



# SWASIA

## NORTH AFRICA

a weekly news digest of southwest asian and north african events plus translations from the hebrew and arabic press focusing on the israeli-palestinian conflict, the arabian/persian gulf, and the great power policies

Vol. II, No. 50

December 19, 1975

## Special Topic: Saunders' Testimony on Palestinians

Saunders' testimony, a State Department position paper on the Palestinians, has generated considerable debate in the Middle East. This issue of SWASIA contains Saunders' testimony along with a sampling of editorials and commentary about it from the Hebrew and Arabic press.

*The United States policy statement on the Palestinians was presented by Harold H. Saunders of the State Department in testimony to a Congressional subcommittee. Following Saunders' presentation of the statement, Lee H. Hamilton (Dem., Ind.) Chairman of the subcommittee noted some of the significant aspects of the statement: "First is its tone. The statement appears somewhat conciliatory towards the PLO and the Palestinians; there is little hostility shown in it. I find that it opens doors and that it shows concern and realizes the crucial nature of the Palestinian issue. Second, your statement seems to extend something of an olive branch to Syria and the PLO. On each of the four major issues you discuss relating to the PLO and the Palestinian representation issue, you appear to be open-minded and to be seeking new information and clarification . . . Lastly, I would like point out what I consider to be one of the most important statements in your prepared remarks. On page 10 [page 8 in SWASIA], you state: 'It is obvious that thinking on the Palestinian aspects of the problem, must evolve on all sides.' I take that to mean that we would hope that thinking on this issue will evolve within the PLO, in Israel, in the United States and in the Arab world."*

### INSIDE

<b>Encouragement to the PLO</b> an editorial from <i>Haaretz</i> . . . . .	2
<b>A Substantial Development</b> an editorial from <i>Al-Ahram</i> . . . . .	2
<b>Credibility Gap</b> an editorial from the <i>Jerusalem Post</i> . . . . .	3
<b>Sheer Mirage</b> an editorial from the <i>Jordan Times</i> . . . . .	3
<b>The Next Blow</b> a satirical commentary by Amos Kenan from <i>Yediot Aharonot</i> . . . . .	4
<b>Davar's Viewpoint</b> an editorial from <i>Davar</i> . . . . .	5
<b>A Different View</b> by Mattityahu Peled from <i>Ma'ariv</i> . . . . .	5

*Special Subcommittee on Investigations  
of the Committee on International Relations  
of the U.S. House of Representatives*

*November 12, 1975*

## Statement by Harold Saunders

*At the time the following statement was made, Harold H. Saunders was Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Middle Eastern Affairs. On December 1st, he became the Director of Intelligence and Research at the State Department.*

Mr. Chairman:

A just and durable peace in the Middle East is a central objective of the United States. Both President Ford and Secretary Kissinger have stated firmly on numerous occasions that the United States is determined to make every feasible effort to maintain the momentum of practical progress towards a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

We have also repeatedly stated that the legitimate interests of the Palestinian Arabs must be taken into account in the negotiation of an Arab-Israeli peace. In many ways, the Palestinian dimension of the Arab-Israeli conflict is the heart of that conflict. Final resolution of the problems arising from the partition of Palestine, the establishment of the State of Israel, and Arab opposition to those events

will not be possible until agreement is reached defining a just and permanent status for the Arab peoples who consider themselves Palestinians.

The total number of Palestinian Arabs is estimated at a little more than three million. Of these, about 450,000 live in the area of Israel's pre-1967 borders; about one million are in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza; something less than a million, about 900,000, are in Jordan; half a million are in Syria and Lebanon; and somewhat more than 200,000 or so are elsewhere, primarily in the Gulf states. Those in Israel are Israeli nationals. The great majority of those in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Jordan are Jordanian nationals. Palestinian refugees, who live outside of pre-1967 Israel and number 1.6

*(Continued on page 7)*

from HAARETZ,  
Israel's most prestigious newspaper

November 14, 1975

## Encouragement to the PLO

an editorial

Harold Saunders' testimony before a congressional sub-committee concerns us and causes objections. The official status of the witness prevents us from ignoring his statements or trying to underrate their significance. His statements imply that in his opinion the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is not disqualified as a partner in negotiations seeking a solution to the Palestinian problem. The PLO refusal to recognize the right of the state of Israel to exist does not prevent the United States from establishing diplomatic contact with the PLO; rather, the uncertainty about PLO aspirations prevent this contact. Saunders unflinchingly bases his view upon the well-known resolution of last year's Rabat conference; he doubts the practicality of any attempt to include Jordan as a partner in negotiations aimed at resolving the Palestinian problem. He is so unequivocal on this point that he is seemingly denying Jordan that very right.

Anyone following State Department expressions on the Palestinian issue during the last year could not have escaped the impression that the winds are blowing in the direction of considering the PLO a major factor in the solution of the problem of how to grant national identity to the Arabs of the occupied territories. Indeed, Kissinger has always insisted that refusal to recognize Israel prevented the United States from considering the PLO to be a partner to the attempted solution of the problem; it would not be difficult to find a large number of quotations, which confirmed this attitude, until the last few days. Even the formulations of the United States Secretary of State do not dispel the suspicion that deep in his heart of hearts he is not convinced that the United States should exclude the PLO from its considerations. One does not need to be exceptionally imaginative to imagine that, should Arafat accept the Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, Kissinger would state that this constitutes a drastic change in the PLO's attitude, which transforms it from a revolutionary organization into one seeking legitimacy. As such, Israel must then seek to compromise with the PLO.

This is an attempt to push us into the corner. Whatever opinion is held concerning the official policy of the Israeli government in regard to the occupied territories, it demands too much to expect us to be persuaded that an Arab state between Israel and Jordan will not fall prey to terrorist organizations. One who argues that changing Palestine into a "secular-democratic" state will mean only the existence of a Palestinian state in Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza strip that will live in peace and friendship with Israel is either trying to deceive other people or is fatally mistaken.

from AL-AHRAM, Egypt's  
leading newspaper

November 19, 1975

## A Substantial Development That Must Be Followed Up

an editorial

Israel has begun presenting the U.S. stand toward her as a breach of promises and official commitments made to her during the talks for the second disengagement in the Sinai. Israel's anger has been aroused by the Saunders' document which states that a comprehensive peace settlement of the Mideast conflict will not be possible unless the Palestinian voice is heard and on which the U.S. did not consult Israel before taking this initiative.

This initiative, according to Israel, constitutes a drastic change in the American stand because it considers the right of the Palestinians to political self-determination and not the refusal of the Arab states to recognize Israel as the source of the conflict.

Israel rightly sees this new American stand as a reflection of Sadat's stand which has always considered the Palestinian question the source of the conflict. Just and permanent peace will never be achieved in the area before the legitimate rights of the Palestinians to establish their own national identity on their own land are recognized.

Hence stem Israel's accusations that

The contrary is true. Certain PLO officials promote this idea; they do not disavow the extremist demand but rather conceal that demand behind a facade of exhibitional moderation. No foundation exists for the argument that the PLO has already consented or will consent to the principle of dividing Western Eretz Yisrael (Land of Israel) between Jews and Arabs if only one-half of the PLO appetite is satisfied. The real motivation of the PLO rests upon the wish to revoke the division; they hope that after the Yom Kippur War with the power of Arab oil they will be able to achieve their aim.

Any American policy that regards Yasser Arafat as Eamon De Valera is an illusion. Pushing Israel and Jordan aside will not advance the solution of the Palestinian problem but rather will push it backward. Whoever wishes to consider the Palestinian problem as the core of the conflict should seek approaches to solution other than those preached by Saunders.

Dr. Kissinger has been maneuvering and trying to cover up the gradual change in America's official stand. The release of the Saunders' document at a time when the U.N. has voted to include the Palestinians in the peace talks and has sternly condemned Zionism as a form of racism is a clear indication of this change. The U.S. which abstained from voting on these two resolutions, instead of taking a firm stand rejecting any form of dealing with the Palestinians in retaliation against these resolutions, issued an official statement only a few days after the vote stressing the need for dealing with the Palestinians.

These rifts in the Israeli-American relations must be observed attentively by all the Arab parties involved in the conflict — particularly the PLO because the cause of the discord touches it directly and more closely than any other party to the conflict. Moreover, on the PLO's stand depend whether the gap between Israel and the U.S. will widen or be narrowed. On the PLO's wisdom will depend, to a large degree, the future of the Palestinian problem and, perhaps, the future of the conflict as a whole.

from the JERUSALEM POST  
Israel's English-language daily

November 17, 1975

## Credibility Gap

an editorial

The State Department's recent and most comprehensive document on the Palestinian problem raises many more questions than it attempts to answer. It was prepared and submitted to Congress by Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Harold Saunders, one of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's closest advisers whom he brought with him to the State Department from the National Security Council. And yet Dr. Kissinger claims he never saw it before it was presented. Moreover, the State Department apparently made every effort to complete the document without any prior coordination or, at least, consultation with Israel, although it involves some of the most sensitive policy issues in the Middle East.

On the face of it, Washington argues that the document does not represent any change in the basic U.S. position on the Palestinian problem. But the preponderance given to the PLO by Mr. Saunders in his policy outline clearly indicates a new trend in American thinking which appears to attempt to prepare the ground for some form of future recognition of a Palestinian state.

The U.S. has wanted for some time to introduce a new element into the November 1967 Security Council resolution 242, trying to move away from the "refugee problem" line of that resolution towards something more reminiscent of a "Palestinian political entity." This would bring Washington more in line with West European thinking on a solution to the Middle East conflict. Moreover, Washington apparently needed some official, positive mention of the PLO in order to be able to make even some small headway with Syria on a possible additional interim agreement with Israel. Yesterday's report that President Ford may meet the Syrian President after all seems to prove this point.

Be that as it may, one must wonder at the strange timing of the publication of the Saunders document, coming only one week after the shameful anti-Zionist UN Assembly vote and the two other UN votes on the Palestinian issue, all of which were firmly opposed by the U.S. To compound the issue

even further, there are some strange omissions and emphases in Mr. Saunders' document which can only be explained by Washington's increasing disregard for its solemn undertakings towards Israel which formed an integral part of the recently signed agreement with Egypt. It totally ignores that Fatah and the PLO came into being in the mid-Sixties, at a time when Israel was confined to its pre-1967 borders and never dreamed that it would be subjected to a war that would result in the taking over of populated Arab territories. The only thing he has to say regarding Palestinian terrorism, a policy of indiscriminate murder pursued for over a decade, is that there "must be some assurance if Palestinians are drawn into the negotiating process that these practices

will be curbed."

Mr. Saunders is very factual when he gives the breakdown of the some three million Arabs who today regard themselves as Palestinians who live in Jordan, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Israel, who can hardly be counted as supporters of the PLO. Yet, according to the State Department, there is "no other apparent organization than the PLO that speaks for the Palestinians."

Only ten weeks have passed since Israel initialled the interim agreement with Egypt under strong pressure from the U.S. Proper policy coordination between Washington and Jerusalem, particularly on the sensitive issue of the PLO, was one of the basic premises of that agreement. This promise has been flouted to a large extent by the publication of the Saunders document. If Prime Minister Rabin said only two days ago that Israel will have to consider carefully whether there is any point in additional negotiations with the Arabs, one must now add another question mark directed towards the Americans.

from the JORDAN TIMES,  
Jordan's English-language newspaper

November 19, 1975

## Sheer Mirage

an editorial

The testimony by Mr. Harold Saunders before the House of Representatives' International Relations Committee on the question of U.S. policy on the Palestinians triggered an unprecedented turmoil in Israeli political circles.

The definition of the Palestinians by the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs as something involving "political factors, interests, and negotiations" which are highly commendable and even-handed, were the punch line which greatly upset the Israeli leadership.

Mr. Saunders was, however, quite evasive in relation to the "new" American position in the Middle East — a position which gives an impression of novelty and formality and in harmony with the latest facts of the M.E. problem.

Hardly three days later, Secretary of State Kissinger in his Pittsburgh press conference shed the light on this position and proclaimed without any ambiguity or delusion that the United States will talk to the P.L.O. and will

ask Israel to negotiate with it on condition that the P.L.O., recognizes and accepts the Security Council Resolution 242.

At the same time that Kissinger was holding his press conference, Israeli officials were announcing that their country will not negotiate with the Palestine Liberation Organization even if it did accept the 242 Resolution, the 338 one and even if it publicly announced its formal recognition of the right of Israel to exist.

This extremist Israeli position leaves no room for speculations.

The P.L.O. was entrusted with negotiating the future of Palestine by the Arab States, the Non-Aligned countries and the Islamic World. And when Israel categorically refuses to negotiate with the only qualified party, then Israel's only objective is to keep what it gained through the use of force and military might.

Hence Israel's call for peace and peaceful co-existence is just sheer mirage.

from YEDIOT AHARONOT

November 28, 1975

## The Next Blow

by Amos Kenan  
a satirical commentary

While the gaze of the people living in Zion is fixed at the sublime matters of life such as: who will be nominated for the post of Minister of Prosperity, who will pay the debts of "Herut", who will be the chairman of the Jewish Agency and what will be the lucky number in the TOTO (betting system) — the next blow will fall upon us.

That is not so terrible. Normal states move from one initiative to another; we live from one blow to another. We have grown used to accept the first blow in surprise and then to call the additional blow that falls on us our political initiative. Well . . .

So, the next blow will be to force us to the table of negotiations with the PLO. This will not happen in the days of the Messiah but rather in the foreseeable future.

For the sake of clarity, it must be remembered that, except for the Israeli Government, there isn't even one government in the world that supports our view that Palestinians don't exist, or that Palestinians exist but only as a problem, or that it is possible to achieve peace without including the Palestinians in the negotiations, or that negotiations with the PLO are out of the question under all conditions.

If we did not need anyone's help, and if we could overcome the entire Arab world and the whole world beside on our own there would be no room for worry. The situation is not exactly so and despite the fact that among us stand talented individuals like Moti Friedman, Yihoshua Ben Zion and Michael Zur, still there is room for worry.

True, until the not too distant past, the Arabs had cooperated with us. The first to betray us was Sadat who expressed willingness to try the political option. Sadat who tried more than once to bring the PLO around to the political option — and political option means recognition of Israel — was the first pioneer on the road and now he is stuck. Assad is more cautious than he

was, and he will not take to the road without the PLO's support.

The U.S. is worried because Sadat is stuck. If he falls the entire U.S. policy falls. If no progress is achieved on the Syrian front, Sadat will fall. If the PLO does not choose the political option there will be no progress on the Syrian front.

The Saunders' document is essentially a signalling to the PLO that the U.S. is ready to include it in the negotiations provided it recognizes Israel. But the document is not only a signal, it is also a warning to the PLO that it may remain isolated if it does not enter into the picture. The truth is that at this point not only the Israeli Government is in an unenviable position but so also is Yasser Arafat. He is about to swallow a frog, and, from all indications, he seems to have no choice.

No Arab leader could fail to understand that it is impossible to enter into negotiations with Israel on the one hand, and to declare an urgent need to destroy it, on the other hand. He who wants to destroy should not come to negotiations but rather should open war.

Among others the U.S., the U.S.S.R., Egypt and Syria are not interested in war. Why?

Because the outcome of a war may be devastating for the Arab world and may jeopardize all that the Arabs have achieved in the international arena during the last few years. Also the arms arsenals are not limitless. And, in general, however unpleasant the matter may be to us, it is true that the confrontation states have arrived at the conclusion that the only way to solve the conflict is through negotiations according to Resolutions 242 and 338.

The PLO is the only obstacle. It is no secret that the Soviets tried more than once to persuade the PLO to accept the resolutions of the Security Council. They have not succeeded so far but right now Arafat is in Moscow, and it may be assumed he is there not to

receive roses but wisdom.

Up until now the Soviets have been patient with the PLO because the Americans ignored it entirely. The Americans did that not so much for Israel's sake as for Jordan's. And here comes Saunders' document to foil the political alibi on which the PLO's case rests. The PLO will no longer be able to claim that the U.S. is partner in a conspiracy to ignore it. In short, a situation has been created in which the PLO has to make a decision.

The PLO is a shaky organization, incapable of decision, united on negativism and not on a reasonable political program. The PLO's political program which ignores Israel's existence has no more followers in the world than our program which denies their existence. In short, the time that the PLO wanted to win is running short, and the PLO finds itself in a position similar to that of the Israeli Government.

It seems that Arafat has no choice but to betray us and to declare his willingness to establish a Palestinian state beside the state of Israel and not in her place.

It may be assumed, also, that this betrayal will not pass unnoticed. Gush Emunim will come out against it, Menachem Begin will come out against it, there will be demonstrations and what not, and should the PLO commit itself to abandon terror during the negotiations, this will be the epitome of treachery.

In the light of all this, we must remain courageous, make no decisions, present no proposals, take no initiative, but above all — be unprepared for such a possibility.

Faithful to our national tradition, this blow must fall on us as a complete surprise. Let us hope that no one of our ministers, leaders, generals, rabbis, and journalists will read these things. Let us hope that even if one of them should read them that he will discuss them as nonsensical.

For it behooves us only to be dragged by the nose to the table of negotiations at which the problem of our existence in the Mideast will be solved. For the time being, let us all busy ourselves with gaining time and money while singing in chorus: nothing of the kind, nothing of the kind.

from DAVAR, the daily, Hebrew-language newspaper of the Israeli Labor Union (Histadrut)

November 14, 1975

## Davar's Viewpoint

an editorial

With all the poignant humiliation we still feel because of this week's United Nations vote and with all the satisfaction we get from protests condemning the anti-Zionist and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) resolutions — which prepare the ground for international sanctions to be taken against Israel if she refuses to commit suicide, we should not overlook the fact that a huge gap still separates us from our friends, even those states that voted on Monday against the two pro-PLO resolutions, dealing with rights of the Palestinians. The new document of the United States State Department, presented before a Congressional sub-committee investigating the Middle East problem and made public, shows that the gap over the Palestinian question separates us not only from European states, but from the United States as well.

We should not conclude from the presentation of this document by Harold Saunders, a Deputy Under Secretary of State and a confidant of Secretary Kissinger, that an American campaign on this issue is around the corner. It seems, in fact, that renewed American pressure for some Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights is closer. We also should note that this new document was formulated with great caution so as not to tread too heavily on our toes. With all the renewed emphasis on United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 as the framework for a settlement, however, the document relates to the Palestinian question no longer as a humanitarian question of refugees, but rather as a political question; it speaks of legitimate and national rights.

In clear opposition to the declared policy of the Israeli government that the Middle East conflict is basically a conflict between the Arab states and sovereign Israel and contrary to Israel's exaggerated expectations of neutralizing Egypt, the major Arab state, and keeping her out of the Palestinian question, the document establishes that the Palestinian dimension is in many ways the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict. This document also provides additional evidence of the departure of the United States from the Jordanian solution to which they adhered during the first years of the aftermath of the 1967 war. Although it

states that establishing official contact between the United States and the PLO in a premature stage may slow the whole process, the document does not rule out the option of conducting negotiations with Arafat and his men at some point in the future.

In his testimony before the sub-committee the State Department representative pointed out the ambivalent stand of the PLO: While this organization officially calls for the establishment of a bi-national, secular state, it may be considering the possibility of co-existence between a separate Palestinian state and the state of Israel. This claim is doubtful. If the PLO were to agree to recognize the right of Israel to exist even within pre-1967 boundaries or even within the boundaries of the United Nations par-

tition plan of 1946 — in which a viable Jewish state would be impossible — the PLO would have pushed us into the corner insofar as propaganda campaigns are concerned. The PLO, however, has refused to do this, despite repeated efforts at persuasion on this point. The latest interview with the PLO "Foreign Minister," Farouq Kaddoumy, which appeared in the United States weekly, *Newsweek*, confirmed anew the determined stand of the organization never to accept the existence of a sovereign Israeli state in the area.

All these concerns, however, do not free us from the obligation to move forward in the near future and, despite the many difficulties the matter will create in our public opinion, with a comprehensive policy that will point to a constructive and just solution for the Palestinians within the framework of a peace settlement. If we do not do that and do not improve our image in propaganda and public relations campaigns, we shall be completely ignored by our friends.

from MAARIV, Israel's evening newspaper with the largest circulation

November 28, 1975

## A Different View

by Mattityahu Peled

Mattityahu Peled is a former General in the Israeli Defense Forces and now writes regularly for MAARIV

It may be that the Saunders' document does not yet foretell future moves of the U.S. Government that would contradict its declared policy on the Palestinian question but the document clearly indicates that for the U.S. the Palestinian question has ceased to be subject to considerations of kindness and has become a clear-cut political question.

The most important clause in Saunders' document establishes that "the Palestinians, collectively, constitute a political factor that must be dealt with if we wish to achieve peace." This is the drastic change which the document foretells.

The way in which the Israeli Government reacted to this document invites criticism not because the Government continues to deny the political dimensions of the Palestinian identity but because it tried to deny the deep implications of the document itself — the Israeli Government tried and still tries to do that.

In the beginning, the Government explained that it sees no signs of change in U.S. policy in the document.

Then it condemned the document saying that it was full of falsehoods, distortions and inaccuracies. These two reactions were voiced by the Prime Minister and they indicate that he has become the bearer of the anti-Palestinian flag in the Government.

Indeed, persons who come in contact with him get the impression that his refusal to acknowledge the bankruptcy of the policy of denying the Palestinian identity as a political factor assumes the dimensions of a political dogma with him more than with anyone of his close associates.

What characterizes a political dogma, and every dogma for this purpose, is that it does not rest on proofs taken from reality; it exists by force of its designated mission. The designation of the political dogma that denies the Palestinian identity is to prevent recognition of any Arab factor that relates to Eretz Yisrael in terms identical with ours, that is, as a motherland and a territorial base for national existence.

And, indeed, this is the source of the  
(Continued on page 6)

## Different View, from page 5 . . .

difficulty in our dealings with the Palestinians. Negotiations with them cannot be conducted on a basis similar to that on which negotiations with the rest of the Arab states are conducted. With the Arab states we are negotiating — or willing to negotiate — over the conditions we demand to live in security beside them, while with the Palestinians the negotiations must revolve around the establishment of a basis of mutual coexistence for them and us within the boundaries of Eretz Yisrael west of the Jordan River.

The question that protrudes and is becoming more and more conspicuous is whether this dogma, the causes of which are understandable, is not hurting our most vital interests as a people and a state now by preventing us from assessing our political situation realistically. The Prime Minister's statement that Saunders' document is full of distortions, etc. . . raises this question in all its poignancy because it arouses suspicion that perhaps we are losing the capacity to discern facts.

*[Two paragraphs summarizing the Saunders testimony have been omitted — Editors.]*

For one who is willing to relate to the political situation in the Mideast realistically there are no "distortions" etc. . . in this document that justify speaking of it in these terms. For one who considers recognition of the Palestinian entity as a political problem, a negation of Israel's interest, this document attests to the grave situation of Israel because the U.S. already acknowledges the political character of the Palestinian identity.

For one who believes that Israel must acknowledge the political character of the national existence of the Palestinians and who is ready to proceed to define the basis on which negotiations with the Palestinians can be conducted, the document provides an encouraging testimony that the U.S. insists on two pre-conditions vital to Israel: the Palestinians' recognition of Israel's right to exist and the end of terroristic activities.

One who, on the one hand, sees in the document no sign of change in the U.S. attitude and, on the other hand,

finds the document full of "distortions" etc. . . . confesses that he belongs to none of the categories listed above.

The only clear area to which one can apply the terms "falsehoods, distortions, inaccuracies" is the area which details numerical items. True, Saunders' document is not very precise in its presentation of the figures about the Palestinian population, but the orders of magnitude are not different from those presented by the Israeli Government for propaganda purposes. In the English document put forth by "Carta Jerusalem" entitled "The Palestinians, a Few Basic Facts," the overall number of Palestinians is put at 2.8 million. Saunders states that about 3 million people consider themselves Palestinians. The fact that he did not intend to exaggerate can be established from his earlier reference to the overall number of the Palestinians as "above two million."

The number of Palestinian refugees according to "Carta" is 490,000; this is 60,000 less than the figure acknowledged by the U.N. agencies. Saunders lists their number at about 650,000. True, this figure is slightly higher than the one recognized by Israel but the difference does not drastically alter Israel's assertion that the Palestinian people is no longer a nation of refugees since, also according to Saunders, the refugees constitute only a little more than 20 percent of the overall Palestinian population. Indeed, in this aspect, Saunders' document supports one of Israel's central claims.

### Demographic Discrepancies

There is a considerable difference between the "Carta" document and Saunders' document concerning the number of the Palestinians living in Syria and Lebanon. The first lists 300,000 while the second lists half-a-million, but it is difficult to attach any significance to this discrepancy when the overall number is not drastically different in the two documents. More important is the closeness of the two estimates of the number of Palestinians living in the territories occupied since the Six-Day-War and those living in Jordan.

According to "Carta" more than a million Palestinians are living in the territories and about 800,000 in Jordan. Saunders states that about one million Palestinians are living in the territories and about 900,000 in Jordan. According to both, more than a third of the Palestinian people are

living in the territories; a little less than a third are living in Jordan; and the remaining third are in the rest of the Arab countries. In so far as these are intended to support any political thesis they are equally good for Saunders and for the Israeli Government. Which is to say, these figures are not tendentious.

### Another "Distortion"

Another area which may be said to include "distortions" etc. . . . is the description of the dominant views concerning the legitimate rights or interests of the Palestinians. Saunders, as already stated, presents all or most of these views starting with the one calling for the establishment of a secular binational state in the entire mandatory area of Eretz Yisrael and ending with the one calling for the establishment of a Palestinian state beside Israel in the West Bank and the Gaza strip. He does not offer any estimate as to which is more in vogue in the Arab world but indicates that according to responsible leaders in the Arab world the definition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians does not necessarily have to contradict Israel's existence. All these are well known and proven facts.

But, they still do not provide a basis for negotiations between Israel and the PLO, as Saunders emphasizes, because the PLO still continues to practice terror which has hurt not only Israeli but also American citizens (a fact of which Saunders reminds the members of the Congress) and because Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 are not accepted by the Palestinians. Nor does Saunders explain how a basis for contacts between Israel and the PLO can be established in the future, but he expresses the hope that it will be possible in the future.

### Hope, Not Prophecy

A hope, as is well known, is not the same as prophecy and therefore cannot be classified as "a lie." A hope so thoroughly founded on the understanding of reality as Saunders' document is, however, cannot be cavalierly rejected as a vain hope.

Perhaps a basis for contacts between the PLO and Israel, as Saunders describes it can still be found; Yigal Allon's promised suggestions to the Government in its latest session may contribute to the creation of such a basis. But even if Saunders' hope does not materialize in the near future, his analysis can in no way be described as full of distortions and inaccuracies. Saunders can easily combat such unfounded charges.



## Saunders' Statement, from page 1 . . .

million, are eligible for food and/or services from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA); more than 650,000 of these live in camps.

The problem of the Palestinians was initially dealt with essentially as one involving displaced persons. The United States and other nations responded to the immediate humanitarian task of caring for a large number of refugees and trying to provide them with some hope in life. In later years there has been considerable attention given to the programs of UNRWA that help not only to sustain those people's lives but to lift the young people out of the refugee camps and to train them and give them an opportunity to lead productive lives. Many have taken advantage of this opportunity, and an unusually large number of them have completed secondary and university education. One finds Palestinians occupying leading positions throughout the Arab world as professionals and skilled workers in all fields. The U.S. has provided some \$620 million in assistance — about sixty-two percent of the total international support (\$1 billion) for the Palestinian refugees over the past quarter of a century.

Today, however, we recognize that, in addition to meeting the human needs and responding to legitimate personal claims of the refugees, there is another interest that must be taken into account. It is a fact that many of the three million or so people who call themselves Palestinians today increasingly regard themselves as having their own identity as a people and desire a voice in determining their political status. As with any people in this situation, there are differences among themselves, but the Palestinians collectively are a political factor which must be dealt with if there is to be a peace between Israel and its neighbors.

The statement is often made in the Arab world that there will not be peace until the "rights of the Palestinians" are fulfilled, but there is no agreed definition of what is meant and a variety of viewpoints have been expressed on what the legitimate objectives of the Palestinians are:

- Some Palestinian elements hold to the objective of a binational secular state in the area of the former mandate of Palestine. Realization of this objective would mean the end of the present state of Israel, a member of the United Nations, and its submergence in some larger entity. Some would be

willing to accept merely as a first step toward this goal the establishment of a Palestinian state comprising the West Bank of the Jordan River and Gaza.

- Other elements of Palestinian opinion appear willing to accept an independent Palestinian state comprising the West Bank and Gaza, based on acceptance of Israel's right to exist as an independent state within roughly its pre-1967 borders.

- Some Palestinians and other Arabs envisage as a possible solution a unification of the West Bank and Gaza with Jordan. A variation of this which has been suggested would be the reconstitution of the country as a federated state, with the West Bank becoming an autonomous Palestinian province.

- Still others, including many Israelis, feel that with the West Bank returned to Jordan, and with the resulting existence of two communities — Palestinian and Jordanian — within Jordan, opportunities would be created thereby for the Palestinians to find self-expression.

- In the case of a solution which would rejoin the West Bank to Jordan or a solution involving a West Bank/Gaza state, there would still arise the property claims of those Palestinians who before 1948 resided in areas that became the State of Israel. These claims have been acknowledged as a serious problem by the international community ever since the adoption by the United Nations of Resolution 194 on this subject in 1948, a resolution which the United Nations has repeatedly reaffirmed and which the United States has supported. A solution will be further complicated by the property claims against Arab states of the many Jews from those states who moved to Israel in its early years after achieving statehood.

- In addition to property claims, some believe they should have the option of returning to their original homes under any settlement.

- Other Arab leaders, while pressing the importance of Palestinian involvement in a settlement, have taken the position that the definition of Palestinian interests is something for the Palestinian people themselves to sort out, and the view has been expressed by responsible Arab leaders that realization of Palestinian rights need not be inconsistent with the existence of Israel.

No one, therefore, seems in a position today to say exactly what Palestinian objectives are. Even the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which is recognized by the Arab League and the United Nations

General Assembly as the representative of the Palestinian people, has been ambivalent. Officially and publicly, its objective is described as a binational secular state, but there are some indications that coexistence between separate Palestinian and Israeli states might be considered.

When there is greater precision about those objectives, there can be clearer understanding about how to relate them to negotiations. There is the aspect of the future of the West Bank and Gaza — how those areas are to be defined and how they are to be governed. There is the aspect of the relationship between Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza to those Palestinians who are not living in those areas, in the context of a settlement.

What is needed as a first step is a diplomatic process which will help bring forth a reasonable definition of Palestinian interests — a position from which negotiations on a solution of the Palestinian aspects of the problem might begin. The issue is not whether Palestinian interests should be expressed in a final settlement, but how. There will be no peace unless an answer is found.

Another requirement is the development of a framework for negotiations — a statement of the objectives and the terms of reference. The framework for the negotiations that have taken place thus far and the agreements they have produced involving Israel, Syria, and Egypt, has been provided by United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. In accepting that framework, all of the parties to the negotiation have accepted that the objective of the negotiations is peace between them based on mutual recognition, territorial integrity, political independence, the right to live in peace within secure and recognized borders, and the resolution of the specific issues which comprise the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The major problem that must be resolved in establishing a framework for bringing issues of concern to the Palestinians into negotiation, therefore, is to find a common basis for the negotiation that Palestinians and Israelis can both accept. This could be achieved by common acceptance of the above-mentioned Security Council resolutions, although they do not deal with the political aspect of the Palestinian problem.

A particularly difficult aspect of the problem is the question of who negotiates for the Palestinians. It has been our belief that Jordan would be a

*(Continued on page 8)*

**(STATEMENT, from page 7)**

logical negotiator for the Palestinian-related issues. The Rabat Summit, however, recognized the Palestinian Liberation Organization as the "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people."

The PLO was formed in 1964, when 400 delegates from Palestinian communities throughout the Arab world met in Jerusalem to create an organization to represent and speak for the Palestinian people. Its leadership was originally middle class and relatively conservative, but by 1969 control had passed into the hands of the Palestinian fedayeen, or commando, movement, that had existed since the mid 1950's but had come into prominence only after the 1967 war. The organization became an umbrella organization for six separate fedayeen groups: Fatah; the Syrian-backed Saiqa; the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine; Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine; the General Command — a subgroup of the PFLP; and the Iraqi-backed Arab Liberation Front. Affiliated with the PLO are a number of "popular organizations" — labor and professional unions, student groups,

women's groups and so on. Fatah, the largest fedayeen group, also has a welfare apparatus to care for widows and orphans of deceased Fatah members.

However, the PLO does not accept the United Nations Security Council resolutions, does not recognize the existence of Israel, and has not stated its readiness to negotiate peace with Israel; Israel does not recognize the PLO or the idea of a separate Palestinian entity. Thus we do not at this point have the framework for a negotiation involving the PLO. We cannot envision or urge a negotiation between two parties as long as one professes to hold the objective of eliminating the other — rather than the objective of negotiating peace with it.

There is one other aspect to this problem. Elements of the PLO have used terrorism to gain attention for their cause. Some Americans as well as many Israelis and others have been killed by Palestinian terrorists. The international community cannot condone such practices, and it seems to us that there must be some assurance if Palestinians are drawn into the negotiating process that these practices will be curbed.

This is the problem which we now face. If the progress toward peace which has now begun is to continue, a solution to this question must be found. We have not devised an American solution, nor would it be appropriate for us to do so. This is the responsibility of the parties and the purpose of the negotiating process. But we have not closed our minds to any reasonable solution which can contribute to progress toward our

overriding objective in the Middle East — an Arab-Israeli peace. The step-by-step approach to negotiations which we have pursued has been based partly on the understanding that issues in the Arab-Israeli conflict take time to mature. It is obvious that thinking on the Palestinian aspects of the problem must evolve on all sides. As it does, what is not possible today may become possible.

Our consultations on how to move the peace negotiations forward will recognize the need to deal with this subject. As Secretary Kissinger has said, "We are prepared to work with all the parties toward a solution of all the issues yet remaining — including the issue of the future of the Palestinians." We will do so because the issues of concern to the Palestinians are important in themselves and because the Arab governments participating in the negotiations have made clear that progress in the overall negotiations will depend in part on progress on issues of concern to the Palestinians. We are prepared to consider any reasonable proposal from any quarter, and we will expect other parties to the negotiation to be equally openminded.

**EXTRA COPIES  
of this or any other issue  
are available from:**

**SWASIA, 3631 39th St., N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20016**

**The price is 25 cents per copy  
(or 20 cents for five or more)  
for orders in the U.S. and Canada**

**NEXT WEEK:**

**Additional comments on the  
Saunders' statement from Arab  
sources (Iraqi, Kuwaiti . . .) and  
reactions from Israelis (Abba  
Eban, Yitzhak Navon . . .).**

