

## A United Nations Assessment Project Study

June 16, 1983

### **THE UNITED NATIONS' CAMPAIGN AGAINST ISRAEL**

#### INTRODUCTION

Israel dominates the U.N. agenda. Of the Security Council's 88 sessions last year, 46 were on a topic related to Israel. In the General Assembly and its seven main committees, debates on the Middle East consumed over one-third of the delegates' time and led to 44 resolutions. The number of times the General Assembly convened Emergency Special Sessions on the Middle East was no less than five--a number equal to all the Emergency Special Sessions held in the U.N.'s first three decades. Almost weekly, somewhere in the U.N. system, Israel finds itself under attack: Examples:

- o In July 1982, the Mexico City meeting of the U.N. Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organization passed a number of anti-Israel resolutions, including one equating Zionism with colonialism and racial discrimination (D.R. #51) and another calling for the rewriting of Biblical history to obliterate the role of the Jews (D.R. #126).
- o On September 24, 1982, Israel's credentials were rejected by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in a highly questionable procedural decision.
- o On September 28, 1982, a similar expulsion move was narrowly avoided in the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), despite the fact that ITU's Convention, Article 1, recognizes the desirability of universal participation in the Union.
- o On October 24, 1982, Iran tried to challenge Israel's credentials in the General Assembly. The only country whose credentials have been rejected by the General Assembly (in a move declared illegal by the U.N. Legal Counsel on November 11, 1970 [A/8160]) is South Africa. Yet not even South Africa was branded with the ultimate stigma that is used against Israel--being

declared a "non-peace-loving state." Those words, embodied in a resolution on February 5, 1982, and again on April 28, 1982, resolute in speeches in the Security Council, the General Assembly, and other U.N. forums.

Why has the lone democracy in the Middle East become the principal U.N. pariah? Why is the U.N. so obsessed with Israel? To be sure, matters relating to the Arab-Israeli conflict are very important. Yet they surely are not as urgent--or critical to world peace--as the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia, and the Iran-Iraq war. Are the murders of thousands in Assam, India, going to be ignored by the U.N.--as have similar cases of genocide in Uganda, Tibet, or Burundi--while the U.N. chastises Israel for its alleged genocide of the Palestinian people?

It is not Israel's critical importance that attracts U.N. attention. It is rather that, under pressure from the Palestine Liberation Organization, the U.N. has been making Israel an international whipping boy--discovering Israel and Zionism as the cause of most of the world's ills.

On March 16, 1979, for example, Ambassador Huzem Nuseibeh of Jordan asked, rhetorically, in the General Assembly: "Has the world been polarized into an omnipotent race [Jews] and subservient Gentiles [non-Jews] born into this world to serve the aims of the 'master race'?" The Ambassador repeated these charges on December 8, 1980, before the General Assembly, when he accused the Jewish "people's cabal, which controls and manipulates and exploits the rest of humanity by controlling the money and wealth of the world." On September 8, 1974, William F. Buckley, Jr., observed on Firing Line that the U.N. had become "the most concentrated assembly of anti-Semitism since Hitler's Germany." Said Jeane Kirkpatrick, Permanent Representative of the U.S. to the U.N., at the international meeting of B'nai B'rith in Toronto, Canada, on October 18, 1982:

Israel is a target, inside the U.N., of a campaign that is comprehensive, intense, incessant and vicious....The plight of Israel in the United Nations political system reflects and illuminates some essential elements of that system and of its dynamic, and so must be taken especially seriously. They have implications far beyond the issue at hand, implications far beyond Israel.

For the reverberations of the U.N.'s anti-Semitic and anti-Israeli cacophony translate as well into venomous animosity against the U.S. and the values of freedom and democracy, indeed, against the cause of peace for which the U.N. was originally founded.

The U.N.'s vendetta against Israel is an ironic twist of history: for was not the U.N. born from the ashes of the Holocaust, to insure that such horror would never again happen? Though explicable, the U.N.'s war against the Jews cannot continue without bringing to an end the hope that the U.N. can provide a forum for rational discussion and peaceful settlement of conflict.

## THE U.N. MACHINERY VERSUS ISRAEL

### The General Assembly

The campaign against Israel in the General Assembly erupted most dramatically with the passage of resolution 3379 (XXX) of November 10, 1975, which condemned Zionism as a form of racism. The measure carried by 72 to 35 with 32 abstentions. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, U.S. Permanent Representative to the U.N. at the time, chronicled the political maneuvers culminating in that act, engineered by the so-called non-aligned nations led by a coalition of Arabs and Communist bloc states.<sup>1</sup>

Efforts to denounce Zionism as racism had started as early as 1962, when Ahmad Shukairy of Saudi Arabia had termed Zionism "a blend of colonialism and imperialism in their ugliest forms," recommending that the U.N. "exterminate" the Zionist movement. Said Shukairy: "Nazism is now planted in the shape and in the image of Israel in the Middle East."<sup>2</sup> Three years later, the USSR proposed an amendment to the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which would "condemn anti-Semitism, Zionism, Nazism," and some other noxious "isms."<sup>3</sup> On June 19, 1967, Soviet Premier Aleksei Kosygin developed, for the first time in earnest at the U.N., the theme of the relationship between Israel and Nazism.<sup>4</sup>

From 1967 to 1972, about two dozen resolutions on the Middle East, nearly all rabidly anti-Israel, were adopted in the General Assembly, with the Arabs trying to erode Western support for Israel. Between 1973 and 1978, over eighty anti-Israel resolutions were passed. The crescendo intensified, until the number

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel P. Moynihan, with Susanne Weaver, A Dangerous Place (New York: A Berkeley Book, 1980), Chapter 9.

<sup>2</sup> See The General Assembly's Seventeenth Session, Plenary Meetings, October 9, 1962, p. 437. William Korey, Director of International Policy Research for B'nai B'rith, points out in his book, The Soviet Cage: Anti-Semitism in Russia (New York: The Viking Press, 1973), p. 127, that the Shukairy incident "was isolated and quickly rebuffed." Korey believes rather that "the [Zionism is a form of racism] campaign was brought by the USSR to the U.N."

<sup>3</sup> Moynihan, op. cit., p. 193.

<sup>4</sup> U.N.G.A. Official Records, Fifth Emergency Special Session, Plen.:1526.

of anti-Israel resolutions reached 44 during 1982 alone. None of these resolutions criticizes terrorist attacks on Israel or mentions the Arab threat to Israel.<sup>5</sup> Rather, there is a sustained effort to delegitimize the very idea of a Jewish state, linking it with "imperialism," "colonialism," and "racism."

On April 30, 1976, the Special Committee against Apartheid commissioned a study of Israeli-South African relations. The Soviet Union charged that there is "criminal cooperation of these two racist regimes."<sup>6</sup> Never mind that the Soviet Union itself had been buying diamonds from DeBeers, the South African company with ties all over the world.<sup>7</sup> It could well be asked why the Committee failed to study the relations of other countries with South Africa--it would indicate that Israel's share of South Africa's total foreign trade was only two-fifths of one percent, infinitely smaller than the share of Arab and many other countries. On September 2, 1977, the Kenyan Daily Nation reported that "Arabs are buying South African gold like hot cakes...."

The U.N.'s 1976 study condemned Israel for selling nuclear arms to South Africa, a charge it has never been able to prove. Section III of the study is entitled "Military and Nuclear Collaboration." Yet no evidence is presented. It seems, as Ambassador Yehuda Blum, Israel's Permanent U.N. Representative, observed on November 24, 1978, that this "collaboration exists only in the title and in the table of contents of the Committee's report, presumably because the Committee no longer expects anyone to read the report or take it seriously."<sup>8</sup>

Lack of evidence has not stopped the perennial reiteration of these charges. The March 1982 U.N. Chronicle reports that the General Assembly, in resolution 36/172 M (104 for, 19 against, 17 abstentions), strongly condemned the continuing and increasing collaboration by Israel with South Africa, especially in the military and nuclear field.

Double standard is standard U.N. procedure when it comes to Israel. Whenever the U.N. votes to inquire into allegations of misdeeds by Israel and to create fact-finding bodies to examine the facts and verify the conditions, Israel stands condemned by the very resolution that orders the inquiry. The allegations are

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<sup>5</sup> By way of exception, Resolution 619 (VII) adopted by the General Assembly on December 21, 1952, lamely took note of a complaint by Israel urging Arab states "to desist from policies and practices of hostility...."

<sup>6</sup> A/31/PV.51, p. 6. For detailed discussion and context, see Moses Moskowitz, The Roots and Reaches of United Nations Actions and Decisions (The Netherlands: Alphen aan den Rijn, 1980), pp. 154-170, esp. p. 160.

<sup>7</sup> See Edward Jay Epstein, The Rise and Fall of Diamonds (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982).

<sup>8</sup> A/33/PV.58, p. 976.



set forth as proved facts, and members of the fact-finding bodies are blithely appointed despite their known bias.<sup>9</sup>

The U.N.'s attack on Israel became a virtual war when PLO Chief Yasser Arafat addressed the General Assembly on November 13, 1974. There he boasted of the PLO's determination to destroy Israel, a U.N. member. On November 22, the PLO was admitted to observer status in the U.N., by Resolution 3237. This immediately followed Resolution 3236 (XXIX) which in effect reiterates the PLO program against Israel. Commenting in the Lebanese newspaper al-Balagh on January 5, 1975, Arafat remarked: "This resolution comprises the liquidation of Zionist existence." The General Assembly, through such moves, has given an enormous political advantage to the PLO. U.N. diplomats noted that giving the PLO permanent observer status violates the original purpose of the U.N., which had granted the honor only to states or regional organizations of states.<sup>10</sup> Never had a terrorist group been given such an honor.

The boost to the PLO accelerated through the creation of the Palestine Committee appointed by Resolution 3376 on November 13, 1975. Though allegedly impartial, that Committee provides its members with a platform for issuing statements supporting the PLO and its position. The Committee members do not conceal their support for the PLO. The Yugoslav delegate, for example, acknowledged that he "would be guided by the interests of the PLO."<sup>11</sup> In light of the bias of the Committee, no Western or Latin American countries--except Cuba--have agreed to serve on it. Shortly after its creation, the Palestine Committee prepared a report,

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<sup>9</sup> A careful reading of General Assembly Resolution 2443 (XXIII) of December 19, 1968, for example, shows unmistakably its prejudgement of the issues by the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories. The membership of the committee, moreover, appointed by the President of the General Assembly, consisted of Ceylon, Somalia, and Yugoslavia, none of which had diplomatic relations with Israel. See also Harris O. Schoenberg, "The Implementation of Human Rights of the United Nations," Israel Yearbook on Human Rights, Volume 7, 1977, esp. pp. 33, 36-37, 43.

<sup>10</sup> The representative of the United Kingdom, for instance, emphasized that his government considered the U.N.'s move to be "a fundamental departure from [previous] practice," and to "bring into question the nature of the U.N. as it has hitherto been accepted." A/PV.2296, pp. 23-25.

<sup>11</sup> A/AC.183/L.Y, p. 3. The creation of the Palestine Committee is part of a strategy outlined in a political platform adopted by the Fourth Fatah Conference in May 1980 seized by Israeli soldiers in the headquarters of the Kastel Brigade of the PLO near Sidon, Lebanon. That platform resolves that the PLO should "act so as to turn the UN resolutions regarding Zionism as a type of racism and racial discrimination into practical measures against the Zionist imperialist colonial base in Palestine." See Raphael Israeli, ed., PLO in Lebanon: Selected Documents (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1983), p. 18.

with the active assistance of the PLO, which in effect called for the dismemberment of Israel. Given the automatic anti-Israel majority in the General Assembly, its acceptance was a foregone conclusion. In fact, the Chairman of the Committee told the General Assembly on November 15, 1976, that "the mandate of the Committee was neither to resolve the question of the Middle East nor to reaffirm the rights of Israel, but to define ways and means to ensure recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people."

### The Security Council

Like the General Assembly, the Security Council has yet to condemn an Arab attack on Israel. In 1953, after an Israeli retaliatory raid on the Arab village of Qibya, the Security Council expressed "the strongest censure" of Israel's action.<sup>12</sup> This was the first resolution in which the Council tried to curb Israeli reprisals without dealing with the Arab attacks that may have instigated them. The U.S. has repeatedly objected to this double standard. Complains Ambassador Kirkpatrick: "The U.N. is permitted to give aid to national liberation movements, but the state [of Israel] is not even allowed to defend itself."<sup>13</sup>

The anti-Israel campaign at the Security Council is increasingly assuming the character of General Assembly debates. The PLO seems omnipresent at the Council. Most inappropriately--indeed, illegally--the PLO is invited to participate in Security Council proceedings under Rule 37 of the Council's Rules of Procedure, which applies only to UN "member states," rather than the relevant Rule 39 which applies to "other" entities. In the Council, of course, the PLO routinely attacks Israel.

Harassment of Israel seems to be one of the Council's principal functions. Like the General Assembly, the Council condemns Israel prior to investigation of a case. In March 1976, for example, a complaint was brought against Israel by Pakistan and Libya involving a case of Jews who had attempted to pray on the Temple Mount. The Jews had been arrested by Moslem police, and the case was in the courts of Israel when it was brought before the Council, in what appeared to be a flagrant attempt to incite Moslem religious hatred. The Council proceeded to prepare a draft resolution, prejudging the issue, before Chaim Herzog, the Israeli Permanent Representative at the time, had a chance to answer. Recalls Herzog:

Even before I spoke, a draft resolution prejudging the issue was being discussed by Security Council members who were well aware that the entire allegation was a

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<sup>12</sup> S/3139/Rev. 2.

<sup>13</sup> Speech on October 18, 1982, in Toronto, Canada, before the International Meeting of B'nai B'rith.

lie. To prepare a judgment before both sides have been heard is a travesty of the basic principles of justice....<sup>15</sup>

But the most dangerous aspect of the Council's work, as in the General Assembly, is the responsibility it lends to harsh rhetoric, like referring to Israel as "the Nazi regime." Representative Mohamed A. Sallam of Yemen does so routinely--as, for example, on February 11, 1983, when he spoke of Israel as "the state of the Zionist gangs." Equally available for wide dissemination in all the nations of the world is the speech by the PLO representative Zehdi L. Terzi, who at the same Security Council session condemned "the military troops of the Judeo Nazis and the Judeo Nazi Junta that sits in Tel-Aviv, that Junta that represents the Irgun Zwei Leumi, those who collaborated with Hitler's hordes--yes, those troops marched on Beirut." Hence the Big Lie is given a platform.

### The Secretariat

Though the PLO is not a state, it is well represented on the U.N. staff. There are 22 Secretariat staffers identified as Palestinians; of the 52 listed as "stateless" most are Arabs<sup>16</sup> and many are Palestinians. According to the PLO's U.N. representative Terzi, members of the PLO fill the quotas of other Arab nations, such as Jordan. Meanwhile, Israel is severely under-represented on the U.N. staff. Though entitled to seven to eighteen professional posts, Israel fills only four.<sup>17</sup>

The infiltration of Arabs in key positions at the U.N. is not without political implications. James Jonah, Assistant Secretary-General for Field Operational and External Support Activities and former head of U.N. personnel, in an interview with The Heritage Foundation, noted that his predecessor as head of U.N. personnel, Muhammed Ghareb of Tunisia, had managed to place Arab friends in many units of the U.N. Secretariat in charge of personnel. As a result, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and other Arab nations are represented far beyond their share of contribution to the U.N. budget.

The focus of the U.N.'s anti-Israel activity is the Special Unit on Palestinian Rights, established on December 2, 1977, through Resolution 32/40B. The Unit is widely viewed as a PLO front. Admitted Political Affairs Officer A.W. Siddiq, employed by the Unit, in an interview with The Heritage Foundation: "Everyone working in the Unit believes in the ideals of the PLO."

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<sup>15</sup> Chaim Herzog, Who Stands Accused? Israel Answers Its Critics (New York, Random House, 1978), p. 128.

<sup>16</sup> A/C.5/37/L.2. Document of "limited" circulation.

<sup>17</sup> For a comparison with overrepresented nations, many of them Arab, see Juliana Geran Pilon, "Americans at the U.N.: An Endangered Species," Heritage Backgrounder No. 274, February 14, 1983.

