

# The Palestinian Strategic Report 2005



Edited By

**Dr. Mohsen M. Saleh**

**Dr. Basheer M. Nafi**



**Al-Zaytouna Centre For Studies & Consultations**

# **Chapter Four**

## **The Palestinian Issue and the Muslim World**

E-mail: [info@alzaytouna.net](mailto:info@alzaytouna.net)

Website: [www.alzaytouna.net](http://www.alzaytouna.net)

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## The Palestinian Issue and the Muslim World<sup>1</sup>

**Introduction:** The Palestinian issue has been characterized by two elements that hardly co-exist in any other Arab-Muslim issue in our contemporary world. First: it is an issue on which there is a general consensus among the Arabs and Muslims. Second: it is the touchstone, or “thermometer”, that truly reflects the conditions of the *Ummah* (Nation). Whenever other circles are constricted, the Islamic circle remains the major source of support for the Palestinian issue. The wide Islamic environment represents the strategic depth for the liberation of Palestine, and it constitutes one of the most significant means for exerting pressure on regional organizations.

Though geographical concepts are the easiest in the course of the methodological definitions, the concept of the Islamic circle, which has both ideological and geographical dimensions, remains considerably equivocal, even liable for development. This study is an attempt to evaluate the role and activities of this circle at the level of the Palestinian issue, which is largely related to its size, its natural human and civilizational components and its relation with the other circles of conflict.

The Palestinian issue occupies a paramount position in the priorities of the foreign policies of the Muslim countries, which view the Palestinian issue not only as an Arab concern but the cause of the entire Muslim world. However, since the establishment of Israel in 1948, the concerns and orientations of the Muslim countries towards the conflict have been different and incongruous because of the lack of genuine cooperation between them, and their disparate interests and alliances. A reflection on the positions of some major Muslim countries may provide a scenario that is incompatible with official Muslim policies toward the Palestinian issue. This chapter will focus on three countries: Iran, Turkey and Pakistan, along with a preliminary overview on the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

### The Organization of the Islamic Conference:

The bilateral relation between the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and Palestine has some historical roots, for the former was established in Rabat (Morocco) in the aftermath of the arson of the blessed *al-Aqsa* Mosque in the occupied city of Jerusalem on

21 August 1969. This heinous crime against Muslim sanctuaries and places of worship was faced by a clear and firm reaction by the Muslim leaders that took shape in the establishment of an organization to assume the burden of defending the blessed *al-Aqsa* Mosque, the first *Qiblah* (the direction to which Muslims offer their prayers) and the third of the two noble shrines (in Mecca and Medina). The charter of the OIC embodied an undertaking to strive by all political and military means to liberate the noble city of Jerusalem from the Zionist occupation, and to achieve coordination to protect the sacred places. Moreover, it pledged to support the struggle of the Palestinian people, help them to regain their rights and to liberate their land, and work to uproot all forms of apartheid and colonization.

The year 2005 witnessed the convention of the third extraordinary session of the Islamic Summit Conference in Mecca (on 7 – 8 December),<sup>2</sup> which focused, in general, on combating “extremism and terrorism”. However, the speech delivered on this occasion by Akmal al-Din Ihsan Uglo, the Secretary General of the OIC, included a whole passage on the Palestinian issue. But, it did not go beyond the repeated, official policies that the OIC had followed for several years. He said:

The whole world has now realized that the most serious cause of tension and turbulence in the Middle East region, even in the entire world, lies in the repercussions of the ongoing tragedy in Palestine, particularly in the noble city of Jerusalem. On a daily basis Israeli practices violate international covenants, norms, and laws as well as human values, of which human rights are at the top. This has necessarily resulted in an explosive situation that has incurred tragedies and suffering in the region and tension, insecurity and multiple dangers in the world.

He, furthermore, emphasized his support for the Arab Initiative launched by King ‘Abdullah bin ‘Abd al-‘Aziz, and concluded by saying:

We have mentioned that the option of peace is the strategic choice to solve the problems of the Middle East. On the basis of this perspective, we call upon the international community to impose on Israel full commitment to the application of the Road Map. We also insist that Israel give up its policy in Jerusalem, the central and first concern of the whole Muslim world.

Perhaps the reverberation of the Palestinian issue in the final statement<sup>3</sup> of the Summit was clearer, as it focused on the political aspect, stating:

The Conference has stressed the importance of the Palestinian issue as the pivotal concern of the Muslim *Ummah*. Hence, the termination of the Israeli occupation of Arab and Palestinian lands captured since 1967, including Eastern Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, and the completion

of the Israeli withdrawal from the rest of the occupied Lebanese lands according to Security Council Resolution 425, are essential demands of the entire Muslim *Ummah*.

The statement called for concerted efforts to recuperate Jerusalem and maintain its Islamic and historical nature, to provide the necessary resources to sustain and safeguard *al-Aqsa* Mosque and the other holy places, to withstand the policy of Judaizing the sacred city and support Palestinian institutions therein, and to establish *al-Aqsa* University in Jerusalem. It also called for “fostering the Endowment Fund of Jerusalem by a contribution of one dollar from every Muslim, in addition to contributions of member states.”

Though including some practical suggestions, the final statement, lacks seriousness and mechanisms of follow up and execution, a habitual negative aspect that accompanied the OIC since its foundation.

On the occasion of the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza Strip (GS), the OIC issued a statement on 21 August 2005 calling for the Israeli withdrawal from all the Palestinian lands seized in 1967, and for an immediate drive to confront the Israeli methods of Judaizing Jerusalem. The OIC’s Secretary General, Akmal al-Din Ihsan Uglo, said:

We are looking forward to work for the removal of the Separation Wall and all settlements, to lift the blockade and isolation imposed on the noble city of Jerusalem, stop the aggression and constant threats against the sacred places, particularly *al-Aqsa* Mosque, and to enable the Palestinian people to move freely inside and outside their country.

Uglo also laid special stress on the dangers and the miserable status in which the noble city of Jerusalem and its inhabitants live, as a result of the illicit procedures and practices that Israel pursues to Judaize the holy city and alter its civilizational, historical, and demographic features. He called upon the international community and the Quartet Committee to take immediate action to propel Israel to stop its transgressions and procedures, and to respect and implement the Jerusalem-related resolutions.

In response to the call of extremist Jews, which had sharply increased during the past two years to demolish *al-Aqsa* Mosque and set up their alleged Temple,<sup>4</sup> the OIC issued a statement expressing its deep concern for the alarming conditions of the religious and historical places in Jerusalem, which resulted from the Israeli excavations. They call upon the international community to bear its responsibility and compel Israel not to change the landmarks of the holy city. The OIC’s Secretary General paid special attention to the excavations carried

out by the Israeli occupation authorities under *al-Aqsa* Mosque and the walls of the old town in Jerusalem. The statement warned of the seriousness of the recent Israeli declaration that the old walls surrounding the old town are getting cracked, and considered this as a new Israeli attempt to meddle in the affairs of the Islamic endowments, and alter the identity of the city of Jerusalem.<sup>5</sup>

Regrettably, the sizable OIC, which includes 57 member states, has been a helpless observer of the tragedies and Judaization projects of Palestine. However, the OIC is a mere reflection of the state of Arab and Muslim weakness and disunity. Therefore, it is not expected to play an effective role in the near future.

**Turkey:** Once the Justice and Development Party assumed power in Turkey, there has been a measure of equilibrium in Turkish relations with Israel and Palestine, even an inclination to be more sympathetic to the Palestinian cause, as seen in the increasing visits of Turkish official to Palestine.

However, the Justice Party has found itself in a state of polarization between two opposing directions. Its electoral base is strongly inclined to support Arab and Islamic issues, especially those related to Palestine, and to antagonize Israel, while, the Party's leadership realized that there are other factors that force them to retain relations with Israel, i.e., the powerful sway of the Turkish military institution, and the Party's desire not to provoke America, and to have distinguished relations with Europe, that would facilitate Turkey's bid to join the European Union. Moreover, the strict secular composition of the state and the influential media clout of other trends impede the adoption of a clearer and more open Islamic policies.

In 2005, Turkey tried to adopt "balanced" policies, according to its own criteria. Early in 2005 'Abdullah Gul, the Turkish Foreign Minister, visited the headquarters of the Palestinian Authority (PA) in Ramallah. In his welcoming speech, Nabil Sha'th, the Palestinian Foreign Affairs Minister, said that the delegation had come to open a new page in the historical Palestinian-Turkish relations, and added that Turkey is the first non-Arab state that recognized the Palestinian state, and has always been on the Palestinian side in all international forums. Sha'th also disclosed that an agreement of cultural, educational and economic cooperation will be signed with Turkey.<sup>6</sup>

In an attempt to strengthen Turkish-Palestinian relations, Erdogan arrived

in his first visit to Ramallah on 2 May 2005. He described, in a joint press conference with ‘Abbas, Turkish-Palestinian relations as historical, and that they “draw their strength from common values and culture and from a long history that we are proud of.”<sup>7</sup> Erdogan declared that Ankara is ready “to do its utmost” to encourage the peace process if the Israelis and the Palestinians ask for its help. At the end of his meeting with Mahmud ‘Abbas, Erdogan commended his country’s “excellent relations with both the Israelis and the Palestinians,” and added: “We informed both parties that we are fully ready to do our best to contribute to the peace process, and it is up to the two parties to pinpoint the kind of assistance we may offer, and we will extend it.”<sup>8</sup>

In the past few years, Turkey has tried to play the role of a mediator between Palestinians and Israelis. In 2001, it acted, within the frame of a United Nations Committee, as a mediator to settle disputes over lands, and it contributed in preparing the report of that Committee. Turkey, represented by its ex-president, Sulayman Demirel, together with five other members, was also in the United Nations fact-finding Committee known as Mitchell Committee. Turkey was allowed to participate in this Committee on a personal demand from Yasir ‘Arafat. It also participates, again within the frame of the United Nations, in the International Committee for the Preservation of the Acquired Rights of the Palestinian People, besides its membership in the Jerusalem Committee of the United Nations, and in the international force of monitors in the city of Hebron.

During the years 2003 and 2004, a palpable development in the bilateral economic relations between Turkey and the PA took place. A free trade agreement between the two sides was signed during the visit of the Palestinian Minister of Economy, Mr. Mahir al-Masri, to Turkey on 20 July 2004. During the period 7 and 9 June 2004, the second periodical meeting of the Turkish-Palestinian Council of Work convened in Istanbul. An agreement of mutual cooperation between the chambers of commerce in both countries was also signed. The Turkish authorities directed their consuls all over the world to promptly issue entry visas to all holders of different Palestinian passports.<sup>9</sup>

Nonetheless, despite the Islamic orientation of the ruling Justice and Development Party, and the strive of its leaders to promote relations with the Palestinian side, the Party’s government was unable to depart from the traditional policy of strong ties between Ankara and Tel Aviv that has been established and

actively pursued by successive Turkish governments. However, the relations between Turkey and Israel have become rather cool and unstable during the last two years, up to the end of 2005, due to the following reasons:

1. The Justice and Development Party tried to implement a new foreign policy that keeps Turkey away from polarity, and to establish, as far as possible, good and peaceful relations with all regional and international powers. Hence was its drive towards Syria, Iran, Russia and Cyprus. This was interpreted as constraining relations with Israel, while, in fact, it was no more than an attempt to regulate the relations between the two parties. For Turkish-Israeli relations have remained active in the economic, investment, cultural, military, and security fields.
2. While the Iraqi war and the American occupation of Iraq strained the relations between Ankara and Washington, the Israeli infiltration into Northern Iraq and their support to Iraqi Kurds provoked the sensitivity of Ankara. Although Gul mentioned during a visit to Israel that he accepted the Israeli negation of infiltration into Northern Iraq, the Minister described the issue as more complicated, which indicates that he was not really satisfied with the Israeli denial. The support of Israel to Kurdish aspirations to break away from Baghdad is, in fact, regarded by Turkey as a serious threat to its national security. Hence, an overall Turkish anger, from the government as well as the military establishment, against the Israeli policies toward the Kurdish issue could arise.<sup>10</sup>

Mustafa Kabar Uglo, a Turkish researcher, suggested in a study that though Turkish-Israeli relations had been flourishing until a short time ago, the American war in Iraq revealed that the “old allies” still have conflicting goals, incompatible interests, and contradictory concerns with regard to the future Iraq. The study adds that Turkey fears the establishment of an independent Kurdish state in Northern Iraq, while Israel welcomes this from a security point of view as such a development (leading to weakening and dividing Iraq) would help in protecting it against highly possible threats from countries like Iran, Pakistan, and those beyond them.<sup>11</sup>

3. It is true that the Justice and Development Party came with a moderate formula of conciliation between political Islam, secularism, and relationship with western powers. Yet, it was not possible to ignore the

fact that the Party's root and rank and file is basically Islamic. Thus, it is extremely sensitive to Israeli general policies towards the Palestinians, Arabs, and Muslims. The aggravation of the Zionist practices against the Palestinian *Intifadah* embarrassed Erdogan's government, and forced him to take critical position against Israel in order to avoid an uproar in the Party. The ruling Party took a particularly strong position on Israel's actions against the Palestinians during *al-Aqsa Intifadah*. For instance, Erdogan, the Prime Minister, described Israel's assassination of Hamas leader, Sheikh Ahmad Yasin, in 2004 as "a terrorist act".<sup>12</sup>

The visit of the Foreign Minister of Turkey, 'Abdullah Gul, to Israel, early in 2005 triggered exceptional interest among all the concerned parties. For, it was the first visit of a high-ranking Turkish officer to Israel since the Justice and Development Party took power more than two years ago. Moreover, it came after the refusal of the Prime Minister, Rajab Tayyib Erdogan, to receive the Israeli Prime Minister, Sharon, and his dismissal of Sharon's practices against the Palestinians as "state terrorism". Although the declared objective of the visit centered on Turkey's readiness to play a mediatory role in the peace process between Syria and Palestine on one hand and Israel on the other, the key objective was to revive Turkish-Israeli relations, which seemingly attained a measure of success.

On 1 May 2005, the Turkish Prime Minister, Rajab Tayyib Erdogan, visited Israel for the first time since his rise to power two and half years ago. It was announced that Erdogan's visit aimed at improving relations between his country and Israel, and to participate in the then peace efforts in the region. The economic dimension of the visit was clearly demonstrated by more than one hundred Turkish businessmen accompanying Erdogan.<sup>13</sup>

During the visit, according to an Israeli source, the Prime Minister, Erdogan, discussed with Israeli officials a military deal of about half a billion dollars, which centred around a plan by which the Israeli military industry would develop and improve about 30 war aircrafts, branded F-4 Phantom, that belonged to the Turkish Air Force.<sup>14</sup> Ragaie Qutan, the President of the Turkish Islamic Happiness Party (*al-Sa'adah Party*), revealed that the Turkish Prime Minister, Rajab Tayyib Erdogan, and Israel endorsed an agreement during this visit on selling the water of the Turkish river "Manavgat" to Israel.<sup>15</sup>

In May, the Turkish Defense Minister, Vecdi Gonul, had also visited Tel

Aviv to discuss plans to develop Turkish military aircrafts and provide Ankara with far-reaching pilotless aircrafts. The Director General of the Israeli Defense Ministry, Amos Yaron, described the relations between the defense institutions of both countries as excellent. The spokesman of Israel Aircraft Industries, Doron Suslik, talked about Turkey's interest to develop F-4 aircrafts, and indicated that it is Israeli second largest military customer after India.<sup>16</sup>

In October 2005, the Turkish Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Hilmi Guler, held talks in Turkey with his Israeli counterpart, Binyamin Ben-Eliezer, on projects of bilateral cooperation in the fields of energy and water. On the other hand, the Turkish Minister mentioned an existing agreement for the export of water from Turkey to Israel, and that Ankara is planning to extend the water pipeline to include both Jordan and Palestine in this agreement.<sup>17</sup> Before the end of the year the Israeli Chief of Staff, Dan Haluz made a visit to Turkey, which triggered much heed because it came at a time when relations between the two countries became tense and complicated as result of some developments in the region, specially the war in Iraq and the Iranian nuclear program.<sup>18</sup>

Relations between the two countries had flourished during the 1990s. Many agreements on military cooperation, including common maneuvers and opening of Turkish airspace to train Israeli aircrafts, were signed while Tel Aviv embarked on updating F-16 and F-15 Turkish aircrafts. The two parties also signed initial agreements to manufacture Arrow missiles, Israeli Merkava tanks, and Israeli-Russian helicopters in Turkey.

However, the Turkish-Israeli relations became rather tense and cool when Bulent Ecevit, the former Turkish Prime Minister, accused Israel of committing ethnic massacres against the Palestinian people during the events of Jenin camp in 2002. This tepidity and tension increased after the Islamic-oriented Justice and Development Party came to power in Ankara late in November 2002. In 2004, its government decided to freeze all the afore-mentioned agreements,<sup>19</sup> but soon thereafter the relations improved.

Bilateral trade, which totaled \$54 million in 1987, went up to \$2 billion in 2004, apart from weapon sales. This boom gave rise to business lobbies in both countries that exercise pressure for stronger ties. Tourism plays an important role as well. 3 million & 298,000 Israeli tourists visited Turkey between 1990 and 2004, a considerable influx from a country, Israel, whose total population is less than 7 million. They spent about \$2,400 million.<sup>20</sup>

Below is a table of Israeli trade with Turkey from 2002 to 2005:<sup>21</sup>

**Table 1/4: Israeli Trade with Turkey from 2002 to 2005 (US\$ million)**

Year	Israeli exports to Turkey	Turkish exports to Israel
2002	383.1	813.7
2003	470.3	951.5
2004	813.5	1,166.9
2005	919	1,221

On the other hand, Turkey was used as a bridge to normalize relations between Israel and some Arab and Muslim countries, especially Pakistan. Turkey hosted a meeting between the Israeli Foreign Minister, Silvan Shalom, and his Pakistani counterpart, Khurshid Kasuri. It seems that Turkey promised, on the request of Israel, that Rajab Tayyib Erdogan would explore in some Arab and Islamic countries the possibility of establishing Israeli commercial and cultural attaches in the Turkish Embassies in these countries. It was even reported that he would bring up this issue during his meetings with some leaders of the region during his visits to the Gulf countries. The spokesman of the Turkish Foreign Ministry, Nameq Tan, refused to comment on this Israeli request, which he did not negate it, particularly as other sources claimed that Erdogan instructed his Deputy, Mehmet Aydin, to take up this matter with Arab and Muslim countries, including Algeria, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Yemen.<sup>22</sup>

Thus, the Turkish interests and private concerns constituted in one way or another a step backward, particularly as this comes from a ruling party whose electoral base sympathizes with Palestine.

**Iran:** The year 2005 witnessed increasing Iranian support for the Palestinian issue, especially after Ahmadinejad's success in the Iranian elections, and the completion of the "conservatives" firm grip on the State. This has led to the reinforcement of the dogmatic discourse and the rapid promotion of Iranian-Palestinian relations in line with the original principles of the Iranian Islamic Revolution.

A discussion of the Iranian-Palestinian relations requires reference to the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the subsequent tension in the Iranian-American relations. The Islamic Revolution in Iran promptly declared its rejection of the legitimacy of the Hebrew state, severed relations

with it, and handed the Israeli Embassy in Tehran to the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). Though the support of Muslims all over the world, including the Palestinians, was one of the main objectives of the Revolution, the Iranian inclination towards the PLO started to wane in the aftermath of the Iraqi-Iranian war in which the PLO sided with Iraq. However, Iran distinguished between the PLO, and the ideological commitment of the Iranian Revolution to the Palestinian cause. Hence, Iran directed its attention and support to other Palestinian organizations.

However, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the initiation of the process of peaceful negotiation early in the 1990s led to a change in the Iranian political discourse regarding the Palestinian issue. Iran, while openly rejecting in the past the Middle East peace process, it now declared that it would not withstand or put obstacles in the way of negotiation, despite its conviction that this course will not usher in a just peace in the region. This attitude, crystallized during Khatami's long presidency over the Republic, has obviously altered since Ahmadinejad took the presidency. He escalated the discourse against the Hebrew state, specifically because of the latter's key role in the Euro-American opposition to Iran's possession of nuclear technology.

Iran provides different kinds of aid to the Palestinian people, including humanitarian aid and support to the Islamic resistance factions (Hamas and the Islamic Jihad). Iran stood beside the Palestinian resistance which it considered the most successful means in the face of the occupation, and it has even encouraged the Palestinian factions to continue their resistance. This was expressed by the call of the Supreme Guide of the Islamic Republic, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, to Hamas to continue the resistance.<sup>23</sup> Khamenei maintained that the Israeli withdrawal from GS was achieved by virtue of the resistance,<sup>24</sup> and Ahmadinejad, the Iranian President, emphasized the centrality of the Palestinian issue to Iran.<sup>25</sup>

On the other side, the Palestinian resistance stood by Iran on the nuclear issue. Khalid Mish'al, the head of the Political Bureau of Hamas, threatened to respond if Israel attacks Iran. Mish'al said: "We are part of a united front against the enemies of Islam, of which every element will defend itself by its own means." He declared his support for the Iranian nuclear program saying: "If we assume that Iran has a military nuclear program, so what is wrong with this since Israel and others do have it?"<sup>26</sup>

The Iranian attitude towards Israel should not be separated from the Iranian-

American relations because of several historical and strategic reasons. The election of Ahmadinejad to the presidency was met by stormy reactions from the United States and Israel. Israel regarded his success a setback to the reform movement, as reiterated by Amos Gilad, head of the Political Department of the Israeli Defense Ministry. The Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* commented on this election by saying: “his election [Ahmadinejad] is a significant regional development, for his attitudes may infuriate enmity between Iran and Israel.”<sup>27</sup> On forming his government, Ahmadinejad rapidly shaped his foreign policy that excluded the establishment of any relation with Israel and the United States of America.<sup>28</sup>

Ahmadinejad took part in “The World without Zionism” Conference, organized by the Students’ Islamic Committees in Iran on 26 October 2005, where he said: “As *al-Imam* al-Khomeini said: Israel has to be wiped out from the map”; and added “the Muslim *Ummah* will not allow its historical enemy to live in the heart of its land.” He continued to say that battles on the occupied lands constitute part of a war that would determine the destiny of Israel. In a reference to the anger of the Muslim peoples, he said: “The leaders of the Muslim *Ummah* who will recognize Israel will be burned by the fire of their peoples’ fury,” but cautioned that they will sign “the surrender of the Muslim world.” Ahmadinejad talked about “a historical war of several centuries between the oppressor and the Muslim world” and hinted that “the downfall of the last stronghold of Islam, about a century ago, took place when the oppressors committed themselves to establish the Zionist regime.” He continued by saying: “They used it [Israel] as a forefront to disseminate their ideas in the heart of the Muslim world.”<sup>29</sup>

These statements in general, and their call for blotting Israel from the map are not odd, but they, in fact, reflect a basic conviction of the Iranian Revolution that had already been articulated by its Guide Ayatollah al-Khomeini. Western and Israeli reactions against Ahmadinejad escalated when he questioned, in his statements on 8 December 2005, the legitimacy of Israel on the Palestinian land, belied the Jewish Holocaust in Europe and called for moving this “entity” to Europe.<sup>30</sup> These statements provoked different reactions inside and outside Iran, and intensified Israel’s campaign to rally world opinion against the Iranian peaceful nuclear program. Reformists in Iran criticized Ahmadinejad’s statements about Israel. Muhammad Rida Khatami, brother of the Iranian ex-president, Muhammad Khatami, argued that they will contribute in changing the positions of some friendly powers towards Iran, particularly among western

parties, and be detrimental to Iranian economic interests.<sup>31</sup> Soon European apprehensions of Ahmadinejad's statements increased.<sup>32</sup>

Israel intensified its effort to persuade the United States to launch a military strike against the Iranian nuclear infrastructure in order to abort the Iranian efforts to complete its nuclear program, which Iran considers a legitimate right endorsed by international treaties.<sup>33</sup> In this context, the Israeli Foreign Minister demanded that Iran should be regarded as a real and imminent danger, and called for an emergency session of the Security Council. Israel also rushed to petition the United Nations to expel Iran from its membership on the grounds that "any country, which calls for violence and destruction, as the Iranian President did, does not deserve a seat in this civilized Organization."<sup>34</sup>

Iran, on its part, did not yield to these successive threats. Rather, its Defense Minister, Ali Shamkhani, assured that Iran is ready to confront and contain any military attack launched against it by any foreign forces. But he ruled out an American attack, since Washington is "already drowning in the Iraqi river and a person drowning in a river cannot move to swim in a sea", deeming Iran to be "a military and security sea that America can not swim in."<sup>35</sup>

During a meeting of the General Assembly of the United Nations on 31 August 2005, the representatives of Iran and Israel exchanged accusations of exciting terrorism and threatening the peace and security of the Middle East and the whole world through their nuclear programs. The Israeli Foreign Minister, Shalom, stated that Iran and its nuclear ambitions constitute a pivotal threat to international security, and to progress toward dialogue and peace in the Middle East. The Iranian response, voiced by its representative Ahmad Siddiqi, maintained that these were baseless claims. He said that rather, it is the Zionist state that has a dark history, and still commits war and other crimes against humanity. Late in October 2005, the Israeli Foreign Minister asserted in Paris that his country is fully aware of the Iranian intentions towards it, and that Israel is doing its utmost to persuade the world to fight Iran. He tried to link between the threat of Iran to Israel and its hazard to international security, by saying: "This danger not only menaces us but also reaches the European continent itself." Meanwhile, the Israeli Center of Documents and Information held in The Hague an extraordinary conference that was attended by senior officials from the European Parliament and representatives of the Netherlands parties as well as minority Iranian organizations and the opposition abroad. The goal was to discuss international measures to be taken

against Iran to trim its ambitions and to confront Ahmadinejad's statements. The Conference passed a set of recommendations that called for the isolation of Iran from the international community and its dismissal from the United Nations as the least possible recompense against a country that calls for wiping out another member of the United Nations.<sup>36</sup> It also demanded that Europe takes decisive measures to end Iran's nuclear hazard, and violation of human rights. It, moreover, called upon the western countries to take proper steps to stop Iranian "terrorist" activities, particularly its support for "terrorist" elements, groups, and organizations.<sup>37</sup>

The year 2005, witnessed the resumption of popular celebration on the occasion of the "International Day of Jerusalem." The Iranian President himself took part in this demonstration, where he insisted on his previous statements on the Hebrew state. These demonstrations culminated in a declaration that fully supported President Ahmadinejad, and warned Israel against its continuous aggression on the Palestinians that provoke Muslims' sentiments. It also threatened countries seeking normalization with Israel that they risk the outbreak of a popular fury and jeopardize the future of their countries that will experience turmoil and violence, because Muslims will not be satisfied with anything less than the elimination of Israel.

**Pakistan:** Since its formation in 1947, Pakistan has been taking positive stances towards Arab issues, particularly the Palestinian issue which it viewed as an Islamic and a just cause. The Pakistani Foreign Minister supported the Arab group against the November 1947 partition resolution of the United Nations. Pakistan also stood against the invitation of Israel to the Afro-Asian Conference in 1954, and later Bandung Conference in 1955. Pakistan continued support to the Palestinian issue stems from two considerations:

- The importance of the Palestinian issue as a central concern for the Arab world.
- The strong Islamic entity of Pakistan requires it to support Arab and Muslim issues.

Undoubtedly, Pakistan's support to the Palestinian cause has been somehow politically beneficial to the country in its conflict with India. Besides, it gave it some economic advantages in the Arab world. Though Pakistan has not recognized Israel, and supported conventional Arab rights, its relation with

Israel remains to be a problematic and paradoxal issue. For the foreign policy of Pakistan distinguishes between recognition of Israel and having actual communications, with it. Thus, Pakistan does communicate with Israel, and has different forms of secret cooperation with it.

The Pakistani President, Pervez Musharraf, held a press conference during the extraordinary Summit Conference held in Mecca in December 2005, where he spoke on several issues top of which was the issue of Palestine. He called for a strong stance to save Jerusalem from the Judaization operations, and emphasized the sensitivity of the Palestinian issue for the Muslims.<sup>38</sup> However, this seems to be the only main statement by the Musharraf government on the Palestinian issue throughout the year 2005. Unlike many other Muslim countries and former Pakistani governments, no official in the Musharraf government had visited the autonomous Palestinian territories. Though November 2005 was fixed for a visit, it was postponed due to the earthquake that hit Pakistan on 8 October.<sup>39</sup> This was preceded by a visit of Mahmud 'Abbas, head of the PA, to Pakistan on 19 May 2005, in which he said to the Pakistani President, Pervez Musharraf: "We hope that President Musharraf will throw his political weight behind the efforts aiming at reaching a just solution for the conflict." Musharraf responded: "We will offer our political support to the Palestinians in order to settle the conflict."<sup>40</sup>

The Pakistani foreign policy is, in general, committed to support the Palestinian cause as well as all Muslim issues. It adheres to resolutions of the Islamic Office for the Boycott, and had signed the declaration of the mail boycott against Israel. Nevertheless, Pakistan has actually established direct and indirect commercial relations with Israel, including a deal in 1995 between the Pakistani airlines and the Israeli company of Aircraft Industry to purchase planes' spare parts. There are also some other commercial deals between the two countries through a third party, Jordan in particular.<sup>41</sup> The issue of the Pakistan's recognition of Israel came to the forefront when Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto announced a visit that she would pay to GS on 4 September 1994 before heading to Cairo to attend a conference on population and development. But Israel refused to allow the visit unless Pakistan coordinates directly with it, while Benazir insisted that all the arrangements of the visit be made by the PA. The crisis wound up with the cancellation of the visit, but this provoked a heated and extensive debate in Pakistan over the issue of recognition of Israel.

Yet none of Pakistan's rulers dared to establish diplomatic relations with Israel as Pervez Musharraf did. In 2003, a Pakistani businessman close to Musharraf visited Israel to explore the possibility of full normalization between the two countries. The visit coincided with statements that Musharraf's made, before heading to America, on the issue of reconsideration of relations with Israel, which he reiterated on his return from Washington by saying: "Do we have to be more Catholic than the Pope, or more Palestinian than the Palestinians themselves?" In June 2003, Pervez Musharraf addressed his people by saying: "We should give serious attention to this issue. We engaged in three wars with India, yet we still have diplomatic relations with it, but with Israel we have not been engaged in any war."<sup>42</sup>

These statements paved the way for the first high-ranking public meeting, on 1 September 2005, in Istanbul between the Pakistani Foreign Minister, Khurshid Kasuri, and his Israeli counterpart, Silvan Shalom, which took place through a Turkish intermediary.<sup>43</sup> Kasuri emphasized that his country decided to become diplomatically "associated" with Israel,<sup>44</sup> while Silvan Shalom declared that the two sides had decided to hold all their future meetings in public as a prelude to normal bilateral relations.<sup>45</sup> Kasuri tried to rationalize this development by claiming that it will enable Pakistan to play a greater role in the Middle East peace process to the benefit of the Palestinians and the establishment of their state.<sup>46</sup> But this justification is totally unfounded as Israel does not allow any country in the world (apart from America) to interfere in the peace process. Moreover, in less than 48 hours after the conclusion of the meeting, the Pakistani governmental and pro-governmental media spoke of the great benefits that Pakistan would gain from establishing diplomatic ties with Israel, notably American favour,<sup>47</sup> and the neutralization of Israel that has developing relations with India.

After the meeting of the Foreign Ministers, Islamabad declared that the Pakistani President, Pervez Musharraf, would meet leaders of the Jewish-American community to bridge the gap between the Jews and Muslims. David Twersky, the Director of the International Affairs at the American Jewish Congress, announced in New York that General Musharraf accepted the Congress's invitation to clarify his policy that calls for moderation in the Muslim world, and Musharraf's spokesman, General Shawkat Sultan, confirmed this. General Sultan also stated that this clarification will provide a good opportunity to bridge the gap (...), and get rid of misconceptions and misunderstandings.<sup>48</sup>

The meeting took place, and Musharraf delivered a speech in which he said that the establishment of a Palestinian state would help to end the Islamist's "terrorism", and lead to full diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Israel. Musharraf said that Islamabad had no dispute or conflict with Israel, but the Pakistani people strongly sympathize with the aspirations of the Palestinians to set up their own independent state. The Israeli Ambassador at the United Nations described President Musharraf's speech as a "very brave" move, and hastily emphasized that the time has come for the Pakistani government to take a step forward through opening an office for Pakistani interests in Israel.

The official Palestinian position on this meeting was markedly lukewarm. The Palestinian presidency was aware of it as its spokesman, Nabil Abu Rudainah, indicated in a press statement "that the Pakistani President, Pervez Musharraf, informed President 'Abbas in a phone call two days ago that the Pakistani Foreign Minister would meet his Israeli counterpart in Turkey." The Palestinian presidency had seemingly tried to justify the meeting through a Presidential Press Release, dated 2 September 2005, that claimed, that "any connection between a friendly state and the Israeli government would be beneficial to the national rights of our people."<sup>49</sup>

Palestinian resistance factions opposed this normalization. The National Committee for Resisting Normalization in Palestine described the meeting as a black day in history and a shameful brand for Musharraf's government.<sup>50</sup>

Even the Arab League had expressed opposition, and on 1 September 2005, Counselor Hisham Yusuf, the manager of 'Amr Musa's office, said that Israel had done nothing to be rewarded for.<sup>51</sup> This strong opposition, both inside and outside Pakistan, had probably been behind the decision of the Pakistani government to link its recognition of Israel with three stipulations: the establishment of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital, a Pakistani consensus on such recognition and establishment of relations with Israel, and unanimity within the OIC on recognition of Israel.<sup>52</sup>

However, connections between Israel and Pakistan did not arise on impulse. The Pakistani Foreign Minister had reportedly said that Pakistan and Israel have made secret diplomatic connections for decades before Turkey's talks, and an Israeli researcher from Tel Aviv University, claimed, in a document issued in 2000, that the two countries started secret talks more than half a century ago, and that this confidentiality had enabled the Pakistani rulers to keep regular

connections with Israel, even though they overtly opposed the Hebrew state.<sup>53</sup>

Shortly after the meeting of the two Foreign Ministers in Istanbul, this Pakistani-Israeli rapprochement developed. A non-official Pakistani delegation, led by Maulana Ajmal Qadri, visited Israel and met Sharon twice, though the spokesman of the Pakistani government had repeatedly denied that such a visit had ever taken place. But Qadri insisted that the Pakistani government had given him the green light, but they wanted to exploit his visit to test public reaction in Pakistan to closer and public relations with Israel.<sup>54</sup>

On the other side, the Israeli Minister of Trade and Industry, Ehud Olmert, signed, on 12 September 2005 a decree that temporarily allowed importation from Pakistan “in the context of encouraging relations between Israel and Pakistan”, in the words of a statement issued by the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs.<sup>55</sup> According to the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*, the Pakistani government, accepted aid offered by Israel in the aftermath of the earthquake that hit Pakistan on 8 October 2005.<sup>56</sup>

Throughout the year 2005, the reaction of the Pakistani people to their government’s inclination towards normalization with Israel was, on the whole, violent. They organized a huge campaign that condemned the meeting of their Foreign Minister with his Israeli counterpart in Istanbul. Thousands rushed out in rampant demonstrations which dismissed this meeting as a “shameful position”, and described its date as “the black day.” Moreover, the demonstrators stuck flags and black emblems on their clothes.<sup>57</sup> Qazi Husain Ahmad, the *Amir* of the Pakistani *Jama’at Islami* (Association of Islam), described the meeting as “an enormous crime and a mark of disgrace for Pervez Musharraf’s government”, and added that the Pakistani people refuse and renounce Musharraf’s acts. He also said: “I disassociate myself from him before *Allah* and before the Palestinian people” and emphasized that the Pakistani government has lost all its religious, moral, and political principles as a result of Kasuri’s meeting with Shalom.<sup>58</sup>

In response to the calls of Pakistani opposition forces, Islamic parties, students, and trade unions throughout the country, declared 9 September a day of a nation-wide strike in Pakistan to topple Pervez Musharraf’s regime.<sup>59</sup> In fact, there is practically no evidence that support Musharraf claim that “most Pakistani people support his policy of approaching Israel”, rather, the policy of the Pakistani regime on the issue of normalization with the Hebrew state is obviously confused.

This normalization with Pakistan, the only Muslim country, (out of more than 50 countries), that possesses nuclear weapons, opened the door for Israel to have further diplomatic relations within the Muslim world, which has been persistently and publicly rejected for more than half a century. No wonder that Israel calls Istanbul's meeting historical,<sup>60</sup> as it was instrumental in drawing a large Muslim country, like Pakistan, to the circle of normalization.

### **The Quiet Normalization with Muslim Countries:**

Some Muslim countries seemingly prefer to establish quiet economic relations with Israel, while maintaining their declared official policies that are in conformity with the general policies of the OIC. Nonetheless, irrespective of the symbolic nature and limited size of this trade, such relations represent an important step to Israel.

Malaysia had admittedly been one of the most critical Muslim countries of the Israeli positions. Its former Premier, Mahathir bin Muhammad, had been, and still is, one of the most critical leaders in the Muslim world of Israeli and American policies, and he is a staunch supporter of the Palestinian issue. Moreover the current Malaysian Prime Minister, 'Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, does not, in this respect, differ from his predecessor. Nonetheless, for the past five years, Malaysia's volume of trade has been the second largest, after Turkey, of all Muslim countries. It exceeds that of Egypt and Jordan, though the Malaysian-Israeli trade indicator goes down annually, unlike that of Turkey, Egypt, and Jordan. In 2005, two international conferences, organized by civil institutions and backed by the Malaysian government, were held in Kuala Lumpur in support of the Palestinian cause. But, at the same time, the two conferences hosted activists from the Israeli "Peace Now Movement" as well as some Israeli academicians.

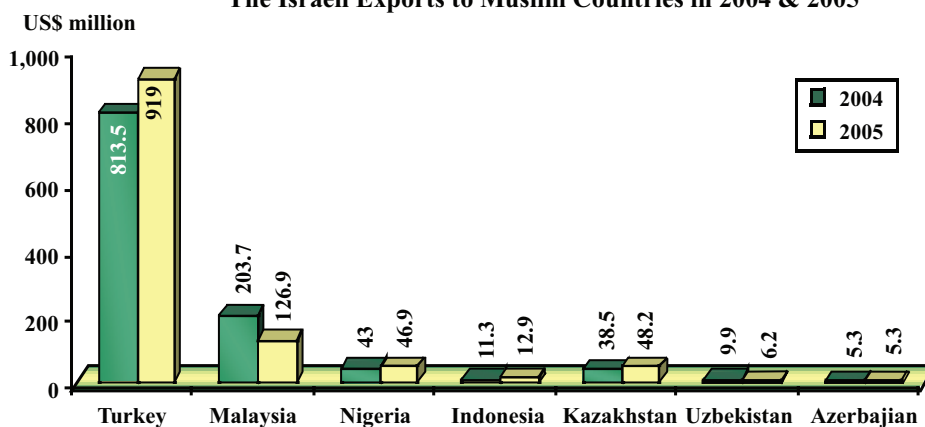
Israeli commercial relations with Nigeria and Kazakhstan have relatively improved during the last years. As for Indonesia, a similar development took place during the reign of the ex-president 'Abd al-Rahman Wahid, who is a member of Peres Peace Institution. Yet this relationship retrogressed after the latter's departure from the presidency, and the huge anti-Israeli campaign in Indonesia during *al-Aqsa Intifadah*. Moreover, the rising role of the Indonesian Islamic movement in the political process weakened Israeli ability to make inroads in Indonesia.

The following table, which is based on Israeli sources, provides a summary of economic relations between Israel and a number of Muslim countries:

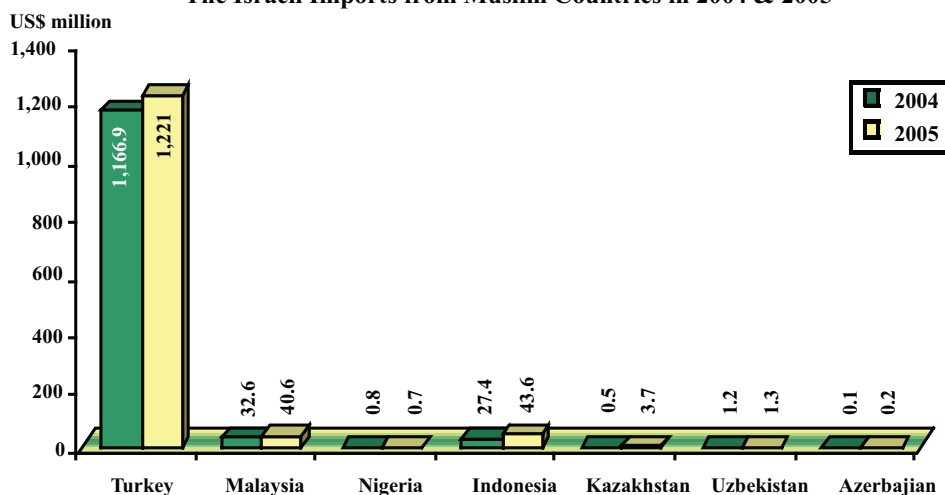
**Table 2/4: The Israeli Trade with the Muslim Countries (US\$ million)<sup>61</sup>**

Year	The Israeli exports				The Israeli imports			
	2005	2004	2003	2002	2005	2004	2003	2002
Turkey	919	813.5	470.3	383.1	1,221	1,166.9	951.5	813.7
Malaysia	126.9	203.7	276.8	289.7	40.6	32.6	26	17.4
Nigeria	46.9	43	28.4	33.3	0.7	0.8	5.1	0.4
Indonesia	12.9	11.3	10	9.9	43.6	27.4	32.6	56.5
Kazakhstan	48.2	38.5	28.5	27.3	3.7	0.5	1.1	1.2
Uzbekistan	6.2	9.9	6.3	38.1	1.3	1.2	1.8	3
Azerbaijan	5.3	5.3	2.9	7	0.2	0.1	0.5	0

**The Israeli Exports to Muslim Countries in 2004 & 2005**



**The Israeli Imports from Muslim Countries in 2004 & 2005**



## Conclusion:

The year 2005 witnessed escalation of tension between the Muslim world and the western powers, which was motivated by the deteriorating conditions in Afghanistan and Iraq; the attacks launched by al-Qa'eda in Europe; and the oppressive measures adopted by the American administration in its war against "terrorism". However, the underlying factor for this tension has been the long and historical engagement in Palestine, during which the western countries have committed themselves to the existence and security of the Hebrew state, and provided it with multi-faceted aid. Conversely, Muslims view Israel as an "illegal entity", whose existence was forcefully imposed. This Western-Islamic engagement has been reflected on the relations between the two parties for the last half century, sometimes implicitly and at other times explicitly. The year 2005 was a striking example of this engagement. It witnessed, for instance, a drastic change in the official Turkish position towards the Palestinian issue. After a series of statements and activities, that showed an increasing commitment on the part of the Justice and Development government to the Palestinian national rights, leaders of the Turkish government found themselves, for obvious reasons, compelled to travel to the seat of the Israeli government to seek its pleasure. In spite of the worldwide uproar on the escalating "political Islam", the main demands of the United States and the European Block from Muslim rulers are not related to issues like *Hijab* (women's wearing decent clothes and head covers) and gender segregation, but to issues of foreign policy, on top of which is their position toward the Hebrew state. During 2005 it has become obvious that the Turkish relations with both Europe and America are contingent on Ankara's relations with Tel Aviv, which could determine the future of the Turkish Justice and Development government as well.

The Musharraf's government in Islamabad had also come to the same "conclusion." Its exorbitantly priced alliance with the United States against "terrorism" was not enough to persuade Washington to concede to the Pakistani demands in the post cold-war time. Rather, the Pakistani government has to overstep the national taboo of recognition and normalization with Israel, if it were to hope for an American treatment parallel to the one that it gives to India, or even directly next to it.

The Iranian case is no different from that of Turkey and Pakistan. Increasing western opposition to the Iranian nuclear program is essentially goaded by Israel's security interests, not by serious Euro-American fear. It is not difficult

to guarantee the peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear program as this could be done through an internationally controlled monitoring system, which Iran does not reject. Yet, the focus of the problem is the insistence of the western powers to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear technology and experience that may constitute a threat to the Hebrew state in the long run. As the Iranian negotiation with the European Troika came to a deadlock and the menace to impose international sanctions on Iran increases, the Iranians have realized that their problem is essentially Israel.

The Hebrew state does not only constitute a source of danger to the neighboring Arab states, or the Arab world at large, but also to many Muslim countries. This is the underlying factor for the rapid change in the policy of the Turkish Justice and Development government towards Israel, the Pakistani political transformation on the issue of recognition of Israel, and the Euro-American increasing focus on the Iranian nuclear program. While some had expected that the 1990s Oslo Accords would open the road for consistent normalization and peaceful relations between the Hebrew state and many Muslim countries that do not directly lay within the orbit of the conflict over Palestine, the events of the year 2005 dashed these hopes and aspirations. Muslim peoples, even states, have become increasingly conscious of the tight link between their relations with the Western world and their position on the Palestinian issue.

This awareness has become noticeable in the popular demonstrations of solidarity with Palestine which flared throughout the Muslim world. It is recommended to become glaringly obvious during the coming years, either because of the aggravating crisis in Palestine, the escalating tension between the Muslim world and western forces or for the rising popularity of the current political Islamic trend inside Palestine and in various Muslim countries. But, noticeably, the pro-Palestinian popular Islamic activities have become less organized and politicized than their counterparts in the 1960s and 1970s. This is attributed to the failure of both the PLO and the PA to give due attention, since the Oslo Accords, to the popular Islamic dimension of the Palestinian issue. However, to restore the centrality of this vital factor to the Palestinian scene, assiduous actions should be taken to find new interactive channels between the Palestinian arena and different regions of the Muslim world.

## Endnotes:

- 1 Dr. 'Amr Sa'dawi: Researcher of Political Science, Free Lance writer in several journals and magazines and editor of Islamic Book Review (IBR).
- 2 The Islamic Summit Conference is the highest body in the Organization. It undertakes the task of making strategies related to Islamic action and policy. It is held once every three years with the purpose of discussing issues of vital importance for the Muslim world and mapping out the Organization's policy accordingly. So far eight Conferences of Islamic Summits were held. The Conference can also be held whenever the interests of the member states require. At the convention of every session, a chairman would be elected and he holds this position till the convention of the next session.
- 3 See the final statement issued by the extraordinary third session of the Conference of the Islamic Summit at: <http://www.oic-oci.org/ex-summit/arabic/fc-ex-sum-ar.htm>
- 4 About the transgressions and threats that *al-Aqsa* Mosque was exposed to during 2004 and 2005 see: <http://www.mic-pal.info/reportdetails.asp?id=606>
- 5 *Al-Quds al-'Arabi*, 21 November 2005.
- 6 <http://www.pna.gov.ps/Arabic/details.asp?DocId=1742>
- 7 <http://thawra.alwehda.gov.sy/-archive.asp?FileName>
- 8 <http://news8.thdo.bbc.co.uk/hi/arabic/middle>
- 9 See the text of the speech of the Turkish Foreign Minister, 'Abdullah Gul, before the members of the Legislative Council, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Palestinian National Authority, 5 January 2005, see: <http://www.pna.gov.ps/Arabic/details.asp?DocId=1737>
- 10 Muhammad Nur al-Din, "*Al-'Ilaqat al-Turkiyyah al-Isra'iliyyah: Marhalah Jadidah?*," (Turkish – Israeli Relations: A New Stage), *Al-Sharq*, 9 January 2005.
- 11 Muhammad al-Khawli, "*Turkiyyah wa Isra'il: Tahaluf wa Tadarub al-Masalih*," (Turkey and Israel: Alignment and Divergence of interests), *Albayan*, 28 July 2005.
- 12 Soner Cagaptay, "The Turkish Prime Minister Visits Israel: Whither Turkish-Israeli Relations?," The Tharwa Project, 27 April 2005, see: [http://arabic.tharwaproject.com/Main-Sec/NetWatch/NW\\_5\\_10\\_05/Cagaptay.ht](http://arabic.tharwaproject.com/Main-Sec/NetWatch/NW_5_10_05/Cagaptay.ht)
- 13 <http://new8.thdo.bbc.co.uk/hi/arabic/middle>
- 14 *Al-Quds al-'Arabi*, 2 May 2005.
- 15 *Alwafd*, 14 May 2005.
- 16 *Assafir*, 6 May 2005.
- 17 *Albayan*, 13 October 2005.
- 18 'Abd al-Zahra Al-Rikabi, "*Turkiyyah wa Isra'il: Tagdid al-Tahaluf am Taf'iluh?*," (Turkey and Israel: Renewing the Alliance or Activating it?), *al-Khaleej*, 1 January 2006.
- 19 Husni Mahali, "*Madha Ta'ni Ziarat Irdughan ila Isra'il?*," (What Are the Implications of Erdogan Visit to Israel?), *al-Mustaqbal*, 30 April 2005.
- 20 Soner Cagaptay, *op.cit.*, 27 April 2005, see: [http://arabic.tharwaproject.com/Main-Sec/NetWatch/NW\\_5\\_10\\_05/Cagaptay.ht](http://arabic.tharwaproject.com/Main-Sec/NetWatch/NW_5_10_05/Cagaptay.ht)
- 21 Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics: [http://www.cbs.gov.il/\fr\\_trade/tld.htm](http://www.cbs.gov.il/\fr_trade/tld.htm)
- 22 Husni Mahali, "*Anqarah Tazra' Diplumasiyyin Isra'iliyyin bi Safaratiha fi Dual 'Arabiyyah wa Islamiyyah*," (Ankara Plants Israeli Diplomats in its Embassies in Arab and Islamic Countries), *al-Khaleej*, 13 September 2005.
- 23 *Al-Aman*, Beirut, 16 December 2005.
- 24 *Alayam* newspaper, Bahrain, 20 August 2005.
- 25 *Al-Mustaqbal*, 25 October 2005

- 26 *Al-Hayat*, 16 December 2005.
- 27 Ahmad al-Tahir, “*Al-’Ilaqat al-Iraniyyah al-Isra’iliyyah: Jawlah Jadidah min al-’Ida’ wa al-Tawattur*,” (Iranian – Israeli Relations: A new Round of Enmity and Tension), *Alquds*, 7 December 2005.
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- 29 *Al-Khaleej*, 27 October 2005.
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- 31 *Al-Khaleej*, 14 December 2005.
- 32 *Al-Khaleej*, 28 October 2005.
- 33 In the Israeli strategic mind there prevails a vision that Iran constitutes a major threat to Israel’s security. Hence, is Israel’s concern about Iran’s developing its nuclear program. See: Louis Rene Berse, “Israel, Iran, and Prospects for Nuclear War in the Middle East,” *Strategic Review*, Vol.21, No.2, 1993.
- 34 Ahmad al-Tahir, *op. cit.*, p.33.
- 35 *Al-Hayat*, 29 July 2005.
- 36 The isolation of Iran is considered as one of the most important features of the Israeli vision of the Iranian role in the Middle East, see: Ult Aras, “Turkish-Israeli-Iranian Relation in the Nineties: Impact on the Middle East,” *Middle East Policy*, Vol.VII, No.3, June 2000.
- 37 Ahmad al-Tahir, *op. cit.*, p.33.
- 38 <http://www.islamicsummit.org.sa/16.aspx?ID=116>
- 39 *Alghad*, 19 November 2005.
- 40 *Assafir*, 20 May 2005.
- 41 Muhammad Fayiz Farhat, “*Tatbi’ al-’Ilaqat al-Pakistaniyyah al-Isra’iliyyah: Al-Dawafi’ wa al-Ishkaliyyat*,” (Normalizing Pakistani – Israeli Relations: Incentives and Dilemmas), *al-Siyassa al-Dawliya*, Issue No.162, October 2005, p.180. (In this context an agreement was signed between Israel and the Jordan Royal Airlines to transport Israeli merchandises to Muslim countries which do not recognize Israel and have no diplomatic relations with it, including Pakistan).
- 42 As’ad ‘Abd al-Rahman, “*Al-’Ilaqat al-Pakistaniyyah al-Isra’iliyyah: Sharkh Jadid fi al-Jidar al-Diplumacy al-’Arabi*,” (Pakistani – Israeli Relations: A New Fracture in Arab Political Wall), *Alhaqa’eq* newspaper, London, 15 September 2005: <http://www.alhaqaq.net/defaultch.asp?action=showarticle&issueid=9secid=5&articleid=34133>
- 43 About the Turkish role, see: Khayri Mansur, “*Yulyus al-’Arabi wa Brutus al-Pakistani*,” (Arab Julius and Pakistani Brutus), *al-Khaleej*, 11 September 2005.
- 44 By the ambiguous term “diplomatic association”, Pakistan establishes diplomatic relations under the umbrella of an unfamiliar description in international relations that has no legal value, particularly if not accompanied by legal and official recognition according to internationally applied principles. Yet its major value lies primarily in its political, moral and propagandistic significance. See: Hasan Abu Talib, “*Al-Zawaya al-Arba’ lil Irtibat al-Diplomacy al-Pakistani al-Jadid ma’ Isra’il*,” (The Four Corners of the New Pakistani Diplomatic Engagement with Israel), *al-Watan* newspaper, Saudi Arabia, 8 September 2005.
- 45 Hasan al-’Attar, “*Al-Mukafa’at al-Islamiyyah wa al-’Arabiyyah lil Kayan al-Suhyuni*,” (Arab and Islamic Rewards for the Zionist Entity), *Akhbar-alkhaleej* newspaper, Bahrain,

- 27 September 2005.
- 46 Pakistan justified its step of normalizing relations with Israel as being a reward for Israel for evacuating Gaza Strip of Jewish settlements considering it a step toward ending the occupation.
- 47 Immediately after the announcement of commencing relations between Pakistan and Israel, the American Congress approved \$3 billion in aid along with the provision of advanced planes of \$1 billion and other F-16 war aircrafts to update the Pakistani air force. Nassuh al-Majali, “*Pakistan: Al-’Awn al-Amriki ‘Abra al-Bawwabah al-Isra’iliyyah*,” (Pakistan: American Aid through the Israeli Gate), *Alrai* newspaper, Amman, 21 February 2006.
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- 49 *Al-Mustaqbal*, 3 September 2005.
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[http://www.palestine-info.info/arabic/palestoday/dailynews/2005/sep059\\_1/details4.htm#1](http://www.palestine-info.info/arabic/palestoday/dailynews/2005/sep059_1/details4.htm#1)
- 51 Site of IslamOnline, 1 September 2005.
- 52 *Al-Khaleej*, 2 June 2005.
- 53 *Al-Watan* newspaper , Doha (Qatar), 7 September 2005
- 54 *Albayan*, 19 November 2005, quoted from the Pakistani newspaper: *Nation*.
- 55 *Alghad*, 13 September 2005.
- 56 *Haaretz*, 15 October 2005: <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/634932.html>
- 57 Jamal Mazlum, “*Al-’Ilaqat al-Pakistaniyyah - al-Isra’iliyyah: Al-Ab’ad al-’Askariyyah*,” (The Military Dimensions of the Pakistani Israeli Relations), *al-Siyassa al-Dawliya*, Issue No.162, October 2005, p.182.
- 58 *Amir* of the Pakistani *Jama’at Islami* (Association of Islam) in an interview with The Palestinian Information Center:  
<http://www.palestine-info.info/arabic/palestoday/reports/report2005/ameer.htm>
- 59 Fahmi Huwaydi, “*Ayna al-Maslahah fi al-Tatbi’ al-Aan..?*,” (Where is the Benefit of Normalization Now..?), *Asharq Alawsat*, 28 September 2005.
- 60 The Turkish State Minister, Mehmet Aydin, who arranged and sponsored the Pakistani-Israeli meeting, came out to say that his country has a lot of similar ideas that he considered to be within the Turkish obligation to promote dialogue between cultures and religions. See: *al-Hayat*, 10 September 2005.
- 61 Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics: [http://www.cbs.gov.il/fr\\_trade/td1.htm](http://www.cbs.gov.il/fr_trade/td1.htm)

# The Palestinian Strategic Report 2005



**This** Palestinian Annual Strategic Report explains, discusses and analyses the events that took place during 2005, and pursues their developments. The primary objective of this Report is to assess the Palestinian situation on a regular basis through a rigorous study of its various aspects, i.e., internal political affairs, economic development, the educational system, demographic indicators, the Arab-Islamic and international positions and the Israeli attitudes and policies.

The chapters of this academic exercise were commissioned to distinguished meticulous specialists. These chapters were submitted to further scrutiny by another high caliber specialist in the Palestinian issue. Then, the two editors edited the texts and incorporated what may have been overlooked. Hence, it is important to note that this project is essentially a product of team work.



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10th Floor, Riviera Centre, Coniche al-Mazraa'h, Beirut, Lebanon  
Tel: (961) 1 303 644 | Tel-Fax: (961) 1 303 643  
Email: [info@alzaytouna.net](mailto:info@alzaytouna.net)

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