

# REGAINING THE INITIATIVE

# PALESTINIAN STRATEGIC OPTIONS TO END ISRAELI OCCUPATION

A REPORT BY



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This document contains views shared in a number of workshops and other informal meetings between a group of Palestinians from inside and outside the Occupied Territory. The workshops were convened by the Oxford Research Group and were made possible by a grant from the European Union.

The opinions expressed in this report do not reflect the perspective of any single political faction. They only reflect the deep concern the participants have about Palestine and its just cause. All the participants took part in their individual capacity.

The document outlines a number of scenarios and Palestinian strategic options.

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The current negotiations in the 'Annapolis' peace initiative have reached a critical point. On the sixtieth anniversary of the Nakba, after twenty years of fruitless negotiation for a Palestinian state on the basis of the historic recognition by the PLO in 1988 of the existence of the State of Israel, it is time for Palestinians to reconsider this entire strategic path to their national objectives. Although already greatly inflated beyond the original 57% allotted in UN General Assembly Resolution 181 in 1947, Israel shows no sign of accepting even the 78% of historic Palestine that lies within the 1967 borders, but continues to encroach beyond them in order to create new 'facts on the ground' that will progressively render an independent Palestinian state on the remaining 22% inoperable. A weak Israeli government is confronted by strong internal resistance to any compromises whatsoever, while a divided Israeli public is not ready to take the necessary risks. Indeed, Israel refuses formally and consistently even to accept the fact that it is an occupying power with concomitant duties in international law. Instead Israel calculates that a negotiated two state outcome on the 1988 basis is permanently available, and supposes that it can perpetually hold out for better alternatives to a negotiated agreement. The Israeli position rests on the assumption that procrastination will continue to tilt the strategic balance increasingly in Israel's favour. In short, Israel is not a serious negotiating partner.

The central proposal in this Report is that Israel's strategic calculations are wrong. Israeli strategic planners overestimate their own strength and underestimate the strategic opportunities open to Palestinians. There are four main perceived alternatives to a negotiated agreement that are attractive to Israel and therefore prevent Israel from reaching a final settlement on the terms offered. It is a key strategic aim of Palestinians to make clear to Israel why these four alternatives are simply not available.

First, the default option of prolonging negotiations indefinitely by pretending that 'progress has been made' and that suspensions are temporary as during the past twenty years, with ongoing encroachments and military incursions, few burdens, and considerable financial and other benefits from continuing occupation.

Second, a pseudo provisional 'two state agreement' with a strengthened but severely constrained PA masquerading as a Palestinian government while Israel disaggregates and picks off the 'historic issues' and retains permanent control. Third, a unilateral separation dictated by Israel.

Fourth, a control of the occupied territories by Egypt and Jordan.

But these four alternatives are unacceptable to Palestinians. They do not take Palestinian national aspirations seriously. Indeed, they aim to undermine Palestinians' national identity and rights altogether. So, if Israel refuses to negotiate seriously for a genuine two-state outcome, Palestinians can and will block all four of them by switching to an alternative strategy made up of a combination of four linked reorientations to be undertaken singly or together.

First, the definitive closing down of the 1988 negotiation option so long abused by Israel. This blocks the first two preferred Israeli alternatives to a genuine negotiated agreement.

Second, the reconstitution of the Palestinian Authority so that it will not serve future Israeli interests by legitimising indefinite occupation and protecting Israel from bearing its full burden of the costs of occupation (it may become a Palestinian Resistance Authority). This also blocks the first two preferred Israeli alternatives, and also helps to block the third.

Third, the elevation of 'smart' resistance over negotiation as the main means of implementation for Palestinians, together with a reassertion of national unity through reform of the PLO, the empowerment of Palestinians, and the orchestrated eliciting of regional and international third party support. The central aim will be to maximise the cost of continuing occupation for Israel, and to make the whole prospect of unilateral separation unworkable.

Fourth, the shift from a two state outcome to a (bi-national or unitary democratic) single state outcome as Palestinians' preferred strategic goal. This reopens a challenge to the existence of the State of Israel in its present form, but in an entirely new and more effective way than was the case before 1988.

Is this what Israel wants? Israel cannot prevent Palestinians from a strategic reorientation along these lines. Does Israel really want to force Palestinians to take these steps?

The result of a reorientation of Palestinian strategy will clearly be much worse for Israel than the negotiation of a genuine two state outcome on the basis of the existing 1988 offer. Although many Palestinians may still prefer a genuine negotiated two state solution, a failure of the present Annapolis initiative will greatly strengthen those who argue against this. Most Palestinians are then likely to be convinced that a negotiated agreement is no longer possible. What is undoubtedly the case is that a reversal of the 1988 offer and the adoption of an alternative strategy is much preferable for Palestinians to any of the four preferred Israeli alternatives to a negotiated agreement. So, if current negotiations fail, Palestinians will be driven to replace the 1988 offer by a new strategy, not just rhetorically but in reality. The negotiated two state outcome will then be definitively cancelled. Palestinians will ensure that Israel is seen to be responsible for the closure of their 20 year offer. Israel will have lost an historic and non- recurrent opportunity to end the conflict and to secure its own future survival on the best terms available for Israel.

**In short Palestinians are able to block all four of Israel's best alternatives to a genuine negotiated outcome via a fundamental reorientation of strategy. Israel is not able to block this reorientation. The result of such a reorientation would be far worse for Israel than that of a genuine negotiated outcome. The result of such a reorientation would be far better for Palestinians than any of Israel's best alternatives to a genuine negotiated outcome. Therefore, when Palestinians calculate that a genuine negotiated outcome is no longer available, they undoubtedly will re-orientate their strategy, not only rhetorically but in reality, and will finally close down their twenty year 1988 offer.**

Palestinians, therefore, have three main immediate parallel strategic tasks, which it is the central purpose of this Report to outline.

**The first strategic task** is the detailed working out of a fundamental reorientation of Palestinian strategy along the lines outlined above, including the new preferred strategic path, and the full range of mean

of implementation. All of this is commented upon in the main body of the Report. This task must be undertaken in all seriousness and on the assumption that present negotiations will fail. Even if only used as a strategic threat in order to force Israel to negotiate seriously, the intention must still be to implement the new strategy should negotiations fail. An empty threat is strategically no threat. A mere bluff does not work. So it is now an urgent priority for Palestinians to agree and work out in detail their alternative to a negotiated agreement and to communicate this as soon as possible and as forcefully as possible to Israel. This must be the immediate focus of unified national strategic planning that includes all Palestinians, from different backgrounds, generations, genders, and political affiliations, both those living in the occupied territories and those living elsewhere.

**The second strategic task** is to make sure that Israel understands the terms on which the 1988 offer is still held open by Palestinians and is clear about what Palestinians can and will do should these terms not be met. Has a national movement ever made a concession on a similar scale to that made by Palestinians in 1988? In negotiations Israelis repeatedly say ‘we do all the giving and the Palestinians do all the taking’. This is the opposite of the truth. Palestinians continue to demand no more than 22% of their historic land. It is Israel that has done all the taking through continuous government-backed settler encroachment on this remaining 22%. The second strategic task for Palestinians, therefore, is to spell out the minimum terms acceptable for negotiating a fully independent Palestinian state on 1967 borders, and to explain clearly why this is by far the best offer that Israel will ever get, including guarantees for Israel’s future security from neighbouring Arab states. Palestinians will set out a clear timetable for judging whether this has been attained or is attainable. It is Palestinians who will judge ‘success’, and it is Palestinians who will decide how long to persist in negotiations and when the moment has come to change strategy entirely.

**The third strategic task** is to ensure that it is the Palestinian discourse that frames international discussion of the Palestinian future. This is elucidated in the Report. The aim is to make clear to regional and international third parties that in all this it is not Palestinians who are lacking in commitment to a negotiated outcome, but Israel. Palestinians have persisted for twenty years with their historic offer of 1988. Israel has refused to honour it. That is why Israeli protestations are no longer credible to Palestinians. Israel has given Palestinians no option but to look elsewhere for fulfilment of their national aspirations. Israel bears full responsibility should negotiations fail.

In conclusion, it needs to be understood clearly that we Palestinians will never allow Israel to continue its encroachments and domination under the pretence of insincere negotiations, nor to go on imagining falsely that there are better alternatives available to Israel. Israel will have to decide whether to accept the time-limited negotiation offer that is evidently in its own best interest, or not. And we Palestinians will then act accordingly at a time and in a way of our own choosing.

It is now up to us as Palestinians to regain the strategic initiative and to take control of our own national destiny. Israel, regional partners, and international actors, must understand definitively that Palestinians will not be divided in their strategic objectives, and that the Palestinian people, steadfast and determined, will never give up their national struggle.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## THE CURRENT CONTEXT

On the sixtieth anniversary of the Nakba, Palestinians find themselves as far away from realising their strategic national objectives as ever. Expectations from the current phase of negotiations, launched in the final year of the Bush administration in the USA, are very low. The 'Annapolis' initiative is seen to promise, not more, but less than previous attempts, such as those made in the final year of the previous Clinton administration. The 'Road Map' includes deeply ambivalent conditioning factors unacceptable to Palestinians, such as talk of 'provisional borders' and the open-ended acknowledgement of changing 'facts on the ground' contained in the American 'Letter of Guarantees' of 2004. With the passing away of the first generation of Israeli leaders and deep shifts in the demographic make-up of Israeli society through changing patterns of immigration and ideological commitment, Israel lacks the unity and strong leadership necessary to deliver the genuine negotiated two- state agreement that is the only acceptable outcome for Palestinians. Above all, as outlined in the Executive Summary, Israel sees no need to do this, given its widespread assumption that a two-state solution is always available and the belief that there are in any case more attractive alternatives to a negotiated agreement that remain open.

In these circumstances the Palestine Strategy Study Group has discussed the strategic implications of the present situation for Palestinians, and has concluded that there is an urgent need for Palestinians to reassess their short-term and long-term national strategy in order to be able to respond in a unified way to whatever emerges from the Annapolis process by the end of this year.

## THE PALESTINE STRATEGY STUDY GROUP

The Palestine Strategy Study Group is made up of Palestinians who live in Israel, in the occupied territories, and in the diaspora. The participants come from a wide cross-section of Palestinian constituencies in order to represent as many strands of Palestinian society as possible. Each speaks only for himself or herself, but it is hoped that the range of backgrounds and affiliations means that conclusions reached reflect a broad spectrum of Palestinian opinion.

The Group met for extended three-day workshops in order to analyse and discuss strategic options for Palestinians in the months coming up to the sixtieth anniversary of the Nakba. These sixty years have been very long and bitter years for Palestinians. But the main focus of the Group is not on the past. It is on the future. What options lie ahead? What overall strategy best equips the Palestinians to achieve success in their unwavering determination to achieve national independence? How can Palestinians refocus on the strategic objectives that all of them share? Can a common platform be articulated that will enable Palestinians to speak with one voice regionally and internationally? Can Palestinians regain the initiative in determining their own future?

This report summarises the interim conclusions of the Palestine Strategy Study Group. We say 'interim', because the analysis of strategic options and the formulation of an agreed strategic path ahead is an ongoing process. It is hoped that Palestinian leaders will join together in formulating an integrated Palestinian strategy that can command the enthusiastic support of all Palestinians, and that fellow Palestinians from every background will participate.

## AIMS OF THE REPORT

This report aims to do two things.

First, the report aims to encourage the development of a unified and comprehensive Palestinian strategy for ending occupation that commands general support from all Palestinians. The suffering of the Palestinian people and the denial of their just aspirations for national self-determination have gone on long enough. To this end the report considers strategic options, develops analytic tools for evaluating those options, and defines an optimum strategic path ahead. The aim is to achieve the greatest clarity possible in these analytic tasks.

Second, the report itself constitutes a part of that strategy. This is a function of the strategic process. As a text it aims to fulfil roles that are integral to the strategy mapped out within it. This can be seen through the way in which the report addresses multiple audiences. The primary audience is Palestinian. Here, as already mentioned, the purpose of the report is to articulate a common platform that will unite fellow Palestinians in order to strengthen the effectiveness of our unified voice. The aim is to support national leaders in their efforts to formulate an agreed national programme with clear goals and tools for implementation.

But there are also other audiences. Given the nature of strategy, as commented on below, there also needs to be an awareness of the likely impact of the report on other readers - opponents and third parties. Since a major function of the report is to promote the still relatively little known Palestinian discourse as the dominant discourse, a further important aim is to minimise misunderstanding or misrepresentation of it.

The report is not written in academic or specialist language. The simpler and more direct the language the better so long as the key ideas come across strongly. The kind of strategic thinking identified as essential in this report is not over-technical or inaccessible. On the contrary, it must be clearly understood by all those Palestinians in whose name it is formulated. This, too, also contributes to the aim of maximising participation by Palestinians.

Nor does this report go into the finer details of sub-strategies and tactics, important though these are in operationalising strategy. For example, a huge range of actions come under the broad heading 'resistance'. A report of this length cannot specify, evaluate and aggregate these individually. This is a further task of application in particular contexts - and another way in which this is an open text to which further contributions are warmly invited.

As for the ongoing task of updating and revision, it is anticipated that some elements of the report are likely to endure (notably long-term objectives), whereas other elements are likely to become dated, either through the eruption of unexpected events, or through the anticipated passing of time-bound phases (such as the current 2008 Bush peace initiative) and subsequent readjustments.

## STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The structure of the rest of the report follows the logic of the strategic thinking that has guided the deliberations of the Palestine Strategy Study Group. This is the path that Palestinian readers are invited to retrace critically for themselves. It is of course hoped that they will broadly agree with the main thrust of the strategy. But, where they do not, it is hoped that they will suggest positive amendments and in this way participate in and come to own the process.

### 1 Introduction

### 2 Prerequisites

Prerequisites are those things that are required for there to be an effective Palestinian strategy in the first place. The Palestine Strategy Study Group identifies three prerequisites.

### 3 Strategic Objectives

Objectives here means 'strategic objectives' - the overarching purposes or goals that the entire strategic effort is directed to attain. The Palestine Strategy Study Group hopes that all Palestinians will agree on the three national strategic objectives stated here.

### 4 Scenarios

Scenarios are possible futures. That is to say, they are possible political frameworks within which strategy needs to be defined. It is important to consider a wide range of scenarios in order to build flexible contingencies, to undertake comparative analysis, to identify the outcomes that are preferred (desired) and dispreferred (undesired) by Palestinians, Israelis and third parties, to work out how some may be promoted (and in what order) and others may be blocked - and to orchestrate the optimum strategic pathway, and alternative pathways, accordingly.

### 5 Relative Power Distribution

The analysis of relative power lies at the heart of strategic thinking. It is the main link between objectives and strategies. Power analysis revisits the scenarios in order to determine what is and what is not in the power of Palestinians, Israelis and third parties to achieve either on their own or via the actions of others. Power analysis assesses the capacity of agents to convert their aspirations into reality. This injects hard-headed realism into the procedure. It identifies the main obstacles that block preferred strategic pathways, and it suggests what can and should be done to reduce or remove them.

## **6 Strategic Options and Preferred Strategic Path**

The evaluation and comparison of strategic options is the culmination of the preceding analysis. At this stage strategic thinking is able to weigh up alternatives in terms of relative preferences and relative capability, to understand linkages between them, and to make informed decisions about the order and sequencing of strategic priorities.

The preferred strategic path is the final strategic route chosen from the present situation to the ultimate strategic objective.

## **7 Means of Implementation**

Means of implementation are the array of policy tools available to Palestinians in moving down the preferred strategic path towards the strategic objectives. They range across the spectrum of 'types of power' discussed below. One of the most important benefits of strategic analysis of the kind pursued here is that all means of implementation are now clearly focused on the task of increasing pressure at the points selected by Palestinians, and are orchestrated within a single national effort to which all Palestinians can contribute at every level of society.

## **8 Revision Points and Assessment of Alternatives**

In light of the above, Palestinians now have pre-agreed staging-posts where they can pause and review progress. Palestinians have clearly defined what counts as 'success' in each case. Decisions can be taken on when and whether to persist in certain directions, and on when or whether to change tack. Fallback positions have been prepared and thought through. Alternative interim goals and strategic paths are ready.

## **9 Outline of a Strategic Action Plan**

An action plan suggests the sequence of actions required to initiate implementation of the strategic plan.

## 2 PREREQUISITES

The Palestine Strategy Study Group suggests that the following three requirements are essential for there to be an effective Palestinian national strategy that is unified, strongly formulated, and clearly communicated to the outside world. All three lie firmly within the capacity of Palestinians to achieve. They can be acted upon straight away. This Report calls on all Palestinians to make this happen.

### 1 THE REQUIREMENT OF A NEW DISCOURSE

An essential prerequisite for seizing the strategic initiative is to shape the nature of the discourse within which the issue of Palestinian independence is discussed.

A discourse is a framework of language within which verbal communication takes place. It is the discourse that determines what can and cannot be said within it and how this is to be understood. At the moment the Palestinian national struggle is nearly always discussed in terms of other peoples' discourses. This is like playing all football matches on other teams' pitches. It is always an away game - we begin one goal down. Palestinians must refuse to participate on those terms. We must explain and promote our own discourse and make this the primary language within which the Palestinian issue is discussed.

Two international discourses in particular are inappropriate for the Palestinian case. Unfortunately these are the usual frameworks adopted by the international community.

The first is a **peacemaking discourse**, which assumes that the problem is one of 'making peace' between two equal partners, both of whom have symmetric interests, needs, values and beliefs. This is the wrong discourse because there are not two equal conflict parties. There is an occupying power and a suppressed and physically scattered people not allowed even to have its own identity legally recognised.

The second is a **statebuilding discourse**, which assumes that the problem is one of 'building a state' along the lines attempted in Cambodia or El Salvador or Mozambique - or even to a certain extent in Afghanistan. This is the wrong discourse because there is no Palestinian state.

The result of the dominance of these two discourses (not to mention the prevailing Israeli-US discourse) is that the essence of the Palestinian problem is not recognised in the first place. This is disastrous for the Palestinian cause.

The Palestine Strategy Study Group strongly urges fellow Palestinians to seize their destiny in their own hands by refusing even to enter these other discourses until it is appropriate to do so and to focus all their energies on explaining and promoting the prior Palestinian discourse. The appropriate discourse uses the language, not of peacemaking or statebuilding, but of national self-determination, of liberation, of emancipation from occupation, of individual and collective rights, of international law. This must be the primary discourse. Only when the priorities defined within the primary Palestinian discourse of emancipation are recognised can the hitherto rightly subordinated discourses of peacemaking and statebuilding move properly into the foreground.

Perhaps the most appropriate comparable discourse here is the discourse of decolonisation. This needs to be clearly understood by the international community. For example before 1947 Gandhi's primary discourse in India was not a peace-making discourse, because he was not making peace with Britain but struggling to end British occupation. And it was not a state building discourse because there was not yet an Indian state. His primary discourse was one of emancipation and national struggle. The same is true of the Palestinian discourse. Palestinians are of course ready to enter serious negotiations. They are more ready to do this than Israelis. But such peacemaking has to be defined within a context that genuinely aims to deliver Palestinian national aspirations. Anything less is simply not peacemaking but a confirmation of continuing occupation and repression.

There is no space to pursue this in detail further here, except to note the importance of combating a central idea in the peacemaking discourse that what is at issue is two equivalent 'Israeli' and 'Palestinian' 'narratives'. No doubt there are Israeli and Palestinian narratives. But what is centrally at issue is not a mere Palestinian narrative, but a series of incontrovertible facts - facts of expulsion, exclusion, dominance and occupation bitterly lived out by Palestinians day by day over the past 60 years and still being endured at the present time. This is not a narrative. It is a lived reality. Finding the best strategy for ending this lived reality is the main purpose of this Report. Transforming the discourse within which it is discussed is a major part of that effort.

For example, here are some undeniable facts. In 1922 there were 84,000 Jews living in Palestine (census data). By 1947 this number had risen to 608,000. Much of this was the result of deliberate policy to build immigrant Jewish numbers in order to create a Jewish state in Palestine. At that time (1947) there were 1,364,000 Palestinians. Palestinians owned some 95% of the land where they had lived for centuries. Yet in November 1947 UN General Assembly Resolution 181 called for a division in which Jewish land would be 57.12% and Palestinian land would be 42.88%. This was not a Security Council Resolution. The Jewish State of Israel was declared in May 1948. By the time of the ceasefire in 1949 Israel held 78% of historic Palestine and the Palestinians were left with 22%. The 1949 Armistice Line was not and is not a legally defined political border. UN General Assembly Resolution 273 (III) of 11 May 1949 admitted Israel into the UN, not a 'Jewish' State. Some 750,000 Palestinians had become refugees (about half the population - see UN Resolution 194). In 1967 Israel occupied the remaining 22% of the land of Palestine.

In November 1988 the Palestine Liberation Organisation, recognised by Palestinians as their sole representative, made the extraordinary sacrifice of accepting the existence of the State of Israel and determining to establish an independent Palestinian state on the remaining 22% of historic Palestine in accordance with UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 (PNC Political Communique, Algiers, 15 November, 1988). Has a national movement ever made a concession on a similar scale? To this day this remains the basis for official Palestinian strategic objectives. Yet for twenty years these objectives have not been realised. Why? In negotiations Israelis repeatedly say 'we do all the giving and the Palestinians do all the taking'. This is the opposite of the truth. Palestinians continue to demand no more than 22% of their historic land. It is Israel that has done all the taking through continuous government-backed settler encroachment on this remaining 22%. The aim has been to create 'facts on the ground', now reinforced by the 'security wall', in order to reduce the land left for a future Palestinian state below even 22%.

This is not just a 'Palestinian narrative'. These are facts. At the time of writing Israeli government-backed settler encroachment is still continuing relentlessly despite the negotiations. Palestinians know that Israel is not yet a serious negotiating partner. It is on the basis of these facts and on this understanding that the strategic objectives for Palestinians are set out in the next section.

## 2 THE REQUIREMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY

The second prerequisite is national unity. A house divided against itself cannot stand. Palestinian strategic action is impossible if the Palestinian nation is unable to speak with one voice or to act with one will. This does not mean agreeing about everything. Nor does it cancel internal Palestinian politics. But it does mean that, when it comes to formulating and enacting a national plan in relation to the outside world, Palestinians must subordinate internal politics to the superior demands of shared destiny and unity of purpose.

It is not surprising that, under the intolerable pressures of occupation, deep internal divisions have surfaced, particularly since the passing away of the charismatic national leadership of Yasser Arafat. It is also true that external powers - particularly Israel but also others - have adopted a deliberate policy of 'divide and rule'. But this is all the more reason for Palestinians to rise above such rivalries, pressures and provocations when formulating a strategy for national liberation. The future in this respect is in our own hands.

After the hopes engendered by the creation of the National Unity Government in the wake of the achievement of the manifestly free and fair January 2006 elections, the events of June 2007 were a severe blow to Palestinian national unity. The Palestine Strategy Study Group has no interest in allotting blame and it is not its business to make pronouncements on internal Palestinian politics. But the Group is unanimous in calling on all political leaders to conduct internal politics in such a way that the Palestinian people present a unified face to the outside world. The Group is convinced that this is also the wish of the vast majority of the Palestinian people. We owe this to all those who have struggled for so long and made such great sacrifices for the national cause. This is essential not least because of the prospect of a possible national referendum on the current negotiations. How can the Palestinian people make an informed decision on a matter of such supreme national importance without prior extensive and informed national debate that rises above partisan political interest? This Report is an attempt to encourage such a debate.

### 3 THE REQUIREMENT OF STRATEGIC THINKING

The third prerequisite is that as broad a spectrum of Palestinians as possible should join in the task of strategic analysis, strategic choice, and strategic action. In this report the Palestine Strategy Study Group invites readers to participate in a strategic approach to the national project, because this is the essential means for its realisation.

Strategic thinking is a particular kind of thinking. Strategic thinking formulates clear national objectives and keeps them firmly in view throughout. Everything is subordinated to the achievement of those objectives. But analysis is also guided by hard-headed assessment of relative power capabilities - what Palestinians and others can and cannot do on their own or in combination. Strategic thinking combines ultimate vision with a firm grasp of practical possibilities.

So the analysis of power links objectives to strategy. The concept of power is central in politics and is elaborately discussed in the literature. But it will be taken here in its simplest sense as ***the ability to get what you want done***. If you get what you want done you have power. If you do not get what you want done you do not have power.

Four aspects of power are important in strategic thinking and are worth bearing in mind while reading this report because they have guided its formulation.

First there is the **nature of power** (types of power).

The American political analyst Joseph Nye distinguishes between 'hard power' and 'soft power'. He sees international politics being played out on a three-dimensional chess-board where the top board represents military power, the middle board represents economic power, and the bottom board represents cultural power. Dominance of any one board does not guarantee strategic success. It depends on the situation. For example in the late 1980s the Soviet Union had invested in enormous military power, but was deficient in economic power and had lost cultural power. The collapse of the Soviet Union demonstrated the severe limits of military power on its own over the longer term. In those circumstances military power proved to be no power at all.

Kenneth Boulding similarly distinguishes between 'threat power', 'exchange power' and 'integrative power':

Threat power says 'do what I want or I will do what you do not want'. This is an approach that relies on force and the threat of force.

Exchange power says 'do what I want and I will do what you want'. This is an approach that emphasises bargaining and compromise.

Integrative power says 'do what I want because you want it as well'. This is an approach that focuses on 'winning hearts and minds'.

Boulding argues that threat power may be effective over the short term, but is less effective than exchange power and integrative power over the middle term. Repression on its own cannot endure. For Boulding integrative power is the most effective form of power over the long term - the power of legitimacy, of loyalty, of cultural identity, of trust. Enduring families, communities, nations and religions in the end rest on integrative power.

In strategic planning agents must choose the most effective form of power (or combination of forms) in different circumstances, and must be prepared to be flexible in switching from one to the other where appropriate.

Second there are the **locations of power** (who has power).

The strategic analysis that follows is based on an assessment of what Palestinians can and cannot do on their own or in combination with others in relation to different kinds of challenge. Similar analysis is undertaken of Israeli relative power and options, and those of regional third parties and relevant international players including the United States.

It is essential in strategic thinking to take constant account of how the chess-board looks from the perspective of the opponent. This is fundamental. A player who does not do this - who only looks at the board from its own perspective - will never be a grandmaster. Such a player will lose. The strategic purpose is to exert mounting pressure on the opponent to act as we want. This can only be done if we understand what the opponent desires and fears, and the sources and limits of the opponent's power. The same applies to inducing third parties to behave in the ways we want them to.

Third there is the **application of power** (the strategic deployment of threats and inducements).

Strategic players are able to use threats and inducements (sticks and carrots) effectively in influencing the behaviour of others. Strategic threats must be credible to be effective. This almost certainly means that they cannot be a

bluff. Palestinians must therefore be prepared to carry out the threatened actions in case the opponent does not heed them. More is said about this in section 7 below.

Fourth there are the **uses of power** (how to deploy power to attain strategic goals).

In the end the whole purpose of strategic thinking comes down to the way the various forms of power are used. Oliver Ramsbotham distinguishes between the politician, the visionary and the statesperson in this regard:

The politician understands how to manipulate the levers of power in order to stay in office, but is not able or willing to use power consistently in order to attain strategic purposes. This use of power is ultimately pointless.

The visionary, in contrast, does keep long-term strategic goals clearly in view. The visionary can inspire aspirations and can articulate longings. But the visionary does not keep the short-term workings of power in his sights and consequently cannot deliver. This use of power is ultimately ineffective.

The statesperson never loses sight of strategic objectives, but also clearly understands the workings of political power. The statesperson is able to step back at times in order then to leap forward further (*reculer pour mieux sauter*), has a good grasp of timing, can sense opportunities and act on them, remains flexible but determined in the face of unexpected events or setbacks. When the statesperson meets an impasse, he does not remain clutching the bars that block his path. He lets go, finds another path around the barrier, and suddenly appears from an unexpected side to turn the tables on those who thought that they had stopped him. The statesperson surprises his opponent. He does not act as his opponent expects. The statesperson is capable of strategic thought and action. This use of power is what achieves lasting results.

The Palestine Strategy Study Group wants Palestinian leaders to be statespersons. It is hoped that the report may make a contribution towards clarifying what this entails.

### **3 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

Strategic objectives are the overarching goals that inspire the entire project of strategic thinking. They are the final ends of strategy.

For Palestinians there are three main linked strategic objectives. These aspirations are unanimously shared by all Palestinians. These strategic objectives guide everything that follows.

**The first strategic objective is to end occupation of Palestinian lands.**

**The second strategic objective is to establish a fully independent and sovereign Palestinian state.**

**The third strategic objective is to honour the right of return of Palestinian refugees.**

These strategic objectives are often misunderstood by non-Palestinians, and are also deliberately misrepresented.

In accordance with the PLO declaration of 1988 the second strategic objective means:

**'The establishment of a fully independent and sovereign Palestinian state on 1967 borders with its capital in East Jerusalem'.**

This also serves to define what is meant by the first strategic objective 'ending occupation'.

The third strategic objective in particular rings alarm bells when it is interpreted as a coded message to go back on the 1988 PLO decision to recognise the existence of the State of Israel.

This will not be the case if Israel negotiates seriously and with time-urgency on the above basis, as is clearly explained in the body of the Report below, and has been extensively discussed in earlier Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, notably those that took place in 2000-2001.

**But, if Israel does not act in this way, if Israel is not prepared to negotiate seriously on those terms, then not only the third strategic objective, but the other two as well will also be open to reinterpretation by Palestinians (see section 6 below). The main purpose of this report is to spell out what this means and to think through its implications.**

## 4 SCENARIOS

Scenarios are possible futures. They are possible political frameworks within which strategies are to be determined, weighted and interrelated.

When in doubt, scenarios should be included, even when they may seem improbable, in order to think through their implications. The distinction between different scenarios (how they are divided up) is a matter of judgement, as are questions about whether they are mutually exclusive or whether there are ways in which one may lead to another. Some may think that the scenarios listed here have been wrongly divided or that scenarios are missing. In that case they are invited to suggest ways of improving the list and of making it more complete.

It is important to include scenarios that we do not like (undesired scenarios) as well as those that we do like (desired scenarios), because the aim of strategy is as much to close down the former as to promote the latter. The 'best' scenario for Palestinians at any one time will be the one judged to be most *desirable* and *attainable* in those circumstances. For example, it is a matter of judgement whether a highly desirable but barely attainable scenario, or a less desirable but more attainable scenario, is seen as the preferred option. This may change over time.

Scenarios play different and changing roles as strategic possibilities open up and disappear. For example, if the Palestinians' initial preferred option is a two state scenario (because this is both desirable and seen to be the most attainable), then a one state scenario (more desirable but less attainable) may at first be used as a strategic threat to persuade Israel to negotiate seriously for a two state outcome. If the threat is seen to fail by Palestinians - for example because Israel does not negotiate seriously - then the 'attainability' of a two state solution may diminish to the point where we will abandon it and shift our preference to a one state scenario. Now the one state scenario ceases to be held in reserve as a mere threat and itself becomes the preferred option. It replaces the two state scenario as the strategic goal.

There are also scenarios that Palestinians dislike under all circumstances and want to close down. Particularly if these are seen to be desirable by Israel, and to be tempting Israel to hold out against serious negotiations as a result, then the Palestinian strategy will be to demonstrate to Israel that these scenarios are unattainable - and that we have the power and the determination to block them.

It can be seen from this that it is useful to list scenarios and classify them as desirable or undesirable. From this, together with further comparative analysis, it is eventually possible to distinguish scenarios into three categories:

the *preferred scenario* at the time of writing to be *promoted*

*acceptable scenarios* that may be used as threats, or eventually themselves become preferred options, to be *held in reserve*

*unacceptable scenarios* to be *closed down*.

This task is done in section 6 ('Strategic Options and Preferred Strategic Path').

## **SCENARIOS ACCEPTABLE TO PALESTINIANS**

### **A A Negotiated Two State Outcome**

The two state scenario emerged as a serious contender in the 1970s. Since 1988 it has been the dominant scenario in negotiations between the PLO/PA and Israel. It is now under unprecedented strain. Twenty years of failure have deeply discredited it among Palestinians, who, as noted above, no longer regard Israel as a serious negotiator. The question for us is whether to persist with this scenario at all. There is no point in the sacrifice of 1988 if no Palestinian state emerges in return. All that negotiations do is to prolong and consolidate the occupation.

In the current situation the Palestine Strategy Study Group does not aim to second-guess the detail of the official negotiations being conducted through the PLO/PA. But the Group insists that what counts as 'success' will be determined by Palestinians. Under the two state scenario the three strategic Palestinian objectives listed above are interpreted in the light of the 1988 declaration. So Palestinians have already made the great sacrifice. The ending of occupation and the creation of an independent Palestinian state are understood in relation to 1967 borders. There is no onus on Palestinians to concede more than this. The onus is on Israel to settle according to UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

All the detailed questions under the two state scenario have been exhaustively and repeatedly clarified, for example during the 2000-1 Camp

David, Clinton Parameters and Taba contour discussions. This includes questions about borders and land-swaps, the status of Jerusalem, security issues, economic and resource issues, the geographical integrity of the Palestinian state including links between its two component entities, and the range of options available for honouring the rights of Palestinian refugees. The Palestine Strategy Study Group sees no necessary fatal impediments here so long as the negotiating parties - above all Israel - have the political will to overcome them.

But does Israel have the political will? The Palestine Strategy Study Group is convinced that the two state outcome is by far the best scenario from an Israeli perspective. Unfortunately Israel does not yet understand this. The main reason is that Israel thinks that there are more attractive scenarios. And Israel supposes that the two state solution is always available, so that there is no motive to make the necessary concessions and to take the necessary risks inseparable from any settlement with sufficient urgency.

To anticipate what follows, if Palestinians decide that the two state solution for the moment remains the preferred option, then the chief strategic aim must be to alter these Israeli perceptions and calculations. Israel must be made to understand that there are no alternative more attractive scenarios. This is a key point to which the analysis will shortly return.

## **B A One State Outcome**

The one state scenario is now daily gaining momentum among Palestinians. What had counted against it, namely its relative unavailability given relative power distribution (see next section), is being progressively reduced as prospects of a two state outcome recede, and more thought is given to as yet barely explored possibilities such as the reconfiguration or even abolition of the Palestinian Authority (see below). Highly informed Palestinian strategists are now actively advocating such scenarios in preference to what is perceived to be the alternative - a permanently frozen and deteriorating status quo or other scenarios into which the two state option is currently seen to be collapsing (see below). Many Palestinian citizens of Israel in particular favour a one state outcome. In other words that Palestinian citizens in the State of Israel and Jewish citizens in the State of Palestine both enjoy full individual and collective rights (the State of Israel becomes a democratic state rather than a Jewish and democratic state). But the one state solution also receives good support among Palestinian citizens of Israel. These views are strongly represented within the Palestine Strategy Study Group.

There are in fact many one state scenarios. Here two will be noted, each of which has extensive support among Palestinians.

### A Bi-National State

Advocates of the scenario of a bi-national state emphasise collective rights and look to various power-sharing examples as in Belgium, Canada or elsewhere. There are many federal and confederal models. The ultimate scenario of a bi-national state is not necessarily incompatible with a two state scenario, because, once two states are securely established, there is no reason why they cannot confederate at a later date. However improbable this may seem in present circumstances, this is an example of the complex ways in which apparently mutually exclusive scenarios can be made to interrelate given imaginative thinking. The Palestine Strategy Study Group recommends the inclusion of forward-looking and creative ideas in Palestinian strategic discussion. There are many other variants here, including forms of future confederation which encompass not just Israel and Palestine, but also Jordan - and even Lebanon and Syria.

### A Unitary Democratic State

This variation on a one state scenario is based, not on collective rights, but on individual rights. This is the nightmare scenario for most Israelis, because demography now comes to predominate. Not only a Jewish state of Israel, but even a state in which the Jewish population is a majority, is likely to be swept away under this scenario. And yet it is the most logical scenario given basic Western ideas of individual freedom, rule of law and democracy. It represents the shadowy adumbration (sketch) of what a democratic pluralistic Palestine might have become had historical events turned out differently. For Palestinians it is a poignant vision rendered inoperative historically because of British policies and actions (or inactions) during the crucial years of the British Mandate.

For many Palestinians the best strategic route to this outcome would be the reconfiguration of the PA, as will now be outlined.

## C A Reconstitution of the Palestinian Authority (interim stage)

A reconstitution of the PA could take a number of forms, from a mild reorientation to a more radical reconfiguration, or even abolition. The reconstitution of the PA would be more of an interim forcing strategy than an independent scenario in its own right, because it is compatible with a number of final scenario outcomes. Indeed, there are strong calls for a reorganisation of the PA in any case as noted in section 7 below.

This development is eloquently advocated by influential Palestinians in various forms. It constitutes a main Palestinian resource for blocking scenarios E to H below, and can be used both as a strategic threat in order to constrain Israel to negotiate an acceptable two state outcome seriously, and as an integral part of an alternative Palestinian strategy should that fail - for example as a stage on the way to a single state outcome.

The key idea is that, in the absence of a satisfactory two state outcome, the PA should no longer pretend to be an embryonic Palestinian state, because - under intense outside pressure that often takes the guise of 'helping the PA' - this is seen to amount to reinforcing the occupation and doing the Israelis' job for them. Critics say that there are two ways in which this is effected. First, in the absence of a real two-state solution, the PA - as an instrument for implementing the two-state solution - needs to be reconsidered since its continuation conceals the realities of occupation and allows Israel to use the virtual peace process to rapidly alter facts on the ground. Second, because the PA is responsible for local economic, social and political policy and for keeping Palestinians in order, Israel is relieved of its responsibilities and is able to forget the occupied territories altogether. Given the large amounts of international aid that flow in it also removes a heavy burden of financial responsibility from Israel's shoulders. In short, Israelis want to deny that they are occupiers both to themselves and to the outside world. For critics the PA enables them to do this.

A reconstitution, reorientation or reconfiguration of the PA, therefore, would have three strategic functions. The first function would be to uncover the realities of Israeli occupation and to end the current Israeli policy of manipulating an artificial peace process in order to perpetuate dependency and progressively alter 'facts on the ground'. The second function would be to close down the alternative scenarios that are attractive to Israelis and that depend on a continuation of the PA (see below). The third function would be in this way to force the international agenda onto new ground determined, not by Israel, but by Palestinians.

A radical reconfiguration (or abolition) of the PA would mark a decisive switch in Palestinians' preferred strategic path towards their strategic objectives. Instead of an immediate struggle to end occupation and establish a separate Palestinian state on only 22% of historic Palestine as has been the central aim since 1988, the strategy would on the contrary aim to intensify the transparency and cost of occupation to Israel and to demand Palestinian rights to equal legal and constitutional status within a single state. Palestinians, who already constitute 20% of the population of the existing State of Israel, would now constitute a majority.

In terms of strategic means of implementation, to be discussed in section 7 below, this scenario is also seen by its advocates to be linked to a major shift of emphasis in means of implementation in mainstream Palestinian policy, away from negotiation and towards a new form of concerted national resistance. Under that scenario the restructured PA could become a Palestinian Resistance Authority (PRA).

#### **D A United Nations Trusteeship (interim stage)**

This option is relatively little discussed by Palestinians at the moment and has not been thoroughly discussed by the Palestine Strategy Study Group. So it will only be briefly mentioned here. Nevertheless it remains an attractive possibility in the eyes of many Palestinians. It is seen to have two advantages. First, it would replace Israeli occupation by international occupation, which would be highly desirable for Palestinians. Second, it would be a staging-post on the way to independence. This is consonant with transitional UN interventions in East Timor and Kosovo related to the implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions.

A strong international presence also implies that a powerful and effective **international intervention force** might replace the IDF, an idea which is also gaining momentum independently under the two state scenario discussed above as a way of overcoming core Israeli security inhibitions. There are also signs that the US is becoming more favourable to this idea than has been the case in the past.

### **SCENARIOS UNACCEPTABLE TO PALESTINIANS**

At this point the strategic analysis moves away from scenarios that are seen to be desirable by many Palestinians to scenarios that are seen to be undesirable, because they not only fail to take their national aspirations seriously but actively undermine their national identity and rights. These scenarios play a vital role in

Palestinian strategic thinking, because they represent what Israel (and Israel's allies) think are the more desirable alternatives to a swift conclusion of negotiations for a genuine two state outcome. These are the scenarios that we need to close down

## **E Continuation of the Status Quo Plus**

This scenario is assumed by many Palestinians to be Israel's preferred scenario and the one towards which Israel's strategic thinking is principally directed. Under this scenario Israel goes on using the negotiations within the 'Road Map' parameters to conceal its continuing occupation and progressive usurpation of Palestinian land. There are many Israeli motives for doing this including the financial profits made from the occupation.

At a time of weak Israeli government inertia is also likely to perpetuate this scenario, because there is no Israeli consensus on alternatives. Israel hopes that eventually Palestinians may weary of their struggle and subside into one of the scenarios that follow. In the meantime Israel can live with the situation, wait for conditions in the wider region to improve, and continue to reap the benefits.

In short, for Israel this is the default scenario. Israel is so used to this state of affairs after twenty years that Israeli planners take it for granted. For example they continue to use transparent subterfuges like settler 'outposts' that can be 'traded in' during negotiations in order to protect the substantial settler encroachments.

A central Palestinian strategy is to demonstrate clearly that this will no longer be an option for Israel. Rather than submit to any further prolongation of the twenty year 'status quo' we will shift the entire strategic ground and ensure that the transparency and costs of occupation are properly met by Israel. Israel will be forced to assume the proper burdens and responsibilities of an occupying power in international law. Nor will Israel be permitted to use international 'aid' to the occupied territories to relieve Israel of the full burden of responsibility.

The 'status quo plus' scenario is seen by Israelis to be compatible with at least three more or less attractive 'final state' scenarios as noted below. These scenarios are not clearly distinct, but are worth considering separately. All of them envisage some kind of severing of Israeli responsibility for major centres of Palestinian population. The ultimate strategic determinant of this direction of Israeli strategic thought (which also includes the scenario of negotiating a two state outcome) is the demographic threat posed by Palestinian numbers to the continued existence of a Jewish state of Israel. Short of further massive expulsions of Palestinians under the Greater Israel scenario (which is not elaborated here), Israel is seen to have no option other than to separate itself eventually in one form or another from the densely populated Palestinian areas beyond the 1967 borders.

## F A Pseudo Two State Outcome

One such scenario that is attractive to many Israelis is a negotiated two state outcome hedged around with so many Israeli demands for continuing security that the resulting State of Palestine would be geographically reduced, divided into separate 'Bantustans' and rendered perpetually dependent. It would be a permanent 'provisional state'.

Israelis are pleased to switch from the Oslo process whereby Permanent Status Agreement on all key issues was to precede the establishment of a Palestinian state, to the Roadmap process where the establishment of a Palestinian State within Provisional Borders (PSPB) would precede resolution of all historical issues in a Permanent Status Agreement. This would enable Israel to 'strengthen' the PA with an apparent array of fragmented and diluted sovereign functions to the point where Palestinians would be unable to dissolve it. From here Israel would have several options, including freezing negotiations while still 'keeping them alive'. Some issues could be bargained over piecemeal with the repackaged PA, some could be dealt with unilaterally by Israel, some could form the substance of ad hoc bilateral arrangements with neighbours and the United States. The result would be perpetual Israeli control of the strategic future.

A central strategic aim of Palestinians is to block this possibility outright. It is vital to make Israel understand straight away that none of this is a remote possibility. It is a non-starter. Palestinians will decide what counts as a satisfactory outcome to current negotiations, and Palestinians will simply not accept a 'provisional' state, or a 'strengthened PA' performing pre-set strategic functions for Israel, or a fragmented or diluted approach to key issues that allows Israel to manipulate them one-by-one, or a continuation of the pretence of sham negotiations. Israel is deluded if it thinks that it can retain 'flexibility' in this way, or eternally postpone its commitments while leaving the option of a negotiated agreement open. It cannot

## G Unilateral Israeli Separation

Many Israelis have been attracted by the scenario of unilateral separation. In this scenario Israel is able to determine its own final borders and other security and resource issues, without the encumbrance of negotiations as under the two state scenario, and then impose this by force. The evacuation of Gaza and the building of the security wall are expressions of this thinking, which was central to the creation of Ariel Sharon's Kadima Party.

Subsequent events in Gaza have done much to discredit this scenario in the eyes of many Israelis, who are swinging back to the belief that direct military control remains essential until more secure political arrangements are made. Nevertheless this is another scenario that we need to block. This issue is addressed in the next section.

## H An Egypt/Jordan Control/Occupation

Another alternative 'end state' scenario envisages different permutations whereby Egypt in Gaza and Jordan in the West Bank take various measures of control and security responsibility. This is attractive to Israel because the demographic problem is solved and security arrangements with Egypt and Jordan are already reasonably satisfactorily worked out. Full strategic analysis would at this point have to look at the scenario from an Egyptian and Jordanian perspective, which is not attempted here.

This scenario is unacceptable to Palestinians. From a Palestinian perspective the reason to consider scenarios such as this is to gauge their influence among Israeli and American planners. Our strategic aim is then to ensure that they are no longer seen as realistic alternatives.

# 5 RELATIVE POWER DISTRIBUTION

The analysis of the distribution of power assesses the capacity of Palestinians to promote preferred outcomes and close down dispreferred outcomes. In this section the analysis moves from *desirability* to *capability*. Both need to be considered when weighing up strategic options as in the next section (*Strategic Options and the Preferred Strategic Path*).

In assessing capability, analysis revisits the scenarios in order to determine what is and what is not in the power of Palestinians, Israelis and third parties to achieve either on their own or via the actions of others. Power analysis assesses the capacity of agents to convert their aspirations into reality.

Clearly this is an elaborate and detailed task if undertaken thoroughly. It requires analysis of different types of power (as discussed above in section 2 and looked at again below in section 7) at different locations (Israel, regional level, international level) and under different scenarios. Strategic thinking understands that in a conflict situation the power of one player is relative to the power of another. These forces interconnect.

Extensive discussions along these lines took place within the Palestine Strategy Study Group in preparation for this report. Here there is room only to give a tabulated indicative summary.

Readers who disagree with these assessments are invited to participate in further ongoing discussion about Palestinian strategic options.

### SCENARIOS ACCEPTABLE TO PALESTINIANS

<u>Scenario</u>	<u>Palestinian capability to promote</u>	<u>Israeli capability to block</u>	<u>Third party capability to influence</u>
<u>Two state</u>	low	high	medium (US high)
<u>One state</u>	low (short term) increasing (long term)	high (short term) decreasing (long term)	low (short term) increasing (long term)
<u>PA reform</u>	high	low	low
<u>UN trustee</u>	low	medium	medium (US high)

### SCENARIOS UNACCEPTABLE TO PALESTINIANS

<u>Scenario</u>	<u>Palestinian capability to block</u>	<u>Israeli capability to promote</u>	<u>Third party capability to influence</u>
<u>Status quo</u>	high	medium	medium
<u>Pseudo-two state</u>	high	low	low
<u>Unilateral separation</u>	low (short term) high (long term)	high (short term) low (long term)	medium
<u>Egypt/Jordan</u>	high	low	medium

This table suggests that at the time of writing Palestinians have a low capability of reaching an acceptable **two state outcome** (A), because Israel at the moment still has a low preference for it and a high capability of blocking it. To change this Palestinians have to alter Israeli preference and Israeli capacity to block, by means summarised in sections 6 and 7, including the mobilisation of third party support. A concerted and united Palestinian strategic drive along the lines recommended in this Report would transform these capabilities.

Palestinians are also seen to have a low capability in the short term of reaching a **one state outcome** (B), because here the outcome is unacceptable to most Israelis, Israel has a high capability of blocking it, and third party leverage is seen to be low. Palestinians would have to change all three to increase Palestinian capability. However, failure to shift Israel in the desired direction on negotiations for a two state outcome greatly increases the desirability of this outcome and the determination of Palestinians to change the balance of power accordingly. Above all, in the absence of other alternatives blocked off by Palestinians, including all four of Israel's 'best alternatives to a negotiated agreement' (see below), and the definitive collapse of the 1988-2008 two state negotiations, this scenario becomes the only show in town for what is internationally recognised to be the Palestinians' irrefutable right to national self-determination. This will transform the situation and therefore the array of preferences and capabilities associated with it. Palestinians would have an increasing capability of reaching this objective and Israel would have a decreasing capability of blocking it over the long term. Third parties (including the US) would have an increasing capability to affect the outcome. Palestinians would have increasing opportunities for eliciting growing international support for their undeniable national and individual rights. This is what we now need to think through in detail.

On **reconstitution of the PA** (C) Palestinians are seen to have high capability. Israel is thought to have a low preference for this outcome, but also a low capability of preventing it. Israel does not want the PA to be weakened, abolished or transformed. Israel does recognise the threat that this would pose by exposing the reality of occupation, greatly increasing its burdens, and sharply reducing Israel's flexibility and strategic options. It understands the real threat of a shift of emphasis away from creating a Palestinian state on 22% of Palestine and towards basic human rights for Palestinians in the whole of Palestine from the Mediterranean to the Jordan river. As a result Israel will do everything it can both to undermine the PA as a genuine instrument of Palestinian independence, but at the same time to shore it up as a tool for managing indefinite occupation. This will include seeming to transfer carefully graded and highly selected 'sovereign' rights to it and pressing for even more international aid for 'statebuilding'. Israel will hope that Palestinian PA leaders and the thousands of families dependent on PA salaries will be

unable to resist this subversion of the PA. Israel will then make out that this is all part of genuine and generous support for perpetually ongoing negotiations. But none of this alters the fact that in terms of capability Israel is at its weakest here and the Palestinians are at their strongest. Third parties are also judged to have low capacity unless Palestinians cooperate. Very simply, none of this will happen unless we want it to happen. So here is another key focal point for Palestinian strategic thinking.

The **UN Trusteeship (D)** scenario has not been discussed fully. Although Palestinians have low capability of achieving this outcome, because Israel opposes it and has the capability of blocking it with US support, this scenario may gain in plausibility if the two state outcome is seen to fail. It also introduces the more general idea of an international intervention force, a strategic option that Palestinians may want to push further as a key element in other scenarios.

The following four scenarios are unacceptable to Palestinians and seen to be desirable to Israel. The question in terms of relative distribution of power is, therefore, whether we can block them

Enough has been written in the previous sections to suggest that we can block all four of Israel's preferred alternatives to a negotiated two state agreement.

It may not at first appear that Palestinians can easily block the **status quo plus scenario (E)**. After all, this has been the situation that has persisted over two decades. But Palestinians have many options for making continuous Israeli occupation increasingly costly and decreasingly beneficial to Israel. Above all we have the option of terminating negotiations and/or withdrawing collaboration through the PA. We can entirely re-orientate our strategy away from post-1988 norms if we want. These are major strategic cards. The immediate strategic aim for Palestinians is to convince Israeli planners that a comfortable and profitable continuation of the status quo is not available.

The **pseudo-two state scenario (F)** can and should simply be rejected by Palestinians. It is up to us to define clearly what counts as an acceptable two-state outcome based on the fundamental concessions of 1988 and to refuse anything else. Our failure in the past has been not to explain this clearly enough internationally. The strong recommendation in this Report that Palestinians must insist on discussing their national project within terms of their own discourse becomes strategically central at this point. It is not Israel that is giving and Palestinians who are taking, but precisely the other way round.

The **unilateral Israeli separation scenario** (G) may seem more difficult to block given current Israeli military strength. Steps in this direction are already a *fait accompli* as noted above. But, as has already been shown, it can be rendered increasingly inoperable by Palestinians, necessitating repeated Israeli incursions into the separated territories. Above all, there are many ways of circumventing and discrediting it in the absence of two state negotiations. A refusal by Palestinians to accept separation on these terms, together with the blatant disregard for international law involved provides a firm basis for the long-term change of strategy by Palestinians that would inevitably accompany this alternative. Israel would face never-ending instability, insecurity, mounting regional danger, internal unrest within Israel, and increasing costs, with no prospect whatsoever of negotiating a way out. The opportunities offered by the Arab Peace Initiative would be cancelled. It would be impossible for Israel to shuffle off responsibility for the heavily populated Palestinian enclaves left stateless outside the newly imposed borders. Our claim for already internationally recognised basic human rights would become increasingly irresistible. Military capacity on its own, as history has repeatedly shown, becomes decreasingly effective over time. An indomitable and sustained movement of national self-determination cannot be indefinitely repressed by force alone.

Finally, the **Egypt/Jordan scenario** (H) can again be blocked given the high reluctance of those states to take on the responsibility of administration, welfare and security so long as the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank refuse to accept this, as it is perceived by Palestinians to be an extension of or a new form of foreign military occupation. Once again all of this is predicated on Israel's clear refusal to negotiate for a genuine two state outcome in good faith.

This section has focused on the capability of agents to promote attractive scenarios and to block unacceptable ones. It has been seen that we have a much greater capacity to block the preferred Israeli alternatives to a negotiated agreement than may have been realised - given lucid, coherent, united and determined Palestinian strategic thinking and action. But this is only half the strategic equation. In order to clarify the optimum strategy for Palestinians it is necessary to decide whether it is still in our interest to persist with a two state negotiation. And, if so, how to increase its relative attraction for Israel, and to decide on what terms and for how long this option should be kept open. That is a task for the next three sections.

## 6 STRATEGIC OPTIONS AND THE PREFERRED STRATEGIC PATH

In the discussion of strategic options by the Palestine Strategy Study Group all the strands of opinion listed above were represented and argued through. In determining a preferred strategic path in the light of this, the Palestine Strategy Study Group has aimed to include all major components within the broad thrust of the recommended strategy - in some cases as reserve scenarios that play a supporting role to begin with, but may become alternative paths themselves should the initial path lead nowhere.

The preferred strategic path is the final strategic route chosen from the present situation to the ultimate strategic objectives.

The eventual consensus of the Palestine Strategy Study Group was to recommend:

**A final and conclusive push to compel Israel to negotiate immediately and seriously for a swift two state outcome acceptable to Palestinians - or face the reality of a concerted Palestinian strategic reorientation in an entirely different direction - and one far less favourable to Israel.**

At the moment Israel is not negotiating seriously. How can this be changed? This question is addressed in the rest of this section and in the two sections that follow.

In determining the optimum strategic path for Palestinians it is helpful to take note of insights from the Harvard Negotiation Project. At the core of this interest-based negotiation approach Roger Fisher and William Ury have identified the following as the key:

*'People think of negotiating power as being determined by resources like wealth, political connections, physical strength, friends, and military might. In fact, the relative negotiating power of two parties depends primarily upon how attractive to each is the option of not reaching agreement.'*

The immediate strategic aim for Palestinians, therefore, is to alter the relative attraction to Israel of negotiating a genuine two state outcome acceptable to Palestinians in comparison with the options seen to be available to Israel if no such agreement is reached. **The main thrust of the strategic framework is to make the outcome desired by Palestinians more attractive to Israel and all the perceived alternatives less attractive or impossible.**

This means working simultaneously on the three clusters of scenarios identified above and in the ways suggested by the preference/power analysis in sections 4 and 5:

By **promoting** the two state outcome as the **preferred scenario** at the time of writing by working to make it relatively more attractive or less alarming for Israel.

The strategy here is not to compromise the three Palestinian strategic objectives, but to make it clear to Israel that these are understood in terms of the 1988 PLO declaration and therefore do not threaten Israel. On the contrary, together with the offer of normalisation by Arab League states (Beirut declaration), this outcome guarantees the future of Israel in a way that no alternative option does. The 2002 Arab Peace Initiative (API), subsequently reconfirmed, has never been properly acknowledged - or even discussed - in Israel. This is a major error from an Israeli perspective. A central element in this strategic proposal, therefore, is that the API should be developed in more detail and promoted with more energy. Palestinians sincerely believe that this genuine two state outcome is by far the best option from the perspective of Israel.

By **reserving** the one state outcome and the UN Trusteeship possibility as **acceptable scenarios** to be used as threats, but also to be developed in case the preferred scenario fails and they become preferred scenarios.

If Israel fails to act as above as judged by Palestinians, the present precarious balance in favour of the negotiated two state option for Palestinians is thereby cancelled. It will be Israel that will have cancelled it and will subsequently be held responsible for doing so. In that case the entire preceding strategic calculation of preference and capability changes. We no longer offer the twenty-year old 1988 outcome even as a possibility. Instead we will substitute one or more of the reserved scenario options and act accordingly. Everything set out under 'strategic objectives' in section 3 above is then opened up for reinterpretation, beginning with the PNC Algiers communiqué of November 1988 itself. 'Ending occupation' will be reinterpreted to challenge the legitimacy of the 1949 Armistice Line, including the manifest injustice of UNGA 181. The idea of a negotiated two state outcome on the basis of 1967 borders will have receded into history. So will the Arab Peace Initiative contingent upon it. They will not reappear.

By **closing down** the status quo plus outcome, the pseudo-two state outcome, the unilateral separation outcome, and the Egypt/Jordan outcome as **unacceptable scenarios**.

In the meantime Palestinians must explain with utmost clarity to Israel (and to the US) that the four 'alternatives to a negotiated agreement' that may be tempting Israel not to negotiate seriously for a genuine two state solution, are already simply not available. We will never accept them, and we have the capability of blocking them. They are already non-starters. They should be removed at once from all Israeli strategic calculations.

## 7 MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

Means of implementation are the tools or instruments available for Palestinians to move down the preferred strategic path within the overall strategic framework in the direction of their strategic objectives. They are the levers that we can pull to propel our national project down the chosen route. All the instrumental means employed need to dovetail together, and there is only one strategic question to ask in deciding the optimum combination - is it likely to work? Power has been defined in section 2 as 'the ability to get what you want done'. The coordination of instrumental means selected is the one that maximises relative power for Palestinians in persuading Israel to act as Palestinians want.

It is important to remain flexible and to be prepared to take up and discard means appropriately as circumstances change. The reason is plain. Power is defined in relation to objectives within a varying context. As the context shifts, so do the determinants of the power required. A combination of patience, persistence and determination together with a readiness to rethink options, and pin-point accuracy in tailoring means of implementation so that they maximise sustained pressure at the required point - these are hallmarks of successful strategic action. Palestinians must not allow themselves to become prisoners of any one instrumental approach.

As indicated in section 2 the Palestine Strategy Study Group was mindful of the different types of power available:

Threat power

Exchange power

Integrative power

All of these need to be used as appropriate. In particular, it is worth bearing in mind three points about the concept of strategic threat.

First, in strategic planning 'empty' threats are of no use. The aim must be to ensure that threats are 'credible'. It is possible that a bluff can be credible, so long as it is believed not to be a bluff by the opponent. Much was written on this in the extensive literature on nuclear deterrence during the cold war. Nevertheless, despite this possibility, the Palestine Strategy Study Group

recommends that threats employed by Palestinians must be actions that we are willing and able to carry out if the threat fails. Only this will convince Israel. So it is essential that preferred Palestinian alternatives to a two state outcome are seriously planned for and thought through now as advocated in the next section.

Second, in strategic planning, threats and inducements (sticks and carrots) go together and are two sides of the same coin. A threat is strategically pointless unless it alters the balance of attractiveness of two options for Israel in the direction Palestinians want. So the threat which makes one option less attractive has to go with the inducement that makes the other option more attractive. For example, as seen above, if the aim is to induce Israel to negotiate seriously for an acceptable two state outcome, then this must be made relatively more attractive and the alternatives to an agreement relatively less attractive to Israel. By the same logic all means of implementation (related to all three types of power) must be coordinated in the same way in order to maximise pressure in the desired direction.

Third, different forms of power define different forms of threat at different times. For example, in some circumstances resistance and armed struggle act as a strategic threat. But in other circumstances, the cessation of resistance and armed struggle, which is usually seen as an inducement, may turn out to be the most effective strategic threat as well. In the 1960s and 1970s in Northern Ireland, for example, Republicans in Sinn Fein chose armed struggle as the main means of implementing their strategy and attaining their strategic objective - a unified Ireland. But circumstances changed and by the 1990s Unionists (who wanted Northern Ireland to remain in the UK) felt much more threatened by the Republican decision to end the armed struggle than by its continuation. They were used to the IRA and the stark certainties of confrontation. What they feared was the uncertainty and compromises of normal politics together with its demographic implications. Indeed, this was *why* the Republicans (and Gerry Adams in particular) decided to switch the strategic framework and means of implementation in the late 1980s. The strategic objectives remained the same. The strategic path and the means of implementation were altered.

In a fully worked out strategy this section on the means of implementation would be the most detailed and specific section, because of the great range of options available. Extensive debate took place within the Palestine Strategy Study Group about appropriate means for implementing the preferred strategic plan. Given limited space, however, there is room in this Report only to indicate the main outlines. And detailed application will in any case need to be elaborated later in the light of what it is hoped will be the much wider participation by fellow Palestinians in follow-up discussions.

It will be helpful to group means of implementation under five headings that recurred in the discussions of the Palestine Strategy Study Group. The first two headings - unity of national leadership, and the empowering of the Palestinian people - are indissolubly linked together and cover all the others. They are prerequisites. The remaining three headings - negotiation, resistance, eliciting third party support - represent the three main **categories of implementation**.

### Unity of national leadership

As noted under 'prerequisites' in section 2, national unity is a *sine qua non* for effective Palestinian strategic thinking and action. Without it, there can be no Palestinian strategy.

The Palestine Strategy Study Group has emphasised that it is not its business to enter into internal national politics. But Palestinians have to clarify the relationship between the PA (legitimised through elections, but not representing all the Palestinian people and vulnerable to subversion by Israel) and the PLO (weakened by outmoded structures and bureaucratic inefficiency, but still the only overarching institutional expression of Palestinian nationhood). In addition to institutional reform, and linked to it, there is also the widely recognised requirement for national reconciliation - especially between Fateh and Hamas. United we stand, divided we fall. We should not let those who have an interest in keeping Palestinians divided succeed in their purpose. This was a central call in the Prisoners' Document, signed up to by all parties at the time.

Using the terminology explained in section 2, what we Palestinians require now from our political leaders is not politicians or visionaries, but statespersons. We need leaders who are capable of rising above internal party faction in response to the overarching imperative of unity in relation to the outside world in our shared national struggle. The Palestine Strategy Study Group is clear that in the tasks of institutional reform and national reconciliation it can only be exchange power (negotiation of power sharing arrangements) and integrative power (the fostering and strengthening of national unity) that are appropriate. There should be no place for threat power in the political dealings of Palestinians with each other.

## Empowering the Palestinian Population

At the heart of Palestinian strategic thinking and means of implementation lies the greatest resource of all - the Palestinian people. Mobilising, unifying and energising the entire population inside Palestine and beyond will be the central task for Palestinian strategists contemplating a reorientation of strategic priorities.

Although the Palestine Strategy Study Group discussed it extensively, this is also too large a subject to be adequately handled in detail here. It demands strategic discussion and coordination between all Palestinian political leaders. Empowerment covers the economic sphere, the social sphere, the political sphere, the educational and cultural sphere. Special emphasis was placed on supporting those who have shown extraordinary steadfastness in withstanding intolerable conditions, including Jerusalemites, those immured in Gaza, those whose livelihoods have been ruined, those who are living in exile, the prisoners, the poor, the injured, the disabled, the bereaved. The Palestine Strategy Study Group was very mindful of all those who have suffered in the national cause over the past 60 years.

Because the means of implementation cover the whole range of action from threat power, through exchange power, and on to integrative power, all the varied skills and capacities of the Palestinian people are required. Different individuals and groups supply different elements. All of these need to be mobilised and orchestrated into a single, well targeted effort. This is one of the main functions of national strategic thinking when as many as possible in different locations and at different levels are involved in the discussion and formulation of policy. As a result concerted action is far more likely to be effective than it would be if left to the uncoordinated efforts of fragmented individuals or groups.

For example, at the moment there is talk of a national referendum on the outcome of current negotiations with Israel. The problem is that, without extensive prior national strategic debate and consensus, the Palestinian voters are likely to be swayed more by political expediency than by strategic priorities. This is not a good basis for wise national decision-making. It weakens Palestinians and hands the major strategic card to their opponents. Nothing could indicate more clearly how important it is for political leaders to rise above partisan ambition when it comes to guiding public Palestinian debate about national strategic options. No doubt disagreement about strategy is sincere and not just a mask for partisan political interest. Even so the requirement is for political leaders from all parties to articulate a broadly agreed national strategy. Otherwise there is no prospect of rallying, coordinating, energising and empowering Palestinians. And, without the focused and determined effort of the Palestinian people, there can be no effective implementation of strategy.

## Negotiation with Israel

Negotiation is the first category of means of implementation, given the preferred strategic path outlined in the previous section. The initial aim of Palestinian strategy is to compel Israel to negotiate a genuine two state outcome acceptable to Palestinians. Here all three types of power are relevant. *Integrative power* must be used to convince Israelis that a genuine negotiated two state outcome on 1967 borders not only does not threaten Israel, but is the best outcome for Israel. *Exchange power* must be used to settle historic issues along lines often discussed before. *Threat power* must be used to make clear what Palestinians mean by an independent state of Palestine, when they expect progress and how they will judge it, and what they will do if this is not forthcoming. Enough has already been written about this earlier in the Report.

## National resistance

The second main category of means of implementation is national resistance. Here threat power predominates. The range of options open to Palestinians under the general heading 'resistance' is great, reaching from non-cooperation, through various forms of boycott and economic measures, and on to more active forms of resistance. This broad category of implementation can be deployed in support of all the strategic options so long as the tools are selected and applied with strategic precision. Again there is no room to do justice to this here. The distinction between civilian resistance and armed resistance is critical, and, within the latter, the distinction between armed attack on Israeli military assets and armed attack on Israeli civilians raises additional moral issues. Members of the Palestine Strategy Study Group were clear that in choosing means of implementation Palestinians must make sure that the overwhelming justice of their cause is implemented by means that are also seen to be just.

The Palestine Strategy Study Group urges a thorough review by Palestinians of the different combinations of resistance strategies that will be most effective in maximising pressure on Israel, first in the context of impelling Israel to negotiate a genuine two state outcome, and second in the context of a radical reorientation of strategic path should Israel fail to do this. The latter includes a whole range of economic and other measures that will shake the security of settlers, including scattered farming populations in the Jordan valley.

Palestinians will prevent Israel from using 52% of West Bank output for the benefit of the Israeli economy, and will force Israel to take on the full economic burden of occupation. The Palestine Strategy Study Group calls for **smart resistance** - that is, strategically targeted, flexible and effectively orchestrated resistance, fine-tuned to ensure that Israel fails in all the alternatives to a negotiated agreement that it wrongly supposes will be available. Smart resistance is coordinated with a concerted diplomatic and media offensive, tailored for different international audiences, to make certain that it is the Palestinian discourse that frames all discussion about the Palestinian future.

It is at this point that the question of reconstituting the PA, discussed in section 4 as an interim scenario, re-emerges as a means of implementation. Within a major reorientation of Palestinian strategy the PA may be reconfigured as a Palestinian Resistance Authority (PRA).

Resistance is not a substitute for negotiation, because in the struggle for national self-determination national resistance legitimately accompanies negotiation (section 2.1). Nevertheless, if Palestinians are forced to switch strategy because Israel refuses to negotiate seriously as judged by Palestinians, then national resistance becomes the predominant, if not sole, means of implementation, and the national effort will focus on it with greater intensity accordingly. What alternative will there be? Is this what Israel wants?

### **Eliciting third party support**

The third main category of means of implementation covers the eliciting of third party support. In all of this it must be a prime strategic aim for Palestinians to maximise third party support to intensify pressure on Israeli planners. This requires careful analysis of the interests and relative capabilities of third parties at regional and global levels, as indicated in section 5 above. There is no room to do this in detail here. But the Palestine Strategy Study Group is convinced, first that we have hardly begun to ensure that the Palestinian discourse is the primary discourse when discussing our national project in the international arena (see section 2), and, second, that the Palestinian mobilisation of third party international support will only be effective when we speak with one voice and are able to articulate a lucid, morally compelling and consistent strategic plan along the lines advocated in this Report.

All three types of power are again relevant and need to be strategically dovetailed. For example, if the initial aim is to induce Israel to negotiate seriously, then at regional level, *integrative power* can be mobilised to convince Israel that negotiated delivery of an acceptable two state outcome will be rewarded by third parties (e.g. the Arab League) via normalised relations throughout the Arab world, regional stability and cooperation, and possible solidarity against the Iranian nuclear threat. *Exchange power* can be utilised in the offer of large-scale regional economic deals and opportunities by third parties to enhance Israel's economic opportunities if agreement is reached. And *threat power* can be focused on warning of the severely deleterious regional consequences of continuing confrontation and occupation.

Expressed negatively, the strategic aim is to counter Israel's efforts to pick off Arab neighbours via bilateral arrangements so that the Palestinian issue is relegated to a peripheral side-show.

Similar considerations apply at international level - including strategic efforts to convince US planners that the preferred Palestinian option is also very much in US interests, and that it is Palestinians who are the serious negotiators and Israel which is not. During the remainder of 2008 Palestinians should be capitalising strategically in this way on the Bush Annapolis peace drive. There is great scope for Palestinians to play a more sophisticated role in this respect without compromising any of the three strategic objectives listed in section 3.

## 8 REVISION POINTS AND ASSESSMENT OF ALTERNATIVES

In this section Palestinian strategic planning finally determines what the benchmarks are for progress or otherwise along the preferred strategic path, and what the revision points are for strategic review. At these points Palestinians will judge whether progress is satisfactory from a Palestinian perspective. Decisions can then be taken on when and whether to persist in certain directions, and when or whether to change tack.

The Palestine Strategy Study Group does not go into detail about **time-limits**, **benchmarks** and **conditions**, because this will be the proper business of those who carry strategic planning forward when general agreement has been reached among Palestinians about whether or not to proceed in the direction recommended in this Report.

Instead a final review of alternatives to a negotiated agreement is offered, first in terms of alternatives favoured by Palestinians, then in terms of alternatives favoured by Israel.

### **Alternatives to a negotiated agreement - Palestinian**

Palestinian alternatives to a negotiated agreement include a combination of single state scenarios (bi-national or unitary democratic) within which Palestinian claims to self-determination will from now on be pursued, together with a reformulation of the PA and re-orchestration of 'smart' national resistance to ensure that Israel ceases to reap benefits, but instead bears the full burden of financial and moral responsibility for occupation. All efforts will also focus on demonstrating that it is Israel that has blocked a genuine two state negotiated outcome and on rallying regional and international support for the universally recognised legitimacy of Palestinian claims for basic citizens' rights. For example, Palestinians will emphasise that Jewish citizens will have equal civil rights with Arab and other citizens in the new single State of Palestine.

Are we Palestinians prepared to pay the price of the new strategic struggle when we begin from such a militarily weak position? It is the very contempt with which Israel has treated Palestinians' just demands for a negotiated agreement over the past twenty years that dictates that Palestinians, under no illusions about the difficulty of the task ahead, are more than determined to pay any price demanded. What they will never do is to allow Israel to continue its encroachments and domination under

the pretence of insincere negotiations, nor to go on imagining falsely that there are better alternatives available for Israel.

*Palestinian alternatives to a negotiated agreement are difficult but possible. They are preferable to a continuation of the status quo. The reorientation of Palestinian strategy cannot be blocked by Israel.*

### **Alternatives to a negotiated agreement - Israel**

Israeli strategic planners imagine that they have all the cards in their hands in relation to the Palestinians. They think that at least four attractive alternatives to a negotiated agreement are available. First, the default option is to prolong negotiations indefinitely by pretending that 'progress has been made' and that suspensions are temporary as during the past twenty years, with ongoing encroachments and military incursions, few burdens, and considerable financial and other benefits from continuing occupation. The other alternatives are: second, an 'adulterated two state agreement' with a strengthened but severely constrained PA masquerading as a Palestinian government while Israel disaggregates and picks off the 'historic issues'; third, a unilateral separation dictated by Israel; and, fourth, the Egypt/Jordan option. The simple fact is that Palestinians can block all four. Israel, on the other hand, has no counter to the four moves that make up the Palestinian alternative strategy: first, a Palestinian decision to close down the 1988-2008 negotiation route definitively; second, a Palestinian decision to reconstitute the PA so that it no longer serves Israeli interests; third, a Palestinian decision to heal internal wounds, rebuild national unity, and orchestrate a new programme of strategically 'smart' national resistance; and, fourth, a Palestinian decision to switch fundamental strategy away from a two state and towards a single state outcome. Palestinians will also try to ensure that Israel loses the dominant discourse battle - even in the United States.

*Israel's alternatives to a negotiated agreement are delusory: Palestinians can and will block all of them. The outcome for Israel will be worse.*

## 9 OUTLINE OF A STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

In strategic analysis the final stage is to set out a list of actions to be taken in order to initiate the strategic process that has been decided upon.

The Palestine Strategy Study Group does not specify a detailed action plan in this Report, because this must be a task for those who, it is hoped, will join in the strategic debate that it is the main aim of the Report to initiate. When as many other Palestinians as possible have become engaged in the task, and when a more general decision has been taken on whether to accept the main thrust of this Report or to adapt and change it, that will be the time to agree a detailed national action plan that commands general support.

In the meantime the Palestine Strategy Study Group suggests that these may be among the main headings for a coordinated action plan.

Action to promote Palestinian national unity: national reconciliation, power sharing, reform of the PLO

Action to formulate coordinated Palestinian strategy: goals and tools

Action to realign the solidarity movement

Action to mobilise and empower the Palestinian people

**When the strategic aim is to compel Israel to participate in genuine negotiations to establish a Palestinian State on terms acceptable to Palestinians:**

Action to clarify Palestinian negotiation requirements, benchmarks and time limits

Action to orchestrate national resistance: changed configuration of the PA

Action to prepare strategic alternatives to a negotiated agreement

Action to communicate the above to Israeli decision-makers and the Israeli public - there are no better alternatives to a negotiated agreement for Israel: all the alternatives are worse for Israel

Action to elicit regional and international support

Action to change perceptions and policies in the United States

Action to ensure that the Palestinian discourse forms the framework for discussion about the Palestinian future - if negotiations fail, the responsibility is seen to lie with Israel, not with the Palestinians

**When the strategic aim is to reorientate Palestinian strategy because Israel has failed to negotiate a genuine two state outcome:**

Action to block Israel's preferred alternatives to a negotiated agreement

Action to promote Palestinian alternatives to a negotiated agreement

Action to elicit regional and international support for the new strategy

Action to ensure that the Palestinian discourse forms the framework for discussion about the Palestinian future - Palestinians will retain the strategic initiative

**Concluding remarks**

The Report concludes by repeating the strategic assessment reached in section 8:

*Palestinian alternatives to a negotiated agreement are difficult but possible. They are preferable to a continuation of the status quo. The reorientation of Palestinian strategy cannot be blocked by Israel.*

*Israel's alternatives to a negotiated agreement are delusory; Palestinians can and will block all of them. The outcome for Israel will be worse.*

What Palestinians must be prepared to undertake is nothing less than a final and conclusive strategic battle with Israel. Palestinians should not be deterred by the past, but should look with confidence to the future. The main conclusion of the strategic review conducted by the Palestine Strategy Study Group is that Palestinians have more strategic cards than they think - and Israel has fewer. Over the longer term Israeli military power is of limited use - and will even be a liability - if we learn how to play our cards properly. No political arrangement based on force alone endures. Israel is wrong to think that the longer the game goes on the more strategic opportunities it will have. It is the other way round. It is hoped that Israel swiftly comes to acknowledge the strategic logic set out in this Report and acts accordingly in its own best interest. But, if Israel does not do this, then we Palestinians are ready to retain the strategic initiative whatever the eventuality, and to shape our future according to our own wishes, not those of others

