

THE MAKING OF THE PLO

1946: In May 1946, the first conference of Arab Kings and Presidents, according to the system of the League of Arab States, was held in Anshas near Cairo; the meeting decided: "Palestine is the heart of the Arab Group and the fate of Jerusalem is linked to the fate of the entire League of Arab States and what happens to the Arabs in Palestine affects all the Arab peoples... and the Arab countries and peoples have to protect the Arab features of Palestine".

1948: Following the UN Partition Resolution 181, 1947, the announcing of the end of the British Mandate, and the entry of the Arab troops into Palestine, the League of Arab States Political Commission decided on July 10, 1948, to establish a temporary Palestinian administration to manage the affairs of the Arab controlled territory.

The first Palestinian conference was held in October 1948 in the presence of 90 figures representing the mayors of municipalities, heads of chambers of commerce, and representatives of national commissions and parties upon invitation by the Arab Higher Commission. The conference ratified the establishment of All-Palestine Government headed by Ahmad Hilmi Abdul Baqi; the members of the government consisted of the following: Jamal al-Husseini, Rajai al-Husseini, Awni Abdul Hadi, Akram Zuaiter, Dr. Hussein Fakhri al-Khalidi, Ali Hasna, Michel Abkarius, Yousef Sahyoun, and Amin Aqel. The conference decided that the flag of Palestine would be the flag of the Arab Revolt of 1916.

Arab governments and the Arab League recognized the All-Palestine Government as soon as it was declared with the exception of Jordan. Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ahmad Hilmi Abdul Baqi was invited to attend the meetings of the Arab League on October 30, 1948. However, one month after recognizing the All-Palestine Government the Arab League reversed its invite while the Egyptian government banned it from exercising its authorities in Gaza Strip which instead fell under Egyptian administration.

1949: The Arab League Political Commission discussed the idea of presenting official representatives of the Palestinian people in front of the UN General Assembly in its term in Paris in September 1949, alongside the idea of establishing a Palestinian political and civil entity on the land of Palestine. Jamal al-Husseini (a member of the Arab Higher Commission) made a tour of the Arab capitals, all of which agreed to the idea with the exception of Jordan.

1950: In the beginning of 1950, Abdul Rahman Azzam, General Secretary of the League of Arab States, requested from Ahmad al-Shuqeiri to work as his assistant in order to organize the affairs of the General Secretariat; the request was approved by Lebanese PM Riyad al-Solh and Syrian PM Natham al-Qudsi witnessed by Awni Abdul Hadi.

A special annex on Palestine was added to the Charter of the Arab League, stipulating "Even though Palestine was not able to control her own destiny, it was on the basis of the recognition of her independence that the Covenant of the League of Nations determined a system of government for her. Her existence and her independence among the nations can, therefore, no more be questioned de jure than the independence of any of the other Arab States. [...] Therefore, the States signatory to the Pact of

the Arab League consider that in view of Palestine's special circumstances, the Council of the League should designate an Arab delegate from Palestine to participate in its work until this country enjoys actual independence."

1954: Khalil Al-Wazir (Abu Jihad) organized a military raid on Israel from the Gaza Strip but it was prevented by Egyptian security forces.

1955: In April, the Conference of Non-Aligned States (the Non Aligned Movement) convened in Bandung, Indonesia, with the participation of Haj Amin alHuneini. Israel was excluded from participating.

1957: On March 30, Arab leaders from Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Saudi Arabia, reasserted in Cairo the right of Palestinians to return to their homes and rejected schemes to resettle Palestinians.

1959: In Gaza, Mayor Munir Ra'ees, lawyer Jamal Sourani, and Ibrahim Abu-Sitta of the Gaza Refugee Committee meet Egyptian President Nasser and his Deputy Field Marshal Amer, requesting the unification of political national bodies for Palestinians in Egypt, Syria and the Gaza Strip.

On March 9, 1959, and based on an initiative from the Egyptian delegation, the League of Arab States decided to approve a recommendation by the Political Affairs Commission to request from the Arab countries "to hold a high-level meeting and review the phases of the cause of Palestine". The League's Council recommended that the proposed meeting study the issue of "reorganizing the Palestinian people and highlight their entity as a unified people and not mere refugees and to be heard in the nationalist and international arenas through representatives to be chosen by the Palestinian people" and to discuss the "formation of a Palestinian army in the Arab countries".

1960: On November 29, 1960, Ahmad Shuqeiri, in his capacity as Saudi Minister of State for UN affairs, addressed the UN on the Palestinian refugee problem, saying, inter alia, "The rights of the refugees to their homes and homeland are not related to, or in any way dependent upon, the consent or refusal of Israel. These rights are natural, inherent and selfexisting. They are not bestowed even by the United Nation, let alone Israel. They can't be denied even by the United Nation, let alone Israel. They are vested in the refugees; they reside with the refugees. Thus consent or no consent, these rights are imprescriptible, irresistible and indivisible."

On March 27, Abdul Karim Qassem of Iraq announced the formation of the "Palestine Army". - The Arab League Council debated the organization of a proposed Palestinian Government. - On April 26, Pres. Nasser said that "the Palestinian entity must be preserved because the extermination of the entity would mean the elimination of the Palestinian problem forever." - In August, at the 4th Arab Ba'ath Party Convention in Damascus, a call was made for the formation of a popular front for all Palestinian organizations, to be independent of any Arab Gov.

1962/1963: The Arab Experts Commission agreed in July 1962 that the Palestinian entity project is based on "the call for a national council that represents the Palestinian concentrations which would result in

the formation of a national front to lead the Palestinian people and this front would have military, political, organizational, media and financial departments, and its relations with the League of Arab States will be defined". The Experts Commission didn't present this project to the League because of the Jordanian opposition. In September 1963, and following the death of Palestine delegate to the League of Arab States Ahmad Hilmi Abdul Baqi, the League appointed Ahmad al-Shuqeiri and commissioned him to form and head a Palestinian delegation to the UN to defend the Palestinian cause. Ahmad al-Shuqeiri delivered for the second time, a speech before the UN and demanded the return of refugees to their homeland and not provide them with bread scraps.

1963: From January 13-17, 1963, the first Arab Summit Conference was held in Cairo, Ahmad al-Shuqeiri demanded that discussions be not limited to secondary issues without touching on the roots, meaning the Palestinian cause which had deteriorated at the Arab and international levels, thus becoming a cause of refugees. He explained the need for the establishment of an entity that would organize the ranks of the Palestinian people and mobilize their military and political potentials so that they assume their role in liberating their homeland. During the summit, the PLO's draft constitution was also issued.

1964: The PLO is founded by 422 Palestinian national figures in response to many Calls by the various Palestinian organizations, civil society groups and refugees as well to Arab government calls for the Palestinians to form their own independent policy-making entity. The conference, opened by King Hussein of Jordan in Jerusalem, was organized by the Palestinian representative to the Arab League, Ahmad Shuqeiri, it set up the Palestinian National Council (PNC), the PLO Exec. Committee, a National Fund and the Palestinian Liberation Army (PLA) and drafted a National Covenant (Al-Mithaq Al-Kawmee Al-Filistini) as well as a Basic Law. The Covenant endorsed the flag of the Great Arab Revolt of 1916 to be the colors of the Palestinian flag. The Conference also decided to transform itself into the first Palestinian National Council (PNC), which convenes official from 28 May to 9th June in Jerusalem.

The first PLO Executive Committee consisted of: Ahmad al-Shuqeiri as chairman, members: Hamed Abu Sitta, Dr. Haidar Abdul Shafi, Qusay al-Abadleh, Dr. Qasem al-Rimawi, Attorney Abdul Rahman al-Saksak, Bahjat Abu Gharbieh, Attorney Abdul Khaleq Yaghmour, Attorney Falah Al-Madi, and Nicola Al-Durra. Abdul Majid Shuman was appointed head of the Palestinian National Fund, Major General Wajeeh al-Madani was selected as Commander of the PLA.

King Hussein made the opening speech at the first Palestinian National Conference in Jerusalem saying: "The Arabs have decided to cooperate with the Palestinians in order for them to organize their ranks upon their own will and to support them for the sake of liberating their homeland," adding "The Arabs have no life or unity without the liberation of Palestine."

From September 5-11, 1964, the second Arab Summit met in Alexandria and welcomed "the establishment of the PLO as a basis of the Palestinian entity and as a pioneer in the collective Arab struggle for the liberation of Filastine". It passes to the UNSC a letter with the text of the Alexandria Summit Declaration, confirming the commitment to uphold and restore the rights of the Palestinian people to their homeland and saying – in response to Israel's complaints to the UNSC - that Israel's record in the international community hardly qualifies it to accuse other states of violating the UN Charter or of posing a threat to international peace and security.

1965: On January 1, the first military operation of Fateh fedayeen took place in Palestine: the Al-Asifa military wing attack on the Israeli water carrier in Galilee, - marking the beginning of the Palestinian "Revolution".

On January 6, the first official Communiqué from "AlAsifa" headquarters was issued.

On July 17, the first Conference of the General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW) was held in Jerusalem.

On September 3, PLO Chairman Ahmad Shuqri, addressed a public assembly in Gaza City before leaving to Morocco to attend the third Arab summit in Casablanca. He stated: "the PLO was born with a certificate from the Arab states.... Now it is time for the PLO to have a free hand to work (struggle)."

On October 1, the fedayeen training camp "Deir Yassin" is officially opened in Gaza in a ceremony attended by many Palestinian leaders.

In March, China and the PLO signed their first military and diplomatic agreement.

On July 21, PLO Chairman Ahmad Shuqri recruited to the Executive Committee the head of the Jordanian Bar Association, Najib Ershadatt and appointed General Ali Hayyari (right) (former Jordanian Chief of Staff) as the first general director for the PLO's Military Department based in Jerusalem.

The 2nd session of the PNC convened in Cairo from May 31 to June 4, focusing on organizing the PLO as an umbrella for the Palestinian people, calling on Jordan to arm Palestinian villages at the front with Israeli, and to impose a "liberation tax" on the Palestinians to help finance the PLO. Jordan refused both request.

President Nasser addressed the 2nd PNC meeting, stating "Egypt is unable to go to war but does not want to go toward negotiations based on the Bourgiba plan... Since a joint Arab plan is impossible, Palestinians should rely on themselves."

1966: The third session of the PNC, held in Gaza from May 20-24, increased the number of its members from outside Jordan to a new total of 466. The PNC also voted to separate between the Chairman of the PNC and the PLO Executive.

1967: On May 30, the PLO and Jordan joined the United Arab Republic in a defense alliance.

On June 5, the June War broke out at 7:45 a.m. with Israeli airplanes attacking Egyptian targets. Jordan launched attacks on Israel soon after. In the course of the war, some 300,000 Palestinian were displaced from West Bank and Gaza, many becoming refugees for a second time.

On November 23, the PLO issues a statement in Cairo rejecting UN Resolution 242 of November 1967.

On December 11, George Habash (left) announced the formation of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).

On December 24; Ahmad Shuqeiri resigned as head of the PLO.

1968: Fateh declared its political program, calling for the establishment of a democratic state in Palestine where Arabs and Jews will live together without discrimination.

Yasser Arafat left the West Bank headquarters which were transferred to Karamah, Jordan.

On February 28, Abdel Fatah Al-Hmad, a Fateh Central Committee member died in a car accident in Amman, His funeral allowed the PLO guerrillas to appear openly in the streets of Amman for the first time.

On February 28, AS-Saiqa (Vanguard of the Popular Liberation war), a Syrian-backed and controlled PLO faction of leftist-military ideology, was established by the Ba'ath Party.

In October, the PFLP splits as the PLF breaks away (becoming PFLP-GC) under the leadership of Ahmad Jibril (left).

The fourth PNC conference held in Cairo from July 10-17 elected Yahia Hamoudeh (right) as new Chairman of the PLO by laws of previous sessions as well as the Palestinian National Charter were amended, including naming only 100 Palestinian to the PNC - among them representatives of the emerging armed factions - to improve decision making. The PNC called for the total liberation of all of Palestine and sets the number of the PLO Executive Committee members at 11, all to be elected by the PNC. Abdul Muhsen Qattan (left) is elected speaker.

1969: At the fifth PNC session, held in Cairo from February 1-4, a new PLO Executive Committee was elected, with Fateh leader Yasser Arafat as chairman and dominated by resistance groups (al-Muqawama Al-Filistinyya). The number of PNC member increased to 105, including the 12 PLO Executive Committee members as well as: representatives from Fateh (33), PFLP (12), Saiqa (12), PLA (5), trade unions and popular youth organization (3), independent personalities (28), Fateh won 4 out of 11 seats on the new PLO Executive Committee.

The Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PDFLP) was formed after splitting from the DFLP following a leadership dispute. It is led by Nayef Hawatmeh (right).

The Palestinian Popular Struggle Front (PSF) led by Samir Ghosheh (left), was officially formed after splitting away from Fateh.

The PLO Exec. Committee appointed Abdel Razzaq Al-Yahya (left) as Commander-in-Chief of the PLA and replaced Chief-of-Staff Budeiri with Othman Haddad in his place. Former communist Jawad Abdel Rahim is appointed head of PLA military intelligence.

In Cairo, the first public meeting between Fateh leaders and President Nasser takes place in November.

The sixth PNC session held in Cairo in September 1-6 increases membership to 112, adding eight new members, mainly from the DFLP. It agreed to expand the Exec. Committee to between 12 and 15. Yahya Hamoudeh is reelected as speaker.

1970: The seventh PNC session convened in Cairo from May 30 –June 4, rejecting the US Rogers Plan.

The PNC convened as exceptional emergency session at Al-Wihdat RC in Amman from August 27-28, also rejecting the US Rogers Plan and emphasizing Palestinian internal affairs over the need for foreign intervention.

From September 16-22, Jordanian and Palestinian forces clashed as the Jordanian army attacked Palestinian guerillas in various areas of Jordan after the PFLP's landed and destroyed two hijacked airplanes on September 6. The fighting (termed "Black September") left some 2,000 Palestinians dead and 2,000 captured, while another 500 escaped to Syria. The PLO was subsequently expelled from Jordan and set up base in Lebanon.

On September 27, King Hussein and Yasser Arafat agreed to a 14-point ceasefire under President Nasser's mediation in Cairo and signed a further agreement in Amman, on October 13 under which the PLO recognized Jordanian sovereignty and the King's authority and agreed to withdraw its armed forces from towns and villages, in return for which they were granted amnesty.

1971: The PNC held its eighth session in Cairo from February 28 to March 5, deciding - in the light of the fighting with the Jordanian army - to establish a Unified General Command of the Forces of the Palestinian Revolution and appointing Yasser Arafat as its Commander. It also voted to expand the PNC to 150 members and its term to three years.

The ninth PNC session was held in Cairo from July 7-13, with 155 members reflecting an increase in the number of representatives from popular organizations. Khalid Al-Fahoum (left) was the elected speaker.

The Jordanian army led a final offensive against fedayeen bases outside Amman and PM Wasfi Al-Tal announced that the Cairo and Amman agreements were no longer valid. Thousands of Palestinians were killed, including leader Abu Ali Iyad (Left) on July 13th.

On July 24, Mamdouh Sabri Saidam (Abu Sabri, Right) Fated Central Committee member, Commander of the Palestinian forces in 1968, and in charge of Fateh forces in Amman, died in Damascus.

1972: On January 22, personalities from the West Bank and Jordan and members of the PLO met in Cairo to discuss the future of commando actions and the Palestinian problem.

On March 11, George Habash was re-elected Secretary General of the PFLP in its third conference held in Damascus. Mustafa Zabri (Abu Ali Mustafa) from Arabeh near Jenin in named Deputy.

On March 15, "United Arab Kingdom" Plan was proposed by King Hussein: a federal formation of Jordanian-Palestinian relations, the West Bank with Jerusalem as its capital, and the region of Jordan, with Amman as central capital and the King as head of state.

On March 16, the PLO Executive Committee rejected "absolutely and definitively" the King's proposal, as did most Arab states.

On April 5, a Palestinian Popular Congress was held in Cairo, headed by Yasser Arafat. It rejected the "United Arab Kingdom" plan of King Hussein and the idea of President Anwar Sadat to form a Palestinian government-in-exile.

The tenth PNC session was held from April 6-12 in Cairo as an extraordinary session (originally scheduled for July) in the wake of recent developments (the termination of the Palestinian military presence in Jordan, the "United Arab Kingdom" Plan, and the Israeli attempts to hold election in the OPT, condemned by the PLO as an Israeli plot to create a local leadership other than the PLO). The PLO announced that by issuing the Palestinian News Agency Bulletin "Wafa" it is now the sole "information organization" and will supervise broadcast under the name "Voice of Palestine-Voice of Palestinian Revolution".

On July 8, 1972, Ghassan Kanafani (left), novelist, editor of "Al-Hadaf" and PFLP politburo member was killed by a car bomb, believed to have been planted by Israeli agents in Beirut.

On October 16, 1972, PLO Representative, Wa'el Zu'aiter (middle), was murdered in Rome by assassins believed to be from the Israeli Mossad.

On December 8, 1972, PLO leader Mahmoud Hamshari (right) was bombed in his house in Paris; he died a month later (on 9 Jan. 1973).

1973: The 11th PNC Session was held in Cairo from Jan. 6-12. It adopted a Political Program and decided to establish the Palestinian National Salvation Front (PNFS) as an autonomous PLO affiliate to coordinate activities of nationalist resistance forces in the OPT (declared illegal by Israel in Oct. 1978). It also established a Central Council (CC) as consultative body to the PLO and an intermediary between the PNC and the Exec. Committee. The number of PNC member is increased to 180.

On April 10, 1973, an Israeli commando raid in Rue Verdun, central Beirut, left three PLO leaders killed: Kamal Nasser (middle), poet and official PLO spokesman; Kamal Adwan (right), Fateh Central Committee member; and Mohammed An-Najar (Abu Yousef, left), member of the PLO Exec. Committee.

1974: The twelfth PNC session was held in Cairo from June 1-9. It adopted a new 10-point political program, including the rejection of UN Resolution 242 and replacing the concept of a democratic secular state in all of Palestine with the creation of a "national people's authority... on any part of Palestine to be liberated." Several PLO factions form the 'Rejectionist Front' in protest. A new Executive Committee is elected, including three representatives from the PNSF, which functions in the OPT.

The seventh Arab Summit meeting in Rabat recognized the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinians and affirmed "the right of the Palestinian people to establish an independent national authority in any Palestinian territory that is liberated."

On November 13, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat addressed the UNGA in New York for the first time and delivered his famous "freedom fighter's gun and olive branch" speech, calling for the establishment of a secular, democratic Palestine, where Jews, too, will live in equality and freedom.

On November 22, 1974, UNGA Resolution 3236 reaffirmed the rights of the Palestinian people in Palestine, including the right to self-determination without external interference and the right to national independence and sovereignty. UNGA Resolution 3237 grants the PLO observer status.

1975: On November 10, UNGA Resolution 3375 invited the PLO to participate in the efforts for peace in the Middle East; UNGA Resolution 3376 established the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, composed of 20 member states, with the aim of recommending a program for the implementation of the rights of the Palestinian people. A similar resolution has been adopted annually ever since.

1976: On April 12, West Bank municipal elections were held, under Israeli occupation in 24 municipal and local council; nationalist pro-PLO lists candidates won a sweeping victory in every major town.

On June 9, an emergency session of Arab League FMs, called for by Yasser Arafat, convened in Cairo, it called for an immediate ceasefire and the deployment of an Arab peacekeeping force in Lebanon after Lebanese Christian forces killed hundreds of Palestinians in the Kantara neighborhood and Tel Za'atar Refugee Camp.

On January 22, a PLO office opened in Moscow.

On November 24, 1976, UNGA Resolution 31/20 called for the establishment of a Palestinian State in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, led by the PLO.

1977: The thirteenth PNC session was held in Cairo from March 12-22, the first after almost three years due to the civil war in Lebanon. The new PNC increased to 293 members, adding at least 100 new members from the OPT, whose names, however, were kept secret to avoid harassment by Israel. The meeting called for the establishment of "an independent national state in Palestine". The session was named after Kamal Junblatt (left) who was assassinated in Lebanon.

On April 24, the Palestinian Liberation Front (PLF) is formed as a militant PLO faction, led by Mohammed Zeidan (Abu al-Abbas), after splitting from the PFLP-GC.

In May 1977, the US State Department released a Human Right Report, charging Israelis with the following crimes against the Palestinians: a) illegal expulsions from homes and properties; b) detention without charges; c) destruction of properties; d) no judicial remedy for detainees.

On August 8, 1977, US President Carter said the US will begin talks with the PLO if it were to accept UN Resolution 242 in its entirety.

On August 9, 1977, Israel rejected any PLO participation in peace negotiations, even if the PLO accepted UN Resolution 242.

1978: On January 4, 1978, Said Hamami, PLO Representative in London was assassinated.

In Oct., Yasser Arafat, accompanied by Colonel Qaddafi and King Hussein met for the first time since the 1970 civil war at Mufraq, Jordan.

On August 1, 1978, Izzeddin Kalak, PLO Representative in France, was assassinated in Paris.

On Nov. 15, the ninth Arab Summit met in Baghdad, and unequivocally rejecting the Camp David Accords, officially ostracizing Egypt from the Arab League, and establishing the Palestinian-Jordanian Joint Committee for aiding the steadfastness of the Palestinian people in the OPT.

1979: The fourteenth PNC session is held in Damascus from January 15-22, protesting President Sadat's visit to Jerusalem and the signing of the Camp David Accords as well as the Egyptian-Israel Peace Treaty. The meeting decided to establish revolutionary courts in accordance with a new legislative decree (No.5), prepared by Brigadier General Mahmoud Tawfiq Al-Rousan. The PLO Chairman authorized a future set of laws governing these courts, prisons and criminal law - all of which come into effect immediately

1980: On June 2, 1980, Palestinian mayors Basam Shaka'a (Nablus), Karim Kalaf (Ramallah) and Ibrahim Tawil (Al-Bireh) were wounded in bomb blasts carried out by members of the Gush Emunim's Jewish underground group. Shaka'a lost his legs.

On June 13, 1980, Heads of State and FM of the EC meeting in Venice issued a declaration, detailing their position on the Middle East, reiterating the right to existence and security of all states in the region, including the recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

1981: The fifteenth PNC session was held in Damascus with the number of members now reaching 315 (including 180 from the OPT), the session was opened with foreign dignitaries and 400 Palestinians invited as observers. It called for armed struggle in the OPT and approved dialogue with non-Zionist Jews.

On May 24-27, 1981, the DFLP held its second General Convention in Beirut, where some 200 delegates reelected Nayef Hawatmeh as Secretary General and Yasser Abed Rabbo as his deputy.

On August 6, 1981, Saudi Crown Prince Fahd proposes his eight-point peace plan to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the creation of a Palestinian state, Arab recognition of Israel's right to exist, and requesting the UNSC to establish guarantees for peace among all states of the region. The next day, the Arab League adopted the plan by an overwhelming majority

1982: On June 6, 1982, Israel launched "Operation Peace for Galilee" to push the PLO out of Lebanon, a three-month siege of Beirut began at the end of which the PLO was forced to evacuate its fighters.

On June 17, 1982, the PLO asked that 250,000 Palestinian refugees be granted permanent residency.

During the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. an estimated 15,000 civilians were killed.

On August 30, 1982, Arafat left Beirut by boat; an estimated 7,728 PLO guerrillas, and 2,651 PLA troops and 3,598 Syrian were also evacuated from Lebanon.

On September 1, 1982, US President Ronald Reagan, in an address to US population, urged 'self-rule' by Palestinians in an entity linked to Jordan. Former US President Carter endorsed Reagan's initiative for peace.

On November 25, 1982, Yasser Arafat opened a meeting of the 66 member PLO Central Council, seeking a united stand on the Reagan Plan. It adopted a new membership role for the PNC, expanding representation from OPT, and denounced US refusal to allow Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish to enter US for a UNICEF poetry festival in New York.

On December 9, 1982, Yasser Arafat rejected a Jordanian trusteeship role. In New York, PLO official Khalid al-Hassan (left) said the establishment of a Palestinian State was a prerequisite to PLO acceptance of the US peace plan.

1983: The sixteenth PNC session opens in Algiers in the aftermath of the PLO's departure from Beirut; all PLO factions attended, but the 180 members from the OPT were absent. On the agenda: rejecting the Reagan Plan; accepting the Brezhnev Plan; endorsement of the Arab League's Fez Resolution, reiterating Palestinian national unity as well as the PLO leadership; future relations with Jordan (confederation) and with Egypt (after abandoning Camp David). PNC Chairman Khalid Al-Fahum said that Palestinians do not want to destroy any state in the region, and that a Palestinian state will be established in the WBGS, with Jerusalem as its capital.

Yasser Arafat, in his speech to the PNC, supported endorsement of the Fez Plan, but said the Reagan Plan was not enough, although to turn it down flatly would deprive the PLO of its links with the US and of sources of badly needed financial aid.

Salah Khalaf (Abu Iyad, left) a leading PLO leader said that the PLO will step aside and let West Bank mayors negotiate with the US or Israel if Reagan recognized the Palestinian right to self-determination and the creation of a state.

1984: The seventeenth PNC session, called for by Fateh, convened in Amman, from November 22-29. King Hussein opened the session with a call for a Palestinian-Jordanian initiative for peace talks based on the formula of 'territory for peace', and the principles of Palestinian self-determination and a process in line with international legitimacy as expressed in UN Resolution 242. The PLO rejected the latter notion as basis for peace talks. Most PLO factions boycott the session, but the 257 delegates [251 are needed for a quorum] confirm the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians and reelected Arafat as Chairman. Members of the new Executive Committee were: Farouk Qaddoumi (Fateh), Mahmoud Abbas (Fateh), Abdel Rahim Ahmad (ALF), Mohammad 'Abbas (PLF), and the independents Jamal Sourani, Bishop Elia Khouri, Fahed Qawasmeh, Abdel Razzaq Yahya, Mohammad Milham and Jawid Al-Ghosein. Three seats were reserved for the boycotting factions (PFLP, DFLP and the Communist Party). Sheikh Abdel Hamid As-Sayyeh is elected speaker of the PNC.

1985: Yasser Arafat and King Hussein agreed on a common approach to achieve a Middle East peace accord calling for the exchange of land for peace within the context of an international conference

attended by the five permanent UNSC members and all parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict, whereby PLO delegates would attend as part of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian team.

On February 19, 1985, the PLO Executive Committee endorsed the Amman Agreement, reiterated opposition to UNSC Resolution 242, and stressed that a Palestinian-Jordanian federation can occur only after an independent Palestine state was formed.

1986: On February 19, 1986, King Hussein announced the end of year-long Jordanian-PLO efforts to draft a joint peace strategy, because the PLO cannot be convinced to accept UN Resolution 242, for lack of reasonable US guarantees about PLO participation in the proposed international conference.

On July 7, 1986, the Jordanian government closed all 25 Fateh offices in Amman [PLO offices remain open] and deported PLO leader Khalil Al-Wazir (left) on July 10 in response to a Fateh Revolutionary Council statement assailing Jordan policy.

1987: On December 8, 1987, four Palestinians were killed in Gaza and at least seven wounded when an Israeli truck collides with two vans of Palestinian workers returning from Israel; the act was seen as deliberate revenge for the 6 December killing of an Israeli. The next day, the funerals of the killed, attended by thousands, turn into fiery demonstrations - marking the beginning of the Intifada.

On December 11, 1987, during demonstrations at Balata RC, Israeli troops shot and killed at least three Palestinians. Clashes between demonstrating Palestinians and Israeli army throughout the OPT left over 500 Palestinians injured.

The eighteenth PNC session, held in Algiers from April 20-26, 1987, and entitled "Session of the Steadfastness of the Camps and the Masses of the OPT", strongly endorsed the convening of an international Middle East Peace Conference under the auspices of the UN and with the participation of the permanent members of UNSC as well as all concerned parties. Members increased by 40 to 451. A new 15 member Executive Committee was elected.

On April 27, after the PNC criticized the Camp David Accords, Egypt ordered the PLO offices in Cairo and Alexandria closed.

1988: On March 26, 1988, US Secretary of State George Shultz met with PNC members Professor Edward Said (right) and Ibrahim Abu Lughod (left) to discuss the Shultz Peace Proposals [negotiations based on UNSC Resolution 242 between Israel and a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation.]

On April 16, 1988, Palestinian leader, Khalil Al-Wazir (Abu Jihad) is assassinated at his home in Tunis by Israeli Security agents. The nineteenth PNC session convened in Algiers from 12-15 November 1988, and endorsed UNSC Resolution 242, linking it to the 'national right' of the Palestinian people.

On 15 November, two landmark documents were adopted: 'The Political Communique of the Palestinian National Council', affirming the PLO's determination to reach a comprehensive political settlement of the Arab Israeli conflict based on the principles of international law (including UN resolutions and the resolutions of Arab Summits), and the 'Declaration of Independence'.

On December 13, 1988, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat addressed the UNGA on the Question of Palestine in Geneva (where it has reconvened after the US refused to grant Arafat a visa), reiterating the PLO rejection of terrorism of all kinds, and inviting Israel to talk peace. Israel dismisses the offer

1989: On April 2, 1989, Yasser Arafat was elected by the Central Council of the PLO in Tunis as the first President of the State of Palestine.

On May 2, 1989 President Arafat, after meeting President Francois Mitterrand in France, said: "As for the PLO Covenant, the 25 year-old Palestinian National Charter, I believe there is an expression in French, 'C'est caduque' [It is null and void]" and urged peaceful coexistence of the State of Israel and the Palestinian State.

1990: On May 20, 1990, at the Red Cross HQ in Jerusalem, leading Palestinians, including Faisal Husseini, representing Palestinian unions, professional associations, women's committees and other grassroots organizations, began an open hunger strike to demand international protection for Palestinians against 'continuous massacres' of Palestinians in the OPT. The strike lasted till June 1.

On August 5, 1990, 16 MKs and PLO notables met in Jerusalem to discuss joint work for peace. This was the furthest any high-ranking group of elected Israeli officials had gone so far toward recognizing PLO as the legitimate representative of Palestinians.

1991: The twentieth PNC session held in Algiers on September 23-28, paved the way for a Palestinian delegation to participate in the Middle East Peace Conference, based on the principle of land-for-peace and UNSC Resolution 242 and 338. George Habash (PFLP) and Nayef Hawatmeh (DFLP) led an attack on the conditions of participation in the conference, but the PNC authorized the PLO Executive Committee to "continue its current efforts to achieve the best conditions that can ensure success for the peace process in accordance with PNC resolutions". The PNC approved expansion of the PLO Executive Committee from 15 to 18 members, re-elected Sheikh Abdel Hamid As-Sayeh as speaker, and accepted resignation of PLF leader Abu Al-Abbass, this complying with the US condition for resumption of US-PLO dialogue.

On October 31, 1991, the Middle East Peace Conference opened in Madrid with delegations from Israel, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon as well as the joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation. Haider Abdul Shafi headed the Palestinian team.

1992: On January 14, 1992, the Palestinian delegation presented a PLO-approved "outline model of the Palestinian Interim self-Government Authority (PISGA)" to the peace talks in Washington, D.C., as "the basis for negotiations during this phase after the necessary preparatory steps referred to in our agenda have been taken, including the total cessation of all settlement activities."

On October 15-17, 1992, the PLO Central Council met in Tunis (85 out of 105 members) to assess the peace process; the closing statement gave a 'green light' to the peace delegates. The majority vote is possible as opposition figures did not attend or withdrew from the final session. The PFLP voiced reservations, but signed the final statement.

1993: On September 13, 1993, the Israeli-Palestinian Declaration of Principles (DoP) is signed at the White House ceremony by Israeli FM Peres and PLO official Mahmoud Abbass (Abu Mazen), witnessed by US President Clinton, US Secretary of State Christopher and Russian FM Andreaj Kozyrev. A handshake between President Arafat and PM Rabin symbolically concludes the pact.

On October 10-11, 1993, the PLO Central Council met in Tunis -boycotted by PFLP, DFLP, PSF and PLF - to debate the DoP. It voted 63-8 (9 abstentions; 25 absent) to approve it, and asked the Executive Committee to form the Palestinian National Authority for the transitional period, headed by Arafat, to assume powers transferred by Israel.

On November 21, 1993, President Arafat ordered Palestinian forces to prepare to enter the OPT to form the Gaza-Jericho police force.

1994: On May 4, 1994, President Arafat and PM Rabin sign the 186-page Gaza-Jericho self rule accord (Cairo Agreement), in Cairo, witnessed by President Mubarak, Secretary of State Christopher, Russian FM Andrei Kozyrev, Norwegian FM Godal, and hundreds of others. Arafat hesitated at signing the accompanying maps over the wrong size of the Jericho area, but was reassured that the issue was subject to further negotiation.

On May 6, the PLO Executive Committee met in Tunis and approved the appointment of a 24-member Palestinian National Authority.

On May 26, the Palestinian Authority held its first official meeting in Tunis, presided over by Yasser Arafat.

On July 1, President Yasser Arafat returned to Palestine, crossing the Rafah border, welcomed by cheering crowds.

1995: On January 1, the first letter with a Palestinian stamp was sent from Gaza – by President Arafat - to the PLO official in Sweden.

On March 29, the PA Interior Ministry began issuing Palestinian passports.

On September 28, the PLO and Israel sign the 'Oslo 2' Agreement on the second stage of Palestinian Authority In Washington D.C..

In October 1995, President Yasser Arafat attended the special Commemorative Meeting on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the UN and addressed the UNGA.

1996: January 9, donor countries pledged \$1.365 billion in Paris to support developing Palestinian self-rule.

January 20, the first Palestinian Elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council took place. And on April 3rd the first PLC held its first meeting in Ramallah.

On June 5, a trilateral (Jordanian-Egyptian-Palestinian) summit concluded in Aqaba, endorsing peace and stressing the inevitability of the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with Jerusalem as its capital.

1997: On January 12, King Hussein visited Gaza for the first time since 1967 and met with President Arafat in an effort to break the deadlock in the Hebron negotiations.

On March 30-31, the Council of Arab League FMs met in Cairo and issued a communiqué calling for a halt in the normalization of relations with Israel, the resumption of the Arab boycott, and withdrawal from multilateral talks. The resolution was binding with the exception of Jordan and Egypt as they have already signed peace treaties.

1998: October 23, President Arafat and PM Netanyahu signed a deal negotiated over nine days at the Wye River summit, which was attended by US President Clinton and Jordan's ailing King Hussein. Accordingly: Palestinians are to step up efforts against alleged terrorists and confiscate weapons (according to a security plan with a timetable and under CIA supervision) and remove anti-Israel phrases from their covenant. In return, the Israelis are to withdraw from a further 13% of the West Bank, release several hundred of the 3,000 Palestinian political prisoners, allow the Palestinian airport in Gaza to open, and provide the safe passage for Palestinians to move between the WBGS. Both sides will establish a joint Israeli-Palestinian Committee to discuss a third troop withdrawal.

On November 24, Palestinians inaugurated Gaza International Airport which Israel had hitherto kept closed over security concerns. Under the Wye River Accord however, Israel will continue to control the airspace, pre-approve all flight schedules and passenger lists, and maintain the authority to shut down the airport at any time.

On December 10, the Palestinian Central Council met in Gaza to vote on approving a letter from President Arafat to President Clinton, explaining the ramifications of 1996 PNC decision to amend the Palestinian National Charter.

On December 14, In the presence of President Clinton, hundreds of Palestinians officials revoke parts of the Palestinian Charter calling for the destruction of Israel.

1999: April 21-23, 1999, after a meeting between EU diplomats and Faisal Hussein at Orient House, Israeli PM Netanyahu moved to close its doors. The next day, procedures began to shut three other Palestinian offices. Britain expressed its deep concern at the Israeli decision and Israeli President Weizman condemned the closing of Orient House.

On September 4, 1999, Israeli PM Ehud Barak and President Arafat signed the revised Wye Accord at Sharm Es-Sheikh, paving the way for talks on a permanent peace settlement, witnessed by President Mubarak, US Secretary of State Albright and King Abdallah II. The deal was approved the next day by the Israeli Cabinet by a vote of 21-2.

On November 8, 1999, the Israeli and PLO/ PA negotiating teams - headed by Oded Eran and Yasser Abed Rabbo - met in Ramallah to start final status talks aimed at forging a final peace agreement by September 2000.

On September 13, 1999, Faisal Hussein, PLO Executive Committee member in charge of Jerusalem affairs, said there was no future for Ma'ale Adumim but evacuation, "creating a mixture of Israeli settlements with Palestinian cities is nothing but a ticking time bomb that will only lead to situations like those in Kosovo".

2000: On February 2-3, 2000, the PLO Central Council convened in Gaza, to discuss the declaration of the Palestinian State, the peace process and other issues of national importance. Hamas, Islamic Jihad, PELP-GC and Sa'iqa boycotted the meeting. The concluding statement announced the decision to declare the independent Palestinian State with al-Quds as its capital this year, stressing this was a natural right of the Palestinian people and the realization of the 1988 Declaration of Independence. It also emphasized the right of return for Palestinian refugees and that Israeli withdrawal must include all Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem.

On February 3, 2000, the PLC passed a draft law on the Independence of the Judiciary, promoting the separation of powers and financial independence of the judicial system.

On September 9-10, Arafat opens the PLO Central Committee meeting in Gaza to discuss on unilateral declaration of statehood, and announced that talks with Israel would resume on 11 September for four weeks, as requested by President Clinton. Participants voted (58- 15, with 3 abstention, 53 absent) to postpone plans to declare statehood unilaterally after 13 September to give "peace another chance" until 15 November, but reiterated the Palestinian right to full sovereignty over East Jerusalem and the right of return.

On July 11, 2000, the US-sponsored Camp David Summit convened, lasting until 25 July, but end without an agreement.

2001: On January 21, 2001, Israel and the PLO/ PA begin marathon talks at Taba aimed at reaching a final status agreement before the election for PM in Israel due on 6 February. The talks continue for a week before ending without agreement.

On March 24, 2001, a Palestinian leadership meeting (PLO/ PA) under President Arafat (right) in Ramallah rejected any selective application of the Mitchell Report by Israel, saying it must be accepted "as a whole" and be considered as a complement to the Jordanian-Egyptian initiative.

On May 31, 2001, Faisal Hussein, PLO Executive Committee member and in charge of the Jerusalem portfolio, died suddenly of a heart attack in Kuwait. Tens of thousands of Palestinians from the West Bank, Jerusalem and from within Israel marched, waving Palestinian flags and posters, from Ramallah to Jerusalem to bury him at the Al-Aqsa Mosque. During the funeral procession, checkpoints were left open and Israeli police retreated from East Jerusalem, diverting traffic from the route of mourners.

2002: On February 18, 2002, PLC Speaker Ahmad Qrei'a (Abu Ala') said in a press statement that the ideas he reached with FM Peres in December 2001 were formulated as a draft for a final agreement in which Israel would acknowledge the 4 June 1967 borders of the future Palestinian State.

On May 2, 2002, hours after Israeli troops withdrew from his besieged Ramallah HQ, President Arafat emerged from the compound for the first time in 34 days, greeted by a crowd of hundreds of

Palestinians. On July 16, 2002, Quartet leaders met in New York to discuss a plan of action to end Israel's occupation and achieve the vision of two states within three years, but fail to agree on the future of President Arafat with the UN, EU and Russia insisting that he be allowed to head his people's statehood movement.

On September 11, 2002, during a PLC meeting in Al-Bireh (left), the PA Cabinet resigned en masse when it became apparent that a majority of PLC members would vote 'no-confidence' in the Cabinet appointed by President Arafat in June.

2003: On February 14, 2003, President Arafat agreed to appoint a PM following the Quartet demand, and said he would convince the PLC and the PLO Central Council to discuss the implementation of his decision.

On March 8, 2003, the PLO Central Council ended two days of deliberations in Ramallah, during which it accepted the nomination of Mahmoud Abbass as the first PA PM. The closing statement read by Council Speaker Salim Zanoun stressed the Palestinian wish for a peaceful settlement of the conflict with Israel based on full Israeli withdrawal from all the OPT, and for an independent Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital. The Council also discusses a proposed constitution for the future Palestinian State and national unity talks.

On March 10, 2003, the PLC approved by vote of 64-3, with four abstentions, the creation of the post of PM. In an interview with AFP Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh says that creating the PM post "will not change anything to our national reality and is a game with the Zionist and American aggressors."

On March 15, 2003, a PLO Executive Committee statement welcomed President Bush's remarks of the previous day, saying the US commitment to the 'Road Map', without any modification, was a "step in the right direction." However, Arafat's adviser Nabil Abu Rudeineh said "President Bush has so far said nothing about the implementation of the 'Road Map.' Anything short of that will not yield any results. It is not enough."

On March 18, 2003, the PLC voted 69-0 with one abstention on a new version of the Basic Law, establishing the PM post. The PM's approved powers exceeded those envisioned by President Arafat.

On April 23, 2003, the PA leadership struggle ended after Egyptian intelligence chief Omar Suleiman intervened with an Egyptian guarantee regarding President Arafat's position as PA President and his personal safety, and President Arafat approved the government proposed by PMdesignate Mahmoud Abbas. According to the compromise, Abbas will be Interior Minister and Mohammed Dahlan Minister of State in charge of Preventive Security, while President Arafat will retain Command of the General Intelligence and National Security, and Hani Al-Hassan will be the national security adviser. In addition, there is a European promise to work for lifting the siege on President Arafat and the Muqata'a.

On April 29-30, 2003, PMdesignate Mahmoud Abbas's 25-member Cabinet passed the PLC vote of confidence and Mahmoud Abbas was sworn in as the first Palestinian PM together with his new cabinet, in which he also served as Interior Minister.

On June 17, 2003, in Gaza City, PM Abbas met with representatives of the 13 main Palestinian factions to discuss their conditions for a possible ceasefire with Israel, including an end to Israel's assassination

of Palestinians and other military strikes, the release of prisoners, and an Israeli withdrawal to pre-September 2000 positions.

Hamas leader Abdul Aziz Rantisi said any possible ceasefire would only relate to Israeli civilians inside Israel but not to soldiers and settlers in WBGS.

On September 3, 2003, PM Abbas formally agreed to the appointment of Sa'eb Erekat as head of negotiations and contacts with Israel and the US.

On September 6, 2003, PM Abbas submitted his resignation, naming Israel's unwillingness to implement its 'Road Map' commitments and to undertake constructive measures as main reasons while also blaming the US and the international community for not pressuring Israel, as well as the Palestinian side with regard to incitement, the making of accusations, and overall lack of support.

On September 7, 2003, the Fateh Central Committee convened at the Muqata'a to discuss a replacement for PM Abbas, nominating PLC Speaker Ahmad Qrei'a as PM-designate.

On September 11, 2003, in response to PM Abbas resignation, Israel's PM office said it would not deal with a PA ruled by Chairman Arafat or anyone of his choosing, while FM Shalom said Israel would not negotiate with Arafat, and Health Minister Dan Naveh urged for the expelling of Arafat immediately, supported by nine other Ministers. Following the decision of the Israeli Cabinet to 'remove' President Arafat, some 4,000 Palestinians arrived at the Muqata'a to express their solidarity while thousands more staged pro-Arafat demonstrations throughout the WBGS.

On November 12, 2003, PM Qrei'a's cabinet won a vote of confidence from the PLC. The new Ministers were subsequently sworn in by President Arafat. In his augural address, Qrei'a said he would work for an international conference chaired by US President Bush with the intention of striking a final status peace deal, as "interim agreements will only worsen the situation." He further pledged to continue economic and security reforms, to seek a ceasefire with Israel and all armed factions, and prepare for general PA elections by June 2004.

On November 19, 2003, at a meeting in Gaza attended by Egyptian intelligence officials, PM Qrei'a asked all Palestinian factions to agree to a "unilateral ceasefire" as a provisional truce to apply to all attacks against Israel and remain in effect until formal ceasefire terms are agreed upon by the parties concerned. Hamas leader Sheikh Ahmad Yassin announced that he would not consider instituting another ceasefire until he sees what Israel is prepared to offer in exchange.

2004: On January 8, 2004, PM Ahmad Qrei'a stated that the Palestinians would seek to forge a single binational state with Israel if Israel were to carry out its West Bank separation plan, saying, "This is an apartheid solution to put the Palestinians in cantons.... Who can accept this? We will go for a one-state solution... There's no other solution," adding, "The wall is to unilaterally mark the borders... It will kill the Road Map and kill the two-state vision". Israel condemned the statement, calling it a direct threat to the very existence of the State of Israel.

On January 10, 2004, the PLO Executive Committee met to discuss the current situation and reiterated the Palestinian right to declare an independent state in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and Arab parts of Jerusalem, in the absence of a peace deal with Israel and in response to Israel's threats of unilateral action.

On January 23, 2004, in an interview with the Guardian, President Arafat expressed his fear that “time is running out for a two state solution” due to Israel’s construction of the separation barrier and its settlement policy.

On January 24, 2004, Hamas Abdul Aziz Rantisi (left) said in an interview with the Guardian that Hamas could declare a 10-year truce with Israel if it withdrew from territory occupied since 1967, stating that Hamas had come to the conclusion that it had become “difficult to liberate all our land at this stage, so we accept a phased liberation.” He added, “we accept a state in the West Bank, including Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. We propose a 10-year truce in return for [Israeli] withdrawal and the establishment of a state.”

On March 11, 2004, at the opening of the PLC’s ninth session in Ramallah, President Arafat said he welcomed Israel’s planned pull out from Gaza as a step towards a full withdrawal from the OPT and called on the Quartet to put down binding mechanisms on both parties in order to carry out the implementation of the Road Map simultaneously and in a balanced manner under international auspices and supervision.

On March 22, 2004, Israeli forces assassinated Hamas founder and spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmad Yassin as he leaves morning prayers at the Omari Mosque in Gaza City. Abdul Aziz Rantisi became the new ‘general commander of Hamas in Gaza Strip, Khalid Masha’al the overall leader of Hamas. In the WB, thousands express their condolences at Arafat HQ in Ramallah.

On August 4, 2004, Palestinians gather in support of President Arafat as he celebrated his 75th birthday.

On September 8, 2004, Egyptian FM Ahmad Abul Gheith and Intelligence Chief Omar Suleiman discussed the future of the Gaza Strip with President Arafat in Ramallah, saying that “Egypt cannot intervene in the Palestinian issue with the required weight and depth in the shadow of continuing Israeli attacks on the Palestinians.” On September 20, President Arafat convened the PLO Executive Committee to discuss strengthening Palestinian unity, the voter registration drive, and consider Egypt’s offer to train security services.

On October 10, 2004, President Arafat chaired a meeting of the National Security Council and one of the Fateh Executive Committee, both of which call on the international community, particularly the Quartet, to move urgently and work to stop the atrocities committed in the northern Gaza Strip, and force the Israeli Government to respect UN resolutions. President Arafat said in an interview with the London-based As-Sharq Al-Awsat (October 5) that like South Africa’s Nelson Mandela he will step down from office once he has ruled over an independent state.

On October 30, 2004, the PLO Executive Committee met at the Muqata’a in Ramallah, marking the first time in decades that the Palestinian leadership convened without the presence of President Arafat

On November 11, 2004, the death of Yasser Arafat in Percy Military Hospital in Clamart in Paris at 2:30 am GMT was announced at dawn in Ramallah by the PA and confirmed minutes later by Hospital Spokesperson Christian Estripeau. The PA declared a 40-day mourning period. PLC Speaker Rawhi Fattouh was sworn in as interim Chairperson of the PA, as stipulated in the PA Constitution. The PLO Executive Committee elected Mahmoud Abbas to replace Arafat as head of the PLO. The Fateh Central Committee, meanwhile, elected Farouk Qaddoumi to replace Arafat as the movement’s leader.

On December 25, 2004, in Ramallah, Mahmoud Abbas delivered his first campaign speech, pledging to preserve Arafat's legacy and to fulfill Palestinian dreams of statehood on the bases of UN Resolution 242 and 194. Abbas further called on Israel to release all Palestinian prisoners, including Marwan Barghouti, and to withdraw from all of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

2005: On January 9, 2005, thousands of foreign and local observers monitored Palestinian presidential elections. At the end of the day, PLO Chairman Mahmoud Abbas was declared the winner, with 62% of the vote (and a 71% turnout rate).

On Jan. 31, 2005 Pres. Abbas met Pres. Putin in Moscow on his first trip abroad since being elected in a bid to win Moscow's support in the upcoming peace talks with Israel.

On February 8, 2005 the first high-level summit in Sharm Es-Sheikh was held between Pres. Mahmoud Abbas, Israeli PM Sharon, Pres. Mubarak and King Abdallah II. Pres. Abbas announced the cessation of hostilities and an agreement on security coordination as well as a coordinated effort on the disengagement from Gaza and the northern West Bank.

The Arab League Summit held in March from 22-23, 2005 in Algiers stated that peace is the "strategic option" of Arab countries in terms of settling the conflict with Israel. The summit communique "affirms in this context the Arab peace initiative approved by the Arab summit in Beirut in 2002".

On May 26, 2005 Pres. George Bush met Pres. Abbas in the Oval Office at the White House and urged the Palestinian Pres. to tackle the dismantling of 'militant groups', also calling on Israel to end its settlement enterprise, incl. in Jerusalem, and other activities that could prejudice negotiations on a final peace deal.

King Abdallah II attended on June 30, 2005 the Fateh Central Committee meeting in Amman. The topic of the meeting was the convening of Fateh's 6th conference and Palestinian strategy.

The G8 summit held its session on July 8, 2005 in Gleneagles, Scotland, pledging to provide the PA with up to US \$ 3 billion in the next few years in order to boost Middle East peace prospects.

On Dec. 19, 2005 Hamas political leader Khalid Masha'al (left) rejected the EU warning that aid to the PA be halted should Hamas win next month's (Jan. 2006) PLC elections without renouncing violence as a "flagrant interference" in the Palestinians' internal affairs.
