

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT



*session documents*

ENGLISH EDITION

26 April 1994

A3-0301/94/PART B

## REPORT

on the peace process in the Middle East

Committee on Foreign Affairs and Security

Rapporteur: Mr Eisso WOLTJER

Part B: Explanatory Statement

DOC\_EN\RR\252\252359

PE 208.206/fin./PART B  
de - Or. fr

- \* Consultation procedure  
simple majority
- \*\*I Cooperation procedure (first reading)  
simple majority
- \*\*II Cooperation procedure (second reading)  
simple majority to approve the common position  
absolute majority of Parliament's component Members to reject or amend the common position
- \*\*\* Assent procedure  
absolute majority of Parliament's component Members to give assent  
except for simple majority under Articles 8a, 105, 106, 130d and 228 EC

- \*\*\*I Codecision procedure (first reading)  
simple majority
- \*\*\*II Codecision procedure (second reading)  
simple majority to approve the common position  
absolute majority of Parliament's component Members either to adopt a declaration of intent  
to reject the common position, or to amend or confirm the rejection of the common position
- \*\*\*III Codecision procedure (third reading)  
simple majority to approve the joint text  
absolute majority of Parliament's component Members to reject the Council text

DA

DE

EL

**EN**

ES

FR

IT

NL

PT

**C O N T E N T S**

	<u>Page</u>
B. EXPLANATORY STATEMENT . . . . .	3
ANNEX: MOTION FOR RESOLUTION B3-0842/93 . . . . .	9

B  
EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

A. FROM THE HOLY LAND TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL

Two thousand years before Christ the Hebrews settled in the Holy Land. For 2000 years the mountainous region of Judaea and Samaria was the centre of Jewish life. During the period of the Jewish kingdoms Gaza was a Philistine city. In 1000 B.C. King David made Jerusalem the region's capital. After crushing Israel in a struggle lasting 100 years, which ended in 135 A.D., the Romans called the country Palestine, from the name of the Philistines, in order to wipe out its Jewish name. The defeated Jews were scattered as slaves or refugees. Christianity developed in the region, but a considerable number of Jews remained.

Following the Christian persecutions in the fourth century, the Jews and Samaritans were almost all driven out. The population of Palestine by the Arabs and the Islamicization of the region began, becoming more marked in the seventh century. In 1099, the Crusaders led by Godefroy de Bouillon set up the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, which fell to Saladin's army in 1187. The second Latin Kingdom of the Holy Land (1191-1247) was even shorter-lived. Until 1260 the country was dominated by the Mamelukes, who were retainers of the Sultan of Egypt. The decline of the Mamelukes paved the way for the Ottoman victory of 1517. Domination by the Ottoman Turks lasted until 1917.

In the 19th century persecution of the Jews in Europe and the growth of nationalism transformed the prophesy that the Jews would return to the Holy Land into a political movement, Zionism. In 1897 the World Zionist Organization was set up by Theodor Herzl, author of 'The Jewish State'. This marked the beginning of Zionist immigration to Palestine: the Jewish population rose from 25 000 in 1897 to 600 000 in 1947, while the Arab population, which numbered 600 000 at the beginning of the century, had risen to 1.2 million by 1947.

This led in 1916 to the 'Arab Revolt' led by the Sherif of Mecca against the Ottomans with the support of the British, who promised that an Arab kingdom would be created in the Near East.

In 1917, Lord Balfour, Britain's Foreign Secretary, announced that 'His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people'.

Between 1920 and 1922 the United Kingdom obtained a mandate over Palestine and formed the regions to the east of the Jordan into the Emirate of Trans-Jordan.

In 1927 the Jewish Agency was set up to deal with the immigration of Jews to Palestine. Between 1935 and 1939 Arab resistance to Jewish immigration, which had started in 1920, culminated in the Great Arab Revolt in Palestine, which gave rise to severe reprisals by Irgun, the underground Jewish organization.

Between 1936 and 1946 British policy towards Zionism hardened and steps were taken to restrict the number of Jewish immigrants.

In 1947 the United Nations adopted a plan for the creation of two states grouped together in an economic union with international status for Jerusalem. This plan was accepted by the Jewish authorities but rejected by the Arab League.

On 14 May 1948 the independence of the State of Israel was proclaimed. Ben Gurion became the first Prime Minister of Israel. The Egyptian, Syrian and Jordanian armies immediately attacked the new state.

In 1949 Israel defeated its Arab adversaries and joined the UN.

In 1964, on the initiative of the Arab League, the Palestine Liberation Organization was set up. Yasser Arafat became its leader in 1969.

'Black September' was the outstanding event of 1970: the Jordanian regime bloodily suppressed what it regarded as an attempt by the PLO to seize power in Jordan. The PLO leadership was expelled to Lebanon.

The years 1970 to 1977 were the bloodiest period so far as Palestinian terrorism was concerned. In an attack at the Olympic Games in Munich in 1972, 11 Israeli athletes were killed.

## **B. WARS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE ARAB NATIONS**

On 29 October 1956 Israel attacked Egypt in collusion with the French and British. The purpose of the operation was to control the Suez Canal Zone, which had been nationalized three months earlier by President Nasser. Under pressure from the USSR and the United States, the operation came to a sudden end. The attackers withdrew and UN troops were deployed in Sinai.

### **1967**

The Six Day War. In retaliation for the blockade of the Gulf of Aqaba by Egypt, Israel declared war on Egypt, Syria and Jordan and succeeded, in six days, in occupying Sinai, the West Bank, Gaza, East Jerusalem and Golan. A further exodus of Palestinians followed.

In November 1977 the UN Security Council adopted resolution 242 laying down the principles for any future peace. It provided, inter alia, for the withdrawal of Israel 'from the occupied territories', according to the French version, or 'from occupied territories', according to the English version. The Six Day War exacerbated the situation by causing the Arabs to harbour resentment at their defeat and the Israelis to feel pride in their victory and resulted in a war of attrition which ended six years later with the Yom Kippur War.

### **1968-1970**

War of attrition between Egypt and Israel on the Suez Canal.

### **1973**

Yom Kippur War. On 6 October, the date of the Jewish festival of Yom Kippur, the Arab armies attacked Israel. The war continued until 11 November when, under UN pressure, Israel and Egypt signed an agreement which opened the way to a Middle East peace conference.

### C. THE PEACE PROCESS WITH EGYPT

1978

After the Yom Kippur War, intense diplomatic activity took place. The result was a general move towards transitional agreements and, in the end, towards a fully-fledged peace treaty between Israel and Egypt. The Camp David Agreement was signed on 17 September 1978 between Begin and Sadat, who were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. In accordance with the agreement, the first peace treaty between Israel and an Arab state, i.e. Egypt, was signed on 26 March 1979. Israel gave back the whole of Sinai to Egypt in stages. The implementation of the Camp David Agreement was concluded in the spring of 1982.

1981

Sadat was assassinated by Islamic extremists.

### D. THE WAR IN LEBANON

1982

Shortly after the peace treaty with Egypt was implemented, Israel was at loggerheads with Lebanon. PLO attacks from Lebanese territory killed an increasing number of people in Galilee, where towns and villages were bombarded non-stop by 'Katiushkas', Soviet-made rockets launched from specially converted trucks.

On 5 June the Israeli Government decided to launch the 'Peace in Galilee' operation: its army invaded Lebanon and besieged the PLO forces in Beirut. In the end, with Western naval force, the PLO forces left by ship for Tunisia and other Arab countries. Bachir Gemayel, the Lebanese President, was assassinated when he was on the point of signing a peace agreement with Israel. Lebanese Christian factions allied to Israel massacred Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila camps. Lebanon became a continuous theatre of war between militias, which tore it apart. The militias were controlled by Syria, Iran, various Muslim or Christian sects and, in the south, Israel.

### E. THE INTIFADA, PROCLAMATION OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF A PALESTINIAN STATE AND THE RECOGNITION OF ISRAEL

1987

The Intifada or 'war of stones' broke out on 9 December 1987 following an accident in which four Palestinians from Gaza died. Young Palestinians began their policy of harassing the Israeli army in the occupied territories. The media impact of the war of stones was indisputable. It paved the way for a declaration to be made at the Arab Summit in Algiers in June 1988. At the summit, Mr Bassam Abu Sharif, a close adviser to Mr Arafat, made a declaration which suggested that the PLO recognized the State of Israel. A document distributed at the summit said that the PLO accepted Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, which entailed recognition of the State of Israel within safe and recognized borders. On 14 November 1988 in Algiers Yasser Arafat proclaimed the independence of a Palestinian State which was prepared to recognize Israel's right to live in peace and security. On 14 December 1988 in Geneva Mr Arafat said that he was renouncing terrorism outright.

## 1988

On 31 July 1988 King Hussein announced his decision to end the 'legal and administrative links' between Jordan and the West Bank. The inhabitants of the Left Bank lost Jordanian citizenship.

## 1989

Yasser Arafat said that the PLO Charter, which contemplated the destruction of the State of Israel, had 'lapsed'.

## F. THE GULF WAR

### 1990-1991

In August 1990, Iraq attacked and occupied Kuwait. In spite of international pressure the occupation of Kuwait continued and led to the Gulf War, which was launched by the UN Security Council. Yasser Arafat's support for Saddam Hussein led the Gulf States to end all forms of financial support for the Palestinians. The Palestinians in Kuwait were deported and found themselves without resources and jobless in Jordan or Iraq. As a result, financial contributions from Palestinians living abroad no longer arrived in the occupied territories, where the economic and social situation got worse and worse. The extremist movement Hamas strengthened its position in the occupied territories to the detriment of the moderate PLO forces, which had been weakened by the serious social problems facing them. During the Gulf War, Israel, which was attacked by Iraqi missiles, showed the greatest restraint and refrained from entering the war despite Iraqi provocations. The United States guaranteed Israel's defence but criticized the settlements policy followed by the Israeli Government in the occupied territories: 110 000 settlers in the West Bank, 5 000 in Gaza and 140 000 around Jerusalem.

### The effect of the Gulf War

The war produced a psychological shock in Israel and within the PLO. Firstly, Israel's military vulnerability had been demonstrated: the population turned out to be vulnerable to Iraqi missiles without the army being able to intervene as Israeli intervention might have caused the anti-Iraqi coalition to fall apart. Secondly, it became clear that only a political solution could secure a lasting peace. Finally, for the first time in its history, Israel found itself, so far as the Iraqis were concerned, in the same camp as certain Arab countries, such as Syria and Saudi Arabia.

For the PLO, the Gulf War also led to big changes in the situation. The rich moderate Arab countries, the oil kingdoms, which up to that time had bankrolled the Palestinians, made them pay dearly for supporting Iraq: large numbers of Palestinians were expelled from those countries and PLO funding was suspended. This brought about the disastrous situation in the occupied territories with which we are familiar.

The US, the only superpower left in the region following the collapse of the USSR, used the opportunity to step up its pressure on the protagonists and compel the various parties to negotiate.

## G. THE PEACE PROCESS

The peace process was finally established on 30 October 1991 at the Peace Conference in Madrid.

From that time on, the United States was the driving force behind the conclusion of peace talks. However, as early as 1989, in its Venice Declaration, which at that time was not welcomed in certain Zionist and US circles, the European Council had called for an international conference on peace in the Middle East to be convened. In all the European Parliament resolutions adopted since then, Parliament has continued to emphasize the importance of such a conference and the need to recognize the PLO as a full participant. Unfortunately, it was only after tragic events such as the Gulf War that others joined Europe in its efforts to secure peace in the Middle East.

### 30 October 1991

Opening of the Madrid Conference under the auspices of the United States and the USSR. As part of a joint delegation with Jordan, Palestinians from the occupied territories took part in the negotiations in Madrid between Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Israel. Bilateral talks started between Israel and Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and representatives of the occupied territories. The PLO was still not admitted to the negotiating table even though the PLO leaders in Tunis pulled the strings and dictated the line to be taken by the Palestinian delegation.

The negotiators began multilateral discussions on arms control, security, the water problem, refugees, the environment and economic development.

It was the United States which set the timetable and venue for future meetings and contributed to the success of the negotiations by acting as intermediary. However, the role played by Norway should also be emphasized. Norway organized secret meetings between the representatives of the Israeli Government and the PLO, which finally led to the conclusion of the Declaration of Principles on 13 September 1993.

### 13 September 1993

Following years of efforts, the peace talks culminated in the signing of an agreement between Israel and the PLO in the presence of the Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and the PLO President Yasser Arafat. Shimon Peres, the Israeli Foreign Minister, and Abu Abbas, a member of the PLO's Executive Council, put their signatures to the historic agreement.

To secure the agreement, radical changes were needed, firstly, in the PLO attitude towards Israel and, secondly, in Israeli policy. Following the Madrid Conference, in the absence of officially recognized PLO representatives, the negotiations continued in stages. Some achievements were recorded from the outset. The coming to power of the Israeli Labour Party in 1992 speeded things up and resulted in the lifting on 19 January 1993 of the ban on all contacts between Israeli citizens and the PLO.

## H. THE TIME OF PEACE: TOWARDS A REGIONAL SYSTEM

In his excellent work, 'The time of peace', the Israeli Foreign Affairs Minister, Shimon Peres, emphasized the extent to which the regional organization of the countries of the Middle East was an essential factor in the region's

economic and social recovery. According to Mr Peres, the problems of the region could no longer be solved by nations acting individually or even bilaterally or multilaterally. Regional organization was the key to peace and security; it would help encourage democratization, economic development, national growth and individual prosperity. But this change would not come about by waving a magic wand or by means of a diplomatic conjuring trick. To establish peace and security required a revolution in ideas. This was not an easy task but it was essential: otherwise all the calm achieved would be short-lived.

Mr Peres argued for the establishment of a regional community of nations with a common market and elected central institutions, like the European Community.

This regional set-up was based on four factors:

- political stability;
- the economy;
- national security;
- democratization.

**Political stability:** an organized regional structure would set up a new framework in the region and would make it possible to establish the potential for the economic and social growth needed to calm extremist sentiment.

**The economy:** it was essential to achieve a higher standard of living throughout the region and to lessen the disparity between countries within the region so as to reduce tension. As long as there was a gulf between people's expectations and any response given by politicians, fundamentalism would grow. As long as a gulf existed between 'rich' and 'poor' countries in the region in the absence of regional solidarity, tension - and, consequently, the danger of conflict - would remain. A regional organization based on cooperation and acting within a supranational framework was the best and, perhaps, the only response to religious and political extremism.

**National security:** in the age of ground-to-ground rockets and nuclear capability, traditional strategic concepts were almost obsolete. Iraq's use of chemical weapons in the war with Iran and during the Kurdish uprising and its deployment of ground-to-ground rockets against Israel during the Gulf War had shown this clearly. A regional system of surveillance and observation was the only way to guarantee a reasonable degree of national security. Regional cooperation would make it possible to undertake a certain amount of disarmament and to use the resources thus released for the region's economic and social reconstruction.

**Democratization:** democracy was a guarantor of peace. History had shown that democratic nations did not go to war against each other. Similarly, totalitarianism had proved to be as much a danger for neighbouring countries as it was a problem for a country's own citizens. Regional organization would help to make the Middle East more democratic.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION B3-0842/93

tabled pursuant to Rule 63 (old)/45 (new) of the Rules of Procedure  
by the following Members: BERTENS, PENDERS and SAKELLARIOU  
on the peace process in the Middle East

The European Parliament,

- A. having regard to its resolution on the situation in the Middle East (A3-0277/91),
  - B. considering that for the first time since the foundation of the State of Israel a peace process aimed at lasting peace has been established and that the chances to come to a peace agreement are realistic,
  - C. considering that aside from parties directly concerned others are also involved, among which the European Community,
  - D. bearing in mind that the European Community and the European Parliament in particular have been trying for many years to contribute to a lasting peace but that the political role of the Community is still underdeveloped compared to its economic weight and influence,
  - E. considering the Treaty on European Union and in particular the stipulations concerning a common foreign and security policy which speak of joint actions (Article J.3) and the role of the European Parliament (Article J.7),
1. Calls on the Council and the Commission to play an active role in the peace process;
  2. Calls on the Council and Commission to inform the European Parliament on a regular basis;
  3. Calls on the Commission to initiate proposals on what the role of the Community should be after the ratification of the Treaty on European Union;
  4. Calls on its competent committee to make a report on the peace process in the Middle East which will indicate how the European Community can play a more important economic and political role in this process also in view of the competences as mentioned in the Treaty of Maastricht.

