

Israeli actions barriers to peace

By ISMAIL ZAYID

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Paul Schneidereit (May 10 column) states that "Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Jordan, which rejected the UN Partition Plan for Palestine setting up two states — one for Jews and one for Palestinians — attacked the new country." The Arabs rejected the UN Partition Plan because it was completely unjust.

On Nov. 29, 1947, when the resolution was bulldozed through by U.S. pressure, the Jews in Palestine, mostly recent and illegal immigrants, constituted 31 per cent of the population and owned 5.6 per cent of the land in Palestine. Yet, this resolution apportioned 56 per cent of the land for a Jewish state, and only 42 per cent of the land for the Muslim and Christian Palestinian Arabs. The Arabs were asking for a binational secular state, as did Martin Buber and Albert Einstein among others.

Furthermore, the leaders of the Zionist movement at the time, Menachem Begin and David Ben Gurion, had no intention of accepting that permanently.

Menachem Begin, leader of the Herut party, stated in relation to the partition scheme: "The partition of the homeland is illegal. It will never be recognized."

David Ben Gurion, when announcing the creation of Israel on May 14, 1948, refused to define its borders, stating: "We are announcing the creation of a state in the western part of our country ... We are not obliged to state the limits of our state."

He later wrote in his diaries (edited by Michael Bar-Zohar and published in 1954), after Israel had conquered 78 per cent of the land of Palestine: "To maintain the status quo will not do. We have set up a dynamic state bent upon expansion."

As to Schneidereit's statement that the Arab armies attacked Israel a day after its creation on May 14, 1948, the fact is that before a single Arab soldier entered Palestine on May 15, 1948, over 300,000 Palestinian refugees were driven out or fled in terror, as a result of the numerous massacres committed against them. As well, many cities — e.g. Jaffa and Acre — and towns allotted to the Arab state in that UN partition scheme were already occupied by Jewish forces.

Besides that, it's clear from the statements by Yigal Allon, Ben Gurion and others that had these Arab armies, meagre as they were, not intervened, the borders of Israeli-occupied territory would have gone far beyond the 78 per cent of Palestine that they did conquer.

Paul Schneidereit speaks of "building settlements in disputed territories." This is the height of audacity. The territories where settlements are being created in the West Bank are illegally occupied

Palestinian territories, as affirmed by international law and repeated UN Security Council resolutions. There is nothing disputed about this land except in the minds of Schneidereit and Israel's apologists.

He accuses Hamas of being a terrorist organization. As to terrorism, Israeli state terrorism exceeds in its magnitude and frequency any acts committed by Hamas. The facts are that Hamas and Israel came to a six-month ceasefire agreement in June 2008, and it was Israel that violated that agreement on Nov. 4, 2008, attacking Gaza and killing six of its citizens.

For any fair-minded person, the failure of any peace process in this area is directly related to Israel continuing its illegal occupation of Palestinian land, and its defiance of international law and the Fourth Geneva Convention. These violations are defined by international law as war crimes, and must be brought to an end if there is to be peace and security for Israelis and Palestinians.

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