States, because they always like to de-contextualise, something about which I will talk later with regard to the global context. But today I want to address the context itself of not just Palestine, but of the whole conflict, of the occupation and of regional as well as global realities. Peace cannot be done in a vacuum, cannot emerge from a vacuum of time and space, but is an extension of and an outcome or a resolution of historical and contemporary realities. It must be an endeavour that is within the principles and imperatives of a global rule of law, if there is such a thing.

We talk about states being responsible for the rule of law within states and I think it is important that states are subject to a global rule of law, so that they are held accountable in terms of their behaviour. The 20th century marked the codification of globalisation – I am not talking here about economic globalisation, but about the codification of a new type of globalisation through a body of legal instruments and international organisations to protect the vulnerable and to curb the unrestricted use of unaccountable power. Thus, following, or second to the formulation and spread of religions and ideologies, which form a sort of commonality, the universality of human rights became the most effective tool for the humanisation of globalisation. International humanitarian law, the Fourth Geneva Convention and all these things were formulated in order to protect the vulnerable, in order to protect civilian populations, not just states.

These instruments were also implemented to provide for a global rule of law, despite the absence of even-handedness, whether in monitoring or in enforcement. Actually, the UN does not have any enforcement power or punitive power. So, despite the fact that there is no way in which genuine accountability can be provided for the perpetrator and that there is no genuine protection for the victim, at least there is a framework, a codification of these laws, which are important. Thus, since the middle of the 20th century, the universal declaration

of human rights, the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war, which is laid down in the UN Charter and in all articles of the Fourth Geneva Convention, provided the anchor for the legality and morality of the Palestinian question, despite the fact that they were never respected or applied by the international community.

And by now you are all aware of the double standards always enforced in terms of the Palestinians, where some resolutions are to be implemented even by force. The US went to war on the basis of UN resolutions which had to be enforced, but when it comes to the Palestinians, these resolutions are shelved, they are in the archives, they are collecting dust somewhere. We have numerous resolutions, but we also have lots of vetos which the US exercised in the Security Council. The Palestinians continued to be deprived of the protection of the law. They were dehumanised and denied and as a result, at a certain point in our history, we resorted to negative means to make our message heard, to reach the world's consciousness if not conscience.

Today we mark two or three days of the passing of Dr. George Habbas of the PFLP, who started the plane hijackings and so on and called this negative attention. Before this, the world never heard of the Palestinians. Now, no matter what, at least they know they cannot ignore us. So, they used negative means in order to get attention, in order to reach people's consciousness. We resorted then, in the late sixties' and the seventies' resistance, to armed struggle, to revolution. In the sixties the PLO became the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and since then, since the sixties, there was an evolution of the political agenda and discourse, up to 1974. I am just rapidly going through this to show you the evolution of the political programme, where we accepted what is called the "transitional solution", namely that we will set up our Palestinian entity on any part of Palestine which is liberated. This was done up to 1988 when the Palestine National Council, the Parliament in exile, issued the Declaration of Independence and accepted the Two-States-Solution and adopted the Peace Initiative.

We accepted UN resolutions 141, 242 and 338, which later formed the basis of the peace process which was launched in Madrid in 1991. So, there was an evolution from the Shukeiri days when the PLO was a sort of Arab organisation under the jurisdiction or control of the Arab regimes and when, gradually, with people like Arafat and the Palestinian revolution, they talked about the independence of the Palestinian decision-making and made sure that the Palestinian question had a life and an integrity of its own, that it was not just an Arab question, but that there was a Palestinian identity and a national cause. At that time, I remember, we talked about the Palestinians being looked at through the two views and I called them the Aristotelian vision of the Palestinians as being subjects or objects of pity and fear. We were either the pitiful

refugees or the fearful terrorists. However, we were never really a people in our humanity, a people with a narrative, with a history, with a culture, with an identity. And ever since then, we have been trying to tell the rest of the world that we are there, that we are not going to disappear and that we do have a national identity and that our cause is the cause of national self-determination and freedom.

Within regional realities, the Palestinian question has always been the most focal and the most emotive issue that has shaped attitudes and perceptions in the Arab and in the Islamic world, if not in the whole world. While public opinion totally identified and sympathised with the plight of the Palestinians as an open wound, a painful wound, a festering wound, as an expression of a very visible injustice, for a long time, Arab regimes exploited the cause for their own longevity and self-interest. We provided, for quite some time, a convenient excuse for avoiding democracy and accountability, for denying human rights and rule of law, because of the external security threat. So, there was a waste of resources, people were buying weapons, people were suspending human rights and democracy, the Arab regimes were avoiding accountability, because there was a security threat, due to the Palestinian question.

And this meant that militarisation, coercive regimes and so on, maintained themselves through their connections, rather than through their own people. And that allowed for a waste of resources and continued, I would say, autocratic, partially despotic regimes. On the whole, the post-colonial legacy in the Arab world left behind many client regimes in the whole region, not just in the Arab world which relied for their legitimacy on external Western powers rather than on internal constituencies. That is why democracy was suspended, because the source of legitimacy for any post-colonial regime was a relationship with the West. Like a protectorate, so to speak, for the regimes, rather than a real democratic system, where you get your legitimacy from your own people, from your own constituency. And this created a relationship of mutual dependencies and mutual interest, maintaining the rule of the system or maintaining the regime, regardless of violations, in exchange for guarantees, whether on oil supplies or a ready market for weapons, which all proved useless.

I told the press that billions and billions and billions of dollars were spent buying weapons from the US, mainly by gulf countries, which had the oil and so they had the cash and the US knew how to siphon off the money back into the US by selling all these so-called sophisticated weapons. And yet, when Iraq invaded Kuwait, they had to rent an army in order to protect them. They spent trillions of dollars paying for the American army. So in a sense, what is the use of all those billions of dollars, since they are not used for self-protection by anybody. It is just one way in which the West can get the money back into the West and in which they maintain regimes that are their clients, regimes that can

depend on them, guarantee the sources of oil and at the same time carry out functional tasks. The most functional state in the region for the US is Israel.

Thus, a simplistic polarisation emerged in the Arab world, a largely corrupt, inapt – not all of them, I do not want to generalise – nationalist regime versus political Islam. No third options, no third democratic parties were allowed to emerge, they were often excluded and targeted by both. It is very easy, if you are a nationalist regime and if you have the military, the weapons, and the money and if you control the resources, to undermine and to destroy any opposition except for the Islamic opposition, because they act in the name of God and they have religious institutions which you cannot target. So, there was this polarisation in the Arab world and the most visible outcome of this was what happened in Algiers when there was an election in which the Islamists won and the nationalist forces refused to recognise this, which launched a whole period of civil war and a total waste of lives and resources. That was the most painful history in Algiers', the post-colonial period. And the same thing happened in Palestine.

In the early sixties, the PLO was formed and the Arab world wanted in many ways to maintain the Palestinian cause as one that can be controlled and managed. This was done up until the mid-sixties when the PLO became the voice of nationalism and identity and revolution. And during the Cold War era the US – I do not want to say the West, because there are many different positions and Western European positions are not entirely identical with the US positions – supported the emergence of ideological and political Islam in order to combat Arab nationalism and communism.

The Cold War era was the era in which the end justified the means, in which they supported the Taliban and so on in Afghanistan in order to fight communism, in which the Moslem Brotherhood was supported in order to fight socialism, communism and Arab nationalism, because it was imperative for Israel that there would be no Arab unity. And this became an integral part of American foreign policy: maintain a fragmented Arab world, do not allow for unity and do not allow in any way for the empowerment of the Arab world. And so we are still paying the price of that policy and it is still ongoing in many ways until they realised that somehow the allies they supported and in many ways created in order to combat nationalism and progressive ideologies are in themselves the first to turn against Western interests and against the US and Israel.

I remember when Israel used to look upon Hamas very kindly when it emerged in early 1988. They thought Hamas was the instrument which was going to destroy the PLO and I remember they used to arrest us, beat us up, but they let Hamas people go and even in jail they gave them special treatment if they ever arrested them. And now they realise that Hamas turned against them imme-

diately, so, maybe they made a mistake in trying to undermine the PLO. I do not want to go into too many details here, because I think it will take too much time. But in 1967 Israel's occupation of Arab land, which included the West Bank and Jerusalem from Jordan, Gaza and Sinai from Egypt, the Golan Heights from Syria and South Lebanon, signalled the overall defeat of the Arab regimes and reintroduced the security pretext under the title "removing the effects of aggression" in the sense that in 1967 there was an Israeli aggression and now all the Arab regimes had to try to remove the effects of the aggression. It also enhanced the rift between the Arabs and the PLO leading to outright confrontation, in Jordan in 1970, in Syria and Lebanon also in the 1970s, and to appeasement or sponsorship. Many of the Gulf countries tried to avoid any confrontation with the PLO, because they did not want any destabilisation in their own countries.

In 1973 the October 6 War, otherwise known as Yom Kippur War with Egypt and Syria, regained some of the lost Arab pride – some of it – and prepared the grounds for the Camp David Accords which were signed in 1979. The signing of the Camp David Accords between Egypt and Israel also led to another major rift in the Arab world, because Egypt was extracted from the confrontation states and signed a separate peace with Israel. And the effects lasted for a long time. However, just as the 1973 war prepared the way for a peace between Israel and Egypt, the Camp David Accords, which they signed later on, introduced and gradually normalised the idea of peace with Israel through negotiations, as opposed to the "three Nos" of Khartoum. There were the very famous "three Nos": no negotiations, no recognition, no coexistence with Israel, which were adopted by the Arab Summit in 1967 in Khartoum, following the 1967 war. In their place then in the 1970s there was more of an acceptance that there would be a negotiated settlement with Israel.

It was not until the end of the Cold War, the collapse of the Berlin Wall, the fall of the Soviet Union and the first American war on Iraq in 1991 that a serious process was launched by the US: the Madrid Process. This was partly in response to the demand by the Arabs who had joined the allies in the war against Iraq and who needed stability and longevity and who felt that their own public was turning against them for taking part in a war against another Arab country. So, in return they wanted a peace process that would solve the Palestinian question. By now it had become clear that the threat to the region and the regimes did not lie in the potential of the Palestinian state, as they thought before, but rather in its absence.

For a long time, and it was no secret – or rather: it is the worst kept secret in history – the Arab leaders would go and talk in secret to the Americans or others and tell them: we do not need a Palestinian state, let's not work on a Palestinian state, maybe we can control the situation. Because they were wor-

ried that a Palestinian state would have a spill-over effect, they were afraid that it might be a progressive state, a radical state, a communist state or that it might be a democratic state and that it might be contagious. As lots of Arab leaders used to tell us: you know, you are trouble makers, we do not know how to cope with you. And we certainly are. People under occupation learn how to be good trouble makers in a positive sense. But, anyway, we refuse coercion and oppression. And if you are people who refuse coercion and oppression, you are not going to be docile if you have a repressive system.

So, in many ways they saw in a Palestinian state a destabilising element and they fought it for a long time. But it was not until the early 1990s or the late 1980s that they decided that the destabilising factor was the absence of the Palestinian state, not the state itself. And therefore, they demanded pay-back in the way that if you are going to enlist us in the war against Iraq, then you need to resolve the Palestinian question, because of its impact on public opinion. It is one of the, as I said, most emotive, most affective, most emotional causes to the Arab public as a whole. So, they were trying to get the Palestinian state going, but at that time nobody was talking about the state, it was taboo. The Americans would not even discuss it and the Israelis would not discuss it, either. The Palestinian state was never mentioned and when in 1993 somebody like Hillary Clinton talked about the Palestinian state, all hell broke loose.

But, the perpetuation of the Palestinian-Israeli, hence the Arab-Israeli conflict was seen by all these leaders as sapping resources and undermining the political systems and also the political elites in the Arab world. More importantly, the defeat or the failure of the regimes, of all of them, whether the nationalist ones, whether the progressive ones, whether the tribal ones or whether the dynastic ones – we have a very strange phenomenon in the Arab world: it is not just the families that run certain countries, that have dynasties, but now even the so-called “elected” democracies, the elected republics also have dynasties, where they try to pass the rule by succession. This is very interesting, it started in Syria, it was very clear, in Libya it is being arranged, in Egypt, and in several others places. We used to tell Arafat that it was a good thing that Zahwa was only four years old, otherwise we would end up having to change the law and say that we need a woman, whose minimum age or maximum age was four and a half years or something. But anyway, there was this move towards dynasties even in elected republics and the failure of all these regimes and the ongoing pain and suffering of the Palestinian people, which was never lifted.

Besides, there was the impact of the refugees on the region and on all the neighbouring states. Here in Europe you are terrified if there are one thousand, two thousand, five thousand refugees. How about hundreds of thousands of dispossessed refugees suddenly descending on a third world country, which is already impoverished. What kind of economic, demographic, social and political

impact would that have on that country? This is what happened in Jordan, primarily in Lebanon, in Syria, a bit in Egypt and so on. So, the Palestinian refugees also formed a major force for the Arab regimes to think that if this conflict is not resolved, if the Palestinian question is not solved, these refugees are constantly going to form a focal point for domestic discontent and instability within their own areas.

That is why, let's say, in Lebanon, for example, the refugees were treated with such a total injustice and oppression. They were totally deprived of any civil right, including the right to work, the right to education, the right to build and so on and the right to travel, because they had stateless IDs, so they could not move. So, this, plus the ongoing pain of the refugees increasingly contributed to the radicalisation of public opinion and the regimes were aware of that. This was a radicalisation not towards the left, because of the failure of Arab nationalists. Arab nationalism could not win a war and could not make peace. The Arab nationalists who were calling for the liberation of Palestine lost to Israel – Israel had the strongest army in the region, the fourth strongest army in the world – and at the same time they could not make a just peace to end the occupation.

So, they could not do either and the public was becoming quite angry and motivated against these regimes. So, they did not move to the left, they moved to the right. They moved more towards the religious, political Islam, more towards the right-wing radicalisation. A gradual shift was taking place away from the largely secular nationalism and towards radical Islam, threatening the overthrow of existing governments, not so much by military or violent means. Remember, in Iran, there was a violent revolution, it is not an Arab country, but in 1978, 1979, the Shah was removed. He was the best friend of the West. And suddenly, the people who took over violently belonged to radical Islam. But now it was more and more by the ballot box, as happened in Algeria, for example, and lately in Palestine with the Hamas take-over. This was the first time in which the Muslim Brotherhood and an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood won power through elections. And that is why they are holding on to power, they do not want to relinquish power.

Since 1991 and the Madrid process the main thrust of Arab diplomacy was directed towards peacemaking by ending the occupation, culminating in 2002 with what is called the Arab Peace Initiative, which was revived in 2005/2006 when the situation became extremely intolerable. In Madrid the Arabs declared that peace was a strategic option. We said: fine, if peace is a strategic option, how do you propose to make it happen? You cannot just sit back and say we have a strategic option which is peace. Peace is like dancing, you need a partner. It is nice to dance alone, but you cannot force Israel to make peace if you are sitting back and saying, it is our option. But anyway, the Arab Initiative

stayed an initiative hibernating for a long time until the situation deteriorated and we in Palestine were on the brink of a real civil war, which we entered into later.

And then I talked last time about the Mecca Agreement, but I do not want to go into more detail here. The failure of the Oslo Process and the consequences of the two wars on Iraq and the Iraq-Iran war before polarised the Arab world even further. In Palestine the failure of the Camp David talks between Yasser Arafat and Ehud Barak, who is now Defence Minister in Israel, Sharon's incursion into Haram al-Sharif and the outbreak of the Second Intifada in September 2000 plus Israel's extreme measures and the violent escalation and siege also contributed altogether to the disillusionment of the public with the discourse of peace and moderation and generated enormous support for the more radical Islamist factions or parties.

Iran was seen as the patron of radical Islam, especially as a sponsor of Hezbollah through Syria and later Hamas. And of course that destroys or exposes the fallacy that there is a Shi'ah axis as opposed to a Sunni axis, because it had nothing to do with religion, it was a political tool. In this context, it was convenient for the Bush administration, especially post-September 11, 2001, to divide the region into axes of extremists and an alliance of moderates. They called them the quartet of moderates, which again, typical of American foreign policies, is quite simplistic and not entirely true. Decidedly, the US so-called "War on Terrorism" had a major devastating impact on the region. I do not think we can overestimate the impact of September 11 on the whole world, but on our region in particular. Not only did this War on Terrorism place the Arab world on notice, the Arab regimes on the defensive against the terrorism charge.

We were all guilty, we were all terrorists, regardless of whether you are a Christian or a Muslim, Arab or non-Arab, the whole region was guilty. But it also unleashed further forces of violence and extremism and also generated further non-state actors, particularly as a disastrous consequence of the war on Iraq. Iraq is a country which is being fragmented, dismantled by war and it has become the headquarters of any extremist, any violent group, of any militia that wants to fight Americans. It has generated more extremism, violence, terrorism, radicalism than you can think of and it has unleashed it on the whole region. It also enhanced the power of non-Arab states in the region, it destroyed the very intricate balance, namely Iran and Turkey, not so much Turkey, because Turkey is facing problems in Northern Iraq with the Kurds, but primarily in Israel. The war ultimately served Israel's interests and Israel now felt empowered by the fact that the US carried out its war on its behalf, destroying the strongest country in the region.

And now, at the cross hairs, we see Israel focusing on Iran. If you want to see what happens to American policy, look and listen to what Israel says. Read Israeli political discourse, newspapers and so on and you see it silently, suddenly becoming American policy. For years we were talking about the targeting of Iraq and we said that a war against Iraq was looming and everybody said: no, no, no, that's impossible. But then Iraq gave them the excuse by invading Kuwait. It was something that should not have happened.

But, anyway, the global ramifications of America's War on Terrorism were quite significant in many ways. One: It was a blatant violation of civil and human rights within the US, domestically. Remember the Patriot Act which the US passed, violations of human rights and civil rights and so on, and, not so domestically, what happened in Abu-Ghraib Prison and Guantanamo and so on. So, these provided the rationalisation and the model for anybody who wants to violate the law. All the third world countries which did whatever they wanted, all autocratic dictatorial regimes had the perfect model in the US. If the US can have the Patriot Act, so can we, if they can carry out racial identification, racial profiling, so can we, if they can torture prisoners, why can't we?

Two: It increased the transatlantic divide between the US and Europe rather than the alliance and divided Europe in many ways into those who sided with the US and those who did not, and you all know about that. And people like Donald Rumsfeld – I am glad he is no longer in office – he is the one who decided to coin Old Europe and New Europe and he decided that New Europe is the Europe which will side with the Americans, no matter what. Anyway, that again is an oversimplification of reality in another way. Three: The unholy alliance between the Christian Right, the radical Christians in the US – and they are a very destructive force – and the neo-conservatives redefined global relations as well as the domestic agenda. They took over foreign policy in the US, not just domestically, but internationally.

They led to the disengagement from the Palestinian-Israeli issue, to the abrogation of responsibility and gave Israel a free hand, time and space to escalate and to continue to use violence. We were people who were under occupation, who were reoccupied, who were under siege and were shelled. I can give you horror stories about my house for hours if you want, what happened when they blew up the Mokata across the street from my house. How they destroyed all the electricity poles, the roads, the trees even, how we lived without electricity, without water, without phones for some forty-some days. But, the Christian Right and the neo-conservatives kept a distance, they prevented the US from engaging positively in any way, from launching any kind of peace initiative and they created a political vacuum which generated more violence, more desperation and therefore more extremism: this War on Terrorism.

It also showed the policies of the Broader Middle East – I talked about this last time – the failed policies of the Broader Middle East, the Greater Middle East, the New Middle East, the externally imposed democratic reforms rather than authentic, home-grown democratic reforms or endeavours, while they decided to avoid the long-standing grievances, the injustices, the causes of conflict and instability at the forefront of which is the Israeli occupation of Arab and particularly Palestinian land. This alliance decided to ignore all these issues and focused on a freedom deficit. I told them a freedom deficit is not the freedom of women which is missing, the freedom deficit is the freedom of the Palestinian people that is being robbed, that is being destroyed by the Israeli occupation.

But in this unholy alliance we also saw the rise of absolutism and ideology and whenever you have positions of ideological impact coming from the US, whether based on Biblical exegesis or revelation or whatever, whether based on hard-line extreme right-wing politics – to the right of Netanyahu – they fed their counterparts. Regarding all extremism – whether in Christianity, or Islam or Judaism – when you maintain a monopoly on God and you think you have divine right and a direct discourse, then you will do whatever is possible, whatever you can do and you can justify it, because God gave you the mandate, not the people who elected you. And when you have a divine right, then it means you will never resolve the quest, you will never resolve any conflict, because that is a fight to the finish, you do not compromise, God is absolute power.

It also generated this view of the polarisation and the Manichaean universe, good versus evil. It is very simple, like going back to the world when we were children and there was nothing but good and evil, God and the devil, there was nothing inbetween. Angels and devils, you are either with us or against us. Well, why can't I be at a distance from you and critical? Why do I have to be either your enemy or your best friend? All the nuances and complexities of cultural, political, national and global definitions and relations were blurred or ignored or oversimplified. And we had the resurgence of the clash of civilisations, I am sure many of you have read Huntington and I do not need to repeat that.

But, one thing that was very important, that Israel also emulated was militarism, unilateralism and the strategic doctrine of pre-emptive strikes, focus on Iraq and Iran and we will see what is happening with Iran later. There was Iraq with the so-called weapons of mass destruction, Afghanistan as a major target, undermining international organisations including the UN and international law, sanctioning the politics of power and violence and sanctioning negative interventions rather than positive engagement to prevent the eruption of conflicts. And this led to fragmentation and de-contextualisation. The neocons loved to isolate each subject, each country, each issue and deal with it separately, out of context. That is why they adopted this “Broader”, “Greater”,

“New” Middle East ideology instead of what we needed to work with: regional demilitarisation. If you are looking for nuclear weapons, I can tell you where they are. There are more than 200 thermonuclear war heads in Israel. Why don't you demand transparency and accountability in Israel? And if you want to create a nuclear free region, we would be the first to support this. I want a Middle East totally free of nuclear weapons. Totally. So, let's demilitarise the whole region.

It should not be so that some people can have military weapons and are totally exempt from any kind of inspection or responsibility and with regard to others, at the mere suspicion or a lie that they might have it, we are going to wage a war against them, we are going to invade them. And now with Iran again. The NIA report, the National Intelligence Report, said that Iran stopped any nuclear programme it had in 2003, right? It is an American report. But what happened? The Israelis hit the ceiling: no, no, no, no, no, there are nuclear weapons in Iran, you have got to fight Iran, you have got to strike Iran. This is not simple, it is not easy, you cannot just act like cowboys and go and start shooting and firing every time you suspect there is something or Israel tells you there is something. Your own intelligence reports tell you there is nothing and if there is a problem between Iran and the Arab world we are being asked to negotiate with our occupiers. Why shouldn't the Arabs and Iran negotiate their political differences? Why should there be a war? So, we need total regional demilitarisation and we need genuine democratisation, homegrown, authentic, and we need real development.

Despite the fact that the Baker-Hamilton report and others all stressed the integrated, comprehensive approach and peacemaking as a key to security in the region, the US still did not move. But now, that they realise that the neocon agenda has run its course and proved to be an abaissement failure we have a last minute about-face by the Bush administration. Is this a genuine attempt? Last time I was here we were a day after Anapolis, and we were talking about the Paris meeting, followed by the Bush meeting later on. Was this a real about-face, a real transformation or was it a PR-exercise? That is the real question. Is it in order to help the Republicans in the election, is it in order to help his own legacy after the failure in Iraq and in Lebanon or is it an attempt to say: we can play a constructive role. Is it too little too late? These are real questions.

And I can tell you: in the Arab world and in Palestine, people certainly do not trust this initiative at all. Years after the Road Map lay neglected and the quartet was hibernating, years after Israel was allowed to recover in the occupied Palestinian territories, lay a siege to the checkpoints, years after incursions, assassinations, shellings, settlements, the wall, Jerusalem, they destroyed the economy, the infrastructure, the very fabric of our life and after the Palestinian political system came near a collapse, we had almost a civil war with serious

polarisation, internal fighting, a vertical and horizontal rift. Gaza which was declared the hostile entity by Israel was under siege, the West Bank subject to incursions, checkpoints and so on. We had this international conference, the Paris Conference and the Bush visit. It did not take long before reality began to unravel, in word and indeed.

In many ways the Bush discourse is important to listen to. That is why I am just choosing a few things of it: he said a few positive things that people can pick out like that the occupation, which began in 1967, must come to an end. The first time he said this was in 2002 in the famous June 23, 2002 speech, when he talked about the Two-States-Solution and he keeps telling us that he is the first president to talk about the Two-States-Solution. He talked about the Two-States-Solution, Palestine as a viable, contiguous, democratic state. And he said that it is not acceptable to have a Swiss cheese country and then he gave a time-line until the end of 2008. If you look at these three in isolation you would say this is fine: no Swiss cheese, the 1967 lines, the occupation must end.

We kept pushing: do talk about the occupation. However, he brought to bear the strategic alliance with Israel and he declared repeatedly, that Israel is their ally, that he will never let it down, that he will not force it or exert pressure on Israel and that the security of Israel is paramount. He also affirmed again and again that Israel is a Jewish state, which is something that many Palestinians felt is a negation of the Palestinian narrative, the Palestinian-Israeli right to happen to be non-Jewish as well as the negation of the refugees' rights. And that was very serious. Then he talked about facts created on the ground – demographic facts and so on – that have to be taken into account in any settlements which meant that an illegality will be incorporated, that the settlements will be accepted.

These are the facts, the demographic facts on the ground, but then he mentioned only the outposts. When the Mitchell and Zinni reports and the Road Map were discussing the dismantlement of the outposts, they stated that there were 32 or 34 outposts. Now I have news for Mr. Bush: there are 200 outposts. But all settlements are illegal, not just the outposts. And then, when he came to speaking about Jerusalem, he said: it's a complicated issue, it is a difficult issue. Well, living is complicated and difficult, but Jerusalem must be resolved according to international law. It is not, as I said last time, a celestial issue, it is a terrestrial issue and we have to deal with it on the basis of international law. With regard to the Palestinian refugees, Mr. Bush was very flippant: they have to be compensated.

So there is no right of return. Regarding the checkpoints: he made a joke that his motorcade was not stopped at the checkpoints, that they went through. And he said: I understand Palestinian frustration, but I understand Israel's need for

security. The checkpoints do not frustrate us, they are there to destroy our lives, they are there to fragment our land, they deprive us of our freedom, of our right, they redefine our time and space. And then he blamed Mahmoud Abbas for the Qassam rockets which were fired from Gaza. If he were informed, he would know that Mahmoud Abbas was the first person who was against the Qassam rockets. He constantly asked Hamas to stop them and he described them as being counterproductive. And most importantly, when it comes to the Palestinian question, he said: the UN has failed.

So, he was very dismissive of the UN and international law, which he would bypass in his initiative. And then he said that the Road Map was in itself the issue, which means that it became the 'sine qua non': if the Road Map is implemented in its totality, then we will see what we can do. But Israel has placed fourteen reservations on the Road Map which totally destroyed its substance and its content. There are no arbitration curbs or accountability, not even the confidence building measures. In language, we heard, what Bush said. But on the ground Israel expanded settlements and gave out building permits for more settlements, especially in and around Jerusalem, Ma'ale Adumim, Jabal Abu Ghneim, which would bisect the Westbank and surround and isolate Jerusalem and Ras al-Amood inside Jerusalem and Silwan. And Olmert who was standing right next to Bush talked about how the cessation of settlement activities does not apply to settlements in and around Jerusalem and to major population centres, which refers to the big settlements. So, what does it apply to? To the outposts, two or three people in each?

There was a dangerous and vicious escalation of violence, particularly in Gaza, where there were forty people killed in forty-eight hours, where there were the shellings on civilians in their homes, in their cars, but also in the West Bank, in Nablus, and in other cities. They undermined the Prime Minister's attempts at imposing or creating some kind of rule of law and public order in the West Bank. They tightened the isolation of Gaza. Eighty patients with chronic diseases died, because they could not have access to treatment. And they cut off fuel, food, medicine and power supplies. We kept saying that walls really cannot hold back a starving people. Walls cannot hold back people who are bent on freedom, either. So, people found a way around the wall, they blew up the wall and went to Egypt. But Israel continues to think and talk about ramifications there, that it can now, with the Herzliya Conference, even redefine the whole region and that the time has come to redraw the map of the whole region, not just to isolate Gaza and the West Bank.

Now, politically, tomorrow, on January 30, 2008, the Vinograd Report will come out, and this will determine the future of Olmert as there are voices calling for his resignation. Most of the political decisions taken in Israel now are based on Olmert staying in power. The questions are, whether he will avoid

resignation, whether Barak or Labour will come to an agreement whereby Kadima will replace Olmert with Zipi Livni or somebody else, whether they will continue a coalition with Shas, whether they will drop Jerusalem in negotiations in order to keep Shas in the government. I do not have time to go into all that, but let's say that now we are back as a subject to Israeli domestic politics and self-interest, back to the language of "no partner", which means no trust.

Even in Israel they are talking about the Palestinians as being an existential threat to Israel. Negotiations have not preceded on permanent status issues, only on settlements. And I said before, you do not negotiate settlements. Settlements have to be removed. Public opinion in Palestine has become more traumatised, more hostile and people lost any faith or confidence in the peace process or in the other side. And the Palestinian people are getting fed up with their own leadership, very honestly, on both sides, whether it is Fatah or Hamas. But at the same time, this violence weakens only the moderates. There was a proposal on the crossing points which Mahmoud Abbas and Salam Fayyad suggested to Egypt and to Israel, but it was refused. I think it is time that they start considering this proposal, because this is one way in which we can reunify the West Bank and Gaza.

I will conclude by saying that, ironically, while people globally are talking about the Palestinian-Israeli issue there is a consensus. I read an article saying that there was no consensus, but there is a consensus on the Two-States-Solution. However, on the ground this option is disappearing. It is really disappearing. Not just with the settlements and so on, but with the division between Gaza and the West Bank. Instead of healing the rift between Gaza and the West Bank, now there is the blockade, the sanctions and Israel's attempt at abrogating responsibility as a belligerent occupant, forcing links of dependency on Egypt, ending the territorial contiguity within Palestine. And they are also trying to destroy political and national cohesion, thereby destroying the possibility of a viable, contiguous Palestinian state.

Add to that the settlements and the wall and the checkpoints in the West Bank and we see the transformation of the Palestinian question again from a question of national self-determination to relations between Gaza – Egypt, West Bank – Jordan, to a protectorate and dependencies. That is what Israel wants, which is not going to happen, but with Israel annexing maximum territory or geography with minimum demography. Or, another option would be maintaining the population centres in the West Bank as isolated bantostands under Israeli control. You can call this a statelet or a mini-state or a city state or a series of city-states. However, Israel is genuinely moving into this direction, but manoeuvring in order to maintain control to buy time to create facts on the ground. Both of these options are recipes for disaster, for perpetuation of oppression, violence, extremism and injustice.

But anybody who has any sense – and Israel should have known this by now – must see: the Palestinian people cannot be beaten into submission or coerced into capitulation. The spirit and will of a people bent on getting freedom and dignity cannot be broken, only walls, sieges and blockades can be broken. Justice and peace, or a just peace, are the true paths to the liberation of both occupier and occupied and to the stability of a region as a whole. Thank you for your patience! Thank you!

Dank

Ein großer und herzlicher Dank gebührt Herrn Professor Martin Goppelsröder, der die Mercator-Professur in den ersten zehn Jahren von 1997 bis 2007 mit seiner künstlerischen Handschrift prägte und ihr insbesondere durch seine Gestaltung der Einladungskarten, der Poster und der Titelseiten der Publikationsreihe ein unverwechselbares Erscheinungsbild verlieh.