

Israelis and Palestinians, Two Peoples, Three Faiths:

Religion and Ethnicity in the Middle Eastern Conflict

Course-Pak for Th. 352.01

**Volume 2: 1990 -1999
Through Gulf War, Madrid Conference
and the Oslo Years**

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FOREWORD, VOLUME 2

A hiatus of fully a year and a half, from December 1988 to June 1990, separates the correspondence in Volume 1 from what follows. I took it that the establishment of an official U.S.-PLO dialogue meant that I should step back and not interfere.

Much of my own activity regarding the region through this period was channeled through the **U.S. Interreligious Committee for Peace in the Middle East**, an organization of American Jews, Christians and Muslims, by now some 2600 strong, which had sprung from the initial group of ten American Christians and Jews who had travelled through the region in June of 1985. (The report on that visit, which I had compiled, stands as Appendix I to the first volume of this collection.)

The founder and Executive Director of that organization, Ronald Young, lives now in Seattle. Before guiding the ten of us on that initial group visit to the region in 1985, he had spent three years as the American Friends Service Committee representative in the Middle East. I have been many times back to the region in the company of Interreligious Committee members, and have been, ever since the formal establishment of the Committee in 1987, an Executive Committee member of its Board of Directors. A reference to the committee's website is appended here as a final page to this volume.

The dialogue with the U.S. had gravely disappointed the PLO. Israel had not agreed to join in it, despite the meeting of the three famous pre-conditions. The government of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir stayed with the traditional Israeli contention that there had to be some Palestinian negotiating partner other than the PLO, even indulging in the building up of Hamas, an organization they would later regret having subsidized. The U.S. participation in the dialogue had been restricted to one official only, Mr. Robert Pelletreau, then an officer in the U.S. Embassy in Tunis, later U.S. Ambassador to Egypt and later ranking State Department officer on the Middle East. Pelletreau could speak only to Abed Rabbo, a symmetrically middle-rank PLO official, and the agenda of their discussions was narrowly limited, mostly to a U.S. conveying of Israeli demands on the PLO. Any matter of interest to the PLO could be handled only indirectly, through contacts between the Egyptian government and the U.S. Embassy in Cairo.

Under these circumstances, Arafat had increasingly placed his hopes on Arab support, and in particular the siren calls of Iraq's Saddam Hussein, who at this time was still the darling boy of anti-Iranian U.S. policy. This came to a head late in May, when Abul Abbas of *Achille Lauro* fame, still a member of the PLO though constantly a trouble-maker, mounted an unsuccessful raid from the sea on the Israeli coast. All his gunmen were killed or captured, and

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Arafat put on notice that he must expel Abul Abbas from the PLO and condemn the raid or see the U.S.-PLO dialogue suspended. Saddam Hussein was patron to Abul Abbas, and would not countenance Arafat's doing this. That was the context of my June 6, 1990 letter to Arafat, my first communication since the end of 1988, urging that he accept the American demand and dissociate himself from Saddam Hussein.

Time ran out without action from Arafat, and the U.S. dialogue was suspended. But the worse storm of the Gulf War overtook this crisis, when Saddam Hussein's Iraq invaded Kuwait on August 2, 1990.

No need here to recount the Gulf War. But I was urged by a close friend, retired Rabbi Roland Gittelsohn of Temple Israel in Boston, to open a correspondence with Prime Minister Shamir, on the same lines as my contact with Arafat. It took me quite a while, but I made the plunge after the October 8, 1990, clash over the Western Wall and the al-Aksa Mosque in Jerusalem, writing to Shamir, and a whole new area of involvement opened up. Shamir replied through Mr. Justus Weiner of the Justice Ministry, and his letter contained an invitation to come talk on my next visit to Israel.

Whether the invitation was to talk with him or with Prime Minister Shamir was a bit vague, but the White House, through Chief of Staff John Sununu, interested itself and promised help to make sure I saw the Prime Minister himself. I wanted Roland Gittelsohn to come with me, but his age and delicate health prohibited it. So I asked Law Professor Richard (Red) Schwartz of Syracuse University, one of our most active Interreligious Committee members and organizer of one of the most successful long-term Jewish-Palestinian dialogues within the U.S. Red agreed to come, and we were ready to travel on February 27, 1991. It was the wrong day to attempt it. Air lines for everywhere in the Middle East had suspended operations during the last mop-up stages of the Gulf War. After a full morning of working out alternative travel arrangements, I heard my brother's verdict that, under these circumstances, we would get to the Middle East and find that the people we wanted to see were too busy to see us. So I postponed the visit, and once the Bush-Baker initiative working toward the Madrid Conference was under way, concluded that further letter-writing was more appropriate for me than an actual visit to Shamir at that time.

Arafat, meanwhile, along with King Hussein of Jordan, appeared to the Western powers and to the Saudis to have taken the side of Saddam Hussein in his invasion of Kuwait. I took a very different view of what was happening, as the correspondence will show. But the outcome of the war left a new wave of Palestinian refugees, driven this time from Kuwait and the Gulf states, pouring into Jordan, some destitute, others very well off. The American administration of President George Bush, and in particular U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, brought the conflicting Middle Eastern parties together in the Madrid Conference of 1991, which after its opening session in the Royal Palace of Madrid held its subsequent meetings over the next two

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years in Washington, on the State Department's premises. The correspondence will show how, during that time, I both carried on active contact with both Israelis and Palestinians and took part, along with other members of the U.S. Interreligious Committee for Peace in the Middle East, in meetings with all the delegations to the Conference, Israeli and Arab.

Israel insisted, throughout the Madrid Conference, that it would not negotiate with the PLO. This was a familiar position, as Israelis had often in the past tried to create alternative Palestinian bodies to which they could relate, all of them in fact unrepresentative. The last of these was the Hamas organization, led by Muslim clerics and actually funded by Israel in its early stages, an organization of its own making that Israel has had reason to regret.

For the Madrid Conference, Israel required that the Palestinian delegation be joined to that of Jordan, that it have no members who admitted to PLO membership, no members from the Palestinian diaspora, and no one from Jerusalem. Secretary of State James Baker got around this by having it tacitly recognized that no one could be appointed to the Palestinian delegation without the approval of the PLO. He granted entrance visas, for each session, to PLO adviser Nabil Sha'ath, a Palestinian businessman resident in Egypt and a close conseller to Arafat, to come to Washington and be the PLO's link to the delegation. Delegation member Saeb Erekat made a point of always saying that he and any Palestinian recognized the PLO as their sole legitimate representative. The most prominent Palestinian exile in the United States, Dr. Walid Khalidi of Harvard University, became for a time chairman of the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. And since Jerusalemites were not permitted into the negotiating chamber with the Israelis, the Palestinian delegation had two teams, a negotiating team and an advisory team made up mostly of Jerusalemites.

The Israelis further demanded that they should not confront a united delegation of all the Arab countries with which they had been at war since 1948 together, but that the negotiations be bilateral in all cases. That meant separate negotiating sessions with Syria, Jordan and Lebanon, and separate Israeli negotiating teams to deal with each of them. Coordination, for Israel, of this complex system fell to Michael Shiloh, my old friend from when he was Consul General in Boston, now in the Washington embassy.

Because of the unwieldiness of this system, a distinct set of multilateral negotiations, which involved all the Middle Eastern countries, together with other countries sponsoring the entire Madrid Conference, dealt with a number of broader questions, ranging from allocation of regional water resources to refugees. The multilateral negotiation on refugees, for instance, when it first met in Moscow in 1991, elected Canada to chair their activities.

Canadian embassies and the Canadian foreign ministry, as a result, have become the best resources for finding what is happening about Palestinian refugees.

Despite these problems, some euphoria attended this opening of real negotiation, and by

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the latter part of 1992 the Labor Party won an Israeli general election, bringing Yitzhak Rabin to the office of Prime Minister with a commitment to make the peace. My own first contact with him, in a rather abrasive letter, came when he lost his temper over Hamas provocations and had more than three hundred of their activists arrested and dumped over the Lebanese border. This tactic, altogether prohibited in international law, had worked for previous governments, though never for so large a number of deportees. Lebanon refused to receive them, and for many months they were perched in a miserable camp in the No-Man's-Land at the Israeli-Lebanese border, entertaining the international press to their great propaganda advantage.

By 1993 it had become apparent to the Israelis that they would get nowhere with the Palestinians by this method; that a Palestinian delegation, if unable to profess its PLO allegiance, could not deliver agreement on any substantive issue. Two Palestinian academics, friends of Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin, contacted two Norwegian academics. Among them, they instituted secret meetings in and around Oslo, which brought together increasingly senior Israeli and PLO diplomats, with the active encouragement of the Norwegian Prime Minister. Beilin argued the results of these meetings to Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, who in turn argued them to Prime Minister Rabin. The announcement, in late summer, that these diplomats had reached agreement on a *Declaration of Principles* on which to base what was intended to be a five-year process of negotiation to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, astonished Israeli, Palestinian and world opinion. On September 13th, 1993, the two sides signed what was popularly known as the Oslo Agreement on the White House lawn in Washington.

The most substantive element of the agreement was a recognition, by representatives of the two peoples, of one another's legitimacy as peoples. The PLO recognized the legitimacy of the Israeli state and society. Israel recognized the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Both Israelis and Palestinians complained of the lack of detailed agreement in the Declaration of Principles. Almost all was yet to be negotiated, left to very hesitant trust in one another's good will. Most alienated of all were the Palestinians who had made up the delegations to the Madrid Conference, who bitterly resented the fact that they had been left uninformed of this entire back-channel negotiation. They were outsiders henceforth.

Two pieces of territory were put under partial PLO jurisdiction early in 1994, the city of Jericho and the Gaza Strip. Arafat returned to the territory for the first time in many decades to establish the Palestine National Authority (PNA), whose name was soon shortened to Palestine Authority (PA). The principle was that the PA would have administrative powers in these territories, while security was maintained by joint patrols of Israeli army and Palestinian police. The Israelis kept total control over Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip, and this pattern would be expanded, as West Bank territory was turned over to the PA, to three zones: area A all Palestinian control, Area B mixed, and Area C controlled entirely by Israel.

Mass murder interrupted this progress when, in February 1994, an Israeli settler, Baruch Goldstein, machine-gunned Muslim worshippers at prayer in their mosque at the Tomb of

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Abraham in Hebron, killing 29 and wounding many more before he was himself disarmed and killed. Both leaders had recognized, when they first signed their agreement, that terrorists would try to halt the process by atrocities, and had promised not to be deterred. But it was Arafat who, at this point, was the first to break off negotiations because of this Israeli terrorism. Six months were lost.

My engagement through this time was to argue against such suspensions, to urge on Arafat that he needed to maintain the mobilization of his people rather than try to negotiate for them without their active participation, and to urge on Prime Minister Rabin and the Syrian President Hafez al-Asad that the Israelis withdraw their troops for the part of Lebanon which they occupied, their "Security Zone," in return for Syrian guarantees of their frontier. This can all be followed in the correspondence.

The murder of Prime Minister Rabin in November 1995 brought progress toward peace to a standstill. Shimon Peres inherited the mantle, and might have won a new election as Prime Minister by a landslide. But he wanted no sympathy vote and postponed the election into the following year.

Meanwhile the Israeli secret police, apparently to recover their pride after failing to protect Prime Minister Rabin, killed the Hamas leader Yahya Ayyash, long a bombmaker but the man actually responsible for maintaining a ceasefire over the previous two years. Hamas suicide bombers, in response, blew up two buses in Jerusalem and a street-crossing in the most popular shopping area of Tel Aviv. Peres, confronted with Hezbollah resistance to Israeli occupation in Southern Lebanon, instituted a shelling-bombing campaign designed to drive the whole Southern Lebanon population up to Beirut. In the course of this, the Israeli army made an artillery assault on a UNIFIL station at Kanaa, killing over 100 Lebanese civilians who had taken shelter there. The two episodes had massive electoral effect.

A new voting system had provided for direct election of the Prime Minister by a popular vote separate from the election of representatives to the Knesset. Disaffected Israeli Jewish voters turned to the Likud's Binyamin Netanyahu for Prime Minister, while the Israeli Arab voters, 22% of the electorate, protesting the massacre in Lebanon, did not vote at all. The idea behind the one-on-one election of Prime Minister had been that it would encourage a two-party system, eliminating many of the small parties. But having chosen between two candidates for Prime Minister, the Israeli public then divided their votes for the Knesset among a multitude of single-issue parties, leaving the two main parties, Labor and Likud, drastically reduced. Netanyahu won the office of Prime Minister by much less than 1%, but then had the option of forming a coalition government from a disparate bloc of parties, many of them sworn enemies to one another.

The Netanyahu government, while formally committed to the Oslo Declaration of

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Principles, dedicated its efforts for the next three years to retracting the recognition of Palestinian legitimacy as a people that had been its cornerstone. The good news in this bleak situation was that he could not succeed in rescinding that recognition, but the peace process, for the duration of his term, went into atrophy. Several strenuous efforts by the Clinton administration forced some minimal progress, but everything was a struggle against hardline Israeli opposition.

In 1999, the unpopularity of Netanyahu's government and the fragmentation of his coalition forced early new elections, which brought former General Ehud Barak to power as Prime Minister. Under the same electoral system as before, a separate popular vote for Prime Minister, the party composition of the Knesset was still more fragmented, despite the massive victory Barak himself had won. The coalition he formed contained several unreliable partners, notably Shas, with 17 seats (a party representing the Sephardic Ultra-Orthodox that consistently prioritized the funding of its parochial school system before any other issue, including the peace), the National Religious Party and Israel B'Aliyah, a largely secular party of Russian immigrants.

Barak, after a promising start, practically wooing both Arafat and President Hafez al-Assad of Syria, decided to prioritize the Syrian negotiation, offering the return of the Golan Heights in exchange for peace with Syria. The Palestinians understood this as a ploy, to isolate them by making peace with Syria first, thus leaving them without allies as they negotiated with Israel themselves.

President Clinton was seen by all sides as committed to bringing about a comprehensive peace agreement and, with his enormous mastery of detail, the one person most qualified to bring it about. As the end of his term approached, the feeling grew among all parties that the comprehensive deal before he left office. Arafat became very apprehensive that he might be coerced into some untenable agreement if the process was speeded through without adequate preparation, and saw only repeated Israeli postponements of land transfers to Palestinian Authority jurisdiction that had long been agreed. Barak pushed hard for a final summit session after which the Palestinians would renounce any further claims on Israel. This was the setting for the Camp David meetings of July 2000, which I will leave to the next volume.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167

June 6, 1990

Mr. President
Chairman Yasser Arafat
Palestine Liberation Organization

Dear President Arafat,

It is a long while now since I have addressed you directly, other than through your nephew in New York, Dr. Al-Kidwa. I have hesitated to write to you in the current circumstances. I'm sure you could predict that I would be in favor of the most complete disassociation of the P.L.O. and of yourself from the attempted raid on the Israeli beaches last week. I expect you are being exhorted to do more on that by so many people whom you know as friends that I preferred not to write unless I could say more than that. I understand well the reluctance you must feel to accept dictation from United States policy-makers about what you should (doubtless they say must!) do and say, especially after you were put through repeated sessions of that sort at the time of the 1988 Geneva meeting of the General Assembly. I hope you realise that you do not have to prove your commitment to a peaceful settlement to me.

I am concerned at this juncture about the whole direction in which events are moving in the Middle East, where new developments seem to me to be negative rather than positive.

Last year, when the question was whether the P.L.O. would do things to make the U.S. policy of accepting Mr. Shamir's election proposal and holding him to it possible, I wrote to you of the paramount interest of keeping the initiative with yourself and the P.L.O. I argued that, however slow and discouraging the movement of events might be, it remained true that everything in Israeli policy was a response to the Intifada, as also was everything in U.S. policy that affected the Middle East. The agenda was being set entirely by the P.L.O., even when the response was a negative one, and it was in your interest to keep it so. It was in the interest of the peace too, because you were dependably committed to the peace, and the Israeli government was not. Hence I argued that you not allow the question to be shifted, by refusing to work with the U.S. policy, and become one of why the P.L.O. would not cooperate. I felt myself, after that, that the Bush-Baker policy of pressing for the elections under at least minimally fair conditions proved its worth, trapping Mr. Shamir in a bad-faith position that he had never imagined he would get to.

Now the situation has worsened. I believe many false criteria are applied to the Intifada. The Likud propaganda was able to claim that the Intifada was fading away simply because there were fewer killings, and that failed to take account of the continuing commitment of the Palestinians to their rejection of occupation and the ongoing process of building self-sufficient political institutions in the villages and towns of the occupied people themselves. It still remained true, as it had been a year before, that all Israeli policy was response to the Intifada.

President Arafat, June 6, 1990 -- 2

All the same, the massacre of May 20th gave new prominence, even new life to the Intifada, horrible as the events were. There was certainly new sympathy and responsiveness to the plight of the Palestinians on the part of the U.S. government and much of the U.S. public, including the American Jewish public. I believe the same was true in Europe and elsewhere in the world, and the Palestinians themselves must have felt that their cause had been dramatised before the world. Israelis, in what I take to be genuine consternation, protested that they all condemned the initial deed by the disturbed young man who murdered the first seven dead. But what was even much more shocking was the action of the government's armed forces in killing at least twenty more in the next couple of days, and continuing that official violence even through the deaths of the two children who were shot down just yesterday (June 5). The wrongs suffered by the Palestinian people, their determined peace proposal in the face of oppression and their Intifada against occupation were more than ever the driving force of events.

But now that is practically lost, and this is basically a result of the raid on the beaches. The great question of the region, as perceived by the rest of the world and even, quite genuinely, by the Israeli public, is no longer how to deal with the injustices done to the Palestinians, as demanded by their Intifada, but instead is whether the Palestinians have now renounced their peace offensive, whether they can be trusted as negotiating partners, whether they and their P.L.O. are merely (that is indeed how it is seen) terrorists. I'm sure this all sounds familiar. This is how it was before the Intifada, when through all their years of suffering the Palestinians had never had the initiative.

You have heard me, and read in my letters, making complaints before about the actions of Mr. Abul Abbas that have been deeply subversive of the interests of the Palestinian people. In this case, Mr. Abul Abbas has carried out an action that had to be long planned and prepared for (using the May 20th events only as a pretext, much as Mr. Sharon did when he invaded Lebanon in 1982), which he had to have known would subvert the Palestinian people's Intifada itself. What more precious thing could be taken away from the Palestinian people? As a result of this action, their Intifada, all the suffering and bravery of it for these two and a half years added onto all the suffering they have been through over countless years before, may have been in vain. The hope of a Palestinian State alongside and accepting the State of Israel may have been stolen from them.

But this is not a result Mr. Abul Abbas could accomplish by himself. It had to be compounded by a failure of the P.L.O. to respond adequately to this deliberate subversion of its own most central policy. It rests with yourself, Mr. President. You carry the burden of Palestine at this moment. I know that there are constitutional limits on what you can do about Abul Abbas, as an Executive member elected by the P.N.C., and I have always been glad to see those elements of democracy and due process in the P.L.O. But that surely cannot mean that there is nothing that can be done. I am not talking here about doing the bidding of the U.S. government, so that the P.L.O. will not be described as naughty. I am talking about the saving of the Intifada. Are the central decisions about that something on which Mr. Abul Abbas has license to defy you and the fundamental policy and interests of the P.L.O., without your having any means or responsibility to counter him?

Over the years I have often wondered myself about your old adversary Abu Nidal, and I have heard many other serious and responsible people ask, whether in fact he has been all along a paid traitor, a provocateur working for the most sinister forces among the Israelis. Now I ask the same question about Abul Abbas. Is that what he is, this destroyer of the Intifada and of the Palestinian people's hopes for their land, a paid provocateur for the Israeli government and the policies of the Likud? You surely saw the comment of one of the important leaders of the Israeli Peace Now movement, who has worked hard for the peace these many years: that Abul Abbas' action, and your reluctance to denounce it, casts you as an actor in a play whose script has been written by Yitzhak Shamir.

There are other ways I approach this whole subject.

One is an analysis of what is centrally at stake in the whole effort to come to a negotiated two-state settlement with the Israelis. I have written this to you before, that the priority among the things that need to happen is that the Israeli public should be prepared to deal on these issues with the P.L.O. As of now, those Israelis who simply do not want to concede anything are a minority. A majority has been ready since early in the Intifada to negotiate a settlement, including territorial matters, with "a legitimate representative of the Palestinian people." They are simply not yet ready to acknowledge that that is you, the P.L.O. That is not simply a propaganda position, but a reality of public perception. Their question, of course, is not whether you are really the representative -- they know quite well that you are -- but whether they can deal with you. That is the far more important division among the Israeli public: they are still split just about half and half between those who believe what you -- the P.L.O. -- have been saying these last several years, and those who do not believe you. That means that the main priority is to win sufficient confidence among the Israeli public that you mean what you are saying so that they will negotiate with you. Since the division is almost half and half, it requires only a little to arrive at the critical mass where the Israeli public will demand negotiations with you over all the real questions. When that happens, the Shamirs and the Sharons and all these cynical leaders who have used that division to secure a stalemate will be swept aside very quickly. They are not important. The public is.

For that reason, my own first question when I heard of the May 20th massacre (and of all the killings by government troops that followed it) was: how will this affect the Israeli public? This might well have been not only a reigniting of the Intifada but also the critical event that would bring about that massing of Israeli public opinion that would make all the difference, and thrust the Palestinian people, represented by the P.L.O., into the negotiations that would really produce the two states. That opportunity, I believe, has now been thrown away, by this action of subversion against the P.L.O. and the interests of the Palestinian people that Abul Abbas has taken. The deaths of those Palestinians killed on May 20th and after have been rendered meaningless by that subversive action.

Another way I approach the subject is through the question of leadership in the Arab community. The Bagdad summit was deeply disappointing. No unity of Arab purpose emerged from it, no decisions were taken that lead anywhere at all. It is shaming to the Arabs and their cause. Even with a number of key Arab countries absent, the rest could not produce anything worth paying

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President Arafat. June 6 1990 -- 4

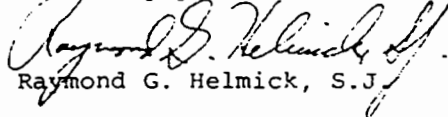
attention to.

Where is leadership among the Arabs to come from? I see nowhere else but from the P.L.O. You, Mr. President, have had this position in recent years. When the Intifada first changed the context of everything happening in the Middle East, and when the P.N.C., and you yourself in your subsequent statements, made it clear that the P.L.O. was embarked definitively on an implacable course for the peace, you had the leadership of the whole Arab world, based not on strength of arms (you have some, but not that much) but on clarity and determination of moral purpose. No one other than you is going to give such leadership now, not the Syrians, not the Egyptians, not the Iraqis. If you don't give it, there will be no such leadership, and the Arab cause, which is fundamentally a cause of peace, will fail. If you exercise it, as you have been doing over a considerable period, none of the negative forces in Israel, dedicated to stalemate and the prevention of the peace, can stand against it, and your victory, for the peace, will be shared by those among the Israelis who are also committed to the peace. But there is no way you can exercise that leadership by farming out your authority to scoundrels like Abul Abbas, or refusing to act resolutely for lack of the sort of consensus that gives veto power to any one of your subordinates.

I write, as you can see, with great urgency now, because I believe the most central interests of the Palestinian people are at stake. More than that, because I believe the whole prospect of regional peace, for the sake of the other Arabs and of the Israelis, to whom I also wish only the best, is at stake. I know you well enough so that I do not hesitate to speak very plainly, in confidence that you will seriously consider what I say here. You know the Christian parable, told by Jesus, of the man who began to build a house, but had not considered whether he had the means to finish it. You have begun to build a house. You do have the means to finish it.

My respect for you and your honest efforts in all your travail is enormous. With my prayers and best wishes, I am

sincerely yours,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

TEMPLE ISRAEL

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Telephone 617-566-3960

RABBI EMERITUS Roland B. Gittelsohn

June 20, 1990

Father Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.
Jesuit Community Boston College
Chestnut Hill, MA 02167

Dear Father Helmick:

I write to tell you how very much I enjoyed the hour we were able to spend together on Tuesday and how much I hope there will be many such opportunities to project our friendship into the future.

I have read thoroughly and with great interest the confidential copy you were good enough to give me of your 6 June letter to Yasser Arafat. There are several points I might want to question you on if there were another opportunity, which unfortunately is not the case, for us to continue our conversation.

Meanwhile, a rather radical thought occurs to me. Would you consider sending in a similar letter to Yatschak Shamir? My first choice would be for you actually to dispatch such a letter to him, though I know it might be difficult since you don't have personal contact with him. It would clarify my own thinking considerably, however, if you would dictate and send to me confidentially, what such a letter would contain if it were actually to be dispatched. I do not mean this to be just an idle exercise, but rather an opportunity for me to grapple with just where you stand between the two extremes. Such clarification would be extremely helpful to me in my own similar dilemma.

Were you to accept my suggestion, you can send your letter to me here at the Temple, marking the envelope "confidential". I shall look for it hopefully when I return from my trip to the West Coast.

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In any event, I am glad we were able to meet each other and look forward to further communication in the future.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Roland B. Gittelsohn". The signature is fluid and elegant, with the first name "Roland" being more prominent than the last name.

Rabbi Roland B. Gittelsohn

RBG:gs



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167

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September 11, 1990

President Yasser Arafat
Palestine Liberation Organisation

Dear President Arafat,

Accompanying this letter will be a copy of the Catholic weekly newspaper for the Archdiocese of Boston, The Pilot, for September 7, in which the regular weekly article by Cardinal Bernard Law, on page 2, deals with the Middle East. I think you will find it a helpful article, coming as it does from so close a friend and confidant of President Bush. Since it addresses itself directly to President Bush's meeting with President Gorbachev, you can be sure that this was seen, in advance of the Helsinki meeting, by President Bush himself, and that it will not have said things unwelcome to him.

The Cardinal, as you see, calls for a swift resolution of the Iraqi conflict by diplomatic means; for the establishment of a means to distribute the wealth of the oil nations equitably among the Arabs who suffer deprivation; for international attention, concentrated as it is on the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, be turned as well to the unresolved plight of the Palestinians, as also of Lebanon; and for President Bush and President Gorbachev, in their meeting, spend some time on a comprehensive plan for peace for the Middle East, including Lebanon, the aspirations of the Palestinians, and the guarantee of sovereignty and security of every nation, including Israel.

I will be down to New York tomorrow, to give that text and this letter to Dr. Nasser al-Kidwa, and discuss with him the opportunity that, I believe, Cardinal Law's article creates. Along with it I will give him a copy of the article I published myself the week before in the same paper, and the tape of a television discussion I held about the same time, in both of which I had spoken of your efforts to mediate a peaceful solution to the Gulf crisis. Because of the Cardinal's article appearing the following week, I can be reasonably sure that my own article was also brought to the attention of President Bush and his officials.

The opportunity this creates is for you yourself to send a letter, in acknowledgement of his article, to Cardinal Law, thanking him for the points on which you can agree with him, and laying out both the efforts you and the P.L.O. are making to bring the Gulf crisis to a non-violent solution, and your position on the Israeli-Palestinian situation.

The advantage of doing this is that it is one certain way to be sure that a letter from you will be put directly and immediately before President Bush. Your letter, if it seems good to you to send it, should be addressed entirely to the Cardinal, but in writing it you should be conscious that your real audience will be President Bush and his Secretary of State.

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President Yasser Arafat, September 11, '90 -- 2

My recommendation is that this letter contain no recriminations at all, against anyone -- Israel, the United States, anyone allied to either -- but instead be entirely a positive explanation of efforts you are making to bring these serious matters to a good conclusion. You must be aware that, when a letter signed by you comes into the White House, there will be people about who are most anxious to discredit you, and who will be looking for any single word or sentence because of which they can say to President Bush: there is the old Arafat, the terrorist, out for the destruction of Israel and the undermining of the West. I feel that no excuse should be given for any such interpretation. I know quite well that your efforts to bring about a peaceful outcome of the Iraqi crisis have been in terms of the U.N. Security Council resolutions, and have rejected any acquisition of territory by force. I would hope that is clear from your letter. I know, too, that the Algiers P.N.C., in its major resolutions, and you yourself in your Geneva statements, have made it clear that you are not seeking the destruction of Israel, but instead a Palestinian state alongside Israel, which would live with it in mutual respect. I have seen this as the aim of the Palestinian people's intifada, which has aimed always at the ending of the occupation, not at the end of the State of Israel. I would find it understandable that you express great disappointment at the failure of Israel's government to respond in any commensurate way to the peace efforts you have made in recent years, and at the hardening of hearts in Israel since the beginning of this crisis in the Gulf, as the Israeli government has so comfortably assumed that they could now forget about any recognition of Palestinian rights. But I would emphasize again that, if this letter is to gain a positive response from President Bush and those around him, this should be done without any sort of recrimination or sounds of hatred or derision.

Great good for the Palestinian cause could be done, in my opinion, if such a letter, speaking only to Cardinal Law, were to be taken as a positive message on P.L.O. intentions by those to whom the Cardinal would show it in the White House.

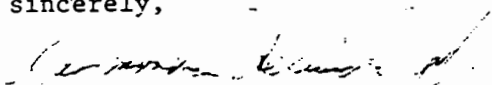
A letter for the Cardinal can be sent, through your own channels, to:

His Eminence
Bernard Cardinal Law
Archbishop of Boston
2101 Commonwealth Avenue
Brighton, Massachusetts
U.S.A.

The proper form of address for the Cardinal in the letter is then:
"Your Eminence."

Dr. Nasser al Kidwa and I will have a conversation about this tomorrow, which I am sure he will report to you. With all best wishes,

sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

The crisis in the Gulf

BY RAYMOND G. HELMICK, SJ

The United States has every reason to find a resolution of the Middle East crisis without a war. So have our allies, both European and Arab. As I write, no one is shooting yet, though the massing of forces is huge, and the taking of hostages, civilians and even diplomats, outrageous.

When war threatens, the American people traditionally rally 'round their leaders and their principles. We've seen this break down, of course, as over Vietnam, when conflicting outlooks over the necessity and justice of the war brought us to an internal battle of principles, and the goals did not seem, to many of us, to merit the sacrifice of lives. So far in the Iraqi crisis, the public is solidly with the President, and world opinion is phenomenally united, too, against the depredations of Saddam Hussein. This is a fragile enough condition, and our policy and our public should be working to maintain it.

The public emotions that rage through an emergency of this sort become very burdensome to the leadership they mean to support if they restrict the President's freedom to look for reasonable solutions. I would not want to fault either the decision to send troops to defend against Iraq's naked aggression or to the commitment of such great numbers as to be a really effective deterrent. There are basic verities, though, that we need to acknowledge.

One of the most important is that you cannot have American (or other foreign) military, at long term, in the middle of an inter-Arab quarrel without turning it into a struggle between the Arabs and the outside, i.e., with us. The people who want us to "show them a lesson" are mistaken. If we get to a shooting war, Saddam Hussein has won. Arab governments, for excellent reasons, are with us just now, and we with them in defense of their countries' integrity and independence. The Arab

man in the street, with irreproachable wisdom, sees the foreign forces that unjustly dominated the Arab world through the imperialist period, and sees Saddam Hussein, for all his recognized immorality, as the one who defies the outside forces. Governments in the Arab world that do not acknowledge this will lose their popular support and go under, as many Arab governments allied to us have done in the past.

If we think evilly enough, we may see that the Iraqi despot is less likely to attack Saudi Arabia than to look for any excuse he can find to attack Jordan. He hardly needs to attack the oil states, as he has them so frightened that they will follow his dictate on oil policy even without a conquest. The purpose of an attack on Jordan would

have nothing to do with Jordan itself, but would be a way to involve the Is-

raelis in the conflict, and turn the whole Arab parade around to march the other way in alliance with him. Then our troops in the Arabian desert would truly be in a pickle. We should be thinking of that when we feel the undisciplined urge to force King Hussein into overt hostility toward Iraq and endorsement of ourselves.

Many of our public figures call explicitly for the ouster or assassination of Saddam Hussein and the humiliation of Iraq. I can think of few more despicable leaders than he, as I hear of his murderous tyranny over his own people, particularly over the Kurdish minority, and the reckless adventures into which he keeps leading his hapless citizens. It may well be that the Iraqis themselves need to be rid of this leader, but that is their affair. The elimination of leaders is not a legitimate goal of our efforts. If we succeeded, and Saddam Hussein were brought down in service to our American (or any foreign) purposes and interests, we would only have succeeded in making him a martyr

NEWS COMMENTARY

and hero, canonizing his revolting intentions, and unleashing long-term revulsion against ourselves throughout the Arab world.

Our American goals, to which most of the rest of the world, including Arab governments, agrees, are just: that the snapping up of another country's territory to conquest be repulsed, and this predator prevented from dictating the terms for so vital a commodity as oil to us and all the world. If we are not to resolve our immediate problem by assassination, we need to find the way to save face all around, and that without yielding on the justice of our funda-

mental goals. The most dangerous people to us now are those among ourselves who can think of nothing more than "we've got to show them they can't push us around."

And we should have some respect for the two Arab leaders who, at great risk to themselves, are working to construct the settlement, King Hussein of Jordan, and Yasser Arafat. Neither of them has sided with Saddam Hussein, though much of our American media would love to have us think they have. Both have condemned and rejected the aggression against Kuwait and the

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Gulf

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domination plans of the Iraqi dictator. But they have worked hard to keep themselves in the position where they can tell Saddam Hussein: you are losing, and here is the way you can extricate yourself with some semblance of dignity.

Saddam Hussein, clear as he is on what he would like to grab, has the habit of making colossal blunders. He did it in attacking Iran, and in attacking Kuwait. After realizing the stupidity of the invasion of Iran, he wanted to back off, but was not allowed to by the furious Ayatollah, who would settle for nothing less than Saddam's head. Eight years of fruitless war, with benefit to neither, followed. If Saddam is brought to want a way out in this case, we should not be the Ayatollahs who prevent it.

A Just Resolution Needed in Middle East Crisis

HOW QUICKLY THE WORLD SITUATION CAN CHANGE. The euphoria over events in Eastern Europe has given way to profound anxiety as the world watches nervously the events in the Middle East. I know that the hearts of all in the Archdiocese are joined in prayer for a peaceful and speedy resolution of the current crisis.

While armed hostilities have not further erupted, and please God they will not, already the crisis has taken its toll. Thousands of persons have been dislocated, the status of refugees in the desert between Iraq and Jordan is most precarious, families have been separated, and the citizens of both Kuwait and Iraq are bearing the brunt of decisions beyond their control.

Obviously, a civilized international order demands respect for the integrity of nations. The United Nations' reaction to the invasion and attempted annexation of Kuwait was remarkably swift. The nations of the world condone such illegal acts only at the threat of their own security.

While the immediate fielding of a military presence on the part of the United States and other nations is understandable in order to deter any further expansionist efforts on the part of the rulers of Iraq, it is essential that no effort be spared to effect a peaceful and swift resolution to the conflict by diplomatic means. The present situation is not unlike the proverbial tinderbox which can so easily be set off in flames by an unexpected, inadvertent act.

It is encouraging that there is near unanimity among the nations of the world in response to the actions of Iraq. It is imperative that close communication and mutual respect be maintained at the international level so that the common resolve that has sustained the effort until now not lose its force.

While the withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait is the major objective of the international community, there are other considerations which should also be addressed.

There is great deprivation



among the peoples of many Arab nations. It is not unreasonable to urge that a fund be established by the oil rich nations such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. This,

it would seem to me, would address one of the serious grievances which have afflicted the area for years.

As President Bush meets with President Gorbachev

I would hope that their discussion might spend some time on a comprehensive plan for peace for the Middle East. Any enduring solution must include Lebanon, the aspirations of the Palestinians, and the guarantee of sovereignty and security of every nation, including

Israel.

Furthermore, the international attention, which in these days finds itself united in an extraordinary manner, might well be turned to the unresolved plight of Palestinians. International collaboration on this problem and a strong resolve to find a just resolution has been sadly lacking. Perhaps one of the good things that can emerge out of the present crisis is a new will to deal with this old but destabilizing problem.

For some time now I have been concerned with Lebanon and have attempted through personal contacts to be of help to that country. As President Bush meets with President Gorbachev, I would hope that their discussion might spend some time on a comprehensive plan for peace for the Middle East. Any enduring solution must include Lebanon, the aspirations of the Palestinians, and the guarantee of sovereignty and security of every nation, including Israel.

The present crisis highlights another problem which it may be difficult to deal with at this time, but which eventually must be faced. Fundamental rights, such as the right of religious liberty, rights which are guaranteed by the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights, are not respected in some Muslim nations. Catholics and other Christians, for example, as well as Jews, are denied the free practice of their religion in some countries. These issues should be addressed in the proper international discussion.

There is something that we can do, and it is more important than all the talk and all the shuttle diplomacy which the experts will engage in. We can and we must pray to God, the one God who is worshipped by the Moslem world, by the Jewish world, and by the Christian world, and pray that He bestow peace on us all.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167

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October 13, 1990

Prime Minister Yitzakh Shamir
The Knesset
Jerusalem, Israel

Dear Mr. Shamir,

Shalom!

It is by coincidence that this letter, some time in preparation, should be written on the morning after the Security Council resolution condemning Israel for the shootings at the Al-Aksa Mosque last Monday, October 8. The whole situation is very painful for all of us who love Israel and are concerned also for the rights of the Palestinians, but was painful long before this particular incident.

I write to you out of concern for Israel, whose safety and happiness are dear to me. For some years past I have also communicated regularly with Palestinians and with their leadership, including, frequently, PLO leader Yasser Arafat, urging on them the recognition of Israel and the other famous preconditions set by the United States for dialogue with them, as the best way for them to serve their own cause. I have for a long time reported all my dealings with either Israelis or Palestinians to Cardinal Bernard Law, the Archbishop of Boston, Cardinal John O'Connor, the Archbishop of New York, and the Holy See, as well as to the U.S. government. While we had your admirable Michael Shiloh as Israel's Consul General in Boston I discussed these matters frequently with him and made a habit of giving him copies of correspondence and reports of meetings, for the information of Israel's Foreign Office, which I visited in 1986. I continued those conversations with Mr. Arthur Avnon, Michael's successor in the Boston Consulate, though I have found the present Consul General a bit hard to approach. I have worked also at building the U.S. Interreligious Committee for Peace in the Middle East, an organization of American Jews, Christians and Muslims who try to build common concerns for the peace of your region and all its peoples. I have visited your country often over the years, and have a broad range of Israeli friends.

An American Jewish friend of high standing in his community, Rabbi Roland Gittelsohn of Boston, to whom I had shown a letter I sent to Mr. Arafat after the boat raid of last April 20, urged me to write to you. I promised it before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait so radically changed the situation in the region, and I have, in considerable dismay, procrastinated since, until Roland recently urged me again to do so because the interests of peace for Israel are now so much more urgent. Within our U.S. Interreligious Committee I have been arguing for some time now that we of the Committee should not assume or accept that we are excommunicated to the Israeli Right, or that we ought not be in serious conversation with you of the Likud. I tried, with only very limited success, to create, at a Convocation the Interreligious Committee held in Boston last February, a forum which Likud sympathisers too, as well as Israelis more identified as "peace movement," would use to present the Israeli Government's proposals as seriously a plan for peace. I often have difficulty in believing that in individual instances, but am determined to work on the assumption of good faith on your part.

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The situation created by the October 8th shootings at the Al Aksa Mosque, as well as the stoning of Jews at the Western Wall, is a terrible mishap for Israel, a new tragedy for the Palestinians even if, at the same time, it is a publicity windfall that puts their case once more before a world audience. I hear contradictory accounts of who did what first, who had planned what in advance or acted with preconceived malice. Frankly I don't expect to have those particular questions resolved definitively and don't see either side's arguments on it as without parti pris. (I've seen pretty much everything Mr. Pazner and others of your office have said about it, and the contradictions and counter-charges from other sources.) I see the U.S. Administration helping to prepare the Security Council's condemnation of Israel's action, which may or may not satisfy our European and Arab allies in the conflict with Iraq, and while I am also outraged over what I see as an ill-prepared and callous response by the Israeli forces involved to a serious incident, I realise of course, as you must, that the U.S. would be vetoing such resolutions if it were not for the crisis in the Gulf. But what comes through to me clearly is that relations are so poisoned between Israel and the Palestinians that such an incident could happen, that people of both sides could so believe the worst of each other and act on their anxieties. If in addition either or both sides was waiting in ambush to harm or discredit the other, that is an incidental detail that only confirms the underlying poison in the whole relation.

To my mind, Israel cannot live this way, with such hatreds polluting the life of its spirit and such traps lurking at every step, and the Palestinians cannot be expected to accept such a situation as other than grounds for struggle. You are one another's neighbors, who must live together, side by side, for all your future history. I do in fact hear the voices of your Ariel Sharons and others who, I observe, are small comfort to yourself, urging that the Palestinians don't belong there at all and should be "transferred" elsewhere, as to Jordan, and I understand well enough what that euphemism stands for. And while you and your party took active part in banning the racism of Rabbi Kahane's Kach party from the Knesset, it disturbs me to see the Moledet party, which appears to be a carbon copy of Kach, welcomed into your coalition. But I accept that your government does in fact see the Palestinians as the neighbors with whom Israel will always live. How can Israel ever be happy if the relation is like this? And how can the Palestinians ever see themselves, or their Arab sympathisers see them, as other than outraged victims of a juggernaut which they must forever resist?

The question, of course, is how Israel can be safe. I never accept that anyone's safety may be at the cost of trampling on others and their rights, but that Israel must be safe I have no doubts. I would even use, without hesitation, what I know is the ultimate formula: the safety of Israel is a cause for which I would willingly give my own life. -- I would give it for the Palestinians too.

This safety question is customarily put in terms of needing this hilltop, this wider margin of territory behind Tel Aviv, this defensive line of the Jordan valley, the Golan Heights, for the military defense of Israel. All these land claims beyond the Armistice line of 1948, as you well understand, tend to convince the Arabs of Israel's intention to displace them, by genocidal crimes if need be. The argument eventually comes down to whether the safety of Israel is to be built on military defense or on the friendship of its neighbors. Personally, I would not trust any formula for the safety of Israel which rested exclusively on either of

Prime Minister Shamir, October 13, '90 -- 3

these bases. I therefore understand and accept your natural revulsion when people speak of leaving Israel without adequate military defense. (There might be legitimate question of what military defense would be adequate once there was stability and basic friendship in the region.) Equally, I have a revulsion for any argument that says Israel should rely only on its military strength, should be content to be a fortress set against all its neighbors and presume them forever hostile. Quite apart from the sympathy I have for Arabs and Palestinians as people with rights that are also sacred, like those of the Jews, but thinking only of the Interest of Israel, I believe that those who look only for this military defense are no true friends of Israel. That there is no way the military balance will forever, or even for any considerable length of time for a nation's life, remain favorable to Israel in a situation of permanent confrontation, and consequently that Israel, if it does not accomplish true peace with the Palestinians and the other Arabs, will fail. That Israel should fail -- I am speaking seriously, of death and exile, of dissolution of the State and the society, and Israel driven out of the Arab world as were the Crusaders, which I believe is the true risk for those who would let Israel rely only on force to sustain its life -- is an appalling prospect, so unacceptable that I commit myself to help prevent it. For that reason, when I encounter the Israeli hawks, or their American friends who think that any talk of peace must be some form of enmity for Israel, I feel no need, and would feel hypocritical if I tried, to accommodate them, or to help rescue them from the threat of peace.

Beyond this basic concern for safety, there is also the bond of Jews, and also that of the Palestinians, to the land itself. As you know, we Catholics have been, as a body, particularly reluctant to grant the argument that there is a necessary link between God's giving the land and the present geo-political reality of Israel, and have, even in our cultivation of interreligious dialogue with Jews, deliberately structured the conversation so that the interreligious dialogue on one hand, and what the Holy See, with its Secretariate of State, calls "public affairs" on the other hand, are dealt with in two different agencies by different people. I don't want to interfere with or reject a technical position that is clearly a convenience to my Church -- that is the level at which I see this -- and I have even written a substantial memo (late 1985) arguing against the establishment of full diplomatic relations between the Holy See and Israel prior to the settlement of the Palestinian question. (You have that memo on file in your Foreign Office, as it is one of the many documents I shared with Michael Shiloh.) But I do also understand the importance, both religious and for their national identity, for Jews that they never lose their bond with this land or with Jerusalem. The trouble is that the Palestinians also have such a bond, and I cannot accept the several arguments I have heard that would trivialize their bond or treat it as less sacred or less a matter of fundamental right than the Jewish one.

For many years I have understood what the priorities of the Israeli people were. A 1985 conversation with Simha Dinitz etched more firmly in my mind what I already knew, that these priorities were, first, the safety of the State and its society, second its Jewish character, and third, that it be a democracy. I accept all these as priorities of mine, that I would never try to interfere with for Israel. I have argued each of these priorities, quite passionately, many times, among others to Mr. Arafat. I know, too, the problems: that you cannot have the Jewish character permanently if you keep all the land, with its growing population -- even the new immigration from the Soviet Union only postpones this problem, does not overcome it --, that you cannot have a society that may call itself democratic if it is

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based on the crime of "transfer," and that the democracy is a delusion if it is for its Jewish citizens only and not for all -- that is the problem with the formulas of autonomy for the people and not for the land. (That a Kahane regards the third priority, the democratic character of Israel, as unimportant or dispensable, is a reason, alongside his racism, for my withholding my respect from him.)

There is a fourth priority in my mind, which I believe has not rooted itself in Israeli minds only because Israeli thinkers and the Israeli public have not really envisioned for themselves the situation of a partition of the land between themselves and a Palestinian entity -- I don't see, with an eye to the real satisfaction of both Israelis and Palestinians that can be the foundation of a truly lasting peace and friendship, that this can be other than a state. This fourth priority is the openness of the land: that there would never again be the situation of the period between 1948 and 1967, when Jews were unable to go to, or to live on, that land, or conversely that Palestinians were unable to do the same. The border, when there is one, must be open. That means, of course, that there must be guarantees, fully agreed, that this openness not mean that Jews will take over, or take away, the land from the Palestinians, and that the Palestinians will not, by pressure of population, take over or take away the land from the Jews. Numbers of actual residents would have to be within the regulation of each society so that demography could not be used by either as a weapon against the other. I have given this a lot of thought for several years, a thing which I don't see being done by Israelis as yet, and I am convinced that this priority, the openness of any border that may eventuate, if clearly seen by both sides as a serious objective, can be arranged.

This letter could become much longer than I have any business making it if I went into all the aspects of the question I would like to. I don't want to discourage you from reading it. But let me come to the substance of what I would propose to you. It is that right now is the best of times for Israel to make a really serious effort at peace with the Palestinians. When Iraq invaded Kuwait, the general impression was that Israel was let off the hook in its dealings with the Palestinian question, and that after all the hassle with the Bush Administration and James Baker, the election plans, the fall of the unity government and the great problems of forming what seemed a very shaky narrow coalition, now the Israeli government needn't do anything about the Palestinians. That turns out to be far from true. You heard the statements from Presidents Bush and Gorbachev in Helsinki, restrained as they were in tone, the noisier things said by Douglas Hurd, and several other statements that mean: the Palestinian question will be back, and Israel will be working a weaker hand in dealing with it. If only from this point of view, it seems to me to be Israel's advantage to initiate serious peace efforts now.

It is appropriate from another point of view also. It always makes me nervous to think that Israelis are relying on American defense to ensure their safety -- I know how Israelis hate to admit that they depend on anyone but themselves for their safety, but the factual situation is that the U.S. has been a major constituent of Israel's safety for many years, and also that reliance on any foreign power, including the United States, is a perilously insecure way for Israel to ensure its safety. But right now, the United States, to which Israel owes some gratitude for a history of services, would be enormously helped if Israel were to make such a serious peace initiative. Its effect on the Gulf situation would be to take the wind out of the Iraqis' sails, and possibly rescue

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the United States and its alliance from a devastating war. Among those rescued from the devastations of such a war would of course be Israel, so that this argument too is eventually one of your own deepest interest. I know that there are numerous voices around you in Israel, as we have them here in the United States, which say that we should have the war with Iraq, to leave it powerless to create any further regional trouble. As I see how assiduously you have worked yourself at the invidious task of keeping any such provocative statements from becoming an obstacle to the United States' diplomatic position and undermining the chances of resolving this crisis without war, I realise how much you must understand the damage such a war would do. (And from that I understand, too, how ill-treated you must feel to be so taken to task now over the Al-Aksa Mosque episode. But that episode itself makes the day when Israel's choices over the Palestinians will be much narrower all the closer.)

The great obstacle to any such peace initiative on Israel's part has been the refusal to deal with the PLO, or with its Chairman, Yasser Arafat. That obstacle is absolute, if Israel is going to insist on it. It will mean that Israel simply cannot work toward peace with the Palestinians. All this time that Israeli governments of both Labor and Likud have claimed they would find nicer Palestinians to deal with has been delusion. Nothing could be clearer than that this is the leadership the Palestinians insist on, and that your search for others is a search for Quislings. No one who does not genuinely represent the Palestinians can make peace with you.

You hear this argument in Israel all the time, under the formula: "You have to negotiate peace with your enemies, not your friends." The Palestinians have obviously not helped themselves by responding so emotionally in favor of Saddam Hussein in the Gulf conflict, though it is not so unintelligible why that would be their emotional response. I learned some years ago to respect Mr. Arafat as a leader. You in fact have the record of my letters to him and my reports, to my church leaders and to the U.S. government, of my 1986 conversations with him and the conclusions I drew. (Those too were among the documents I shared with Michael Shiloh throughout that time, and which I discussed with officials of your Foreign Office while you were still yourself Foreign Minister that year.) I won't repeat the argumentation of all that now, but would remind you of my conclusion that Arafat had himself, over the whole time of his chairmanship since 1969, educated the Palestinian public (while undergoing an evolution in his own thinking) to the acceptance of Israel and the policy of seeking an existence (as, indeed, a state!) alongside, and not to the detriment of Israel. I know that Israelis don't yet believe he means what he is saying (or that the Palestinians mean what they are collectively saying). In my very active communication with Arafat all the time since, I have always made it one of the points of my insistence that the greatest priority for the PLO was to make these assertions credible to the Israeli public, as it was with them (not Americans or any others) that they would have to make peace. But I do believe, myself, that these assertions of their acceptance of Israel are genuine, and my best indication of that is the way their intifada has truly been a rejection not of Israel but of occupation.

Of Arafat himself, the impression purveyed by propaganda is that he has taken the side of Iraq and Saddam Hussein in the current conflict -- this is said of King Hussein too, but there is more glee in saying it of Arafat. My assessment is that Arafat has done no such thing -- he does not accept the aggression against Kuwait, the taking of hostages, or any other of the criminal aberrations of Saddam Hussein,

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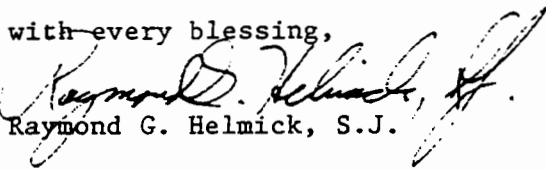
and all his mediating proposals have been entirely consistent with the Security Council resolutions on Iraq. He has not joined the group of Arab states in pursuit of Iraq, but if he had he would have been lost in the pack. I take it that what he is doing, at great risk to himself and his movement, is a very responsible thing, to make it possible for himself to mediate a non-violent resolution of this conflict, and that without derogation from the demands made on Iraq by the United Nations. This is not something he can accomplish by himself. It will take the Soviets eventually to negotiate such a settlement, but they will have to have an Arab leg to their effort. Arafat is the one who can do it -- King Hussein is in too vulnerable a position to do it effectively, and while Muammar Qaddafi is out there somewhere even Saddam Hussein knows that he is a flake.

Hence I see Arafat himself as the man Israel can really deal with, and I don't see anyone else who could speak for the Palestinians so representatively and who would do it as responsibly and effectively in negotiating with Israel. If at this point Israel took the initiative of opening this, Israel would have the credit of deflating the whole threatening Gulf situation as a by-product of dealing with its own most urgent need. What else would so unite the other Arabs against Saddam Hussein?

I hear frequently, too, the argument that Israel can't afford to come to any settlement with the Palestinians until it can have a settlement with all the Arabs, and recognition from all their states. This always impresses me as backwards arguing. The one party that can deliver the acceptance of all the Arabs to Israel is the Palestinians. There will be no Arab acceptance of Israel without a just settlement with the Palestinians, and there will be such acceptance once the Palestinians have a settlement in which they have a real stake.

At this point I don't want to make this letter any more argumentative. I would rather have you know, simply, that I write from genuine, and I hope knowledgable, concern for the good of Israel, as also for that of the Palestinians and the other peoples of the region. I would gladly come to talk with you, whether by myself or with my friends, many of whom are in the U.S. Interreligious Committee -- not too many of them at a time, and don't expect us to come as a unanimous committee, as at least I for one never expect to be unanimous with anybody. I sincerely wish, on behalf of my friends in the Interreligious Committee and on my own behalf, to be in truly respectful dialogue on these urgent questions with you, who are the Prime Minister of Israel and responsible for the nation's peace and safety. With the assurance of my best wishes, I am yours

with every blessing,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167

October 18, 1990

Mr. John Sununu
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Sununu,

You've seen, through Cardinal Law or directly from myself, various communications I have had in recent years with Mr. Yasser Arafat. At the urging of a prominent Boston Rabbi I have written recently to Mr. Shamir, and enclose a copy of that letter for your information.

Mr. Edmund Hull of the State Department wrote to me, at your request, in response to the letter I had sent you August 14th on the visit of Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani. I was grateful for that and passed a copy along to Talabani. I understand why it is nervous-making to receive a Kurdish leader at this time, with all the Arabs and the Turks watching. I noted, too, in Mr. Brzezinski's extraordinarily insightful analysis of the Gulf situation Op-Ed in the N.Y. Times of last Sunday, that he cited the possibility of renewed rebellion by the Kurds in Northern Iraq as one of the dangerous wild cards in the current imbroglio.

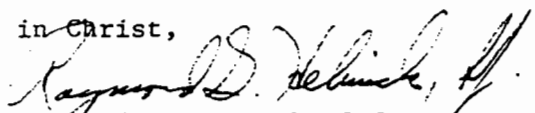
Talabani and his spokesmen here were at pains to tell me that they too understand and accept that any publicity over American dealings with them could be open to misconstruction. They asked me, though, to let you know that they are willing to come over, at any time, on very little notice, and that Talabani and Mahsoud Barzani would gladly come together to meet NSC or State Department people, as a way of assuring the U.S. that they are not planning foolishness or looking for impossible things, but are anxious to play a constructive role, in the hope that the Kurds might be helped to their most basic rights.

The point is that they have come to agreed policies, are not looking for independence or the interference with international borders, but instead look for three things: 1) protection of their human rights in the face of all the atrocities they have suffered; 2) their cultural rights (language, history, traditions); and 3) some degree of free communication among the Kurdish communities in the several countries where they reside.

I assured them that I would pass on their message. And I would see value in it myself if they were seen, even quite privately, so that the U.S. could have secure knowledge that the Kurds were not going to be a land-mine in the way of our policies, and they might be encouraged to keep to a helpful stance.

Best wishes,

in Christ,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167

October 20, 1990

His Excellency
Most Reverend Pio Laghi
Pro-Prefect of the Sacred Congregation
for Catholic Education
Piazza Pio XII
Rome, Vatican City State

Dear Archbishop Laghi,

Christ's Peace!


A new venture here, to which I've been urged by some of the Rabbi friends with whom I work in our U.S. Interreligious Committee for Peace in the Middle East: my first direct letter to Prime Minister Shamir. I thought you should see it, and would be glad of your good counsel on the new departure it represents.

I enclose too an article I ran in the local Archdiocesan paper early in the Gulf crisis. Cardinal Law, in fact, also wrote an impressive article in this same paper, The Pilot, the following week, in which he called for a diplomatic rather than military settlement, and the raising of the Lebanese and Palestinian matters in the negotiation of an eventual settlement, urging Presidents Bush and Gorbachev, who were meeting that weekend in Helsinki, to develop common policy toward those ends. I got that article directly to Arafat, with the suggestion that he write himself to the Cardinal, acknowledging his good article and taking the occasion to present his own efforts to secure a negotiated settlement and his current view of the Palestinian cause, with the knowledge that Cardinal Law would pass that right along to some good friends.

I hope you are enjoying Rome and your new responsibilities. Whenever the Pope holds a Consistory, and catches up with who is presiding over his Sacred Congregations, I would love to be present for the occasion.

With all best wishes,

in Christ,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167

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October 20, 1990

His Excellency
Most Reverend Agostino Cacciavillan
Apostolic Pro-Nuncio to the United States
1312 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20008

Dear Archbishop Cacciavillan,

Christ's Peace!

It is good to find you there as our new Apostolic Pro-Nuncio to the United States. Welcome, and my prayers and best wishes are with you.

Over the last several years I have kept Archbishop Laghi as well informed as I could of correspondence and other dealings with Middle Eastern figures. Part of that has regarded Lebanon, and in the Spring of this year M. Raymond Edde told me that he would like to publish our correspondence and the resulting memos from the last two years in book form. All of this is material your predecessor will have seen as it developed, and the book is now here. I enclose a copy.

More recently, after having dealt a good deal with the Palestinians and with Mr. Arafat over the years, I found myself urged by Rabbi friends in Boston and elsewhere to write to Israeli Prime Minister Shamir. For your information, I enclose a copy of the letter I eventually sent him.

I have generally reported matters such as these to our own Cardinal Law here in Boston, to Cardinals O'Connor and Bernardin, and to Archbishop Laghi. I would like to make a habit of that with you also.

With kind regards,

in Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.
Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167

October 20, 1990

His Eminence
Joseph Cardinal Bernardin
Archbishop of Chicago
1555 North State Parkway
Chicago, IL 60610

Dear Cardinal Bernardin,

Christ's Peace!

A couple of things are enclosed here. The book is things you have already seen, the correspondence I've carried on over the last couple of years with Raymond Edde, and the memos that have gone with it. Edde told me in the Spring that he wanted to publish this. I agreed, and since we had disagreed on a certain number of things over the course of the correspondence, I wrote him another letter to get my licks in before the record, as published in the book, was closed. He, of course, then did exactly the same thing, so the exchange does get rounded off.

The other piece is a copy of a letter I just sent this last week to Israeli Prime Minister Shamir. I've been in so much contact, by letter and visits, with Arafat over these several years, and have tried to keep the Israelis apprised of it, but I hadn't thought to write directly to Shamir before some Rabbi friends here in Boston urged me to. Al Vorspan in New York then became very interested and wanted to see this letter when it would be written. But once Iraq invaded Kuwait everything was stood on its head, so I procrastinated all summer until Rabbi Roland Gittelsohn flushed me out and insisted I must write that letter. So it is for your information.

With best wishes,

in Christ,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167

October 20, 1990

A.R.P.N. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J.
Casa Generalizia S.J.
C.P. 6139
00195 Roma, Italy

Dear Father Kolvenbach,


Christ's Peace!

You've been seeing my correspondence, memos and reports of meetings with Palestinians and with Lebanese for some time. I thought you should have record of the enclosed letter also, which I sent to the Israeli Prime Minister Shamir at the urging of some of my American Jewish friends. They (particularly Rabbi Roland Gittelsohn of Boston and Mr. Albert Vorspan, the Vice President of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations) will have copies of the letter, as will the Cardinals I regularly keep in touch with over this (Law of Boston, O'Connor of New York, Bernardin of Chicago), both Pio Laghi and the new Nuncio in Washington, and the White House (it has already been sent to Mr. John Sununu, and the drill has been consistently that he shows such things both to President Bush and Secretary of State Baker, by a pattern long since established).

Thank you for your very kind letter after my book with Raymond Edde came out. He has in fact written again, commenting on the ways the Gulf situation has affected Lebanon (though before the Syrian assault on General Aoun), and that letter has gone to Sununu, who is himself Lebanese and has mentioned before how much he appreciates Raymond Edde's thoughts in these letters.

With best wishes,

in Christ,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167

October 20, 1990

His Eminence
John Cardinal O'Connor
Archbishop of New York
452 Madison Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10022

Dear Cardinal O'Connor,

Christ's Peace!

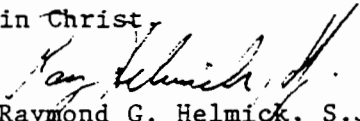
Several items are enclosed here, which means I have fallen behind in keeping you informed as I should.

The principal item is a letter I sent off to Prime Minister Shamir this last week. I was urged to do so by a prominent Boston Rabbi, Roland Gittelsohn, who had seen some of my writings to Arafat. Al Vorspan was also anxious that I should do this, and is also receiving a copy.

The other items are a piece I published in the Boston Pilot fairly early in the Gulf crisis, and, the prize, a book I've brought out, published from Paris in French, on Lebanon. It's my correspondence over the last two years with Raymond Edde and the memos concerning it, all of which you have already seen in English (or "dans l'americaine"). Edde told me in the Spring that he wanted to publish the correspondence. I agreed, and wrote him one more long letter to get my licks in and round off the discussion, since he and I had scrapped often enough in the course of the correspondence. He then, of course, did exactly the same, wrote me a further substantial letter to get his licks in and round off the book. I'm quite happy with the book, and hope we'll get it out in English as well -- I expect it is coming out in Arabic -- especially since the eventual outcome has been that the termination of the fighting, which would have come with an election of Edde in 1988 and would in that case have included release of the hostages, control of the various private militias and a real effort, with a chance, to end the Syrian and Israeli occupation, has now happened simply through Syrian force, and without all those additions.

So I'm happy to present you a book you needn't read, having already done so, and I commend to you my letter to Shamir. All best wishes,

in Christ,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



SACRA CONGREGAZIONE
PER L'EDUCAZIONE CATTOLICA

October 31, 1990

Dear Rev. Helmick, s.j.:

I have received your note of October 20, and the copy of your letter to Prime Minister Yitzakh Shamir that accompanied it. Thank you for both. I read the letter with great interest! May all efforts and prayers be effective in bringing about peace in the Middle East.

Sincerely in Christ,

Giuseppe Ruffini

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ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

POST OFFICE BOX 1979

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60690

Office of the Archbishop

November 16, 1990

Dear Father Helmrick:

Many thanks for your letter of October 20 and its enclosures.

I was particularly impressed with your letter to Israeli Prime Minister Shamir. While I am not as knowledgeable about the Israeli Palestinian conflict as you, what you propose makes a lot of sense. Incidentally, I had dinner with Patriarch Sabbah last month; both of us were attending the Synod. I asked him what might resolve the impasse. His response coincided with yours.

Again, many thanks.

With cordial good wishes, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Joseph Cardinal Bernardin
Archbishop of Chicago

Reverend Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.
Jesuit Community
Boston College
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts 02167



**STATE OF ISRAEL
MINISTRY OF JUSTICE**

Salah-a-Din Street, 29
P.O. Box 1087
91010 Jerusalem

Telephone (02) 708-537
Facsimile (02) 869-473

JUSTUS WEINER, Adv.
Director, Department
of American Law and
External Relations

Jerusalem,
November 26, 1990
File 164.1 H

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.
Jesuit Community
Boston College
Chesnut Hill, Mass. 02167
U.S.A.

Dear Father Helmick,

Your thoughtful letter of 13 October 1990, to Prime Minister Shamir has been forwarded to my attention. I appreciate the sincerity of your expressions of good will and dedication to peace for all the peoples of this region. Moreover, as a former Bostonian, I recognize the importance of the Catholic Church in forming public opinion in the United States. I would therefore be happy to meet with you when you are next in Jerusalem.

The Human Rights Department of the Justice Ministry, in which I am active, investigates and responds to human rights queries and criticisms from abroad. I have enclosed, for your information, a selection of our recent work. Also enclosed is a summary of the recent Zamir Commission Report in English translation concerning the investigation of the Temple Mount incident.

Looking forward to meeting you, I remain,

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading 'Justus Weiner'.
Justus Weiner

enclosures

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

December 4, 1990

Dear Father Helmick,

Thank you for your two very interesting letters of a few weeks ago. I have taken the liberty of circulating the information contained therein with folks here involved in our foreign policy and national security issues.

I really do appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts with me on these issues. Be assured that the insight you have provided is appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "John H. Sununu". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning.

John H. Sununu
Chief of Staff

Father Raymond G. Helmick
Jesuit Community
Boston College
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts 02167



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167

December 30, 1990

Governor John Sununu
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Governor Sununu,

Christ's Peace!

This will be one of two letters I send to you this same day, as I want to write you something about the major crisis of the Gulf. With this letter, though, I would like to bring to your notice the answer I received to my letter of October 13th to Prime Minister Shamir, which you saw at the time.

It is a surprisingly encouraging reply, even if from someone else, Mr. Weiner, writing for the Prime Minister. I will surely make the trip, in the first week of March (my reply to Mr. Weiner also enclosed). I've asked Rabbi Roland Gittelsohn, a great figure of the Boston Jewish community who first asked me to write to Shamir, to come with me. And I want to be sure that I do indeed meet Mr. Shamir himself, to discuss the matters on which I wrote to him, and not simply Mr. Weiner as a substitute for him.

Hence my letter to you. I hope you might, without having to be heavy about it, ensure that there is a meeting with Mr. Shamir when I make this trip in March; and might see, also, that I have the right briefing from people in Washington, whether at State or NSC or both. I'll be speaking for myself, not for the U.S. government, as I've done in many other circumstances, but would like to be sure I don't stick my foot in it or say something silly.

With thanks,

in Christ,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167

December 31, 1990

Governor John Sununu,
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Governor Sununu,

Christ's Peace!

My thanks for your kind letter of December 4th. I was very glad to know that the matters I had written of earlier had been heard. I feel a bit presumptuous, now, to offer my thoughts on the Gulf crisis, but the matter is so serious that I truly feel responsible to say what I think. In writing to you yesterday to ask your help with my March visit to Israel I said I would be sending you the two letters in one day, but when I read over what I then wrote on the Gulf I decided to use it as a draft only.

I take it for granted that, in all his actions in this matter, the President is doing his best to prevent a war, and that that objective has an importance for him comparable to his quite proper determination to see justice done by the full withdrawal of Iraq from its invasion of Kuwait. The means he is using are less intelligible to me than they are to you of the inner circle. I had more confidence in the pre-November strategy, that combined defense against further aggression with sanctions to bring about compliance with the resolutions of the Security Council, than I do with a strategy of offensive threats and a deadline, but my uneasiness is about means rather than about objective. I'll put in a few headings here to make it easier to pick out points in this letter.

WHAT SADDAM HUSSEIN WILL SEE AS HIS FUTURE.

The President has taken his stance on a very convincing moral principle, that there must be no reward for aggression, and I fully respect that. It is the very definition of the Just Cause criterion for a just war, in the classical theory, by which defense against aggression, and in fact only that, can be the just cause for war. It remains true, though, that everything that was a matter of legitimate dispute, requiring negotiation or adjudication, before the Iraqi invasion still remains in need of negotiation or adjudication after a withdrawal. They are not forfeit for Iraq's bad behavior. I am glad to see that President Bush has said this explicitly, but I don't see that this message has gotten through to Saddam Hussein with clarity, largely because we have so many people saying that we must somehow "take out," or get rid of Saddam Hussein, that we must destroy Iraq's or his power to do anything in the future, that we must remove Iraq as a serious factor in the Middle Eastern balance, or other such threatening propositions, and these must sound as loud to Saddam Hussein as the President's recognition that what needed to be negotiated or adjudicated before still needs that afterwards.

Governor John Sununu, December 31, '90 -- 2

This is important, because it should not be made to appear to Saddam Hussein that he would be in a worse situation if he complied with the withdrawal demand than if he did not; that if he did withdraw he would still face invasion of Iraq and destruction of its assets, war crimes trials and reparation demands, and the ignoring of all the matters that he believed were legitimate disputes before he invaded. If that were so, two things would follow: 1) that it would be better for him to await our attack in Kuwait, where he is dug in and has a buffer territory before we get to him in Iraq; and 2) that we ourselves would be following a policy that cannot be legitimized by the just-cause criterion, and had no legitimacy as a cause of war. Assassination doesn't meet the cut.

If we are to expect him to withdraw, and that we will not have to have war, then he must understand that it is better for him to comply than not to comply. A lot of our people seem to have inhibitions about saying anything other than "Grovel!" to Saddam Hussein on the basis that anything other than total humiliation for him is the famous "reward for aggression." It is not, and if we indulge ourselves in that kind of nonsense we make ourselves the cause of the war. This is not reward; it is the assurance of a just settlement by objective criteria.

ALTERNATIVES TO WAR.

All that is to speak as if an agreed settlement may be reached. That seems to me only remotely likely in the short term left by our January 15th deadline, or even some mid- or late-February deadline when our generals will all agree that our military forces are ready. Hence it is important to me to see that there are two alternatives to war: 1) the agreed settlement; or 2) continued embargo.

The latter, continuing the sanctions, has become a matter not merely of dispute among us Americans but a kind of touchstone of opposing policies. It should not be allowed to be that, as such a sham political battle makes it hard if not impossible to look at the real options and could trap us into a war that is unnecessary. Necessity is another of the essential criteria of a just war, and as all of you in the inner circle must be acutely aware, an unnecessary war is simply unforgiveable, especially in our contemporary circumstances, in which the horrors of a war and its effects on us and others are so monstrous.

From the beginning I have been convinced that the sanctions policy was in fact an effective one, and as I hear Administration spokespersons now repeat after one another that the sanctions are inadequate, it rings false to me, and I look for the reason for those statements in some doubt about the length of our American resolve to maintain the sanctions, or that of our allies, Arab and other, to stay the course with us. I'll take those up as separate sub-headings.

A. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SANCTIONS.

The sanctions in fact deprive Saddam Hussein of all the things for which he invaded Kuwait. That they have not yet brought him to abandon his invasion already is of far less importance than this. At somewhat longer term

their effectiveness is a certainty much greater than we could have by an attack. (I'll take up the uncertainties of military action a bit later.) To catalogue some of the more obvious items in their effectiveness:

i) Saddam Hussein has no income. He cannot sell his own oil, or what he has stolen from Kuwait.

ii) He cannot import necessities for his military machine. That means that all the high-tech items he relies upon, and has relied upon without difficulty of supply all through his war with Iran, are unavailable to him; that his military system is undergoing rot, on an exponential scale, so that the longer he has to wait the less prepared he will be militarily, and the morale of his forces has to decline as constantly.

iii) He has serious food shortages, and some real major suffering in the country for lack of specific necessities, especially of milk and medicines. I would take note of the particular provision in the Security Council resolution that these civilian necessities should not be kept from Iraq. Many advocates of a sanctions policy worry that any exception of these items would have the effect of weakening the sanctions and making them less persuasive to Saddam Hussein. I'm of an opposite opinion, namely that we could afford to sharpen the focus of the sanctions, putting the emphasis very specifically on the two main features: no oil out, no military or strategic supplies in, and that this would actually make the long-term resolve of our alliance to enforce the sanctions more convincing rather than less. I'm sure we should also be taking care to alleviate the effect of these sanctions on Jordan, which should not be subjected to them, but I will take that up separately below. But it does not appear to me that there is any sign of real famine or starvation in Iraq, nor that agriculture is a particular difficulty for the Iraqis. The picture is one of major inconvenience and disruption rather than of hunger, and that is all to the good.

iv) Saddam Hussein becomes a problem for his own people rather than the hero who successfully defies us and "the West." Over these first months of the crisis he has enjoyed hero status with the Arab masses for those readily understandable reasons, so much so that the alliance of Arab regimes with us has had to be seen always as a shaky one that threatens the standing of those regimes with their own people. As time goes on and the sanctions hold, without (as I shall explain) major drawbacks for other countries than Iraq, Saddam will increasingly be denied this hero status for his own people and army and for the other Arab peoples. The only thing that could then restore it to him would be that we should have the bad judgment to make him a holy martyr, and we should be able to manage the good sense and restraint not to do that.

v) If the sanctions policy were known to be the intention of our alliance, rather than plans of an offensive to drive Hussein more precipitously from his conquests, we would be able to draw down the numbers of our forces in the desert, replacing parts of our American complement with Arab forces, while still leaving Iraq on notice of the impracticality of any further aggression. This would make the long-term exercise of this policy far more acceptable both to our American public and to our allies.

vi) A long-term policy of sanctions would produce, in fact would be the very definition of, stability. This would deprive Saddam Hussein of his ace in the hole, which is his ability to hold the industrialised countries to ransom by disrupting oil prices. We've all learned by now that there is no real problem with oil supply over any time-scale affected by these sanctions, since the other Gulf countries have been able readily to make up for what we are not getting from Iraq and Kuwait. If the continuance of sanctions for the foreseeable future is the known policy of our alliance, the most conspicuous effect will be that stability is restored, and that sanctions are its form. That will mean that oil prices come right down to where they were.

B. ABILITY TO SUSTAIN THE SANCTIONS POLICY AT LONG TERM: U.S. AND EUROPE

We and our European allies have shown our capacity for long-term commitment by the way we maintained the Cold War stance against the Soviet bloc for the length of 44 years. We sustained the blockade of South Africa, too, for a convincingly long time. That was a far less successful blockade than this present one, because there was so much economic reason for countries and companies to break those sanctions. In the present case, it is good economic sense for all these countries and companies to stay with the sanctions, especially for that goal of stability. We hear a lot of complaints about holes in the sanctions, though exclusively from those who have some political/ideological reason to want an attack on Iraq, a war. But in fact only a trickle, of no real economic or strategic importance, either of imports or exports has gotten in or out of Iraq, and it can remain so for the indefinite future, until Saddam Hussein becomes too great a burden for his own people to bear.

In that connection, we hear of much worry about the future military strength of Iraq, of its potential to develop, in a year, or in five or ten years nuclear weapons with which it would be more of a threat. This is the most popular form in which it is said that we must "go in and take him out," or similar formula that actually mean a war of aggression on our part (in theory, the pre-emptive war which just-war theory will really not permit). I truly regard this as a fictitious fear. The military strength of Iraq, altogether an anomaly according to the country's resources or state of development, has been possible only because of the arms-sale policy of our own country, the Soviet Union and the Europeans, especially Germany and France. There is no way that is going to continue, whatever the outcome, peaceful or otherwise, of this present crisis. We have it perfectly within our power, in the kind of collaboration with our allies that is now, with the end of the Cold War, entirely available to us, to prevent any further development of weapons of mass destruction by Iraq, or even the maintenance of anything like its present conventional military strength. That aspect of our sanctions policy goes on in any conceivable responsible future, with the result that the military threat of Iraq is a passing and rapidly evanescent quantity.

All this convinces me that the sanctions policy, if maintained at long term, is indeed adequate, and hence that war is unnecessary. As I laid down above as basic supposition, I accept that it has to be the President's policy to prevent this developing into a war. But this option of continued sanctions as a means to prevent it is so clear that it can't be acceptable to slide into a war over any miscalculation on this point. That there is impatience is evident, as it is also

Governor John Sununu, December 31, '90 -- 5

evident that there are many people who want a war and use impatience with the sanctions as an excuse for it. The sanctions have not caused Saddam Hussein to withdraw yet. But all the things that have made the continuance of the crisis unacceptable to us rise instead from the large scale of the military forces we have deployed in the area to provide an offensive capability, or from the uncertainty and air of crisis that destabilises our own and the world's economy.

Could we now afford to announce a change of course, away from offensive intentions and toward buckling down for a long future of sanctions, without looking weak? I see no reason why that can't be done. It can be presented as a consensus with our allies that the sanctions are indeed effective as a long-term instrument of policy and easily within our power to maintain. That will have more convincing terrors for Saddam Hussein than anything else we could tell him, as it would mean that he loses all the props for his own hold on Iraq other than the sheer terror that keeps people from overthrowing him. If in fact he is to go, it cannot legitimately be done by our decision, but only by the decision of Iraqis. And if he were overthrown or assassinated by ourselves or on our instigation, it would have the effect of making him a martyr, making all his baleful thinking about ourselves popular among the Arabs in a way that would be more dangerous to us than he is himself. But if the Iraqis themselves eventually get rid of him, the decision is theirs and legitimate. If, by simple terror, he manages to hold on for an exaggerated length of time, his whole regime and its military will be losing in strength and relevance all the time, provided that the sanctions are kept in place.

C. ARAB STEADFASTNESS IN THE SANCTIONS AND LINKAGE PROBLEMS.

The real worry that I see in the Administration is not about the effectiveness of the sanctions, nor about our own and our European allies' ability to sustain them, but about the Arab part of this alliance that the President has so brilliantly brought together. This worry is about linkage to the question of Israel and the Palestinian problem.

We are under growing pressure to raise that question again, pressure even from our European allies but much stronger from the Arabs, and this becomes a question of the stability of the alliance itself each time another Security Council resolution about Israel and the Palestinians comes up and we teeter on the edge of vetoing it. Of course we are adamantly against linkage, which we rightly recognise as a con-trick on the part of Saddam Hussein, who uses the suffering of Palestinians as rationalisation for the suffering he imposes on the Kuwaitis, his own people and many others. At a strange level we actually are being sucked into direct linkage ourselves, inasmuch as we are now saying that as long as Saddam Hussein keeps talking about the Palestinians we will have nothing to do with them, and that of course is linkage, and gives him the advantage of being able to accuse us of bad faith, a thing the Europeans too are inclined to believe on this issue. Just this last Saturday, the 29thth, we have this new, terrible outbreak of violence against Palestinians in the occupied territories, starting with the shooting to death of youngsters for writing graffiti, and escalating after that through a day of riots. The whole issue will surely come

Governor John Sununu, December 31, '90 -- 6

right back to the Security Council again, this time with a stronger demand for international protection for the civilian population of Palestinians under occupation. There will be more embarrassment for the United States and more danger to our alliance with Arab countries.

When I heard General Powell and Secretary Cheney testifying before the Senate committees, they seemed more anxious to talk about the dangers of five or ten years from now, when Saddam Hussein would be stronger and perhaps a nuclear power -- and as you see, I don't believe that is true. The real worry these two witnesses seemed to represent in the Administration was about this next year, and what would happen to our Arab alliance over that time. Their preference for talking about a fictional hypothesis of five or ten years from now was that this danger to the Arab alliance is too delicate to talk about.

There is a solution to this problem, I believe, and it is in two steps: first isolating Saddam Hussein through the sanctions policy, thus producing the stability in which he could stew and the rest of the world relax; and then seriously addressing the Israel/Palestinian problem while Saddam Hussein was thus left irrelevant.

This is really why I wrote the letter to Prime Minister Shamir that you saw two months ago, arguing in it that Israel will inevitably be brought face to face with this problem again, by ourselves among others, and that Israel's best chance now is to take the initiative in the matter before it is forced upon it. I think it must be obvious to you that I do not propose that we act unfairly to Israel, undercut Israel's safety or rights, or do anything to the prejudice of our Israeli ally. As I argued in my letter to Shamir, Israel will not in fact ever be safe without coming to real terms with the Palestinians; and can come to peace with the rest of the Arabs through no other means than that the Palestinians are satisfied and commend them to the other Arabs. Our taking the initiative in this matter, not linking it to our Iraqi problem but treating it as requiring our serious attention in its own right, and in a way that simply pulls the rug out from under the pretensions of Saddam Hussein, will guarantee that the process will be one that safeguards the real rights and interests of Israel.

THE ALTERNATIVE OF WAR.

If we do come to war, we will to my mind have satisfied the Just Cause criterion for a just war; will have fallen foul of the Necessity criterion, as I believe we have no need to go to war; will perhaps have failed of the Right Intention criterion, if we are invading Iraq not for the justifiable reason of repelling aggression but for the ulterior motive of "taking out" Saddam Hussein. But our main problem then will be with Proportionality in this war.

This can be put in starkly moral terms. Our military have a horror of repeating the Vietnam experience of restraint in war, what they call "fighting with one arm tied behind their back." President Bush and all his spokesmen speak of a swift, violent blow that is meant to determine the outcome all at once. There are tactical problems on whether that is feasible, but at the

Governor John Sununu, December 31, '90 -- 7

moral level the problem with it is that this describes, most probably, an attack on civilians. An army, thoroughly dug in as the Iraqis are, is not vulnerable enough to such an attack to be decisively knocked out, and I see no way this attack is going to have the sort of effect forecast if it is not against civilian cities. It is apparent enough that this is not currently worrying our American public in anything like the way the prospect of American deaths does, but that is an unfortunate bit of moral unperceptiveness on our part. The question doesn't have to be put in such abstractly moral terms as I have put it. The proportionality criterion is expressed by Clausewitz in terms of costs: if the costs of war are greater than the war's objectives, then the war must stop right there. The costs involved in this enormous carnage of Iraqis are an odium of Americans that will cling to us like the odium that attached to Germans after the Second World War. It is something that will stay, particularly, with Arabs for at least our own lifetime, perhaps much longer, and will result in Americans having no safety from terrorist attacks, at home or especially abroad, anywhere in the world for decades to come. Only through hypocrisy could we then always conclude that it was our attackers' fault and we should, self-defeatingly, dedicate ourselves to punishing them. Even apart from the great probability that the attack we have been describing would be against civilians, the strategy is basically to kill so many of them that we don't get enough of us killed to get everyone worried. That already incurs that odium, and not only in the eyes of Arabs. It will not be forgiven even by our European allies, and will be a lasting shame for ourselves.

I won't try to enumerate the other costs of such a war, as I'm sure you get plenty of such estimates. I'm glad to see that General Powell and the other responsible military men don't pretend this can all be done by air power, but understand that a ground offensive will be an essential part, and that it will involve American casualties on a scale that our own people are unlikely to accept as proportional to any objective they can endorse.

But I don't think I need to argue this case to any of you. I'm sure the President and all of you who assist him are as anxious as any of us to prevent its coming to this war, and that the question is the one I have already been addressing: how to avoid it, where are the alternatives, the better options.

One prospect I can't omit, though, is the involvement of Israel in such a war, through an attack by Iraq, through an Iraqi seizure of Jordan or however. That has, from the start, been Saddam Hussein's best option to turn the whole Arab parade around against us. I hear, occasionally, claims by or for the Administration that the Arab alliance would hold fast even in that situation. I don't believe that for a moment, and am sure that anyone who is telling you that is bluffing. Once Israel and the issues that cluster about it are brought into the war, as they surely would be as soon as it got under way and despite all the careful and responsible Israeli avoidance of provocation so far, we could be sure that our half-million Americans out in the sand-box would be right in the middle of enemy territory, on their own, with no access to harbors or airports or communication that they could not hold by force, and with consequent long-term wreckage of our relation with all the Arab states. For Israel itself, too, it would be not only the immediate, awful damage of war,

Governor John Sununu, December 31, '90 -- 8

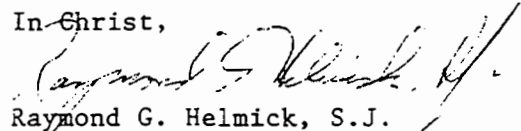
it would be the final determinor of a situation in which Israel would always have to live in the midst of enemy states, an armed camp, drawn in on itself to the destruction of its civic life, which ultimately would fail in its confrontation with hostile Arab neighbors who might have been friends. For the Palestinians, also, it would be all tragedy, their forcible ousting, in genocidal circumstances, from their West Bank and Gaza territories, and the creation of a desperate Palestinian remnant that would have no aim in life but to wreak vengeance on their enemies.

All of this really means that war is a non-option. To come to it would already be failure: failure for the United States in its first great crisis after the termination of the Cold War; failure for the vaunted new international order, which could only dissolve into chaos; failure for the United Nations, able to act with unity now for the first time in its history, but bringing, with all its means for peace, nothing but bloodshed, which would irreparably discredit it, especially since we would all judge afterward that it had been unnecessary.

I write you perhaps a discouraging message, if you read it in terms of its negatives about the policy that appears to be heading into war. Actually, though, on the supposition I start with, that the President is working not to have the war, I would hope this letter may be read as positive, in terms of its two main conclusions: that a policy of continued sanctions will mean the genuine overcoming of the whole threat posed by Saddam Hussein's aggression, and that the problems of our alliance with the Arabs can be overcome by taking up the other main regional problem, that of Israel and the Palestinians, not by linkage, but in a way that leaves Saddam Hussein irrelevant on the sidelines.

My best wishes, and as you will understand, my prayers are with the President and all of you who assist him, that you may all have wisdom and calm through this time of momentous decisions.

In Christ,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

January 9, 1991

Dear Father Helmick,

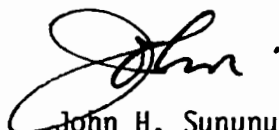
Thank you for your letters. I have asked our folks in NSC for the best way to handle your request for a meeting and briefing prior to your March trip.

I'll try to get back to you in relatively short order.

I hope you had a wonderful Christmas and I hope 1991 is a better year for all of us.

Thank you again for taking the time to correspond on these critical issues.

Sincerely,



John H. Sununu
Chief of Staff

Father Raymond G. Helmick
Jesuit Community College
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts 02167



January 18, 1991

Dear Archbishop Taglia,

Christ's Peace!

I thought I should keep you informed of these developments. I had written to Prime Minister Shamir in mid-October, and received a sufficiently welcoming reply that I will make the trip to see him. When I first wrote, I sent a copy to Yehon Lunnani (along with other material on Lebanon and on the Kurds), and as always received a cordial note back from him. Once I had the reply from Mr. Weiner, I sent that to Lunnani with the request that he make sure I see Shamir and not merely Weiner when I get to Israel. I sent that to Lunnani at the same time as a critique of the U.S. war policy, and still had his reply that he would do what was needed to get me that meeting.

When I make the trip to Shamir, I'll stop over in Rome to report on it.

In Christ,

Raymond Helminck, S.J.

Ray Helmick, SJ
Jesuit Community
Boston College
Chestnut Hill, MA 02167

February 11, 1991

Dear Ray,

I appreciate so much your invitation to join you on your planned trip to the Middle East. The papers you have sent comprise an impressive -- a better word might be monumental -- justification for the next step in your personal campaign to bring the Israelis and the Palestinians together. You have found a way of speaking to both sides that seems likely, if anything can, to make them listen to reason. And you have appealed at a deeper level than reason in saying you would give your life for Israeli safety, as you would also for the Palestinians.

All this leads me to ask how I can best assist you in your great effort. I am not sure that this is the best time for me to do as you request, i.e., that I join you in a trip to Israel. My reasons for doubt arise primarily from a concern that Mr. Shamir may not be as inclined to listen at this time as he might be after the Gulf War has moved on toward its conclusion.

If he and I knew each other at all, or if I had some credentials in the American Jewish community, that might well make a difference. There are many American Jews who do qualify in these terms, including (I'm sure) your friend Rabbi Roland Gittlesohn and our mutual friend Rabbi Harold Kushner. My own standing in the American Jewish community is nothing like theirs.

On the contrary, if I am known at all (and that is doubtful) it might well be through AIPAC reports on troublesome murmurs at the margins of Jewish community life. I am known to the rabbis and Federation people in Syracuse as one of those Jews who question the policies of the Likud government and engage in dialogue with Palestinians. While I have not yet been marginalized as punishment for these audacious activities, a local campaign has now begun which promises a coordinated religious-secular effort by Jewish community leaders to make the case for Israel in its time of trouble. That case takes the form of leafleting against Palestinian "terrorist" visitors (such as Mubarak Awad) and letter-to-the-editor attacks against a local Jewish peacenik who organizes women-in-black demonstrations, misusing as the rabbis put it "the accident of Jewish birth" to further her anti-Israel political ends.

- 2 -

In times such as these, Shamir is most likely to listen to a well-known Jew whose public record bespeaks continuing support for the State of Israel. There are several of these who might well join in an effort to persuade the Israelis to consider reconciliatory negotiations with the Palestinians.

Would it not be helpful at this time to bring together a group of such people, to discuss ways in which they might help Israel to understand the growing US determination to "do something" for the Palestinian people? Out of such a discussion, especially if carried on for a series of meetings, could come some identifiable mainstream Jewish leaders to whom Shamir would listen. Such a group could also help the US government to formulate policies consistent with US interests in the Middle East that Israel could live with. In their deliberations, it would of course be best if they could also be informed by moderate Palestinians.

This suggestion does not conflict with your plans. One or another of the people I have in mind might already be willing to join you for a trip to Israel in early March. I would be glad to try to locate such a person. My first effort would be directed toward a group known as Nishma (let us listen) that includes Earl Raab, Henry Rosovsky, and Ted Mann.) Its Executive Director, Tom Smerling, if willing to join you would bring to the meeting with Shamir the kind of credentials that would increase the promise of such a meeting.

If no such suitable person could be found -- and I realize that the hour is late -- you might think of a solo visit as serving a useful purpose, i.e., to apprise Shamir of the interreligious efforts being made in this country to facilitate a reconciliation between Israel and the Palestinians. That message, coming after a White House briefing, would surely be heard -- whether or not you were accompanied on this trip by an American Jew.

On the last point, let me underline the importance of your visit being preceded by conversations in Washington. If I read Shamir correctly, he respects power. The US is unquestionably in a powerful position in the Middle East. We can use that power to help Israel achieve acceptance in the Middle East of the future, especially if we plan now to do so when the Gulf War draws to an end.

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To maximize that assistance, American policy should be developed in consultation with leading American Jews. They should be supporters of Israel who recognize its capacity (through fear or anger) to hurt itself. It is time that our government avail itself of the continuing advice of such people.

There may already be contacts between our government and people of this kind. I think you can add to their influence by bringing some of them into a more prominent role through your activities. The pre- and post- visit briefings would seem good times to do so. This might become a first step toward the establishment of an interreligious advisory group on the Middle East that should of course include Muslims as well as Jews and Christians.

I am sure that Ron Young would find such a possibility interesting. If you think it appropriate, feel free to share this letter with him -- or, if you prefer, I will be glad to do so. All three of us deeply believe that dialogue between moderate members of opposing groups needs to be encouraged if the world is to find an alternative to the kind of deadly quarrels that so detract from the hopes of mankind.

I hope that this letter encourages your efforts. Please be assured of my determination to contribute in whatever way I can to the important work you have undertaken.

Sincerely,

Red

Richard D. Schwartz



SACRA CONGREGATIO
PRO INSTITUTIONE CATHOLICA

12 February 1991

Rev. Raymond G. Helmick, s.j.
Jesuit Community
Boston College
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts 02167

Dear Rev. Helmick:

Thank you for your letter of January 18. I have taken notice of and read with interest the enclosed correspondence between yourself, Mr. Justus Weiner, and Chief of Staff John Sununu.

I presume that you are still planning to make your trip to Israel to meet with Prime Minister Shamir and Mr. Weiner, even though things have changed somewhat with the initiation of the Gulf war on January 17th. Yet the desire for peace and the efforts needed to work for peace must always be pursued. I would like to offer my prayers and support to your endeavor. If your return trip brings you through Rome, I would welcome the opportunity to see you to discuss your meeting with Prime Minister Shamir.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Rev. Pío Laghi
Pro-Prefect
Congregation for Catholic Education

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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS

February 14, 1991

Governor John Sununu
Chief of Staff
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Governor Sununu,

Christ's Peace!

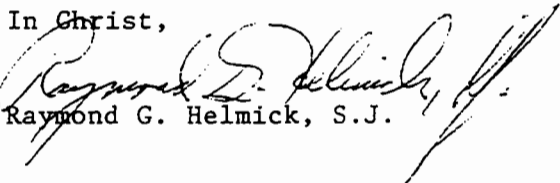
The time is running down toward my visit to Israel, following up on my mid-October letter to Prime Minister Shamir and the response sent for him by Mr. Justus Weiner. You had kindly agreed, as I requested, to see how I could be sure of seeing Mr. Shamir himself on this visit, and not Mr. Weiner only, and also to see that I had an appropriate briefing from folks in Washington before I go to Israel. I reckon that all of you have other things on your mind these days, so I thought I might remind you in case this might have slipped between the cracks.

I've felt I should have a really serious American Jewish companion in making this visit, and, as I wrote both to you and to Mr. Weiner, I had asked Rabbi Roland Gittelsohn to come with me, he having put me up to writing to Mr. Shamir in the first place. It turns out he can't do it, but I will have with me Dr. Richard D. ("Red") Schwarz. He teaches at Syracuse, has been a mainstay of our Interreligious Committee for Peace in the Middle East, and has a long career of building dialogue on the peace among American Jews, Christians and Muslims. Red has been many years in a wheelchair but is game for any such travel. There is no one I would prefer to travel with on this errand.

Neither of us is inclined to make this trip and not see Mr. Shamir. We also need to make the travel arrangements, and if, as seems likely, we would get our Washington briefing just the last day or so before travelling, we should plan to leave, on February 28, from Washington. I will make the reservations in any case, figuring we can cancel them if there is no prospect of seeing Mr. Shamir.

My thanks for your frequent readiness to respond so kindly and positively to the things I write you.

In Christ,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS

February 27, 1991

Governor John Sununu
Chief of Staff
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Governor Sununu,

Christ's Peace!

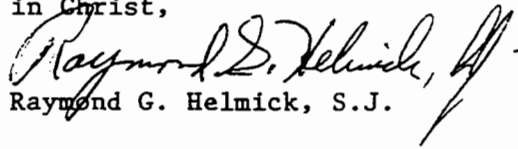
Thank you for the great consideration you showed in coming to the phone over my travels to see Prime Minister Shamir during a time of such colossal work in the White House. Professor Schwartz and I highly appreciated it. In the end, we postponed the visit because the time constraints were too tight to give us assurance that the purpose could be carried out.

Travel to Israel is a bit more complicated than usual these days, with only El Al going there. It was the fact that El Al requires, for understandable reasons, that its passengers stay overnight in the city from which they will get on their planes, and of course does not travel on Shabbat, that took a matter of days off our scheduled time for Israel and Rome (a reporting in to the Vatican Secretariate of State and my Jesuit General). At that point we realized that all the people we wanted to see were extremely busy in these days of the close and aftermath of the war, and we were likely to go there and find they had no time to see us within the limits imposed.

We will make this trip in May, and I hope I may have your help again at that time. Meanwhile, since the situation has changed so much since I wrote to Mr. Shamir last October, I need to write him another really serious letter. I think I owe one to Mr. Arafat as well, and I will send you copies of both. On our May visit, Professor Schwartz and I plan to invite a number of Israelis (of the Likud as well as of the "Peace Camp") and Palestinians to a conference at Syracuse University, along the lines of one that Professor Schwartz held there back in 1987. But meeting Prime Minister Shamir will be the primary interest.

With best wishes,

in Christ,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS

February 27, 1991

Mr. Justus Weiner, Adv.
Director, Department of American Law
and External Relations
Ministry of Justice
Salah-a-Din Street, 29
P.O. Box 1087
91010 Jerusalem

Dear Mr. Weiner,

Shalom!

This is to confirm, as I wrote earlier on December 30, that I shall be coming to Israel, and hope to meet you and Prime Minister Shamir, following on your kind letter of November 26 with its helpful enclosures; that in response to my letter of October 13 to the Prime Minister.

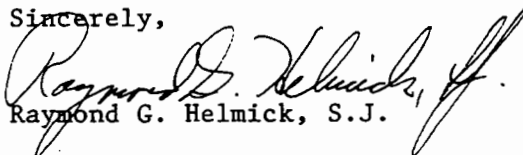
I had asked, as I told you, Rabbi Roland Gittelsohn of Boston to come with me, as he had recommended in the first place that I write to Mr. Shamir. Rabbi Gittelsohn was not able to make the trip, but instead Professor Richard D. Schwartz of Syracuse University, one of the mainstays of our U.S. Interreligious Committee for Peace in the Middle East, will be with me.

We will arrive in Israel this Friday, March 1, just before the beginning of Shabbat, on the Swiss Air flight from Zurich, and will be there until the following Thursday, March 7, when we will return to Rome.

I would especially appreciate it if you would suggest some people it would be good for us to see in that time.

I look forward with pleasure to meeting you.

Sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS

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February 27, 1991

Most Reverend Father General
Peter Hans Kolvenbach, S.J.
Casa Generalizia S.J.
C.P. 6139
00195 Roma, Italy

Dear Father General,

Christ's Peace!

Tomorrow I shall be leaving for a visit to Israel, on which I expect to meet Primate Minister Shamir to discuss the matters raised in the letter I wrote him last October 13, which you have. I will be accompanied by Dr. Richard D. Schwartz, an American Jewish law professor of Syracuse University and a mainstay of our U.S. Interreligious Committee for Peace in the Middle East. He has been organizing Jewish/Christian/Muslim dialogue on the peace for longer than our committee has existed. After we have been in Israel and the Occupied Territories we will come on to Rome, arriving on next Thursday, March 7. I think it will be important that we report to you and to the Holy See on this visit. We will then go on to Tunis on the Friday evening or Saturday morning, to see Mr. Yassir Arafat, and return to the U.S. on the Sunday, March 10.

All my correspondence in these matters has continued, because of my work with Cardinal Law, to be put before the U.S. President, and I have had the cooperation of the Administration in arranging this trip. Mr. John Sununu, the President's Chief of Staff, intervened to see that I would see Mr. Shamir himself. It is because we will have the chance to report directly to high levels of the U.S. Administration that I felt we should certainly get to Tunis and be able to report the P.L.O.'s position in the aftermath of the Gulf war as well as the results of our meeting with Mr. Shamir.

I would appreciate it if I might stay at the Borgo S. Spirito with you on my arrival in Rome March 7, as this would greatly facilitate reporting to you and getting across to the Holy See. I would be glad, also, if you could accommodate Dr. Schwartz for that evening. He is a wheel-chair case, having been crippled by polio as an 18-year-old many years ago, and I will have been tending him all through the journey. I would rather not leave him on his own at a hotel for that night.

With best wishes,

in Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.
Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS

February 27, 1991

Mr. Justus Weiner, Adv.
Director, Department of American Law
and External Relations
Ministry of Justice
Salah-a-Din Street, 29
P.O. Box 1087
91010 Jerusalem

Dear Mr. Weiner,

Shalom!

I had already written another letter to FAX to you this morning, saying that I expected to be with you in Israel this coming week, as I had already written on 30 December, responding to your kind letter of 26 November, which in turn had been prompted by my letter to Prime Minister Shamir of 13 October last.

I find we need to postpone this journey. I've just spent the morning working over plane reservations for it, and found that with the complications of travel in these days the time we would have becomes too narrow, and there is too much chance that the people we need to see would simply be too busy to meet us within such short notice.

Professor Richard Schwartz, of Syracuse University, had planned to come with me, and I just conferred on the phone with him. We concluded we should make this visit in May instead, and leave ourselves more time than our respective term breaks in our universities allowed us at this time. I wish we were able to see you and Prime Minister Shamir this coming week, but we shall do it then instead.

With best wishes,

sincerely,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.
Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



STATE OF ISRAEL
MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

Salah-a-Din Street, 29
P.O. Box 1087
91010 Jerusalem

Telephone (02) 708-537
Facsimile (02) 869-473

JUSTUS WEINER, Adv.
Director, Department
of American Law and
External Relations

March 13, 1991
File 164.1 H

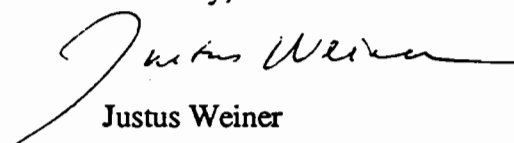
Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.
Jesuit Community
Boston College
Chesnut Hill, Mass. 02167
U.S.A.

Dear Father Helmick,

Thank you for your letter of 27 February 1991 concerning the delay in your visit. As regards your desire to discuss your concerns with Prime Minister, I suggest that you make your request to meet with him directly to his office.

I look forward to meeting with you and Professor Schwartz.

Sincerely,


Justus Weiner

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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167

June 20, 1991

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir
The Knesset
Jerusalem, Israel

Dear Mr. Shamir,

Shalom!

When I wrote to you last October 13th about Israel's need for a peace settlement, you kindly had Mr. Justus Weiner send me a generous reply, which included the suggestion that we talk when I next visited Israel. I planned, in fact, to make that visit the first week of March, when I had a term break from teaching, and had hoped to speak with you yourself as well as Mr. Weiner. Rabbi Roland Gittelsohn of Boston, who had first urged me to write to you, had been unable to accept the invitation to come with me, but Law Professor Richard Schwartz of Syracuse University, one of my most valued colleagues in the U.S. Interreligious Committee for Peace in the Middle East, was all ready to accompany me. However, the whole trip came to grief when the complications of travel just in those days of the conclusion of the Gulf war made it impractical. I had a letter ready to FAX to Mr. Weiner giving our time of arrival, but after a long morning on the phone to airlines, trying to eke out enough time in Israel, in Rome to report in to Church authorities, and back to Washington to report to U.S. authorities who were helping us, I had to call Professor Schwartz to say we couldn't manage it, and substitute a different FAX to Mr. Weiner saying that the trip was postponed.

Of course, I have followed developments in the peace efforts, Israeli, American and Arab, since, and while it had been very reluctantly that I postponed my visit in March, once I saw that Secretary of State Baker was on the scene within the week I was duly grateful that I had not been caught up in the backwash of such high-powered diplomacy. When that sort of thing is going on, I think it is usually better for the likes of myself to stay in the background. But I have felt I should once again write you a serious letter.

Most of my friends are becoming quite discouraged by now at the prospects for peace among Israel, Arabs and Palestinians, wondering if Mr. Baker's "window of opportunity" ever existed, and generally blaming you rather heavily for posing obstacles. I hear all the dismissive anti-Shamir things -- hopes for a change of government, hopes for a younger leadership even in Likud. It's said that you are not your own man, that Ariel Sharon or some other makes the real decisions and you merely front for them: -- that, of course, from people who don't understand the workings of cabinet government. It's said, too, that you don't keep your word, that you make commitments and then, under pressure, renege on them, the instances

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Prime Minister Shamir, June 20, '91 -- 2

being your election plan of last year and the assurance given Mr. Baker by Mr. Levy that the U.S./Soviet-sponsored conference could reconvene, by agreement, after six months, which you subsequently denied. Such arguments, to me, are a needless form of trench-warfare. When I was planning that abortive visit in March, one young fellow remarkably influential on the White House staff actually argued to me at length -- his conversation punctuated repeatedly by "with all respect" -- that it made no sense for me to talk with you because, at your age, you have already had all the ideas you will ever have, so that I should be talking to younger Israeli leaders. I'll talk to them too, but I really have much different and more positive expectations of you.

It impresses me that you have devoted all your life to the building and the safety of Israel, playing always hard and sometimes violently, but with unquestioned commitment. When I wrote to you before, I argued at some length that any effort to maintain the State of Israel in the midst of the Arab world only by means of defiance and the sustaining of their siege will ultimately fail; that whatever present military advantage Israel has, and however necessary military vigilance may be in Israel's present circumstances, there is no way that such advantage will be preserved for the kind of time that is of real significance in the life of a nation. That means that a policy that does not work for genuine resolution of the conflict and friendship with Israel's neighbors now, while there is opportunity, is the eventual doom of Israel. I believe you understand that, and that after your lifetime of committed service to Israel that is not the heritage you will want to leave.

Trying to look at the pressures of these recent months from your point of view, I am sure that a principal concern of yours must have been to repel boarders, to ensure that Israel did not succumb to an imposed form of resolution or lose control of its own destiny for the convenience of the United States or any other constellation of power. I respect that entirely. But if it means that Israel does not itself devise serious initiatives for peace, then Israel is betrayed by itself. I expect you to understand that too, and not to accept that it should be so, or indolently to wait for some other leader after you to solve that problem. What comes after you you cannot trust, especially if you should have led Israel into progressively more intractable problems before handing on the responsibility.

It is clear to me, also, that as soon as you make the very first serious step toward resolving this conflict, your coalition will dissolve. (Forgive me if I say that I don't take anything you have done so far, whatever claims you make that this or the other tactical concession should score you points for good behavior -- good behavior defined, of course, as serving American convenience -- as those first serious steps toward peace. Neither George Bush nor James Baker nor any other can bring you to a peace settlement if you don't want it and make it happen yourself. I agree with your critics that nothing of the sort has yet happened, but because I understand how fragile the coalition is, that fails to worry me.) It is equally true that you can have another coalition whenever you want it. There would doubtless be a tricky moment when elements in the Likud, sensing that you had become serious about the peace, would try to replace you with another candidate for Prime Minister. But I know that the crazies do not entirely control Likud, and I trust that you, with careful planning, would weather that storm. Hence I don't believe that we have yet heard all there is to hear from you.

Prime Minister Shamir, June 20, 1991 -- 3

I am sure, too, that your Labor opposition -- people also devoted to the good of Israel who would readily join you in a real peace initiative: they have said as much -- understand as well as you do that a peace settlement you would make would be a true resolution, and that one they would make without you would be only the illusion of a settlement. It might interest you to hear from someone like myself who talks directly with them, that the Palestinian leadership understands that too, both the external P.L.O. leadership -- Arafat has said that to me himself -- and the responsible internal leadership.

What results if you continue to do nothing, to postpone the peace until it is someone else's responsibility? That can be discerned even from the shape of your coalition, and it is a frightening sight. I told you, in my October letter, of my relief that you in the Likud had taken the initiative of banning Rabbi Meir Kahane and his Kach faction from the Knesset. Their solution to the "Palestinian problem" (as they conceived it), wrapped in the sinister euphemism of "transfer," was a genocidal crime, as you all recognised even if you didn't want to name it. Now there is Moledet, the same people and same despicable ideas under another title, led now by General Zeevi. He is a Himmler only. The really dangerous man, as you know well, is General Sharon, who does everything in his power to undermine and supplant you, who huffs and puffs marshmallow and plans a genocide that would make the beloved name of Israel a stench. Are you content that that should be your legacy, that in the longer perspective of Israel's history you would have played von Papen to Sharon?

These are painful topics to raise, with their shocking affinity to the old shameful blood-slander, which I repudiate with all determination, and their echo of the most extreme crimes against the Jewish people. All of us who see and know this prefer simply not to speak of it, for that reason. But these are serious concerns, because these genocidal urgings really exist in the most deranged and frustrated fringes of Israeli society, and they are really present in your governing coalition. They are serious, too, because your government's current policy of ever more settlements in occupied territory, of squeezing the Palestinians out, leaves no other real options. What is to become of the Palestinians if you will take even the last remnants from them? What do you do with them after you have left them nothing? Where is the compassionate heart of Israel, its root commitment to justice for the poor and the oppressed, those values for which Jews have lived throughout their history? Is this the fate of Israeli society, to take on itself, by incremental decisions, such a burden of crime?

I don't know if that specter is as real to you as the other horror specter, as horrible to me as to you, of Israel's failure to preserve itself in the face of Arab rejection. The two are essentially related. It is the perceived threat of genocide that the Arabs reject, genocide to themselves if they are Palestinians, genocide to those with whom they identify as their own people if they are Arabs of the other states. For many years some of them identified the whole concept of Israel with this threat of genocide. (And you, who have seen genocidal fury directed at yourselves, must understand how difficult it is to see anything else in people who threaten it.) By now, that is the position only of their most stupid fringe. The Palestinians themselves, in their P.L.O. leadership and in the substance of their public opinion inside the occupied territories and in their

Prime Minister Shamir, June 20, 1991 -- 4

diaspora, have accepted Israeli society, the Israeli State and its rights, and in this they are able to speak for the other Arabs and deliver their consent to a settlement. But they will not accept an actual genocide, such as they see threatened in the present policies of Israel's government. This is the threat they see in every new mobile home dragged into the occupied territory by the gun-happy Gush, in every new seizure of water and ancestral land. And true enough, what other option does this incremental policy leave to Israel? It is here, and only here, that Israel's own very existence, as well as its soul, is ultimately threatened.

What Israel actually needs is an open border. It is evident by now to all of us how important it is to Israelis that Jews should be able to live in Judea and Samaria. That became an issue almost as soon as it became possible after 1967. There must be no return to the closed border that existed before that, with Jews unable to visit your holy places or live in the ancient beloved places. I hear you often saying that Jews can live anywhere, by which I take it you do not mean Baghdad or Riyadh; or alternatively that Jews can live anywhere "in the land of Israel," which leaves the quarrel to be settled over where, legitimately, is the land of Israel. Israel, of the nature of its society, can't live on injustice, on the deprivation of another people's equally legitimate rights. That means an open border, so that it is possible for Jews to live in Judea and Samaria even after acceptance of a partition, for Jews to move about freely in territory that is the Palestinians'. There is a reciprocal side to that, in equity. That is that it is equally important to Palestinians that they should be able to live in Jaffa and Haifa, where their ancestors lived. They have long since recognised, in terms of their acceptance of Israel, that this can only be done by an agreed system that would prevent it from disrupting population balances, and that would necessarily be true on both sides of an open border that was the border of a genuine peace. It is this, rather than the dispossession of a whole people and seizure of everything that is theirs, that should be the aim of Israeli policy. That leaves defensive policy to be regulated by its own criteria, but this should be the criterion for just partition. If, on land that were Palestinian, it were possible for Jews to live, Israeli citizens but subject, as residents in the Palestinian portion, to Palestinian law (acceptable only if that were the law of a democratic society), and possible, too, for Palestinians to live on land that is Israel, with the option of Palestinian citizenship but they also subject, as residents of Israel, to Israeli law, then you would have the situation that each people would have its own territory, with recognised borders within which its own law obtained, but that each people would also have the freedom of the whole land, could live in all of it.

When it comes to defensive policy, the character of that would be much different once Israel has the genuine friendship and cooperation of its neighbors, as I wrote to you in my letter of October. The need to take defense seriously would not disappear. The real danger would not be the Palestinian state itself, which would by agreement be unarmed and with its borders and Israel's under the strongest possible international guarantees. The risk would instead be the overthrow of Jordan, and Jordan's effective absorption, as an armed state, into the Palestinian state.

What you need, then, is the guarantee, in any agreement that is made, of Jordan. This can't be in terms of the guarantee of Hashemite monarchy, though the reign of King Hussein has been responsible, a benefit to Jordan's people and to the region. But a polity built on persons or a family is too fragile. The formula

Prime Minister Shamir, June 20, 1991 -- 5

would have to be found to define what is guaranteed as the distinct society and polity of Jordan, with all recognition of the qualities of King Hussein and the Hashemites. I have often heard discussion of a kind of Benelux arrangement by which cooperation and mutual benefit could be built among Israel, Jordan and a Palestinian state, without any one of them losing its individual integrity, and I know that has ready acceptance in the Palestinian leadership, its terms a matter to be negotiated.

There is one other matter I must adumbrate before closing, and that is the representation of the Palestinians. I hear it rumored that your government has obtained, or is working to obtain, from our Mr. Baker promises that the P.L.O. will be excluded from any role in such negotiations as may take place. To me that means the repetition of an old game that has produced failure many times in the past: the claim of Israelis to choose who will represent the Palestinians, to choose representatives for them who will not represent them, to demand Quislings and determine that Israel will treat only with Quislings. Under such circumstances, even if something resembling a settlement were reached, it would be no settlement and all would remain still to be done. If our Mr. Baker has agreed to that, he has less wisdom than I had attributed to him.

The Palestinians have insisted for years that their true representation is the P.L.O. Claims that this is because of intimidation are simply untrue. There has indeed been suppression of alternative Palestinian approaches to the Israeli government, sometimes violent suppression. But this is because Israel has demanded Quislings, and at times, as in the case of the "village leagues" of the 1970s, manufactured them. It is true also that the exiled community has kept political control over the resident community in the occupied territories, a fact which had its credible explanation in the intimidation that Israel was able to exercise over the resident population. But as the resident Palestinians achieved a capacity for their own political expression, through their intifada of recent years, two things have become plain: one is that the P.L.O. has given a very free hand to local resident Palestinians, and the other is that these residents, with plenty of freedom (exercised most recently by their very outspoken criticism of the sad state to which the intifada itself has been reduced through its frustrations), have maintained their allegiance to the P.L.O., as legitimate, chosen organ of Palestinian expression.

The external P.L.O. leadership has now been critically weakened by the failure of its policies during the Iraq crisis. I take a different view of this than the conventional one, which has its origins in Israeli rejection of the P.L.O. and its leadership. I would hope that you yourself don't feel obliged to believe everything said by your own propaganda agencies in this regard. I see the P.L.O. as the representation that Palestinians have built for themselves under most difficult circumstances, without which they would again be bereft of organisation or leadership. I see Yasser Arafat as the person who has brought his people to the acceptance of Israel and the proposal of a genuine peace with the State of Israel. That he has failed in his policy over Iraq is not a matter of his having taken the side of Iraq and its despicable leader, though he did take the position that the massive American military presence in the region was a greater threat than the actions of Iraq. I believe he tried to position himself to mediate a non-violent resolution of the conflict. That he failed in that effort was not entirely by his fault. It does leave him strikingly naked, and as one who has learned to respect him I regret that.

Prime Minister Shamir, June 20, 1991 -- 6

Now that his failure is so profound, the Palestinians have good reason to reflect on their leadership. The structures of their organisation are strong enough to bear this, especially now that they have succeeded, in recent years, in making decisions by the acceptance of majority opinion rather than always requiring full consensus. They have never had the opportunity to organise an election by popular vote, either in the occupied territories, where the population is concentrated enough to hold elections, but where Israel has always vetoed those candidates who were the actual choice of the population, or in their diaspora, where there has never been the technical help provided to register and canvass the Palestinians entitled to vote. Nevertheless, they have built the most remarkable democratic system that can be had without those facilities.

I observe that Israel's policy of rejecting Arafat himself and the P.L.O. is self-defeating. You bind the Palestinians to defend the only leadership they have, and leave them no option but to insist on that and that alone. You violate that most fundamental principle that their leadership must be that of their choice, not of yours. That is an injustice to which Israel should never let itself be party. The only interest it can serve is to guarantee that any negotiations held, if any are at all, will be meaningless and fruitless.

It would be well worth Israel's while to encourage a genuine election process among the Palestinians, and genuine means that it would not be Israel that did the supervising but an international body that could be agreed upon as objective and unbiased, and also that no candidate could be vetoed because of Israeli objection. I expect that the Palestinians would be quite open to such a process, have learned their resources of leadership well and would be ready to choose wisely. I do not in the least discount that Arafat himself may still be exactly whom they choose as most suitable for them. If, after his debacle during the Gulf crisis, they chose otherwise, he could retire with honor. But the choice would be genuinely a Palestinian one, and nothing else can be respected as democratic.

What I have written on these last three matters -- the open border, the Benelux arrangement for security and the representation of the Palestinians -- is only sketched here and needs far more discussion and filling out. Those friends with whom I have discussed this letter asked that I speak of what peace would mean for Israel, and for the other peoples of the region as well, the astonishing bright opportunities it would create for all of you. I believe in those, but find it a more speculative theme than I want to get engaged in.

The substance of what I want to convey is my urging that you yourself, Yitzhak Shamir, seize on the opportunity to make a genuine peace. I know and sympathise with the necessity for you to defend Israel from having a peace imposed from outside, but you cannot do without peace unless you would condemn Israel to eventual failure, cataclysmic failure, and leave Israel exposed to the mounting -- incremental -- temptation to a shaming crime. I have long worked with the principles of conflict resolution, and learned that none of the theories and techniques will work the miracle without a genuine determination of the parties to make the peace. My bets are on you, that you have or can have this determination, and carry it through to success, even though I can base that only on your proven devotion to the long-term safety of Israel and cannot see any evidence of it yet in any of your actions in what we keep calling the "peace process." I don't see

Prime Minister Shamir, June 20, 1991 -- 7

anyone else in Israel's leadership who could carry it off successfully. One never knows what may be the potential of those younger leaders to whom I found myself referred, but I would fear that, if you leave the future for others to determine, by default, the fanatics like Sharon will be the ones to seize it.

My supposition has been that, while Secretary of State Baker's high level of diplomacy continues, I am better advised to write you letters than to try to speak with you. If you should judge otherwise, and would be open to a conversation, I would gladly make the trip, even at very short notice, I wish you well, and wish strength to your spine.

With blessings and my prayers
for your good
and that of Israel,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167

57

June 21, 1991

Rabbi Rolnd B. Gittelsohn
Temple Israel
Longwood Avenue and Plymouth Street
Boston, MA 02215

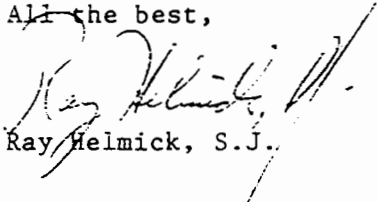
Dear Roland,

Shalom!

Here is the new letter to Yitzhak Shamir, which just went off to him today. I sent a copy along also to Justus Weiner, with covering letter (enclosed), and of course got it right down to John Sununu (for George Bush and James Baker).

I'm off on a trip to Rome on Monday, to see two good friends -- Pio Laghi, who was Nuncio here until just over a year ago, and Cahal Daly, who's just been made Archbishop of Armagh -- made Cardinals. I'll have the chance to discuss this letter, and the further development of the correspondence, with people over there, in the Papal Secretariate of State and with the Jesuit General, Fr. Peter Hans Kolvenbach, who has always been a great help to me. You and I need to get together soon when I get back.

All the best,


Ray Helmick, S.J.

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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167

June 21, 1991

Professor Richard Schwartz
15 Clarmar Road
Syracuse, N.Y. 13066

Dear Red,

Shalom!

Here's the new letter to Shamir. It's pretty much as I outlined it when we were down in Washington together. I enclose, too, a copy of the covering letter I sent to Justus Weiner, who had written to me for Shamir. I thought he should have a copy. One went to Sununu too, and along with it a copy and reminder on the Interreligious Committee's letter to Bush.

I'll be glad to hear your thoughts on this, especially as there will be more letters, and I need to be fed good thinking on the subject. Let's be in touch soon.

With best wishes,


Ray Helmick, S.J.



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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167

June 21, 1991

His Eminence
Cardinal Law

Dear Cardinal,

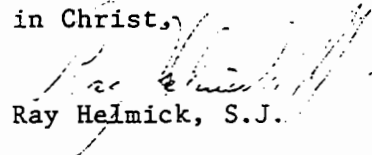
Christ's Peace!

Enclosed is a new letter that I've just sent off to Prime Minister Shamir. I'm sending copies around to my normal list, including of course Governor Sununu. I thought you should know of it.

I'm also enclosing a letter that our Interreligious Committee -- the group you spoke to so beautifully when we had our Convocation at B.C. in February of last year -- sent to President Bush. This one, in fact, is of my drafting. We had invited Secretary of State Baker to speak to the group for a National Cathedral convocation in Washington early this month. He wasn't able to do it then, though he apparently liked the idea of it as a helpful forum. We've had the sort of meeting where we invite the Israeli and the Palestinian speaker of not and a number of Americans several times over now, and felt that for a major public affair we shouldn't just repeat that but do something that would really contribute to developing positive initiative in the situation. So we've offered to assemble an audience of our people -- Jewish, Christian, Muslim, with a lot of recognisable faces -- at whatever time either the President or Mr. Baker would want to make a statement on the Middle East for which that would be a useful forum.

All the best,

in Christ,


Ray Helmick, S.J.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167

June 21, 1991

His Eminence
John Cardinal O'Connor
Archbishop of New York
452 Madison Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10022

Dear Cardinal O'Connor,

Christ's Peace!

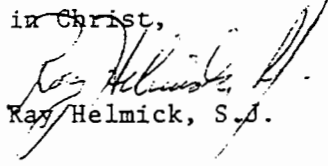
I've been at it again, writing to Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, as I did last October. The enclosed letter just went off to him today.

He had had a surprisingly positive answer sent to me -- an official writing for him -- after the October letter. And since it contained an invitation to talk with me on my next visit to Israel, I very nearly made the trip in the first week of March, when I had a term break. John Sununu had taken an interest in it, and taken steps to see that I would get to meet Shamir himself, and not just the man who had responded for him. But the complications of getting into Israel just in those last days of the Gulf war prevented the trip, and I was quite content to see it postponed once I saw that James Baker was right on the scene within the week. It's no time for the likes of me to be about when that sort of diplomacy is going on. I'm better off to be writing letters.

My brother Bill and I are both going over to Rome next week, to be there for the Consistory. Perhaps we may come across you there.

All best wishes,

in Christ,


Ray Helmick, S.J.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167

June 21, 1991

His Eminence
Joseph Cardinal Bernardin
Archbishop of Chicago
1555 North State Parkway
Chicago, IL 60610

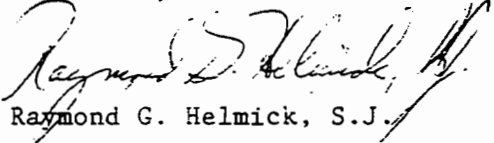
Dear Cardinal Bernardin,

Christ's Peace!

Once again I've been writing to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir. The enclosed letter just went off today, and I thought you should be kept informed of it. My previous letter to him, in October, got a surprisingly positive reply, not from Shamir himself directly but through someone he had respond to it. Since it included an invitation to talk with me on my next visit to Israel, I nearly made the trip just at the beginning of March. John Sununu, who regularly sees to it that these things are put before the President and Mr. James Baker, had made provision that I would meet Shamir himself, and not just the man who had written to me for him. But it turned out to be just the wrong time. The complications of getting into Israel just in the last days of the war prevented it, and once I saw that Baker was on the scene within the week of the time I had planned to go, I concluded that I should keep out of the way and continue writing letters instead.

With all best wishes,

in Christ,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167

June 21, 1991

His Excellency
Most Reverend Agostino Cacciavillan
Apostolic Pronuncio to the United States
1312 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008

Dear Archbishop Cacciavillan

Christ's Peace!

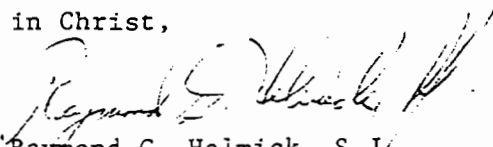
Just today I have sent off another letter to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, following up on the one I had sent him last October. I had received a surprisingly positive reply to that letter, not directly from Mr. Shamir but from an official writing for him. It contained an invitation to talk on my next visit to Israel. Since I had kept President Bush and Secretary of State Baker informed of all this, through Mr. John Sununu, I called on Mr. Sununu's help to ensure that when I went to Israel I would meet Mr. Shamir himself, and not merely the man who had written on his behalf. That was all set up for the first week of March, but unfortunately the trip was a casualty of the war -- it was simply too complex to get into Israel in those last days of the fighting. Once I saw that Mr. Baker was right on that scene within a week of the time I had proposed to go, I was grateful not to have been mixed up in such a high-diplomacy context. The place for my sort of intervention is when matters are at a stalemate. Under present circumstances, I can get farther by writing letters.

Mr. Sununu has a copy of this enclosed letter, for his prestigious circle, as have also several Cardinals whom I regularly keep informed, especially of course my own Cardinal Law, and a small group of others.

I will actually be in Rome this coming week, for the elevation to Cardinal of your predecessor and of another good friend, Cardinal Cahal Daly of Armagh. It is possible I may even see you there.

All best wishes,

in Christ,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167

June 21, 1991

Very Reverend Father General
Peter Hans Kolvenbach, S.J.
Curia Generalizia S.J.
Borgo S. Spirito, 5
C.P. 6139
00195 Roma, Italy

Dear Father General,

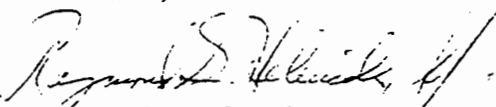
Christ's Peace!

Just today I have sent off another letter to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, following up on the one I had sent last October and which had received a surprisingly positive reply, both of which you saw. I have sent a copy of this along, as I always do, to Mr. John Sununu, who will see that it is known to Mr. Bush and Mr. Baker. He had been very helpful at the time, last March, when I had meant to get to Israel, making sure that I would be able to meet with Mr. Shamir himself and not merely with the official who had answered my letter on Mr. Shamir's behalf. I was disappointed, at that time, not to be able to make the trip, since travel into Israel simply became too complicated in those last days of the Gulf war. But once I saw that, within a week of my projected visit Secretary of State Baker was on the scene, I was very grateful that I hadn't been caught in the middle of that. I think letters are a far better way of communicating with Shamir right now.

I'll send a copy of this along to Tom Michel as well. And in fact I will be in Rome this coming week. Two close friends -- Pio Laghi and Cahal Daly -- are among those to be made Cardinal, so I will come over to be present at the Consistory. I will arrive on Monday, June 25th, and will be staying, along with my brother Bill, a Boston diocesan priest and pastor, at the Hotel Santa Ana. I will surely plan to contact you and would like to have your sense of this correspondence.

With all best wishes,

in Christ,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167

June 21, 1991

Rev. Thomas F. Michel, S.J.
Curia Generalizia S.J.
Borgo S. Spirito, 5
C.P. 6139
00195 Roma, Italy

Dear Tom,


Christ's Peace!

I've been writing once again to Yitzhak Shamir, following up on the letter I sent him last October, which had received a surprisingly positive reply. I've sent a copy of this along to Fr. Kolvenbach, and mentioned to him that you would have one as well. It has also gone the route all my letters of this sort go: to John Sununu at the White House, who regularly does put them before both George Bush and James Baker, to Cardinal Law, Cardinal O'Connor and Cardinal Bernardin, to Pio Laghi over there and to his successor Agostino Cacciavillan, and to a short-list of people in our U.S. Interreligious Committee for Peace in the Middle East.

I'm going to be in Rome this coming week. With both Pio Laghi and Cahal Daly being made Cardinal, I want to be there for the Consistory. And it will be a chance to talk through this correspondence and other aspects of my Middle East work with some people there in Rome. In particular, I'll be anxious to see the General, as I told him, and I think the simplest way to contact him may well be that I call you. I'll be staying, this trip, along with my brother Bill, who is a Boston diocesan priest, at the Hotel Santa Ana, just across the Piazza from you, and arriving sometime Monday, June 25th.

So I look forward to seeing you, and hope to get your thoughts on these matters. All the best,

in Christ,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167

June 21, 1991

His Eminence
Pio Cardinal Laghi
Congregazione Per L'Educazione Cattolica
00120 Citta del Vaticano

Your Eminence,

Christ's Peace!

How good to be able to address you as Your Eminence. This came as no great surprise, but it is so wonderfully deserved after all your service to the Church. As you know, my brother Bill and I will both be over to Rome so that we can congratulate you in person. I look forward to the meeting and to the days of celebration. My prayers will be with you.

Meanwhile, I thought you should have the enclosed as soon as possible, a new letter to Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir. Since I had to postpone my visit to see him, planned for the beginning of March, I knew there had to be another letter, and in fact a regular sequence of them. I've waited quite a long while to be sure that the occasion was right, and that the right issues could be addressed. And since Mr. John Sununu had been so helpful after my last letter, making provision that I should have been sure to see Shamir himself had I been able to get there in March and consistently putting this material before Mr. Bush and Mr. Baker, of course I have sent a copy right along to him.

God be with your important work and bless you and the Church in it. It will be a great joy to assist at your elevation next week.

In Christ,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167

June 21, 1991

Mr. Cherif Sedky
Kirkpatrick and Lockhard
1800 M Street, N.W. -- South Lobby
Washington, D.C. 20036

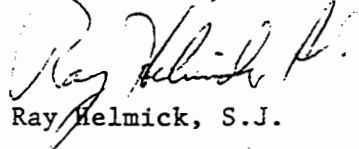
Dear Cherif,

Ron has been mentioning to me that I should get a copy of the things I have written to Yitzhak Shamir to you, and have a conversation with you on the phone. There was a letter last October, which I enclose here, and now I've just sent off another today. The first one had a surprisingly positive response, not from Shamir himself but from a Mr. Justus Weiner writing for him. It included an invitation, "glad to talk with you on your next visit to Israel," which was the reason I almost got over there at the beginning of March. I sent along a copy to Justus Weiner, with covering note (enclosed), also one to John Sununu, who consistently put these things before Bush and Baker (that covering note also enclosed -- here I called his attention as well to the Interreligious Committee's letter to Bush).

I'll be away by the time you get this, over to Rome to see a couple of good friends made Cardinals, and will get back on the 4th of July. Let's be sure we get a chance to talk all this through then. The easiest way to get me these days is at the parish where my brother is Pastor -- St. Theresa's parish in West Roxbury, (617) 325-1300, but since there are two Helmicks here you have to make clear that it is me you want, not my brother Bill.

It will be good to talk with you.

All the best,


Ray Helmick, S.J.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167

June 21, 1991

Mr. Justus R. Weiner
Director
Division of American Law
and External Relations
Ministry of Justice
29 Sallah-a-Din Street
P.O. Box 1087
91010 Jerusalem, Israel

Dear Mr. Weiner, -- Justus,

Shalom!

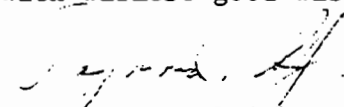
The enclosed letter just went off to Prime Minister Shamir. Since he asked you to answer my previous letter last October, I thought I should send you a copy direct. I've been grateful for your periodic notes and bundles of documents, and hope it won't be too long before we meet.

My friends, hearing that I was finally putting together another letter to Mr. Shamir, tried to catch me out by saying that Mr. Shamir had decided he would no longer talk to Mr. Bush. I fell right into it, and asked, in consternation, why? They said he had remembered that the last time Israelis listened to a bush, they had been left wandering in the desert forty years.

I hope I help to keep communications open. I've taken the risk, in this letter, of touching subjects that we are all told are taboo, that we should never talk about, and of course they're the ones that the Palestinians spend their time worrying about.

As I mention in the letter, under present circumstances I am not so anxious to go over and talk with Mr. Shamir, unless he should wish it (which I don't expect). While Baker is making his frequent calls, I expect that an outsider would be in the way, and that the most Mr. Shamir could do in decency would be to fob me off with things I needn't travel to Israel to hear. It's better that I write letters. However, I have been raising the question, in our Interreligious Committee, of bringing a group of significant people from our membership or potential membership around on an informational tour of the region. I don't have an answer yet on whether that will be done, but it might be that I will visit Israel in that context. I rather hope so, because I miss being there.

With warmest good wishes,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167

June 21, 1991

Governor John Sununu
Chief of Staff
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Governor Sununu,

Christ's Peace!

Once again I've written off to Prime Minister Shamir. A copy of the letter is enclosed for your own information and that of anyone in the Administration you think should see it.

After I had to call off that visit to Shamir in the first week of March, when you were being so helpful to see that I saw him and not merely Mr. Justus Weiner, who had replied to my October letter for Shamir, I thought I should certainly send another serious letter, and postponed it while I waited for the right time and circumstances. I do think I should keep out of the way while the Baker shuttle is going on. Visits to the likes of Mr. Shamir by the likes of me can be useful, I think, in times of stalemate -- that's how I first got into the long communication with Arafat, or with Raymond Edde -- but not when this level of diplomacy is going on. A letter is better right now.

You have certainly been in a lot of people's line of fire since I last wrote or spoke to you. I can only say: Corragio! It's plain enough that none of this is about how you travel. I spotted the enclosed cartoon in this morning's Boston Herald, and thought it would amuse you.

All best wishes,

in Christ,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

P.S.: Might I call your attention to the letter the President just received (copy enclosed) from the U.S. Interreligious Committee for Peace in the Middle East. I did the text for it, and wanted to be sure you realised the invitation to the President or Secretary of State Baker to use this group as a sounding board at a time of their convenience is very strait. It could be just the right platform for them.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167

June 21, 1991

Ronald Young
Interreligious Committee
Greene & Westview, 3rd Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19119

Dear Ron,

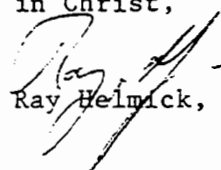
Christ's Peace!

Enclosed is the letter to Shamir, written after I'd chickened over and over again. I spent all yesterday on a train up from Washington, working at this on a yellow pad, typed it up last night, then changed half of it and typed it over again this morning. It's in the mail now, with a copy and further covering letter to Justus Weiner, who had written to me on Shamir's behalf after my October letter.

John Sununu has a copy in the mail too, and I took the occasion of that to call his attention to the Interreligious Committee's letter to Bush (of which I enclosed a copy), telling him I hope he'd pay attention and that the offer of what could be a really helpful forum was legit.

All the best,

in Christ,


Ray Helmick, S.J.



3339 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20008-3687

APOSTOLIC NUNCIATURE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

4272/5

June 28, 1991

No.

This No. Should Be Prefixed to the Answer

Reverend Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.
Jesuit Community
Boston College
Chestnut Hill, MA 02167

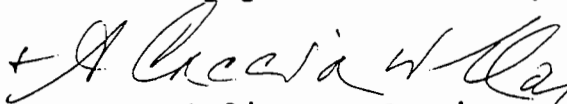
Dear Father Helmick:

Thank you most sincerely for your kind letter, with the informative enclosure, of June 21, 1991.

You may rest assured that I have carefully reviewed your observations, as well as the contents of your correspondence with the Prime Minister of Israel, with much care and interest, and that I appreciate your consideration in keeping me apprised.

With prayerful good wishes and cordial regards, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Apostolic Pro-Nuncio

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

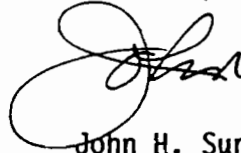
July 2, 1991

Dear Father Helmick,

Thank you very much for your letter. I have circulated it to the appropriate folks here.

You are right that your letter is the best tact to take right now. Please keep me informed as to what transpires.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "John H. Sununu", written over a large, stylized circular flourish.

John H. Sununu
Chief of Staff

Father Raymond G. Helmick
Jesuit Community Boston College
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts 02167

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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167

July 16, 1991

Dr. Nasser al-Kidwa
Palestine Observer Delegation
United Nations
New York, N.Y. 10017

Dear Dr. al-Kidwa,

Enclosed is a letter for President Arafat, along with a copy for yourself so that you know what you are transmitting.

This matter of the Palestinians' loss of the initiative, about which I talked with you some months ago, just after the end of the Gulf war, has had me very much exercised ever since. My proposal here of an election seemed to me even when we talked the likeliest way to reinstate the initiative, but I couldn't see my way through to it then.

I have, meanwhile, written once more to Mr. Shamir, again as frank and outspoken a letter as you are accustomed to seeing me write many times over to President Arafat. You will see the text eventually, but I think it best that I leave time enough for Shamir to respond first. He hasn't yet, though the letter went out early in June, but I think this letter will cost him some time before he knows how to respond.

I've been through so many stratagems to get these letters to you without danger of their being opened on the way. This time I think I will simply trust to the integrity of the mail and send it direct. Please do let me know that it got to you intact.

With all best wishes,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.
Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167

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July 16, 1991

President Yasser Arafat
Palestine Liberation Organisation

Dear President Arafat,

These are strangely uncertain days for the hopes of the Palestinian people. On the one hand, there appear to be possibilities of moving toward the sort of peace between the Palestinian and Israeli peoples that was sought by the decisions of the last PNC, and on the other hand the P.L.O., as the basic and most valuable organisational structure of the Palestinian people, is left in a gravely disadvantaged position in the aftermath of the War in the Gulf. I don't know how you perceive and evaluate the current situation. For some time I rather doubted that Mr. James Baker's "window of opportunity" had ever really existed. This week's announcement by President Assad, I believe, does indeed significantly improve the chances of a negotiated settlement. Characteristically, it is a decision taken after long and careful deliberation. For all your own unhappy experiences with President Assad, I expect you would agree with my own assessment that he will not back away from a decision he has made with such care, and can be relied on not to accept a settlement that would not be fair to the Arabs. Whether he will see the needs of Palestinians as you see them, and the Palestinian people see them, remains to be determined.

I had planned for some time now to send you a letter on how the people of Palestine can have an adequate voice in the determination of their own cause. President Assad's decision, by making some real diplomatic action on the question of Palestine more realistically possible, makes that question more acute.

Shortly after the end of the war against Iraq I was down to New York to talk with Dr. Nasser al-Kidwa. Our conversation was rather inconclusive. I was very conscious that the Palestinians and the P.L.O. had been terribly weakened by the war and its outcome. It seemed, just in those days, that the Arab states of the coalition might go ahead with a Baker plan for Arab-Israeli and Israeli-Palestinian settlement that would try to bypass or ignore the P.L.O. I felt sure that the Palestinian people would not accept a process that left them without effective organisation, and Dr. al-Kidwa believed that the Arab states would then very quickly reject any such process also. To a large extent events have justified his expectations, though not as clearly or unambiguously as they might. But the Palestinians themselves are left as weak now as they were then with regard to influencing the outcome of their own cause. For the length of the intifada, the Palestinians had held the initiative in the region. Every action or policy decision of the Israelis, every U.S. decision about the Middle East, was a reaction, whether positive or negative, to the intifada. But the intifada, already suffering the strains of long frustration, was among the first casualties of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait: not in the sense that the Palestinians were any more willing to accept Israeli occupation, which they were not; but in the sense that after August 2, 1990,

President Yasser Arafat, July 16, '91 -- 2

the Palestinian agenda and their intifada, for all practical purposes, ceased to count as a motivating force for anyone except themselves. The initiative was gone.

That in itself was a devastating loss for the Palestinians, but was made much worse by the perception that the Palestinians had discredited themselves and given the lie to the decisions of the Algiers PNC and all their talk of a peace initiative by espousing the cause of President Hussein and looking for him to destroy the State of Israel.

I believe I have a fair understanding of what was happening in this matter. Palestinians had gone through a lot of frustration by this time, having made their peace initiative and received no serious response at all from the Israeli government in more than two years. Great anger at that was evident, and justified. It seemed most unrestrained in the Palestinian population of Jordan, where people's lives were especially disrupted by the events in Kuwait and the other Gulf states. In the Occupied Territories themselves, and among the rest of the Diaspora Palestinians, much more realism was evident, but it was a sad thing to see the Palestinians of Jordan just deliberately blind themselves to the simple facts of what was happening and attribute any news they found unwelcome to propaganda, no matter how evident it was. There was a tremendous amount of publicity given, here in the United States and elsewhere, to the image of Palestinians standing out on their rooftops and cheering as the few Scud missiles were fired at Israel. I was in the habit of pointing out that there were a lot of people, in the United States and in Israel, cheering at the bombing of Baghdad, but the parallel did not seem to make much impression.

You know, from many previous letters, my own very negative assessment of President Hussein, his policies and his impact on the Palestinian cause. I have been all the time of the Gulf crisis arguing, in many forums both public and private, that you yourself were not an unambiguous supporter of him and his actions. From the time that the Saudis and the Egyptians made their first decisions, last August, to enter into a coalition with the United States, I understood, and had much sympathy for, your judgment that the armed presence of Americans and other Westerners in the Arab heartland was a great danger, and your being as much alarmed at that as you were at President Hussein's aggression against a fellow Arab State, but I knew you were no supporter of the invasion of Kuwait. My reading was that you were trying to set yourself in a position to mediate a non-military resolution of this conflict, and I found that a creditable enterprise on your part, even if a very dangerous one. The plain fact, however, is that you have failed in that enterprise. The war went ahead, and was catastrophe for Iraq and its people. The reason for that lies not with you but with others, on both sides, who let the situation eventuate in that extreme of violence despite whatever efforts you and others made to prevent it. But your failure left the Palestinian people more vulnerable than before. It was exploited, of course, by those who wanted to discredit you. I happen to realise that it was largely because of your insistence to President Hussein that he freed the thousands of hostages -- "guests" -- that he had been holding, releasing them just before Christmas. It seems clear to me, too, that President Hussein was the one who ordered the murder of your faithful colleague, Abu Iyad, and that the motive for that was to intimidate you yourself. I find that especially appalling among the many dastardly deeds of President Hussein. It embarrasses me now when I see statements attributed to you that read as fawning adulation of this criminal ruler.

President Yasser Arafat, July 16, '91 -- 3

At present, though, the great priority for the Palestinians is to regain the initiative and have a genuine voice in their own affairs. The best that can be said, at this time when there is the prospect of real motion on the Palestinian question, is that you are back to the status of 1985, when there was the apparent prospect of the Israelis and their American backers meeting with a joint delegation of Jordanians and Palestinians, with the proviso that the Palestinian members of the delegation had to have the prior acceptance by the government of Israel and must not be publicly identified as leaders of the P.L.O. In some ways the present situation is even worse, with the Israelis feeling much more assured in excluding the P.L.O. from consideration as representative of the Palestinian people, and no one either in the Arab or the Western states seriously objecting to that exclusion. You and your colleagues in the leadership of the P.L.O. have shown great political maturity in authorising such excellent representatives within the Occupied Territories as Faisal Hussein and Hannan Ashrawi to speak with Mr. Baker, who knows but does not publicly acknowledge that they speak by your authorisation, but the Israelis feel emboldened to exclude Faisal Hussein from consideration as spokesman because of his East Jerusalem residence, and anyone else like Hannan Ashrawi who acknowledges loyalty to the P.L.O. The choice of members even for the Palestinian part of a joint delegation with the Jordanians promises to be full of crippling Israeli-imposed restrictions.

This is the chosen field of contest, and it is precisely here that I want to propose to you now that the Palestinians, and the P.L.O. in particular, once again seize the initiative, as I believe you must somehow do, whether by the plan I will outline or otherwise, if the Palestinians are not simply to be taken advantage of in any negotiations that may develop. The credentials of Palestinians to be representative of the people are under challenge, and it is those credentials, I believe, that should be established beyond any question. To do that, in the present circumstances, would put the Palestinians in an incomparably stronger position to speak and negotiate with a voice that could not be ignored.

I myself regard the P.L.O. as authentically representative of the Palestinian people, a structure the people has itself constructed, under most difficult conditions of repression of any political activity on their part, and which is now of great value to them as their organised and authentic voice. I know the P.L.O. has a shadowed history in its first years, before the 1967 war, when it was first founded as a way of making Palestinians and their cause into an instrument of Egyptian policy, and that other polities, among them the Syrian, have often tried to dominate Palestinian efforts since, using groups that they tried, with only partial success, to affiliate to the P.L.O. But through your own work, especially since you became Chairman in 1969, you have liberated the P.L.O. itself from these pretensions and enabled it to become authentically the voice of the Palestinian people.

The Israelis, nevertheless, have been successful, with a broad segment of the public in powerful countries like the United States, in asserting that the P.L.O. is not truly representative, but imposes itself on the Palestinian people by intimidation. What matters is not whether this is true or not, but that it is believed by enough people so that the P.L.O.'s representative character has been publicly impugned. That is, of course, a propaganda position, but a successful one.

President Yasser Arafat, July 16, '91 -- 4

This position, espoused by the Israelis, that the P.L.O. imposes itself by intimidation, is supported by three things that have an evident factual basis.

1. Alternative Palestinian approaches to Israeli government have historically been suppressed, sometimes violently suppressed. There is an obvious explanation for that, in the fact that the Israelis have demanded Quislings and frequently made it clear that they would talk only with people who did not really represent the Palestinians but instead represented a sell-out to themselves. Public opinion, in the United States or in the other powerful states of Europe, understands well enough in the case of the occupied countries of the Second World War how a people in these circumstances has to defend itself against treasonous collaborators. But the Israelis have managed, so far, to make their charge of intimidation stick, in the public mind, and in this matter have to be challenged with indisputable fact.

2. It is equally clear that the exiled Palestinian leadership has traditionally kept political control to itself, within the P.L.O., and not committed it to the resident population in the Occupied Territories. For this, too, there is a good explanation, simply because of the fact that the resident community has been so much subjected to intimidation by the Israelis themselves, with the result that they could not speak for the Palestinians with the freedom that the exile community could. This situation, in fact, has changed in the recent years of the intifada. The resident community has risen above fear of Israeli intimidation and repression, and has found spokesmen who have been able to articulate the Palestinian needs and aspirations, even overcoming all the Israeli efforts to prohibit their profession of loyalty to the P.L.O. itself, as authentic voice of their people. Fears among the exile population that the residents would allow themselves to be separated from them, and would look only for their own liberation without caring for the Palestinian Diaspora, as the Israelis have so often sought, have proven groundless. The residents have by now demonstrated their capacity to act effectively within the leadership, in full union with the whole Palestinian people.

3. As the intifada has wound down to its present sad state of frustration and disillusion, deprived of its powerful agenda-setting function ever since the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, it has degenerated into carnage of Palestinians by Palestinians, murder being often the first answer even to a suspicion of collaboration, and many unscrupulous individuals taking advantage of this anarchic state to settle old personal scores or advance their own power within the community by groundlessly accusing others and arranging their slaughter. The intifada, as a popular movement, certainly needs radical repair, and it needs to be recognised, as I have argued above, that it is no longer the thing that can give the Palestinians the basic initiative. But again, there is a positive side to be recognised. This is that the P.L.O. has given a very free hand to the resident population of the Occupied Territories to express themselves politically, and that these resident Palestinians themselves, with the capacity for serious political expression that they have developed through the intifada, have been outspoken in their criticism of the sorry state to which the intifada has been reduced.

With the P.L.O.'s reputation impugned in this way -- through the Israeli denial of its representative character and through the offense taken, even by many centrally important Arab states, at the P.L.O.'s conduct during the Iraqi crisis and war -- it seems to me that the thing that will best restore to the Palestinian people an adequate share of initiative in the dealings about their own future and an unmistakable voice of their own is to concentrate effort on establishing the representative character of Palestinian leadership. What I propose is an election, one that will command the respect of all observers. I thought this even at the time I spoke with Dr. al-Kidwa last March but could not see my way through the technical difficulties and obstacles then. I have given it constant thought since and think I can now see the way to conducting it.

The Israelis themselves have been proposing elections in the Occupied Territories as part of the Shamir plan of the last several years. The trouble has been that an election under occupation authority cannot be free, and that there has never been any agreed formula on what these candidates would be elected for. International supervision of the election should make it free, and ensure that candidates could not be banned because the Israelis regarded them as undesirable or not pliant to their own wishes. And such supervision should be available if it were the demand of the P.L.O. that the elections should be held.

There has never been an election among the Diaspora population of Palestinians. This too would be feasible if, at P.L.O. request, there were full international cooperation in compiling a registration list of qualified voters, and international supervision of the election in each country to ensure that the result was free.

The Israelis would, predictably, be likely to refuse a vote for a Palestinian representative body in East Jerusalem, though with the kind of international support that would be generated by a P.L.O. request for a full internationally supervised Palestinian election, they might conceivably be brought to allow even that, on the basis that the Palestinian population of East Jerusalem is not permitted to vote as citizens in Israeli elections. If they did not agree to elections in East Jerusalem, a freely elected Palestinian representative body from all the other territories, those occupied by Israel and the Diaspora, could then itself elect representatives from East Jerusalem.

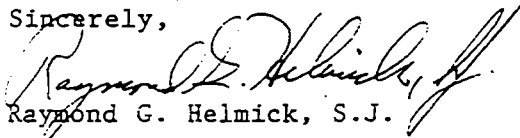
A Palestinian demand for such an election, relying on the U.N. or some other agreed and trustworthy international body, would restore a significant level of initiative to the Palestinians and make the representative character of their spokesmen indisputable. That the P.L.O., as such, should be the body making this demand of the international community would be a convincing sign of its own representative character. There could be no question of restricting the election to P.L.O. candidates, and if the sticking point should turn out to be an Israeli refusal to let candidates run in the Occupied Territories under the banner of the P.L.O., it would be quite feasible to let candidates run without party labels of any kind, and declare their affiliation later, much as was done in the famous municipal elections of 1969. The P.L.O. should have no apprehensions about the result of such elections.

President Yasser Arafat, July 16, '91 -- 6

Would the P.L.O. be elected as their representatives by the Palestinian people, or would you yourself be elected? No one can say that for certain before seeing the result of such an election. You in the P.L.O. have told me often what a democratic structure you have built, even without ever having had the means to hold an election by universal suffrage because of the circumstances of occupation and diaspora. I have come to believe that is true, and I think that, at this juncture, the circumstances that have always prohibited an election could be overcome. In that case, I would expect the Palestinians to choose the representatives who have served them well, and provided them with a representative structure up to this point. The P.L.O. has presented itself not simply as a party but as the equivalent of a state structure for the Palestinians. In such an election as I propose, the P.L.O. would in fact present itself as a party, having ceded the task of organising the election to the international body that would be the guarantee of its integrity. Even in the unlikely event that the P.L.O. itself, or you as its leader, were not elected, you would have deserved well of the Palestinian people in having bequeathed to them a body of elected deputies and a structure whose representative character was beyond any possibility of cavil. That, in itself, would be the strongest building block from which the Palestinians would be able to build up their nation and state, and they would never be ungrateful. After the terribly critical losses of this last year, this or some equally definitive step to restore the Palestinian position is truly needed. I believe that, in these matters, you can treat your people with full confidence that they will choose wisely and well. Their political education has been too painful for them to do otherwise.

I recommend this drastic initiative to you with the best wishes I can muster for you and your people, that you may attain a just settlement out of the more fluid circumstances that are now being created, may have the full voice you are entitled to in the deliberations, and may come to a peaceful resolution of the agonizing problems that have afflicted you for so many years, and be able to live at peace and in fruitful cooperation with the Israelis and all the other neighbors in your region.

Sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

*Permanent Observer Mission
of Palestine
to the United Nations*



29
البعثة الرقابية الدائمة
لفلسطين
لدى الأمم المتحدة

3 September 1991

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.
Jesuit Community
Boston College
Chestnut Hill
Boston, MA 02167

Dear Father Helmick

I am sending herewith, the attached answer of His Excellency, President Yasser Arafat, to your recent letter regarding your evaluation of events in the area.

Thanking you for your support and wishing you all the best.

Sincerely,

Dr. Riyadh Mansour
Deputy Permanent Observer
of Palestine to the U.N.
Charge d'Affaires, a.i.

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STATE OF PALESTINE

PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION

President's Office



دولة فلسطين
منظمة التحرير الفلسطينية
مكتب الرئيس

..... : رقم

..... : تاريخ

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

Jesuit Community

Boston College

Chestnut Hill

Mass. 02167, U.S.A

Dear Father Helmick,

Greetings,

With great appreciation I received your recent letter in which you inform me of your evaluation of events in the area. Thank you for your interest in apprising me on your views on events and for your concern to establish just peace in the area.

I take this opportunity to explain some issues mentioned in your letter.

The P.L.O is exposed to a crazy and feverish campaign launched by the Zionist and Israeli circles to deform its image and its reputation in the world. Their aim is to direct a severe blow to the just struggle of our people, to their blessed Intifadah and to the PLO, their sole legitimate representative. By this crazy campaign they deliberately aimed at deforming the image of the PLO, its positions and policies vis- a- vis the Gulf- crisis and the Gulf- war and vis - a - vis the recent events in the Soviet Union. We officially stood against the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait as well as the war against Iraq. We made written initiatives which we handed to all concerned states and parties. Despite that an unjust campaign was unfolded against us which also intended to mar our people's struggle and leadership in order to increase confusion such as happened concerning the martyrdom of Brother Abu Iyad who was assassinated by one Israeli Mosad agent.



Concerning the coup d'etate that took place in the Soviet Union our position was clear and frank. We have conveyed it to the Soviet Government, and announced in the mass media and in my letter of congratulations to the Soviet President Michael Gorbachev. Despite that also, this unjust campaign continued unfolding against us. They wanted to hold us responsible for the outcome which they are planing to achieve. They started for example, to propagate that the PLO lost its credlbilly! Does the credbility of the PLO emanate from them or from the extent it represents its Palestinian people, its will, aspirations, dreams and rights?

The Palestinian people is the party who decides on that. This is a fundamental principle of the democracy which they are calling for, and which we adopt in our Palestinian arena, because we consider the Palestinian democracy to be the shield which protects the Palestinian national unity. And on this democratic basis we had welcomed conducting free elections under the United Nations auspices and called for the carrying out of a Namibia-model - solution on the occupied territories.

Despite all these feverish attempts we assure you that we will continue our work and struggle to realize a just and comprehensive settlement in the area. On this basis we welcomed President Bush's initiative of 6 March 1991 and facilitated the Secretary of State Baker's mission in the area by giving our approval to our brothers in the occupied territories to meet him. However, we found the U.S. Government, who says it is serious in pushing forward the peace process in the area, agreeing with the Government of Israel on excluding the PLO from negotiations, excluding the City of Jerusalem, as an issue and its representatives, from the Conference, on intervening flagrantly in the issue of Palestinian representation as a whole, on normalizing, firstly, Arab Israeli relations and then on

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STATE OF PALESTINE

THE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION

President's Office



دولة فلسطين

منظمة التحرير الفلسطينية
مكتب الرئيس

الرقم :

التاريخ :

dealing with the Palestinian issue over a period of five years, two of which are for negotiations and three for self-rule. During this period, Israel, the occupation authority, would have confiscated the remaining Palestinian occupied lands, to establish over them settlements for the thousands of new Jewish immigrants.

Our Palestinian people, under the leadership of the PLO, their sole legitimate representative, is still seeking to realize a just and fair peace which will put an end to their tragedy and through which the area, its states and peoples, are passing. Our people will continue their just struggle and blessed Intifadah to end the Israeli occupation by withdrawing the occupation forces from the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories, and to realize their inalienable national rights, including their right to return, to self-determination and to establish their independent state with Jerusalem as its capital, so that peace in the land of peace, the land of blessed Palestine, may be achieved.

Thank you for your support and wish you good health and success. With my best wishes.

Tunis, 1 September 1991

Yasser Arafat

President of the state of Palestine

Chairman of the Executive Committee of the

Palestine Liberation Organization



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167

September 9. 1991

Governor John Sununu
Chief of Staff
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Governor Sununu,

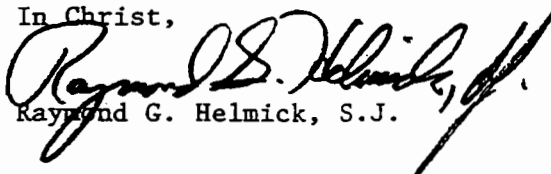
Christ's Peace!

You had asked, when I sent a copy of my last letter to Prime Minister Shamir, that I let you know of any response. To the best of my knowledge there has been nothing direct as yet, unless it is because of that letter that two separate copies of Aryeh Shalev's book on The Intifada: Causes and Effects (from the Jaffee Center) have been sent me. They weren't identified as to source. I can understand that Mr. Shamir may have found it too difficult to formulate a response to the letter I sent him.

I assume the same goes for the accompanying letter that I just received today from Mr. Arafat, and that you ought to have it as soon as possible. It's a response to my letter of July 16th, which you have.

Naturally enough, he doesn't say whether or not he will take up my recommendation that they hold an election, with all the elaborated detail I went into in that letter. He would have to make a public announcement of something like that, rather than say it in a letter to me. I phoned the P.L.O. Observer Mission when I got the letter, and spoke with Dr. Mansour, who had forwarded it to me. Normally I would talk to Dr. Nasser al-Kidwa, Arafat's nephew and the head of the Observer Mission now. He's out of the country, so I got less information than I would have from him. Not long after I sent the letter I did talk with Dr. al-Kidwa, and he told me then that people in the P.L.O. found the idea attractive, but hesitated to act on it because they didn't want to create complications in the way of the American-proposed conference. As of then, they were most anxious to see the conference come about and to have Palestinian participation. But al-Kidwa thought this idea of an election might actually be something the Palestinians would propose at the conference itself, or possibly at a PNC meeting before. The issue of who would represent the Palestinians hadn't come to such a head at that time (about a week after I sent the letter on July 16). I need to talk with al-Kidwa again now, and will do so when he gets back to the country. Who "people in the P.L.O." means, in the phrase he used then, is rather a puzzle now that there is so much dissent being expressed, but I doubt that al-Kidwa himself would express an opinion that didn't have some resonance in Arafat's own thinking.

In Christ,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167

September 9, 1991

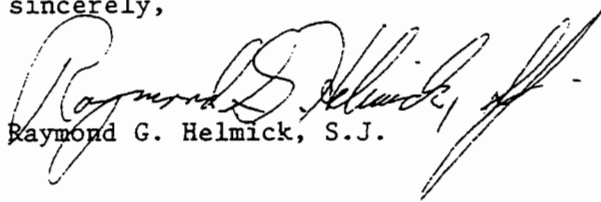
Mr. Daniel Kurtzer
Deputy Assistant Secretary of State
Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Kurtzer,

A response just came in to me today to a letter I had sent to Yasser Arafat back in July. I sent a copy along right away by FAX to Governor Sununu at the White House, who had had a copy of my letter to Arafat at the time it was sent. It's quite possible that you have already seen it, through Mr. Sununu, as well as letters I have sent to Prime Minister Shamir. In any case, Ron Young suggested I send you a copy of Arafat's letter and the letter of mine it responded to, so that you have it before you and Secretary Baker set off for the region later in the week.

With best wishes,

sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167

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September 21, 1991

President Yasser Arafat
Palestine Liberation Organisation

Dear President Arafat,

Thank you for the great honor you did me in sending your letter of September 1. I feel complimented that you showed me that confidence. As I informed Dr. Riyad Mansour, who had forwarded your letter, I got a copy of it directly to the White House, first by FAX and then by post. That was the only way I circulated it, apart from a copy to the key State Department aide who, I knew, would accompany Secretary of State Baker on his visit this last week to the Middle East. Wider circulation, I felt, would only dissipate your letter's effect.

I note what you write about the misrepresentation of the P.L.O.'s positions about the invasion of Kuwait, and about the Soviet coup, and realise the importance of your position on those matters being before our American government. I note, too, your statement that you "had welcomed" free elections under U.N. auspices and called for the carrying out of a Namibia-model solution on the occupied territories. I took this as referring to the election proposal which was the substance of my letter to you of last July 16. It was not entirely clear to me whether this is a priority matter for the P.L.O. now, though I well understood that an announcement on such an initiative would have to be in a public statement and not in a letter to me.

Other matters in your letter had my close attention and deserve comment. But I really want to write a very short letter just now. There are important things I would like to say as you prepare the P.N.C. meeting, and I know your time for such letters as this is more limited during those preparations.

Briefly:

As I see the tight constrictions within which the P.L.O. must make its decisions about Palestinian participation in the conference that Mr. Bush and Mr. Baker hope to convene next month, I too think it extremely important that you find your way through to participating. I think it a mistake to insist, to the point of making it a condition for participating, on prior assurances from the U.S. on matters that will be the subject of the conference: specifically the interpretation of S.C. 242 as calling for the return of all occupied territory, the specific status of Jerusalem and the term "self-determination," which the U.S. has taken to be synonymous with an independent state. My sympathy, as you well know, is with you on all these three points, and my agreement with you on these does not contradict my sympathy and good wishes for the safety and permanence of Israel. I believe that the dynamic of a conference, once it is engaged, works for you on all these matters, and that it would be a mis-judgment if the P.L.O.

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President Yasser Arafat, Sept. 21, '91 -- 2

were to refuse to participate because there were no prior decisions by the United States on these matters on which the conference process would truly help you.

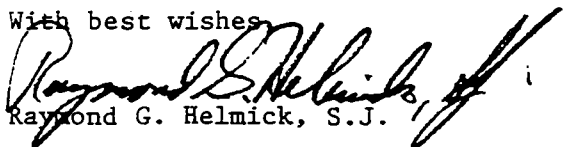
I believe the Bush Administration has in fact been more helpful to the cause of justice for the Palestinians than your analysis accounted for. The acceptance of Israeli restrictions on Palestinian representation has been far more qualified, and serious argument been maintained for the representation of East Jerusalem Palestinians. Basically, the fact that Mr. Baker has so consistently maintained contact with Palestinian representatives who are East Jerusalem residents and who so plainly acknowledge their accountability to the P.L.O. is the most substantial message that the United States is giving to the Israelis on these matters. And the sudden storm that has blown up over the \$10 billion loan guarantee and its connection with settlements in occupied territory should be encouraging to you that the U.S. Administration does not accept or foster the Likud government's intentions in this regard. If the U.S. were, at this point, to give the explicit assurances that the P.L.O. would so much like to see, it is my judgment that the Israelis would not show up for the conference, and that is not the outcome that you should want to see.

The more important issue is the one about representation of the Palestinians. I hope you will find the way to agree with King Hussein and send representatives in a joint delegation. Whatever the outcome, it is to your advantage that it be the Israelis, and they only, who would be in the position of refusing to participate in a conference. As I now take pride in having predicted to you, President Assad has now made it clear that he will not participate in a conference at which there is no Palestinian representation, and it was clear from even earlier that King Hussein himself could not possibly do that, so any talk of a conference going ahead without Palestinians is now shown to be entirely hollow. That gives you a stronger position in insisting on a proper representation, and I know you are intent on not making the choice of Palestinian representatives a provocation that would give the Israelis an easy excuse for backing out. If they refuse to participate, it should be clear to all the world that their refusal is unreasonable, and for that there will be consequences.

And that brings me back to my election proposal. I outlined it all enough in my July 16 letter so that I will not occupy your time with it further now. But I do still strongly recommend it.

I understand, and appreciate, your reluctance to create a diversion that could undermine the conference, and realise that you will not want to use this election proposal in a way that could have that effect. At the right moment, though, which might be at the conference itself or might be another time, such an election would have two effects that I think would benefit the Palestinian cause. One would be to regain the initiative precisely on the ground -- their representation -- on which the Israelis have chosen to oppose the Palestinians. The other, a consequence of that regaining of initiative, would be to bring your precious intifada back within the control of the forces for liberation among the Palestinian people, at a time when it threatens otherwise to be taken over only by the representatives of despair among them.

With best wishes


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

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October 16, 1991

Mr. Justus Weiner, Adv.
Director, Department of American Law
and External Relations
Ministry of Justice
Salah-a-Din Sreet, 29
P.O. Box 1087
91010 Jerusalem

Dear Mr. Weiner,

Shalom!

I was very glad to receive the couple of pieces of documentation from your Justice Ministry -- the response to Amnesty International's 1991 annual report and the September 5 letter that Human Rights Director Tamar Gaulan was sending out to anyone who had written about IDF selctive conscientious objectors -- both of which turned up in my mail yesterday. It's always good for me to be familiar with the positions the Israeli government takes on such issues. You know quite well that I take my own view of these things, that I'm really not trying to pick quarrels with Israeli positions, but don't always come up with the same views as these. I do at least recognise it when various groups come searching for the chinks in Israel's moral armor, and I know that the government of Israel has to respond in kind.

But most of all I was happy to hear again from you, even without any covering letter from yourself. I'd been afraid I was put in Coventry since my last letter to Mr. Shamir, of June 20th. It's always very clear to me when I write such things that they are painful, and I understand that it is often just beyond doing to respond to particular uncomfortable points that one doesn't want to accept publicly but also may not want to dispute, as they come close to the bone. My purpose in such a letter is to set people to serious thinking. I would hope you notice that, when I raise distressing matters of that sort, things that I thoroughly believe and worry about but which I know are hot buttons if they were to become part of the public discourse, I write them to Mr. Shamir but do not inject them into the public forum.

It might interest you to know that I wrote an equally plain-spoken letter to Mr. Arafat not long after the one to Mr. Shamir (on July 16th), and received back a three-page letter of soul-searching from Mr. Arafat himself dated September 1st. That is different from my normal experience with him. I have visited and talked with him several times since 1985, written frequently, and always rather drastically, and normally get the reflection of these contacts in a conversation with his nephew, Dr. Nasser al-Kidwa, nowadays the head of their Observer Delegation

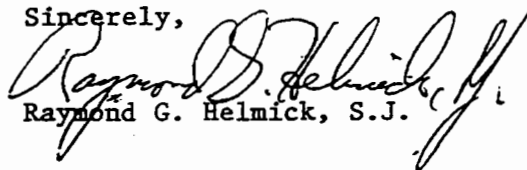
Mr. Justus Weiner, Oct. 16, '91 -- 2

at the U.N. This is the first time I have had a letter back directly from Mr. Arafat. There were defensive passages, of course, and he did not, in that letter, announce that he was going to take up any of the things I proposed. I understood well enough that any such announcements should not be in a letter to me, but in a public statement. But his letter was some evidence of his taking the points seriously. I got a copy of it right off to our Administration in Washington without otherwise publicizing it.

The things I wrote to Mr. Shamir in June have, I find, been the substance of relations among Israel, the U.S., and the various Arab parties to the efforts at a peace settlement, in the several months since. I do read of Mr. Shamir periodically saying precisely the things that alarm me most, as I explained in that letter, and I do in fact understand how it may be necessary for him to take these public positions without my attributing to him the consequences of which I warn, but which I see as the objectives of his enemies on the Israeli Right. I'd like to emphasize here, among all the things I raised in my two letters to Mr. Shamir, my thoughts on what Israel really needs to do to ensure the future right of Jews to live in Judea and Samaria: namely to provide that whatever border comes eventually out of negotiations and a properly guaranteed settlement of the conflict, it must be an open border, that enables both Jews to live in Judea and Samaria and Palestinians to live in parts of Israel, each with their own chosen citizenship but under the laws of the territory in which they choose to live, and with ample provision, guaranteed, that this will not be in such numbers as to threaten the demographic integrity of either territory. That, to my mind, is among the most important things I have had to say there.

My best wishes, to you and to Mr. Shamir. I well understand the sense of apprehension with which you in Israel approach the conference and the consequent peace effort from which we all, also, derive such hope. I think my Christian prayers count too. They are with you, as they are with the other parties to these efforts, and they are for your peace, your permanent safety, and for happy and productive relations between you and your neighbors.

Sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



STATE OF ISRAEL
MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

Salah-a-Din Street, 29
P.O. Box 1087
91010 Jerusalem

Telephone (02) 708-537
Facsimile (02) 869-473

JUSTUS WEINER, Adv.
Director, Department
of American Law and
External Relations

December 2, 1991
File 164.1H

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.
Jesuit Community
Boston College
Chesnut Hill, Mass. 02167
U.S.A.

Dear Father Helmick,

Thank you for your letter of 16 October 1991 and for expressing your views regarding the disposition of the administered areas in a possible peace settlement. Your concern and discretion in these matters is greatly appreciated. As you know, however, the Human Rights Rights Department of the Ministry of Justice deals exclusively with investigations of factual and legal matters. The peace negotiations and related political issues fall beyond the scope of our jurisdiction.

Again, thank you for sharing your views with me. I do look forward to meeting with you during your next visit to Jerusalem.

Wishing you a happy holiday season,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Justus Weiner'.
Justus Weiner

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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

March 6, 1992

Mr. Michael Shiloh
Embassy of Israel
3514 International Drive, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008

Dear Michael,

Shalom!

It was good to see you again after all these years, as I came by the Embassy with my friends in the Interreligious Committee. I've missed having you as Consul General here in Boston, having felt while you were here that I could always speak with you with the greatest confidence.

I am enclosing here, as I promised, copies of the letters I have sent to Mr. Shamir. Mr. Justus Weiner of the Justice Ministry has handled the answering to these on Mr. Shamir's behalf, understandably not taking positions on any of the points I raise but simply encouraging me to keep writing and suggesting that we talk when I next visit Israel. I very nearly did that last year, in company with Professor Richard Schwartz (who was with us the day I saw you last week), but the time we had projected for the visit was the last days of the Gulf War, and the logistics of travel just overcame our efforts, as I spell out in the second letter.

Our visit to you at the Embassy was very encouraging. We had heard, from the Arab delegations to the talks, their impression that Israel was not seriously negotiating, but simply marking time. It would not, in fact, seriously shock or scandalize me if that were, at least for the present, the case, since you have an election on in Israel, which has everything to do with these talks. But I was very positively impressed with the people to whom you introduced us, Mr. David Sultan, Colonel Ahaz Ben-Ari and Dr. Yehoyada Hiam, as well as Mr. Granot of your Embassy. Much of my impression was of their sense that these negotiations were not a matter of going through motions, or a venture into simple uncertainty, but were the culmination of each of their lives, the thing they had hoped to do all their working lives, and something they had every intention of bringing to a successful conclusion, however long it would take. They have my great admiration, and my prayers, for that purpose.

Especially interesting to me was David Sultan's comment, in the context of what he saw as Palestinian efforts to build full sovereignty into the fabric of their autonomy proposal, that Israel did not make a sovereignty claim over these territories -- would in fact have annexed them if it believed it held sovereignty over them -- any more than it recognized a Palestinian or Arab or other claim to

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Mr. Michael Shiloh, March 6, '92 -- 2

sovereignty over them, but instead regarded these as disputed territories, and did not mean the form of authority proposed for them in the Israeli proposal to determine that sovereignty question. I observed that I found this consistent with what I have heard in the major addresses of record that Mr. Shamir has made, as at the Madrid conference and while he was visiting the U.S., in which he had carefully avoided closing doors on these questions, however preemptively he may speak in more popular statements elsewhere.

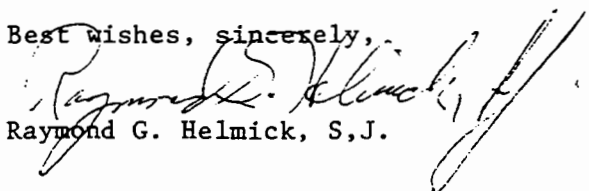
It was also interesting to hear, after we had heard the Palestinians speak of their frustration over the question of elections, that Palestinian elections were not unwelcome to Israel. I note the reports in today's news of how the Palestinian delegation received something of a spanking from U.S. State Department spokesmen for what was called their "posturing," efforts to build the final resolution into the preliminary steps, particularly the election of a full Parliament with powers over all pertinent matters. I will surely be writing to the Palestinians myself on this point. It seems to me that it is in fact in the interest of Israel as well as of the Palestinians that there should be elections. The Israeli rejection of the elections as proposed represent an interest, on the part of Israel, in not conceding the sovereignty question that appears to be subsumed in the Palestinian proposal. It would seem to me that the Palestinians, in order to have the election of representatives whose legitimacy is beyond any question, would do well to propose their election in a form that did not subsume these other disputed matters, however much it is their intention to pursue those further objectives in the further course of negotiations.

I do have much sympathy with the Palestinian delegation's feeling that it is being precluded from communicating with its own constituency at home. Other than to try to subvert the whole process by discrediting those Palestinians who seek to negotiate peace, which I hope is not an Israeli objective, it would seem to be in Israel's interest to let the peace delegation communicate with its people and build a serious constituency among them for peace. I don't see it as legitimate for Israel to try, by consorship, to prevent them from propagandizing their positions in the negotiation, though I concede the need to prevent promotion of violence. That seems altogether remote from what this Palestinian delegation is doing.

I was disappointed, too, that we were told, at that meeting, that Israel "had hard evidence" that the attack on the Israeli soldiers in Galilee had been the work of Fatah, with outside authorization. I don't doubt that that is what you yourselves were being told from home base, but it turns out not to be true at all. That is the more disturbing in that the assertion of it was the occasion for a most violent Israeli response against parties unrelated to those who actually carried out that assault, a violent response that came close to undermining the whole process of these peace negotiations.

My main impressions, though, are the very heartening ones I carried away from our conversation with you and the members of the negotiating team. I hope I may see much more of you as this process goes on, and would welcome having you here at Boston College on occasion to comment on it.

Best wishes, sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

March 23, 1992

Dr. Nasser al-Kidwa
Head of Mission
Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine
to the United Nations
115 East 65th Street
New York, N.Y. 10021

Dear Dr. al-Kidwa,

I was anxious to get in touch with you just before our Interreligious Committee group had the series of meetings in Washington last month of which I enclose a report. I had hoped to be able to see you while driving down to Washington. Ron Young may well have sent you a copy of this report already, but I wanted to be sure you had seen it.

Normally I find myself writing directly to your uncle, President Arafat, and stopping in to see you in the course of transmitting the letter. This time I think I should be addressing you on both the two matters I want to take up, with the confidence that you will let President Arafat know of our exchange.

The first topic I wanted to raise with you is the matter of the lapsed direct U.S.-P.L.O. conversations. I had been down to Washington with many of the same Interreligious Committee people a bit earlier, either in November or December as I recall, and we had a meeting with Dan Kurtzer of the State Department -- Dan was also present through most of the February 25 meeting reported here with Edward Djerejian. I do find Dan Kurtzer a very helpful person in these matters, but he was at his most unhelpful in that November meeting when it came to U.S. relations with the P.L.O. The formula he used was a familiar one, that the P.L.O. knew perfectly well what it had to do to restore the dialogue with the U.S. I've heard that so often, during the years we were striving for the original (1988) establishment of that dialogue, and my perception had always been that the P.L.O. could in fact never be quite sure: that even when it thought it had the main outlines of what the U.S. would find acceptable it feared it would be told any initiative on its part was somehow insufficient, that "you didn't say it right." And I well remember those last days before the breakthrough to the dialogue, when President Arafat was in Geneva at the U.N. meeting, and the phone lines were buzzing as Sweden's Foreign Minister tried to get from the U.S. State Department the magic words that would be considered an acceptable formula. It didn't seem very promising to me, at that November meeting, to try to get the authentic formula without first having a conversation with you, to hear from you what your understanding was, what priority this had with the P.L.O., and whether you had any confidence that the dialogue would be resumed if you worked at it.

Dr. Nasser al-Kidwa, March 23, '92 -- 2

I had thought our February meeting with Mr. Djerejian might have been the right time to take that matter up, starting from a citation of what Dan Kurtzer had said in November, and it was for that reason that I wanted to see you beforehand. It might also just not have been the right occasion, as I would have had to contend with the possibility of other members of our delegation breaking in with other outlooks, or changing the subject or otherwise blunting the question. I would like now, though, to write to Djerejian and raise the subject in a concentrated way. I may well need to make the trip to New York first and have a good solid discussion with you before I do that.

At any rate, the subject did come up again in the February meeting with Djerejian, and I held back from entering into it at all. It was in this form: what Ron Young includes as a separate page of "'Talking Points' on Prospects of Peace...", with its list of "Examples of trust building measures," actually represents part of the conversation with Djerejian and Dan Kurtzer, including their suggestion -- it was Djerejian who brought this up as something he would hope for -- of "Palestinian leaders calling for an end to violence related to the Intifada." Djerejian went through that with some detail, acknowledging that only a call by Palestinian leaders for such action was feasible, as no one could expect the leadership to have control over every frustrated or excited Palestinian. I would have liked, at that point, to bring up the question: what Palestinian leadership was he talking about, since it was clear to me that the only Palestinian leadership that could do such a thing effectively was the P.L.O., and it was in that sense that I saw Djerejian wish for this as a trust-building measure bringing up again the question of U.S.-P.L.O. relations and dialogue. I postponed doing that until after I should have had the chance to talk with you.

The matter of calling for an end to violence in the Intifada, I take it, would raise no problems for the P.L.O. It has, from the beginning, been the non-violent character of the Intifada that has given it its special value. Israelis used to complain that the throwing of stones was itself violence, but it was always clear enough to them that the substitution of stones, and of course demonstrations and civil disobedience of a non-violent kind, instead of bombings, armed attacks and hijackings, was a substitution of non-violent (at least comparatively) for violent protest. And it was clear, too, that while the Israeli military was able to stop any military attack any Arabs might bring against them, they were from the beginning altogether helpless against the Intifada, precisely because of that non-violent character. Much has happened since, to the advantage and the disadvantage of the Palestinians, but for the P.L.O. it has been a major worry, with the frustrations that grew among people in the Occupied Territories, actual armed violence, whether against Israelis or against Palestinians suspected of collaboration, has been growing, to the discredit of the Intifada, and actually to the glee of those Israelis who wanted to see the Intifada fail. None of that helps the Palestinian cause, as the P.L.O. well knows. A call for the removal of violence from the Intifada should be a feasible enough thing, especially if it would be seen by the State Department as a substantive confidence-building measure, and I would like to see it used as an effective opener of the question of restoring the U.S.-P.L.O. dialogue, since no one other than the P.L.O. could credibly make that call.

I'm sure you won't be shocked if I say that I would find it quite intelligible if the State Department were quite satisfied not to have any dialogue with the P.L.O.

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Dr. Nasser al-Kidwa, March 23, '92 -- 3

at the present time. They have their peace negotiations going, with both Israeli and Palestinian participation, without the P.L.O. as recognized formal partner. They have a number of heads of serious quarrel with the Israeli government, which U.S. officials must be seeing with some alarm right now, as that situation looks to be blowing up without their full control. They have much to lose by raising an additional crisis between themselves and Israel, and would have to fear that their restoring the dialogue with the P.L.O., for whatever satisfactory or unsatisfactory reasons, might give the Israelis the excuse to walk out of the negotiations. (They would do that, of course, only if they wanted to for other reasons, and would have to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of it. It would surely affect their electoral politics, and perhaps American electoral politics.) So it may be that Dan Kurtzer's November observation that the P.L.O. knows perfectly well what it has to do to restore the dialogue means that the U.S. simply sees no good coming from a restoration of the dialogue at this time. I'd like to see the question raised, quite realistically, in those terms, and would be happy to put it to Edward Djerejian in a letter, and follow-up meeting, if I could be sure that would not be seen as a nuisance by the P.L.O. As for yourselves, I need to know what, if any, priority it has with the P.L.O. to be formally in dialogue with the U.S. government as these negotiations go on. I see some advantages and some disadvantages to you in having the negotiations in the form they take at present, advantages very obviously in the P.L.O.'s taking its proper seat in the negotiations -- which is a question not only about the American stance but also about the Israeli -- and of course great disadvantages for the P.L.O. if it were to seek a restoration of the dialogue and be rebuffed. We need to talk about this. I have the opening to raise the question, and have to know whether it is right to do so at this time or not.

There is a second, quite different, matter I wanted to raise with you. As the Washington negotiations went through their February stage there were both Palestinian and Israeli formulas proposed for the interim autonomy regime. Both sides, I think, set their positions plainly and honestly enough. The Israelis set a procedure that would recognize no authority as coming from the Palestinian people, only a source of authority, as David Sultan put it in our meeting (report, p. 9), "the same as it is today, i.e., the government of Israel." The Palestinian formula looked for elections, of a Palestinian deliberative body and of officials, that would effectively establish that the source of authority in the Palestinian territories was the Palestinian people themselves, -- in Israeli eyes, a claim to sovereignty.

I must say that I was positively impressed by David Sultan and the other members we met from the Israeli delegation. I understand that it may well be the Israeli government's policy to maintain these negotiations in being now without allowing them to go anywhere, and that doesn't even shock me for the present, since they do have an election coming up. But these Israeli negotiators did persuasively represent themselves as prepared to work, through the long haul, for a genuine resolution. It was I who raised the observation that Prime Minister Shamir, for all the claims he makes in popular speeches to Israeli audiences that he will never return any territory, had carefully refrained in his major statements, as at Madrid and in his speeches in the U.S., from closing any doors in the matter of return of territory. Sultan had confirmed that, and recognized the equation between that

Dr. Nasser al-Kidwa, March 23, '92 -- 4

that careful restraint on Shamir's part and his own observation that Israel did not make a sovereignty claim on the Occupied Territories, nor recognize a prior Palestinian sovereignty claim to them, but regarded them as "disputed territories" (with his remark that "If Israel already claimed sovereignty, we could have annexed the territories.")

I see an opening in that, which I would like to recommend that the Palestinian negotiators exploit in their next session. I have this understanding of the process of negotiation, that one should separate the holding of positions from the pursuit of interests. It is certainly the position of the Palestinians that they should -- ultimately -- have an independent state with sovereignty over its territory. I see no reason to retreat from that position, but the prior granting of it need not be made a condition for agreement on preliminary steps. The Palestinians have, here and now, a very strong interest in holding elections, and so demonstrating to the world, to the Israelis and to themselves, the full legitimacy of their leadership. (This is something I urged strongly to President Arafat in July of last year, and I have been delighted to see elections figure so prominently in Palestinian demands.) I think that the Palestinian delegation, in pursuit of that interest, should carefully recognize the Israeli interest in not, at the present time, allowing such elections to represent a real claim of sovereignty on the part of the Palestinians. The Palestinians, without concealing their eventual intention of vindicating their sovereignty, should be looking for ways to frame the demand for elections that do not make that claim to an already-recognized sovereignty: so as to enable the Israelis to permit the elections now.

It is my observation that the Palestinians have learned a great deal about the process of negotiating in recent years. Back in 1979, approximately the same autonomy regime was offered as is being discussed now -- then, as now, as an interim and not a permanent arrangement. There were many disadvantages to the proposal, for the Palestinians, at that time, even though more was on immediate offer then than now. With the advice of the other Arab states, the Palestinians then rejected the whole proposal, perhaps for many good reasons, but with the result, among others, that the number of settlers in the territories rose by a high multiple, that Lebanon was invaded, to the great detriment of the Palestinians as well as the Lebanese, etc. etc. Since that time, to my mind, the Palestinians have learned better how to negotiate such matters, and are now prepared to take what is offered and use that as a springing point for more. This is what I am recommending now, that in the matter of the holding of elections, the Palestinians find the way to accommodate their interest in having the elections to the Israeli interest in not (yet) having the fact of elections represent actual sovereignty. And I see this as involving no compromise whatever of the demand of the Palestinians for eventual recognition of their sovereignty.

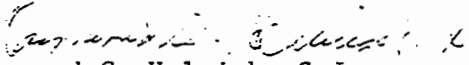
I should tell you that I have been preparing myself to write to President Assad of Syria. Syria has now, and recognizes, a strong interest in bringing these negotiations to a satisfying conclusion. But of all the negotiating parties, Syria has the least actual experience in dealing with such negotiations. I see them, now, as being about at the stage that the Palestinians were at in 1979, and needing and deserving help with the process of negotiation.

Dr. Nasser al-Kidwa, March 23, '92 -- 5

Those are the two subjects on which I need to talk with you. I would be very happy to make the trip down to New York and go over both these matters -- the U.S.-P.L.O. dialogue and the winning of Israeli consent to elections in the Occupied Territories -- at a time convenient to you. That should probably be after you have had a chance to refer this letter back to President Arafat. I send him my affectionate greetings, and I will call you in a week or so.

With all best wishes,

sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



January 27, 1993

His Excellency
Dr. Ahmed Esmat Abdel-Meguid
Secretary General
League of Arab States
Cairo, Egypt

Your Excellency,

Last month, on December 4th, you most graciously received a delegation of our United States Interreligious Committee for Peace in the Middle East, an organisation of Jews, Christians and Muslims from the United States, at your headquarters in Cairo. I took part in that delegation as a representative of the United States Catholic Conference, though that is not my ordinary position -- I am simply a Professor of Conflict Resolution studies -- and though in writing now I speak only for myself. Like the others in the delegation, I was very grateful for that opportunity to speak with you in an atmosphere of understanding and cooperation that, I believe, was without precedent between such a group and the Arab League.

You will recall that Rabbi Joseph Ehrenkranz of our delegation, who was already known to you from an earlier meeting, raised the question whether it might be possible to end or restrict the Arab economic boycott of Israel, an action that had been recommended by the U.S. State Department at the time in 1991 when the Madrid Conference was just in preparation, as a confidence-building measure directed at the Israelis. Your response, if I can summarise it, was that such an action should not be taken in isolation, without some equivalent confidence-building measure from the Israeli side; that a boycott was a legitimate instrument of international pressure, used on various occasions by the United States itself and by other countries, as well as the United Nations; that Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak had in fact, following suggestions from the United States, made the proposal in 1991 that Israel should end its settlement program in the occupied territories in exchange for an end to the Arab boycott, but had not had, from the Shamir government of Israel, so much as the courtesy of a reply to his proposal, while Israel had, under that government, pressed on with its settlement policy even more intensely.

I appreciated the reasonableness, thoroughness and candor of your reply, especially in the context of our meeting, in which you had made it so plain to us all how genuinely the Arab League and its members sought to promote the prospects of peace. You had left us in no doubt of that. Nevertheless, I approached you as we were leaving and suggested that it might yet be possible to find partial measures, intermediate steps, that might ameliorate the tensions and hard feelings that accompany the boycott, build some confidence and break the logjam that surrounds the issue. My observation has been that, under the new government of Mr. Rabin, Israel has in fact done much to restrict the settlement policy, though without, in fact, making any express link with the proposal of President Mubarak that this be paired off with Arab action on the boycott. Israel has actually stopped the beginning of new settlements or the expansion of old ones, though with the expressed reservation (not yet acted upon in any way) that it can start new settlements for "security," as opposed to "political," reasons. More important, it has ended the financial incentives that had brought most of the settlers to the occupied territories. These are substantial steps, which have certainly increased my confidence, and I believe the confidence of most interested Americans, that Israel will not try further the lay hold of the land, taking it away from the Palestinian population by means of settlements. I speak, of course, of increased confidence on this score, not of certainty.

Dr. Ahmed Esmat Abdel-Meguid, Jan. 27, '92 — 2

You quite rightly observed, when I spoke to you, that Israel has not stopped the building of settlements, and this accorded entirely with what we had been hearing from Palestinians during our visit to Jerusalem, that they still saw unabated building activity going on in the occupied territories, and that the government's announcements had not encouraged them in view of what they could actually see on the ground. I was very conscious, though, of what we had been hearing from Israeli observers, even those most committed to the establishment of peace, that they believed the process of settlement-building was in fact winding down, that nothing new would happen after the completion of what had already been started (however much ambiguity there continues to be about what constitutes a "start"), and that the removal of the financial incentives had already meant that much already existing settlement housing remained vacant because of a reluctance of ordinary non-ideological Israelis to move in. We had been hearing, too, from Israelis in government and those most closely committed to the negotiation process, of their belief that Mr. Rabin and his government were genuinely intent on reaching the peace. That was exactly the condition in which I felt it was possible to take *partial steps* regarding the boycott, in express response to the partial steps that Israel had taken with regard to the settlements.

I promised you then, on the steps in front of your headquarters, that I would write to you on this matter. I have hesitated to do so since, for the reason that Israel has put itself so much in the wrong, in the matter of the deportation of the more than 400 Palestinians into Lebanese territory that is effectively controlled by Israeli occupation forces, that I felt this was a bad time to expect any such action as I was recommending from the Arab countries. Nonetheless, I had promised you a letter and felt I should now write it.

May I propose this in terms of an historical analogy. During the famous Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 the Kennedy administration in the United States received, at one point, two incompatible communications from the authorities of the Soviet Union, one of them a very conciliatory approach brought, by a Soviet Embassy official, through the informal channel of an American journalist, the second a near ultimatum communicated much more formally by cable through the Embassy. President Kennedy and his advisers, wanting very much to de-escalate the crisis and having a conciliatory response to the first message already prepared, were confronted with a dilemma when faced with this second communication, in which they could clearly discern the pressure being brought by Soviet hard-liners on a more positively disposed Secretary-General Krushchev. It was then that President Kennedy's brother Robert suggested that they simply respond to the first message as if the second had never been sent. This was done, and it was the turning point that eventually defused the crisis.

I take it as a given that the countries of the Arab League are looking for ways to promote the peace, and are in consternation at this ill-considered Israeli action — the deportations — that has created such an unnecessary added obstacle to it. My suggestion is that you take a partial step in the matter of the boycott, doing so expressly as a response to the partial but significant Israeli steps in the matter of settlements, and that you make it clear that this constitutes no derogation from your rejection of the deportations but is intended as a confidence-building measure and roadblock-breaker for the whole process of the quest for peace.

I acknowledge your argument that a boycott is a legitimate instrument of international pressure where there has been a breach of law by a nation. I hear American officials objecting that, while this can be true of a primary boycott, it does not legitimate secondary and tertiary boycotts. Those are legal technicalities that are not my immediate concern. I am more interested in the atmosphere of good or bad feeling that is generated by the action, and the use of the situation to create confidence when that building of confidence is clearly the intention of the parties.

Dr. Ahmed Esmat Abdel-Meguid, Jan. 27, '93 -- 3

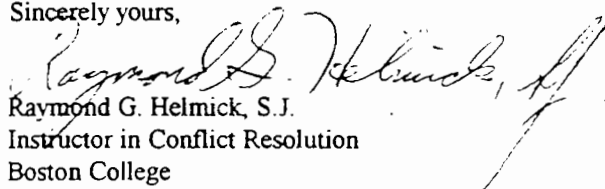
My recommendation is that the Arab countries might take their action -- partial step -- in the one area where the boycott gives the impression of simple anti-Jewish animus or hatred, namely the existing extension of the boycott to Jewish companies or Jewish-controlled entities outside of Israel. If this element of the boycott were rescinded, expressly in response to what the current Israeli government has done so far to restrict the building of settlements, I believe it would have the maximum confidence-building effect.

I would not claim that this is the only partial step that could be taken to restrict the boycott or ameliorate the hard feelings it creates. In fact, since the day I spoke to you in Cairo, I have been at pains to think of other partial steps that could be taken. But this one is of particular psychological importance, and I believe it would achieve the greatest amount of good will of any step I could think of in the context of the boycott.

Since it is a partial step, too, though psychologically important, and leaves the basic structure of the boycott intact -- for later partial steps --, it makes it possible to call on Israel to take some further action to widen the confidence-building effect of this action by the Arab League, freeing up areas of interaction that, so far, have been paralyzed.

I truly commend this suggestion to you, confident in your desire to find ways through all the obstacles that impede the peace. I will send copies of this letter to U.S. Ambassador Pelletreau there in Cairo, to whom I promised it, to the new Administration in Washington, to the U.S. Catholic Conference, to Rabbi Ehrenkranz and others of my friends in the Interreligious Committee delegation that you so graciously received. With the deepest respect and good wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,



Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.
Instructor in Conflict Resolution
Boston College

Senior Associate
Conflict Analysis Center
Washington, D.C.



January 27, 1993

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin
The Knesset
Jerusalem, Israel

Dear Prime Minister Rabin,

Shalom!

It concerns me greatly to see the dilemma in which you find yourself as a result of the deportation order against the more than 400 Hamas and Islamic Jihad Palestinians who have been these many weeks spectacularly encamped between the lines of effective Israeli and Lebanese control in Southern Lebanon. I take it as a given that Israel, under your government, is genuinely committed to seeking peace with the Arab states about you, for which a peaceful agreement with the Palestinians is a prerequisite, and that this is simply not seriously to be questioned. I find that this affair of the deportees is much more an obstacle to the achievement of the peace, and to the process of negotiation, than your government has been prepared to acknowledge in public, though I expect you understand this increasingly well in fact. I would like to be helpful in your need to find a way through this roadblock. I was in the habit of writing to your predecessor, Mr. Shamir, and have for some years maintained a regular contact with Mr. Arafat, urging on him, over a period of several years leading up to 1988, the acceptance of the three well known preconditions for dialogue with the U.S. and, we hoped, with Israel itself.

Just during early December I was in Israel and several other Middle Eastern countries, as part of a delegation of the United States Interreligious Committee for Peace in the Middle East, an organisation of American Jews, Christians and Muslims seeking, together, to promote the peace. I took part in that delegation as representative of the United States Catholic Conference, although I am not a part of the ordinary staff of the U.S. bishops. My normal work is as a Professor of Conflict Resolution studies, and in writing now I speak only for myself.

Like the rest of the delegation, I came away with the conviction that those we had seen — Israelis, Palestinians, Egyptians, Jordanians and Syrians — were truly intent on achieving the peace and convinced, each from their own interests, that success in this enterprise was indispensable; all, similarly, experiencing great frustration in the search, the gravest single impasse existing between Israel and the Palestinians; and all expressing in similar terms the hope that the United States, under the new Clinton Administration, would take an active mediating role at problem moments in the negotiation. This readiness for U.S. mediation was no surprise when it came from the Arab parties, but was distinctly new coming, as we heard it in our December 1 meeting with Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin, from Israeli spokesmen. We had in fact already noted that readiness in the letter your Ambassador to the United Nations, Gad Yaakobi, had published in *The New York Times* on November 20th. We were still in Jerusalem on the 9th December anniversary of the *intifadah* and the following day, and so were there at the time of most of the killings of Israeli soldiers, though not of the Hamas kidnapping/murder of young Toledano. By the time we organised a press conference some days after our return, all perceptions of the situation were colored by the event of the deportations, and we were at pains to express our horror of these killings as well as our chagrin at the deportations.

Prime Minister Rabin, Jan. 27, '93 -- 2

Those deportations put Israel distressingly in the wrong. My own appraisal is so very negative that I must explain first that what I say here is not meant to be hurtful. The reasons for my negative judgment have to be explained. I find this is bad policy, and bad news for Israel. It is in search of Israel's actual interest, which is the peace, and which I do wish you, that I write.

I have seen your own comments deploring what you see as Mr. Boutros Ghali's one-sidedness in pressing for Israel's conformity to the Security Council's resolution in the matter without including a simultaneous condemnation of Hamas terrorism, and I have read, just in this morning's *New York Times*, Ehud Yaari's disquisition on the lines of command in the Hamas structure that had been disrupted by the deportations (surely only very temporarily, as you must know). I am unimpressed. Hamas, and its companion Islamic Jihad, are indeed sinister and basically negative organisations. That Hamas should make pretension to represent Islamic faith I can recognize only as effrontery and a libel on Islam itself, which it misrepresents as a hate creed. The murders you profess to be punishing are indeed heinous actions, particularly the brutal killing of Toledano when he was a prisoner and helpless. But the people you have rounded up and deported are not the killers of Toledano or of any of the others (unless you may have caught up one of them by accident). You have people whom you are punishing for their thoughts and their words, and as repulsive as those thoughts and words may be, this is not the behavior of a civilized nation. If you knew the identities of actual killers, you would certainly not have deported them. The appropriate response would be to imprison them and bring them to trial. It is really not any impressive show of the prowess of Israeli intelligence activity if you do not know who are the actual killers. Possibly you do, but have chosen, for some other reasons, to go another route.

If these people are the conspiratorial fomenters of subversion, as they may well be, you have every means at hand to intern them, with or without charge or trial, as Israel has not hesitated to do with others numbering in the many thousands. It is altogether unpersuasive to argue that terrorism and its organisation have been set back by the deportation. Any relief of that sort is ephemeral, and if in the interim since the deportations there are fewer violent episodes, it is because Hamas hardly needs them now. Their victory is the propaganda advantage you have handed to them. Further killings, beyond the one they carried out to show that you had not stopped them, would simply be distractions from their much photographed and reported life as hero-victims in the picturesque wilderness you have assigned them. These are not bumpkins that you have dumped in this ever-so-accessible corner of Lebanon. They are lawyers, physicians, journalists, professors who know very well how to milk every bit of propaganda value from the martyrdom situation you have so guilelessly presented to them.

But what is at stake here is Israel's reputation. The deportations confirm a judgment on Israel so commonplace as to be a stereotype, that it is a nation contemptuous of law and hence in no way to be trusted in international affairs. That is in fact the opinion, perhaps a biased opinion of your enemies, but the genuine and despairing opinion of those who are trying to negotiate the peace with you. Trust, of even the most basic sort, is the casualty of this proceeding, and without that any effort at the negotiating of a peace is rendered impotent for all participants, yourselves and them.

I hear you saying, again, that to bring the deportees back to Israel would be an unacceptable triumph for Hamas. Once more, I think you are deceiving yourselves out of a wish that there were some justifying reason for your action. The triumph of Hamas is in every day that they spend on their desolate hillside, before the cameras and the microphones, suffering ever so delicately but so publicly. Israel is losing every moment that this goes on. A return of the deportees to Israel or the Occupied Territories would indeed give them a couple of days of increased publicity to glory in, but then the issue would be over, and their publicity advantage would evaporate in a matter of days, as surely as it would have if, as you had apparently calculated, they had disappeared into Lebanon on the day of their expulsion.

Prime Minister Rabin, Jan. 27, '93 -- 3

In the background to this is the fact that Hamas is, to a great extent, the creation of Israeli policy, not only in the sense that it grows on frustration over the delays and disappointments of negotiation and the long ordeal of the Palestinians, but in the sense also that Israeli governments of both major parties have always looked for some Palestinian leadership other than the PLO that they can talk to as alternative (and Israeli-created) seeming representatives of the Palestinians. Turning to the most regressive, least enlightened of the Muslim clerics has not been the first Israeli effort of this sort, but by fostering and even subsidising their growth in power over a period of years, Israeli governments have given birth to the monster that now confronts you.

As for the Palestinians who are actually trying to negotiate the peace, for whose advantage you claim to have undertaken this policy, they are rendered unable to carry on the negotiations so long as this exhibition of Israeli disregard for law continues. It is clear that they are the PLO and that it is the PLO that seeks a peace settlement. That it is they, the PLO, may in fact cause you to have less confidence than you otherwise would in the good faith of the Palestinians who are negotiating with you. Out of my own many years of talking with the PLO leadership, I do in fact have the confidence you lack that they genuinely intend a lasting peace, and that they are not masking plans for the destruction of Israel behind their efforts for the peace. Up to the time that Hamas became so important a force among the most frustrated of the Palestinians, the PLO could truly claim to be the representatives of the Palestinian people recognized and accepted by the overwhelming majority, both within the Occupied Territories and in their diaspora. Hamas, representing the most ugly and regressive side of Palestinian hurt, was accumulating only negatives through their whole early-December rampage of murders. They were discrediting themselves among Palestinians. You, by deporting them, have reversed this course and made them appear to be the true representatives of Palestinians in their oppression. If now the Palestinian negotiators -- the PLO -- were to continue the negotiations without a reversal of those deportations, they could only discredit themselves with their own Palestinian public, and lose at last their representative standing.

I can't believe that you have quite understood the light in which these deportations are seen by the Palestinian population. If Israel can deport 400, as many have said, why not 4,000, or 40,000? Just as the true face of Israeli nightmares is the Holocaust, this is the basic dread of Palestinians. They have their horrible memories of mass flight and deportation in 1948, in 1967. They have been listening for years to the Meir Kahanes, the Ariel Sharons, the Rafael Eitans and the General Zeevis. They have seen those among the ideological settlers who casually murder Palestinians time after time and never suffer any penalty for it. And they know that behind the glib euphemism of "transfer," so often heard and recommended as the proper Israeli policy toward them, lies the threat and the clear intention of genocidal crime. There has been genuine desire, among all the Palestinians committed to peace with the State of Israel -- and through the leadership of the PLO, that has become a significantly large majority opinion --, to believe that your government meant the opportunity for a genuine peace. Nothing you could have done was more calculated to rouse the most basic fears and distrust of the whole Palestinian population than this deportation, understood as the foretaste of the mass forced expulsion that, they believe, the most sinister of Israeli forces holds in store for them. Any leadership of the Palestinians that accepts that prospect, or that agrees to deal with the perpetrators of such a deportation, simply forfeits its right to speak for them. Those with whom you have been negotiating cannot do that.

The only single positive result of your deportation action, a side effect, has been that the PLO and Hamas have been forced to make common front against this action. That has entailed an effort at a common position on other matters, and it is the PLO that has not blinked. It has not retreated at all from its intention to pursue the effort to establish peace with the State of Israel, and it is Hamas instead that has had to back off its adamant refusal to see any merit in the attempt at peace. That may be lip service only, but at least it is the proponents of hate who have had to flinch, rather than the proponents of peace.

Prime Minister Rabin, Jan. 27, '93 -- 4

One further negative element remains in this deportation policy, and this I have to mention if my critique of the action is to be serious, even if it offends you, as I do not wish to do. The quality of your leadership in this instance, which you have proclaimed to be strong, has instead been weak. You have given your people the politics of temper tantrum. As a way of expressing pique, you have done something that strengthened rather than weakened your enemies and undermined the genuine purpose of your government and the interests of Israel. You have done this in order to accede to the most intemperate emotions among the Israeli public, to curry favor over the most unreasoning of their demands, following them into their panic and fostering it. This is weakness rather than strength in a leader. That the public itself should have responded to such stimuli revealed its own moment of greatest weakness, and least capacity to achieve the peace that Israel needs as much as anyone does. That was the time for stronger leadership that would have overcome this weakness in the public, and you failed to provide it.

I don't believe that this sign of weakness is characteristic either of yourself or of the Israeli public. It is aberration in both. But at a critical moment both you and they failed. The Israeli public has since been coming to its senses more rapidly than you, and recognizing the danger into which this ill-considered action has thrust Israel in its quest for peace.

By the time this letter reaches you the Israeli Supreme Court may likely already have rendered its decision on whether the deportation was legal in Israeli terms. I truly hope they will have decided against the deportation and ordered you to retract the order, as I see it as the most decent escape you have from an action that has damaged you and your country in your capacity to achieve your true objective of peace. I note the statements you have already made that you will obey the orders of the Court if they should make that demand. That would be far preferable to having to submit to the judgment of outsiders, of the Security Council, of international opinion. But what will you do if the Supreme Court endorses the deportation? For my part, I would take that as a sign that the Court lacks genuine independence in such matters, which would be a shame to Israel, and I know I would not be alone in that opinion. You would be left in your dilemma, and would eventually have to choose between the peace and your temper tantrum. I would hope that, in those circumstances, you would have the presence of mind to celebrate your Court "victory" by clemency, and would, in as quick a time as possible, end the crisis by bringing the deportees back into Israel. You could explain it as a humanitarian gesture, a refusal to leave the deportees on their barren hillside in face of Lebanese intransigence about receiving them, even though, in my own opinion, the Lebanese would be wrong to receive them under these circumstances. You could intern them or even formally charge them with subversive planning of the terrorist campaign. There would be objections if they were handled, as through internment, without due process, but no one would see this as the foreshadowing of a "transfer" campaign, and the crisis would be past.

I have heard suggestions, coming from the Meretz camp, that the initiation of direct talks between the government and the PLO be used as a way to get past this crisis without readmitting the deportees. I urge you not to attempt such a solution, as it would necessarily fail.

I do in fact believe that your government should be negotiating with the PLO. When, during the visit to the region by our Interreligious Committee last month, one of our American Muslim members asked Yossi Beilin why the government did not do that, his response was that the rules for the talks had not been arranged by your government, that they were already in existence when you came to power and were working. Consequently, do not ask this government to change them.

I appreciate the force of that argument, and discussed it at some length with one of the most discerning of the rabbis in our group, who himself was very dubious about negotiating directly with the PLO. As I see it, the present arrangement, negotiating with a Palestinian team drawn from the Occupied Territories, has subtlety to it, in that it draws the resident population of Palestinians into the process. For

Prime Minister Rabin, Jan. 27, '93 — 5

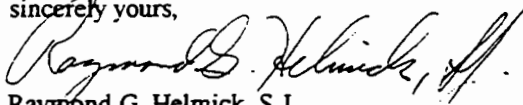
all the deference they pay to the PLO's exile leadership, and their regular consultations with it, they are in no way merely parrots, but are truly significant elements in the determination of Palestinian policy. What the arrangement fails to do is to represent reality. The Palestinians do in fact recognize the PLO as the legitimate expression of their national identity, and would even, were they to relinquish it, be without any such expression of their identity. People understand quite well that they could not afford that, and would be left naked to their enemies without the PLO. Having acquired the respect that I have for the PLO and its genuine quest for peace with the State of Israel, I would like to see the PLO publicly and explicitly a participant in the negotiations. At the same time, I would want to make sure that any change in the rules did not sacrifice the valuable subtlety of the present arrangement, and did not leave the resident population out.

Nevertheless, I urge strongly against any effort to make the admission of the PLO into the publicly recognized circle of the negotiations a substitute for reversing the deportation order. You would necessarily face rejection on that effort, and with that an avoidable further humiliation. I would be opposed to any effort to link the two matters, or for that matter to use the occasion of the deportation as a way of browbeating Israel into discussion with the PLO, an action which I think Israel should take on its merits, not as a consequence of such pressure.

Since you have been in charge of the government in Israel I have felt I should write to you, as I did to Mr. Shamir when he was in that position. I am sorry that the eventual occasion of my writing should be one that called for so censorious a tone. When I wrote to Mr. Shamir, it was in still more drastic terms, though motivated, as is this letter, by love of Israel and concern for its safety (as well as love and concern for the Palestinians too). Mr. Shamir did not respond in person, but always had someone else respond for him, in terms that took cognizance of the concerns I raised. I always admired the fact that he would be that open to very strenuous criticism, and felt that he, like Mr. Arafat too when he receives my letters, must have had to sit down and pour himself a good stiff drink before embarking on one of them. I regard you, with the deepest respect, as the man on whom Israel's hopes for peace must rest, and with whom they have their best prospects. You have my prayers, as well as any efforts I can make, for your success in that task.

With all best wishes, I am

sincerely yours,



Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.
Instructor in Conflict Resolution
Boston College



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

January 29, 1993

Mr. Thomas F. McClarty
Chief of Staff
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. McClarty,

Enclosed are copies of two letters I have just sent off, one to Mr. Ahmed Esmat Abdel-Meguid, the Secretary General of the Arab League on the subject of the Arab economic boycott of Israel, the other to Israeli Prime Minister Rabin about the deportation situation.

This kind of correspondence is something I have carried on for a long while, and I believe I should always keep the U.S. Administration well informed of it. Through Mr. Bush's years in the White House I always sent such things to his Chief of Staff, whether Mr. Sununu, Mr. Skinner or, eventually, Mr. Baker, all of whom shared them about among people in the White House or State Department who, they thought, should see them. I mentioned, in a letter to Mr. Martin Indyk, that I would be sending these things to you, and that I find myself a bit at loose ends as to how to communicate such things in the new Administration. On the basis of my previous habits, I thought it best to send them to you.

My best wishes to you and to Mr. Clinton and his Administration.

Sincerely,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

יועץ ראש הממשלה ומנהל הלשכה
Head of the Prime Minister's Bureau

14 February, 1993
Q.Dep2. (E)274

Mr. Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.
Instructor in Conflict Resolution
Jesuit Community, Boston College
Chestnut Hill
Massachusetts, U.S.A.

Dear Mr. Helmick,

On behalf of the Prime Minister, Mr. Yitzhak Rabin, thank you for your letter dated 27 January, 1993.

On February 1, 1993, the Cabinet of the Israeli Government adopted a motion to return approximately 100 of the 400 Hamas and Islamic Jihad activists expelled to Lebanon in December 1992, and to reduce by half the two-year term of temporary deportation for the remaining 300. The severity of the offences committed will determine the list of repatriates - each case to be investigated individually.

The Government of Israel agreed to these conditions as an act of good faith to the Government of the United States - which has been a key partner in the peace process - and to create an atmosphere of understanding with the new American administration.

Furthermore, Israel will carry out the directives of the Supreme Court for those remaining in temporary deportation. This includes access to an Attorney, the right of appeal before an advisory committee, and a review of security information regarding those who do not wish to appeal. Humanitarian provisions will be made available to deportees by helicopter, as required.

A negotiated peace with its neighbors remains Israel's primary objective. However, it will take whatever legal measures necessary against those who aim to prevent peace, destroy the State and endanger its citizens.

While continuing its fight against Hamas, the Islamic Jihad and all who preach violence, Israel will at the same time explore every avenue leading to peace and prosperity in this region.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "E. Haber".

Eitan Haber

108



League of Arab States
The Secretary General

1/289

15 FEB 1993

Mr. Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.
Instructor in Conflict Resolution
Boston College
MASS.

Dear Mr. Helmick,

I read with keen interest your letter of January 27th, 1993. I should like to praise your commitment to the search for peace in the Middle East. As you may be aware, the restrictions of the settlement policy on the part of the Israeli Government, as you indicated, would constitute a return to legal and expected norms of conduct within the framework of international law and the fourth Geneva Convention. Meanwhile the boycott remains a defensive legal instrument that many states resort to against others even if they are not in a state of war. For that reason I see that the two actions are not symmetrical.

However I believe, that focusing on the implementation of the pertinent Security Council resolutions, mainly Res. 242, 338, 425 and 799 in their totalities and on the establishment of a UN structure for the protection of civilians in the occupied Arab territories will ultimately boost the Peace Process.

Indeed achieving tangible progress in the latter will create a different environment in the Middle East and help eradicating the reasons behind the policies you mentioned.

I seize this opportunity to reiterate my appreciation for your genuine interest in a comprehensive peace in the Middle East; a goal which we share and which we hope we will reach for the benefits of all the peoples and the states in this part of the world.

Sincerely,

All the best

Dr. Ahmed Esmat Abdel Meguid
Secretary General
League of Arab States





February 22, 1993

President William J. Clinton
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Clinton,

It gives me great satisfaction, as one who works intently for peace in the Middle East, to see that you have made this the first foreign policy task of your Administration, both by your intervention in the matter of the Palestinian deportees and by Secretary of State Christopher's current visit to the region. A stable peace in that area is genuinely of importance to our own country and its major allies, quite apart from the needs of the peoples caught up in the conflict there. But since initiating a truly serious peace process in the Middle East was the most creditable single foreign policy accomplishment of the Bush Administration, the failure or abandonment of the process would be a damaging blow to the prestige of the United States. I note that Secretary of State Christopher has made the level of American attention to this process contingent on the seriousness of the participants. It sounds as though the responses he is hearing should be taken as encouraging.

I write now to probe the ground on the matter of the representation of the Palestinians, and in the course of that, necessarily, to comment a bit on the deportation issue. My interest in the Palestinians is in no way a partisan commitment to them and against the Israelis. One of the most solid lessons I have learned in many years of work with peoples in conflict is that the outsider, myself or any of us, can be the friend of both parties in a conflict. I find myself most intensely committed to the good of both Israelis and Palestinians, as well as the other Arab parties, in this one. I have been in close contact, through several visits and a long-running correspondence, with Mr. Yasser Arafat since 1985, and had a role in bringing about the U.S.-PLO dialogue that began in 1988. I also had a correspondence with Prime Minister Shamir, to which he responded always through a third party but with what I found admirable openness to a very critical but cordial view of his policies. You may know of the letter I sent on January 27 to Prime Minister Rabin, of which I sent a copy to Mr. McClarty. I have much admiration for Mr. Rabin, and accept, as do my Israeli friends, the sincerity of his intent to make peace with his Arab neighbors. I believe he blundered badly in ordering the December deportations of Palestinians, however unattractive the particular Palestinians he chose to deport, but I was sorry my first letter to him should be so negative.

Writing on January 29 to your new NSC officer Martin Indyk, I told him I intended to talk with Dr. Nasser al-Kidwa, head of the PLO Observer mission at the U.N., about the possibility, or lack of it, of renewing the direct U.S.-PLO dialogue that existed briefly after the end of 1988. My discussion with him had a context that I explained to Mr. Indyk and will review here. I wrote to Mr. Indyk that if I found reason for it after my talk with Dr. al-Kidwa, as I have, I would write directly to you.

Since I have taken this line before, approaching the then Reagan Administration on the subject of direct dialogue with the PLO, I know the taboos associated with it, and that it sounds to many American officials very much like proposing sin. I believe there is good reason to see advantage in such a dialogue, for us, for the Arabs and for the Israelis as well, and that there should not be an automatic emotional block against discussing it. In the course of a visit to the countries of the region last December I became very aware, especially through a meeting with Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin, both that there was advantage for Israel, as well as others, in breaking through the taboo on talking with the PLO, and

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that it would be critically difficult for Israel to do this on its own initiative. I discussed this with the several American Jewish, Christian and Muslim members of our delegation (Mr. Indyk has the material on that visit by a group of 24 of us, all U.S. citizens but a mix of Jews, Christians and Muslims, under the sponsorship of the U.S. Interreligious Committee for Peace in the Middle East). Some of them were dubious about the idea but gave it close attention. I have been doing my own exploring since, but keep consulting with my friends in the Interreligious Committee.

For a bit of clarity now, I'll break up this text with a few subtitles.

The Context.

A year ago last November, between the Madrid Conference and the first Washington session of the Middle East negotiations, when a delegation of us from the U.S. Interreligious Committee were talking to Mr. Dan Kurtzer at the State Department, he was asked by one of our members, not myself, about the renewal of the PLO dialogue. His response was to the effect that the PLO knew quite well what it had to do to reopen the dialogue. That got right to my antennae, of course, but I did not feel up to addressing it right away without first asking Dr. al-Kidwa, my normal contact with the Palestinians, what he or the PLO understood on that subject. I more or less assumed that Mr. Kurtzer was not ignorant of my own role in the 1988 opening of the dialogue, but not that he was fishing for a response.

From my own involvement with the question between 1985 and 1988, I doubted that the PLO would actually know what the United States might require to reopen that dialogue, since this had been the great question all through my own dealings with Mr. Arafat, in which I had always urged that he meet the famous three preconditions for dialogue between the PLO and the U.S. I had always found Arafat willing in principle to do this, but in doubt as to whether anything would follow from his doing it. He used to talk, at that time, of "playing his last card," referring to his worry that he might take this step and find that nothing followed. He spoke often, too, of a "game of striptease," in which he felt the U.S. (and of course Israel) kept demanding one concession after another from him, and when it was granted, as he felt many had been granted, would demand that he then take off (striptease) something else. Our American metaphor for this might be "moving the goalposts." I had an argument, which I brought to Arafat many times over, that I thought he was mistaken about the striptease: that while the goalposts might be moved over many matters, the U.S. had enunciated those three preconditions clearly and had not changed them over considerable periods of time.

I feel I have an advantage over our American officials, in that I have actually talked at length with Mr. Arafat, as they have not been allowed to; have been able to take his measure and understand his way of thinking and his concerns. Doing that has brought me to a great deal of respect for him, and the reality of his intention of making a lasting peace with the State of Israel. It interested me greatly to meet, during our group visit to Egypt last December, Mr. Pelletreau, with whom I was much impressed: the only U.S. official in these many years who has had a comparable opportunity to speak directly with a PLO official, though only at the level of Mr. Abed Rabbo.

One of my arguments to Arafat all that time was that, when once he "played his card" and established open dialogue with the U.S., he would have an entirely new hand of cards to play. But throughout this time the main question was always what the U.S., and what Israel, would do in response to each step, and that was genuinely an unknown quantity. I tried, over a period, to get the Vatican Secretariate of State to act as a clearing-house, using its good offices to let the parties be informed of this

sort of thing, but found, besides many allies in that enterprise, enough nervousness so that it didn't happen. When, at the end, an intermediary was still needed to do just that, the Swedish Foreign Ministry was enlisted for the purpose. Arafat, having made tentative statements in the direction of meeting the preconditions, first at the Harare Nonaligned Nations conference in 1986, and then at a Geneva NGO meeting in 1987, had become very discouraged at the American and Israeli responses he heard, which were basically that his statements were "nothing new." He persisted nonetheless, with Abu Iyad's and his own meetings in Stockholm with a delegation of American Jews, and then with his address to the special Geneva session of the General Assembly in 1988, only to be told each time: "You didn't say it right." For the final press conference in Geneva, the day after his address to the General Assembly, the time he actually persuaded President Reagan to order the start of the official dialogue, there had to be a telephone link from the State Department in Washington to the Swedish Foreign Minister and then on to him to dictate the actual verbal formula that he used.

I take that whole experience as a measure of how well it can be said that the PLO knows what it has to do to reopen the dialogue with the United States. All the same, when Mr. Kurtzer put the matter so at that November 1991 meeting, I took it to mean that there might well be circumstances under which the U.S. would be willing to reopen the dialogue, and told Dr. al-Kidwa as much. I was pretty doubtful about it, because, first, I was sure the Shamir government in Israel would be not only annoyed but outraged at the thought. Further, the Madrid and Washington talks were already getting under way with a different formula, to which the Palestinians had agreed, and it could have been overturned by such a change as this. Both of those considerations, I expected, would weigh more heavily than anything the PLO might or might not do. At that stage, then, it was a matter of going through the motions.

In February of last year I was back in Washington, again with a delegation of the U.S. Interreligious Committee, to see, over a couple of days, each of the negotiating teams, Arab and Israeli, to the conference. We had a State Department meeting, at the start of that, with Mr. Djerjian, at which Mr. Kurtzer was present, and once again the question of U.S.-PLO dialogue came up and was addressed in very much the same terms as Mr. Kurtzer had used the previous November. Twice I contacted Dr. al-Kidwa by phone, hoping to arrange a meeting at which I could ask him what the PLO actually believed would be the requirements for renewal of the dialogue. By chance, my two phone calls came, without my knowing it in advance, first on the day of Arafat's plane crash in the Libyan desert, and then on the day of his operation to relieve the pressure of the blood clot which the crash left in his head. Both times, consequently, the answer I got was that we would have to wait for the outcome of that day's events before discussing any such question. And then, once our American election campaign got well under way, I decided that nothing was likely to move in that quarter until a new Administration, yours, was in place here and the question could be looked at anew.

Now there is a genuinely new situation, created not only by your own coming into the Presidency but by the change of regime in Israel, from Mr. Shamir to Mr. Rabin, and by the actual state of the negotiations at this stage.

When, early last December (before the deportation crisis arose), our American Jewish-Christian-Muslim delegation met in Jerusalem with Mr. Yossi Beilin, one of our Muslim members asked why Israel did not now itself initiate direct contact and negotiation with the PLO, given the strong sentiment in favor of such a step among not only the Meretz Party but many Labor members as well. Mr. Beilin's answer was that the ground rules of the negotiations had been set up, not by this government, but by its predecessors; that all the Arabs, including the Palestinians, had agreed to them; that the system was in fact working; and so please do not ask this government to change the rules.

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That, to me, was a perfectly intelligible position. For Israel to take the initiative in this matter, whatever practical advantages it might have, would be a climb-down, and a political loss. It is also not a position for the Palestinians to insist on, since if they made this a condition it would be altogether obstructive to the negotiating process.

But Mr. Beilin did not stop there. In precisely this context, he then went on to say that the negotiations, and their success, were an absolute necessity for Israel, that there was no substitute for them, and that for their success an active mediating role of the United States was a prerequisite. Without that U.S. role, the negotiations would be a failure, and the result would be another war. That was a surprising statement to hear from an official speaking for the Israeli Foreign Ministry, and we asked Mr. Beilin to expand on it. We noted that something very similar had been said just a few days before in a letter sent to *The New York Times* (published November 27) by Gad Yaacobi, Israel's Ambassador to the U.N., just the right level to make the point definitely without getting everyone too excited about it. This has been the Arab position for a long time, but it was very new to hear it from Israel.

By now that message has come through so clearly that Secretary of State Christopher has just told the Syrians that the United States intends to be just such an active party to the negotiations. The statement is general, that the U.S. should act to help the parties break impasses, whatever they may be. The immediate impasses on the table, at the time Yossi Beilin spoke to us, were two: the problem the Israeli and Palestinian negotiators had gotten stuck on, about the jurisdiction over land in an interim autonomy regime — just the sort of thing mediators are made for, and not at all an insuperable problem — and this one, about the representation of the Palestinians, on which neither Israel nor the Palestinians can easily move. On the supposition, which I will argue, that it would be helpful both to Israel and the U.S. if there were direct contact with the PLO at this stage, I believe the U.S. could make it easy for Israel to take the step by reinitiating its own direct dialogue, and that this would be a valuable service to all the parties.

Since the time of our meeting with Mr. Beilin, a third impasse has been added, this depressing business of the deportees, on which I will comment a bit later. That is really extraneous to the negotiations, though a serious block to them. I argued, in my January 27 letter to Mr. Rabin that it would be a mistake to link the question of dealing with the PLO to that of the deportees, despite the urging of many in the Israeli Left that he do so. I think these questions need to be kept carefully apart.

Conditions of Restoring the Dialogue.

As you can probably imagine, when I asked Dr. al-Kidwa, at a meeting last week, what the PLO understood as the requirements for renewed dialogue with the United States, I got very little. I had to ask myself if he were simply being cagey, not wanting to raise requirements that might not really be required. But I think it is actually unclear.

The earlier dialogue was broken off in circumstances that are pretty unrelated to the present. The issue was the boat raid on the beach, near Tel Aviv, that was attempted unsuccessfully by Abul Abbas and his people. The raid never had any prospect of success, and was mounted, clearly, in an effort to sabotage the PLO dialogue with the U.S. But Abul Abbas was a member of the Executive Committee — he is so no longer — and it was demanded of Arafat that he repudiate him and his raid as condition for continuing the dialogue. Arafat, at the time, disowned the raid, but moved more slowly on the dismissal of Abul Abbas, an internally difficult political process in the PLO, and the dialogue was broken.

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Behind this was the issue of Arafat's increasingly close links to the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq, which at that time still enjoyed cordial relations with the Bush Administration, receiving arms and financial support. Even at that time I regarded this as a dangerous and damaging alignment for Arafat and the Palestinians, and in fact wrote so then to Arafat, well before the American Administration and Saddam Hussein fell out of love. But behind Arafat's reliance on Iraq, in turn, was great frustration at the severe limitation of the PLO dialogue with the United States, with meetings permitted only between Mr. Pelletreau and Abed Rabbo and only on restricted topics. The dialogue seemed empty and calculatedly devoid of results, an outward show of dialogue carried on only for appearance while any actual dialogue was carried on instead through the mediation of Egypt. It was of course bitterly disappointing to me that the Palestinians themselves did not more highly value the dialogue, despite this empty character. I believed it still had more potential than they saw at that stage. The outcome was a breach in the dialogue, and that was then superseded in importance by the colossal breakdown between Iraq and the whole international community.

Many Palestinians, I find, including Dr. al-Kidwa, don't believe that the break in the dialogue was really about those issues – the boats and Abul Abbas – but that it was rather about Israeli displeasure at the dialogue. Against that argument I would note that a substantial period was provided for the PLO to weigh its course, and that there were many American pleas to meet conditions on which the dialogue would have been continued. It is possible, nevertheless, that an excuse to break the dialogue was being sought, and that if this one had not served another would have been found. But I can't vouch for that.

Now, however, things are much different. Abul Abbas is out, and the PLO visibly relieved to be rid of him and all his works, but it would be imperceptive to believe that those are the issues that prevent a U.S.-PLO dialogue now. What does prevent it? I suspect simply that no one has come up with persuasive reasons to make a change, and I have no quibble with Dr. al-Kidwa's failure to come up with a diagnosis of what the U.S. may currently be expecting of the PLO. A Palestinian might suspect, with a little cynicism, that the conditions may be that the PLO cave in to Israeli positions on any of a series of issues that need actual negotiation, but I don't believe that is the U.S. requirement either. And hence I am myself at a loss to define the conditions.

Reasons for a Change.

The present ground rules for the negotiations, that Israel negotiate with a delegation only of residents of the Occupied Territories, excluding everyone from the Palestinian *diaspora* and all residents of East Jerusalem, has certain advantages, apart from the fact that it used to save Mr. Shamir from talking to people he didn't want to talk to. It enables and requires the West Bank/Gaza resident population to come up with popularly legitimate leadership, whereas they might otherwise be left outsiders to the negotiating process.

There is patently an effort here to create a division between the Palestinians inside the land and those outside, but in fact the arrangement can work, and be acceptable to the Palestinians, only because that effort at division has been overcome. The resident population used to be regarded as disqualified to be spokesmen for the Palestinians for two reasons: one that they were subject to the pressures of a very hard occupation regime and could not be safe from coercion, and the other that they might cut a deal that disregarded the interests and rights of the exiles. Both of those arguments have been refuted now since the 1987 onset of the *intifada*. The resident population has demonstrated that it is not intimidated by occupation – people seem to have needed to demonstrate that even to themselves – and they have also shown that they act in solidarity with the *diaspora* population. There are provisos to both of those

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indications that should be reassuring to Israelis and to all of us who count ourselves as their friends. The Palestinian residents, in overcoming any intimidation, present their *intifada* movement as a rejection of occupation, but not a rejection of the State of Israel. And in insisting on their solidarity with the exiles, they, and the PLO and the exiles themselves, make it clear that they are not planning a movement of return that would disrupt population balances to the detriment of the State of Israel.

The exclusion of East Jerusalem residents from the official negotiating team, even more than the exclusion of exiles, is designed to accomplish what the Israelis are most anxious should not be done to themselves, namely to predetermine, by the initial ground rules, the ultimate outcome of the negotiations. But this exclusion too is acceptable, and has worked, only because it is negated by the facts of the process. Mr. Baker negotiated ground rules with the Israelis which acknowledge that in fact the true leadership of the negotiating team is not among those who are allowed to sit inside the negotiating chamber, but with Mr. Faisal Husseini, who has to sit outside, and other members of the supposed "advisory" team carry at least as much weight in the process as the members of the "official" negotiating team. Mr. Husseini himself, for whom all our American negotiators have learned a high regard, told us how ironic he finds it that everyone in Israel knows that he is the leader of the team, but that no Israeli will officially speak to him. Increasingly, too, there is no effort to disguise the fact that the whole team, "official" and "advisory," consults as a matter of course with the PLO leadership in Tunis, that what happens all happens under the direction of Mr. Arafat and his advisers. The resident negotiating team are in no way ciphers or parrots, but they would regard themselves as simply renegades if they did not acknowledge the position of the PLO as the legitimate leadership of the Palestinians.

I discussed this at length with my fellows on that December visit to the region with the Interreligious Committee, and found some of the most valuable counsel from Rabbi Joseph Ehrenkranz of Stamford, who pointed out the subtlety of this arrangement, and that it would be a definite loss to forfeit that subtlety and hold the negotiations only with the exile leadership. I thoroughly agree with that, and would argue that any change in the situation ought sedulously to cultivate and preserve the role of the residents and the subtleties that have developed in the articulation of the Palestinian leadership. All the same, the situation does not represent reality, and whatever value we may place upon the subtleties, that is a destructive price to pay. I believe it should be overcome.

The fact is that the PLO itself is the representative of the peacemaking intentions of the Palestinians, and the best hope for peace among all the representatives of Arab countries. I say that without hesitation, knowing that it has the sound of simple heresy to those who have accepted and/or propagated a stereotype image of PLO as terrorist, or as unswervingly intent on the destruction of Israel. But it should be evident by now that all those who do represent the rejection of Israel, or terrorist action, have had to separate themselves from the PLO, so much so that membership in and acknowledgement of the PLO, while an assertion of Palestinian nationality and rights, including the right to land, is now unmistakably a rejection of either terrorism or plans for the destruction of Israel. We can comfort ourselves with the knowledge that, on this platform, the PLO still commands a clear, even a large majority of Palestinians. (It is hard to measure, under conditions of occupation that allow the Palestinians no opportunity to show their preference by an actual free vote.) In these matters, the PLO has gone further in the acknowledgement and acceptance of Israel than any Arab country with the exception of Egypt, and exercises effective leadership in the matter not only with its own Palestinian population, resident and exile, but with the rest of the Arabs as well. It is because, and only because, the PLO has agreed to participate in the peace process that the governments of Arab countries are able to go along. Governments like those of Jordan or Morocco may in fact feel as much disposed to accept Israel as does the PLO, but have not found themselves able to say so anything like so plainly. I know the arguments about the PLO's not having formally repudiated the old Palestine National Covenant, but the positive positions they have taken in full public light have superseded its provisions convincingly.

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Look at the alternative. The alternative is not a representation of the Palestinian resident population separate from the PLO, for they are anything but that. The alternative is Hamas or the Palestinian rejectionist factions. These thrive on the frustration of the PLO and its platform of peace negotiations. If the frustration is complete, or devastating enough, we will have a Middle East dominated by such factions, and will see if we, or Israel, are happier with that.

I don't argue this casually, or as propaganda for some dubious faction. As one who has been a partisan and defender of Israel and its enterprise of providing a national homeland for the Jews and their Renaissance since there has been an Israel, I was simply unaware of the reality of the Palestinians and their plight - "There are no Palestinians," "A land without people for a people without land," - for many years. It has always interested me to find when Americans who have become concerned for the Palestinians first noticed them. For many it is 1982 and the siege of Beirut, with its climax in Sabra and Chatilla; for some only 1987 and the *intifada*. For myself, it is 1967, and the realisation that, for its own safety and future, Israel had overstepped, and could not keep these people forever in subjection. In this, I find myself at one with the many Israeli generals who have come to peacemaking concerns out of their priority for the safety, and the soul, of Israel.

As I studied the configuration of the Palestinians, even through the periods of greatest terrorist activity, I could see a pattern of learning and development, and eventually recognize that Arafat himself was going through this process. I had my chance to test this out when, in March of 1986, I had three days of conversation with Arafat, the reports of which I shared quite fully with American and Israeli officials at the time. (My only previous conversation with him had been at a group meeting in 1985, a group of ten American Christians and Jews out of which eventually grew the U.S. Interreligious Committee. But I had been writing to Arafat since that, in particular after the gruesome affair of the *Achille Lauro*, and it was out of that writing that these March '86 meetings grew.) I presented, in my first session with Arafat, my considered interpretation of what his and the PLO's and the Palestinians' experience had really been, with the request that they judge whether my interpretation truly represented their experience.

My supposition was that Arafat had brought with him to the PLO chairmanship in 1969, as part of his baggage from the earlier Fatah movement, the proposition of the unitary state for Israelis and Palestinians, with equal rights for Jew and Arab, for Jew, Muslim and Christian. That proposition was emphatically repudiated by Israelis, and by their friends. But, while meaningless for the Israelis, the proposition of the unitary state had great importance for the Palestinians, in that its most basic meaning was the Palestinian acceptance, even then, of the Jews as a people with rights equal to their own. Driving the Israelis into the sea was, even then, for those who thought this way, no part of the program. But it was not as simple as that, because the Palestinians, including Arafat himself, had to go through a process of understanding what was involved in this seemingly simple proposition. The question was posed in terms of what Jews they were talking about. For a while they spoke of its meaning only the "non-Zionist" Jews. As I pointed out, there are such, but they are altogether unrepresentative - I used the term "meshuggas" - and the Palestinians quickly recognized that. Attempts were made to define the Jews entitled to live in this unitary state as those whose families had been in the land before the 1917 Balfour Declaration, or before 1948, or other dates. In the end it was recognized that none of these distinctions held, but that the Palestinian acceptance of the Israeli Jews included all of them. Nor was this all, since this proposition had to win acceptance, even as its dimensions were being worked out, not only from the band of Fatah members who had come into the PLO with Arafat, but from all the many constituent organisations that made up the PLO and its leadership, and from Palestinian public opinion, both resident and diaspora. Eventually it did, but that process took all the time from Arafat's becoming Chairman in 1969 to about 1974.

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This part of my interpretation was something that I had already so tested out that it was no surprise to me that Arafat and his companions recognized it at once as true to their experience. Arafat was not alone for the meeting, but as is customary with him had invited in several members of his Executive Committee, who were scheduled to hold a meeting after mine. Among those present were Farouk Kaddoumi and Hanni al-Hassan. Arafat himself intervened at this point in my interpretation to say: "We presented a civilized proposal, but it was rejected, by the Israelis and by the Americans." I responded at once: "And I reject it too, because it entails the destruction of the separate Jewish State of Israel, and that State is the choice of its people." But in fact Arafat had already made the rest of my argument for me.

For it was from some time in 1974 that a new proposition began gaining ground in the PLO. At first it was simply for the establishment of a Palestinian "state or entity" on any piece of Palestinian territory, however small, that could be obtained. The unpacking of this idea, and its acceptance by the whole range of PLO constituent bodies and Palestinian public opinion inside and out of the land, again took a matter of years, up to about 1980. But it amounted to the proposal of two states, Jewish and Arab, Israeli and Palestinian, living side by side in respect for one another. Those Israelis who were intent on the permanent retention of all the land captured in the 1967 war, or of an Eretz Israel of yet larger and undefined borders, were more repelled by this two-state proposal than by anything else they had heard, because it undercut their claim that Arabs and Palestinians were unwilling to accept the Israeli State.

I mentioned that, for many Israelis, this talk of two states was clouded by the suspicion that the Palestinians were planning only to eat up Israel by stages, in a "strategy of phases," by which they would first reclaim the Occupied Territories, and then take over all the rest. Farouk Kaddoumi, who is often cited in the anti-Palestinian propaganda output as the proponent of such a plan, was quite angry at this, saying that the PLO had worked so hard over so many years to refute any such idea, and make clear its intention to come to a final settlement that accepted the State of Israel, that such an assertion could only be made as a deliberate distortion. The two-state proposition did encompass the acceptance of Israel, and of the partition proposal made by the U.N. General Assembly in 1947, which all the Arabs previously had rejected as the giving away of land of theirs that was not the U.N.'s to give.

It was at this point that my interpretation of the Palestinian experience became critical, as I argued that what had happened, in Palestinian consciousness, was the discovery of an internal contradiction in the unitary state proposition that they had already accepted. If, as the unitary state proposal argued, the Israeli Jews were to be recognized as a people entitled to all the same rights as the Palestinians claimed for themselves, and if then the Israelis rejected the offer made to them of a unitary state, then it was clear that the Israelis had chosen their separate Jewish state by an act of self-determination as distinct and irrefutable as any such act could be. On that basis, the Palestinians were faced with the necessity, on their own chosen grounds, of recognizing and accepting the Israeli State, even while insisting on their own right to a state. And the basis of that recognition and acceptance of Israel was precisely the same as the basis for the claims of the Palestinians for themselves: the right of self-determination.

I could judge the genuineness of their recognition of this interpretation of their experience as authentic by the way Arafat and his Executive Committee colleagues reacted to this presentation. I had asked, before we met, that there be an interpreter present. I knew Arafat's English from our earlier meeting the previous summer, and realized that we would get on quite well in English most of the time. But I wanted an interpreter for those occasions when we would need to be sure that a technical term was properly understood between us. The interpreter took copious notes throughout this meeting, and I took notes myself, as did Arafat also. When I came to the point of identifying the basis of the Palestinian recognition of Israel, in the two-state proposal, as self-determination, the same as for their own claims,

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Arafat asked the interpreter for an exact Arabic translation. Then he and his companions broke into a flurry of Arabic, and spoke for several minutes. At the end of that time, Arafat asked that I reformulate the interpretation, and that this too be translated exactly into Arabic. Another several minutes of Arabic conversation among the lot of them followed, and then Arafat asked yet again that I restate, unpack and expand upon what I had said. That too was translated with great care, and after several more minutes of Arabic conversation Arafat and each of his Executive Committee companions in turn pronounced that my interpretation did indeed represent exactly their actual experience. In subsequent meetings over the course of the three days I spent with him, I took great care to review and confirm this initial conversation each time, and found that it held. It was on this basis that I was able to conduct the long process of discussion and argument with Arafat that played a part in his eventual public acceptance of the three American preconditions for dialogue.

I go through all this here, a very central incident in my own relation with and study of Arafat and the PLO, to illustrate how I come to respect Arafat and his organisation, an opinion that is *extra chorum* for those who have no direct knowledge of either but who know only the caricature stereotypes of them as stage villains -- the bearded funny-face monster you love to hate and his grotesque followers. These are serious people, committed to finding their way through to peace with Israel on terms that are just to their own people. They, and Arafat in particular, have shown not only that intent, but a capacity to learn and grow, and to lead. The present readiness in the PLO-oriented Palestinian population to conclude a real peace with Israel is a result of Arafat's own growth and leadership, and it would be very hard to sustain without that.

Rather than leave it with only the evidence of that one incident, I will offer corroborating evidence as well.

In another meeting I had with Arafat at the end of the summer in 1986, this time with himself alone, I brought up to him incidents in Arab history that demonstrated the use of peaceful means to overcome stubborn enemies. Nur ed-Din, when it seemed he would have to put Damascus to the siege to win it over to his resistance to the Crusaders, sat before the city instead without any assault and appealed to the good sense and good will of the people against their recalcitrant leaders. His son, Salah-ud-Din, several years later, had just the same experience before the walls of Aleppo. Arafat recognized these examples instantly, and acknowledged them as models for the Palestinians to win the Israelis over to justice by peaceful means.

A point that Arafat was anxious to impress upon me was that his movement was not made up, nor his reliance placed, simply on the political radicals among the Palestinians, but that he had with great care brought into responsible positions in the PLO representatives of all social classes and a broad political spectrum, including the most educated, prosperous and moderate figures among the people. None of our American officials who has gotten to know, even from the safe distance that is all that American policy allows them, Faisal Husseini or Nabil Shaath can doubt this.

On two occasions during the long Lebanese civil war, when a considerable American population in Beirut was seriously endangered by developments in the conflict, the PLO, at Arafat's direction, actually evacuated them to safety. This performance was duplicated in the early stages of the Gulf War, when Saddam Hussein held thousands of Americans and other Westerners, some captured in the invasion of Kuwait, others already resident in Iraq, hostage, claiming them as his "guests" in hotels and other places of confinement in Baghdad. It was Arafat who insisted to Hussein that he release them all just before Christmas of 1990.

President Clinton, February 22, '93 — 10

This was consistent with much else that Arafat did in the context of the Gulf War, the period for which American opinion has most generally blamed him and seen him as siding with Saddam Hussein. True enough, he opposed the drawing of the U.S. and European military force into the Arab heartland. He quite vocally opposed the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait as well, and made an effort, in the end entirely unsuccessful, to position himself as mediator to bring about a non-military resolution of that conflict, seeing it as an inter-Arab affair. That failed effort was so disastrous for him and the Palestinians that, in its wake, I even recommended to him myself that he step back from the leadership and find ways to pass it on through a free election, as in fact he was disposed to do.

But while the Gulf conflict developed, and he was taking this disastrous course, the loudest opposition to any trafficking with Saddam Hussein from within the PLO came from his old companion and the number two officer of the PLO, Abu Iyad. Staff of the PLO office in Tunis, I am told, were treated to, and alarmed by, a prolonged and angry shouting match on this subject between Arafat and Abu Iyad in November 1990. In December, in Baghdad, Arafat had a similar shouting match with Saddam Hussein himself over the invasion of Kuwait and its accompanying circumstances, the prelude to Saddam Hussein's release of his American and European "guests." And in January 1991 Abu Iyad was murdered, at his home in Tunis, by a bodyguard infiltrated into his entourage by none other than the terrorist Abu Nidal, who was then crowing in Baghdad. I brought it up to Arafat, in a letter later that year, that the murder of Abu Iyad had been Saddam Hussein's work, performed for him by Abu Nidal, as a way of intimidating Arafat himself. In a letter of response, which took up much more positively many issues of my letter, Arafat said rather lamely that the murder of Abu Iyad had been the work of a single Mossad agent, a position I hardly think he expected me to believe.

But before this, Arafat had shown his capacity to learn by his response to the *intifada* from its inception in 1987. He grasped at once that this sort of resistance, not really non-violence but the use of stones instead of guns and bombs, had a power that no military assault could have, and that while the Israeli Defense Force could defeat any combination of forces that the Arabs could bring against them, they had no way to defeat the *intifada*. Hence he endorsed it at once, and gave his instructions that no other weapons were to be used, that the character of the *intifada* as a rejection of occupation but not of the State of Israel should be maintained, and that its goal should be established as the attainment of a peace settlement with Israel.

Since the post-Gulf War initiative of the Bush Administration and Secretary of State Baker to set up the Madrid Conference and subsequent negotiations, the PLO has been the one essential element on the Arab side, not only with Palestinians but with other countries, that has made the process possible. All of this I offer as argument that the PLO ought to be treated by the United States as a party with which to deal in the matter of the Palestinians and their claims, that the direct dialogue with them ought to be resumed and not screened behind a series of transparent disguises. It is with the PLO that the peace will be made. If not with them, with whom are we to imagine it will be made?

There is a second line of argument to consider, to do with the actual state of the negotiations as they stand. The disappointing product of them can in part be attributed to factors that are now past: to the unwillingness of the Shamir government to negotiate in good faith, and to the practical withdrawal from the field of James Baker and the Bush Administration from a time last summer not long after the election of the new government of Mr. Rabin. All the same, there is a massive sense of discouragement in the Palestinian population. That was one of the most obvious findings of our Interreligious Committee visit early in December, and I hardly expect the atmosphere to have been helped by the affair of the deportations since.

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Palestinians actually engaged in the negotiations told us that they could see tangible progress in the talks that had been held since the advent of the Rabin government, but that this was all on such technical details that, for ordinary people not directly involved, there was nothing to be seen. Nothing had changed in their lives, unless for the worse. This came in the aftermath of high expectations that the Palestinians had had since Mr. Rabin came into office, with the result that the standing of the Palestinian delegation itself with its own people was seriously endangered. We could verify this by several meetings we had, singly and with groups, with Palestinians of many professions, and we found a strong sense of this among the Israelis who monitored closely the temper of the negotiations. Besides that sense of no progress in the talks, the Palestinians were conscious of a serious worsening of all their social conditions and a phenomenally large increase in the number of deaths at the hands of Israeli soldiers in the Occupied Territories since the coming of Mr. Rabin. Their statistics are striking, and their explanation is that Mr. Rabin, for all his pursuit of peace (they are inclined to believe that of him), wants to be seen as the tough guy, and simply violates law and civilized norms of behavior in order to accomplish that.

In that atmosphere, there seems to be reason to do something that will break the sense of intense disillusionment. To me, that is further reason to bring the PLO directly into the process, as this would relieve the Palestinian population of its sense that this whole development is a tissue of fictions, in which their actual leadership must be camouflaged and everyone must pretend to be something he is not, for the convenience of an Israeli government and public, and American sponsors, that prefer to live with pretense. I am sure that you and Mr. Christopher, in approaching the whole situation of the negotiations from a new perspective, have plans, in one way or another, to bring these torpid talks to life. But I recommend this one, and see it as really important, at this juncture of the talks, to dispel the sense of irreality that is given to them by the imagined exclusion of the Palestinians' real leaders.

And I would emphasize again, at this point, that what I suggest for the United States to do is simply to reinitiate its own dialogue with the PLO. I don't believe this should be done with the rigid limitations of the earlier dialogue, which itself created a sense of empty talk. But the action I suggest for the United States does not bind the Israelis or compel them to follow. What it does instead is to enable them to take a comparable step, a thing that is really to their advantage, but which, for the reasons given earlier, is not within their reach on their own initiative. It is encouraging, truly, to see that the Israelis have, on their own and without compulsion, repealed the law that prohibited any Israeli citizen from speaking with any representative of the PLO. It was a silly and unenforceable law, destructive to the efforts of many Israelis for the peace. Its repeal is a sign of good sense and good will.

Let me raise another issue here. Foreign Minister Shimon Peres was in our country last week. He is another appealing figure, whose commitment to the peace can be relied upon, though he is more timid, if also less violent, than Mr. Rabin. In his speech at the National Press Club he gave a series of reasons for Israel's not recognizing and dealing with the PLO, most of them familiar ones that I at least have ceased to believe in: that the PLO has not satisfactorily renounced terrorism -- I believe it has -- or that excluding the PLO is the price for fostering leadership among the resident Palestinians -- a delusion if he thinks that means he is now dealing with someone other than the PLO. But in an unusual bit of candor Mr. Peres also mentioned a reason that Israelis seldom raise in this context: that Israel will not deal with the PLO because of its claim to represent the Palestinians of the *diaspora*. That must surely figure in Israeli calculations, but again it is self-deception to believe they can permanently or effectively shut out, from their minds or their responsibilities, the exile population, and I don't believe that the United States, as a friend of Israel, should encourage them in such a delusion. A peace settlement that is not a real settlement simply will not serve the Israelis' purpose any more than the Palestinians'. It won't hold, and all the effort will have been wasted. Israel itself could ultimately be lost if it buries its head in the sand in such a way.

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A statement was made some time last year by the Bush Administration, that it was still the policy of the United States to recognize the old U.N. Resolution that called for the return of the Palestinian refugees to their homes or their suitable compensation. The Israelis — still the Shamir government at the time — were appalled to hear this. It is worth noting that the Palestinians have been very reasonable on the subject, recognizing that they must not handle any such right of return in such a way as to disrupt population balances, and in fact pledging themselves to respect that responsibility. Of course, the payment of compensation will fall eventually on the United States — not an unmanageable bill, nor an unreasonable one after all the agony our own policy has brought to Palestinians over the years. I have heard nothing, as yet, from your Administration on this particular point, but I would be surprised if the policy of the United States were changed on so fundamental a matter. This again is a reason to deal directly with the real representatives of the Palestinians, to come to an understanding on such matters.

A final reason to consider dealing directly with the PLO. The United States, in these years since the end of the Cold War, has been placing a lot of its reliance on working with and through the United Nations, in ways never available when Soviet veto power made the U.N. an ineffective instrument. The U.S., along with Israel, is truly isolated among the world's nations in pretending that the PLO can be ignored. This is a hindrance to effective U.S. use of and leadership in the U.N. and the international community. A great deal, of real value to the U.S., is risked by following this policy of pretending to exclude the PLO, which the rest of the world does recognize now as the force for peace. The risks are not in reinstating the dialogue between the PLO and the U.S., but in failing to do so.

The Deportees.

In conclusion, a word on the deportees. Mr. Christopher has occasionally sounded, over these last weeks, as if he were saying that the Palestinians and their Arab allies must simply take the 100/300 compromise that he negotiated with Mr. Rabin and act as though that settles the matter, and that if they do not, the U.S. will simply pick up its marbles and go home, abandoning effort at the peace process in the Middle East. I don't think his message is actually as unsubtle as that, but I don't like to see that impression given.

I think it was well done that the U.S. prevented this issue from coming to a vote on sanctions against Israel in the Security Council. It has not been a good thing that Israel, through the protection of American vetoes, has always been able to ignore resolutions of the Security Council. Setting the precedent of imposing sanctions on Israel now, though, even if they were small, would surely escalate in the future, and would not promote the process of these current negotiations. If the United States were to be put in the position of having to veto such a sanctions resolution under present circumstances, we would lose things we can't afford to lose: our ability to deal with such crises as Iraq, or Somalia, or Bosnia, or whatever comes up next, through the U.N. The 100/300 compromise, especially once it was endorsed in the Security Council, with Morocco's help, as at least temporarily taking the heat off, served the purpose of heading off either of those two bad alternatives.

It is important, though, to realize the centrality of this deportation issue for the Palestinians. I am not talking hurt feelings here, but practical consequences. Deportation, for the Palestinians, raises the specter of the mass expulsion of their whole population. On the one hand, this is 1948 revisited, with the exile of half the population. On the other, it is the open advocacy and planning of such mass expulsion, with the chilling euphemism of "population transfer," by Rabbi Kahane's Kach Party, by General Ze'evi's Moledet, by the Ariel Sharons and other fanatics of the Israeli Right, and the constant, very casual

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shootings and killings of Palestinians by heavily armed settlers, as well as by soldiers, throughout the Occupied Territories, with hardly any consequent penalties. It is not that the responsible Palestinians you find on the negotiating team and in the PLO have any liking for these Hamas and Islamic Jihad types who are sitting out on that hillside. It is rather that the deportation of this 400 means the Israelis can deport, any time, as many as they please, and can at will carry out even the things planned by these fanatics that would amount to genocidal crime. This is as much the central nightmare for the Palestinians as the World War II Holocaust is for the Jews.

The Palestinian negotiators, and with them Dr. al-Kidwa, speaking for the PLO the day I saw him last week, have been showing flexibility about this, in saying that they care about the principle rather than about the actual speed of the return of this group on the hillside, and that if Israel were to commit itself not to use deportation in the future, they would understand its need for some time to settle the matter of these particular deportees. Nevertheless, if they were to accept the 100/300 compromise and go on with the negotiations as if this did not matter, it is predictable that, within the year, the principal real representatives of the Palestinians would be Hamas. That would serve no one's purpose: not the Palestinians', not the Israelis', not ours, not anyone's.

I would hope then, that Mr. Christopher's real message to the Israeli government would be like this: We have saved you from U.N. sanctions by our compromise. Now it is up to you to do the further things that will make possible the resumption of negotiations. I realise that that may in fact already be his message. If not, it should become so. This matter is a distraction, a needless obstacle thrown in the way of the negotiations, and no necessary part of them. It can't be put aside, and the refusal of the Palestinian team to pretend it can ought not be held against them. Urging it is not to neglect or undervalue the negotiations, which could be made worthless if the Palestinians were to negotiate under false pretenses. They would do so if they let this slip under the table, because they would then no longer represent their people in their one most central concern.

I had an urge to try to condense all this into a page or so of letter, on the basis that Presidents don't read long things like this. I resisted, and did not try to make this easy, because it is too important to this first, and very crucial, concern of your foreign policy. I didn't want to play games with it. You had to have it straight.

I wish you well in this matter, and in all your Presidency. My friends, Jewish, Christian and Muslim, in the U.S. Interreligious Committee for Peace in the Middle East ask me to mention to you, before closing this letter, that we plan to organize a major event in Washington, at the National Cathedral, in the course of this year, with prayer on behalf of the three religions and reflection on what is needed for the pursuit of peace. We hope that may be a help to your Administration's effort to promote the peace, and will keep you informed of the progress of those plans.

Sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

February 25, 1993

Mr. Thomas F. McClarty
Chief of Staff
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. McClarty,

This is getting to be a habit. I will not write to you every day, but I thought you should have promptly a copy of the response I just received from Dr. Ahmed Esmat Abdel-Meguid, the Secretary General of the Arab League, to my suggestion of taking partial steps limiting the Arab economic boycott of Israel, in view of the steps the Rabin government in Israel has taken on settlements. My original letter to him was dated January 27, and you have a copy of it, which I sent January 29.

I sent a further letter back to him right away, of which a copy is here.

Best wishes,

sincerely,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.
Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

* letter of 15 February, '93,
above, p. 108



February 25, 1993

Mr. Robert Pelletreau
Embassy of the United States
Cairo, Egypt

Dear Mr. Pelletreau,

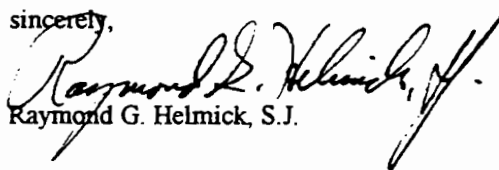
Dr. Ahmed Esmat Abdel-Meguid answered very promptly the letter I sent him on January 27, of which you have a copy. I enclose here a copy of his letter, and of the further response I sent him. I rather hope that, even though he said no, that doesn't close the issue. His argument that the two actions are lacking in symmetry, as matters of law, doesn't hold up terribly well after President Mubarak has already publicly linked them, but my supposition is simply that I'm not the one for him to tell if there were going to be some change in policy. If he does have any further thoughts of this, or could be brought to, you are likely the one who will know of it.

I'm enclosing also a copy of a letter I sent within the last few days to President Clinton, on the chances of reinstating the official dialogue between the U.S. and the PLO, again because you, as the one who conducted the actual dialogue before — admirably, I must say — may well be asked about this if it is taken seriously at all.

This is familiar territory for me, as you can see, since I was closely involved in the lead-up to the 1988 decision on the dialogue. I had the most difficult time communicating then, as this was such a hot potato that I found middle level people in the State Department couldn't deal with it, and I eventually had to stop talking with them. Everything I wrote on the subject was getting separately to George Bush, then Vice President, but that was no better, since anything that came his way had to be vetted by his own monitors, who were at the same level as the people I could no longer talk to at State. So I had to find my way through to President Reagan. On that, I had help. I don't imagine it will be so difficult this time.

With all best wishes,

sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

February 25, 1993

Rabbi Joseph H. Ehrenkranz
Congregation Agudath Sholom
301 Strawberry Hill Avenue
Stamford, Connecticut 06902

Dear Joe,

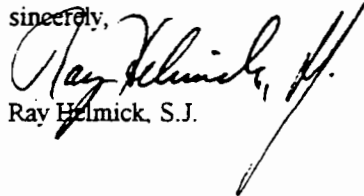
Shalom!

A very prompt answer here from Abdel-Meguid on the boycott matter. He says no, as I suppose has to be expected, but that needn't really be no. I wrote covering notes to go with this to Thomas McClarty at the White House and Robert Pelletreau over in Cairo suggesting, as I do in my response letter to Abdel-Meguid himself, that this can take some further looking at. Actually, his argument that the two actions don't have legal symmetry doesn't carry much force, since President Mubarak has already linked them by his suggestion before Madrid. We'll see.

I sent Pelletreau also a copy of my letter to Clinton about the dialogue, since he had actually conducted the earlier dialogue -- admirably, as it seems to me -- and could well be consulted if that is taken at all seriously.

I wrote to McClarty that this was getting to be a habit, and that I wouldn't write to him every day. All the best,

sincerely,


Ray Helmick, S.J.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

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February 25, 1993

Rev. Drew Christiansen, S.J.
Office for International Justice and Peace
United States Catholic Conference
3211 Fourth Street, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20017-1194

Dear Drew,

Christ's Peace!

A bit more follow-up to our Middle East trip, or at least further Middle East stuff.

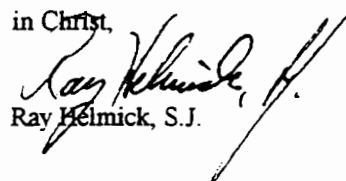
The letter I had written to Ahmed Esmat Abdel-Meguid January 27th was in that big batch of material I sent you February 1st. He came right back with his answer to my suggestion of linking partial steps about the Arab boycott to the partial steps Rabin has taken on settlements. His letter and the reply I sent right back to him are here in copy.

Also here is a letter I sent to President Clinton the other day, asking for a reinstatement of the official dialogue between the U.S. and the PLO.

I'll be off to the Middle East again March 21st, this time under the color of Holy Land. I'll be accompanying and guiding a group of Knights and Ladies of the Holy Sepulchre, and will make sure that besides seeing the buildings and places they do meet some of the folks. Cardinal Law is coming for the first couple of days we spend there.

All the best,

in Christ,


Ray Helmick, S.J.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

February 25, 1993

His Excellency
Dr. Ahmed Esmat Abdel-Meguid
Secretary General
League of Arab States
Cairo, Egypt

Your Excellency,

Thank you for your most courteous letter of February 15, 1993, responding to mine of January 27, on the linking of Israeli settlement policy with the boycott, and my suggestion of taking partial steps on the one in response to partial steps on the other. I will take care to inform the U.S. government of your response, and will send a copy also to my friend Rabbi Joseph Ehrenkranz, similarly to our American Ambassador in Cairo, Mr. Robert Pelletreau, to whom I had sent a copy of what I wrote to you.

It would not seem to me that I, as a private person, am the one to whom any actual change in this matter would be announced. I hope I may have raised an interesting possibility that could be further discussed.

I understand fully your point that the Israeli settlements policy touches on legal and expected norms of conduct within the framework of international law and the fourth Geneva Convention, while the boycott does not raise such problems, being a defensive legal instrument that many states resort to against others even if they are not in a state of war, which leads you to say that these two matters are not symmetrical. You are also aware, of course, of the questions raised by U.S. authorities about the secondary and tertiary boycotts, but those were not the point of my suggestion.

Any symmetry I would search for, in fact, would not be between the standing of the two actions in international law, but rather between the opportunities that are available for building trust through even partial modifications of the two policies. I note, as you mentioned yourself at our meeting in Cairo last December, that President Mubarak of Egypt had himself made that link between the two policies before the Madrid Conference, but had never even received the courtesy of a reply from the then Prime Minister Shamir. Because of President Mubarak's having done that, I would have thought the link established, without need for further symmetry. Good will, which I know you have in abundance, and a lot of creativity in finding imaginative opportunities to express it are what we all need now.

With great appreciation for your urgent promotion of the peace, I am

sincerely yours,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

March 24, 1993

Mr. Raymond G. Helmick
Jesuit Community
Boston College
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts 02167-3802

Dear Mr. Helmick:

Your letters regarding a United States - P.L.O. dialogue as well as a copy of the letter you received from Dr. Ahmed Esmat Abdel-Meguid have been received, and your views noted. As requested, I have forwarded your correspondence.

I appreciate your keeping me apprised of this situation, and again, thank you for writing.

Personally,



Mack McLarty
Chief of Staff to the President

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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

January 29, 1993

out of sequence

Mr. Martin Indyk
National Security Office
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Indyk,

May I congratulate you first on your position on the National Security staff. You are a fine choice to succeed to Richard Haase's position for the new Administration, and I'm glad to see you there.

I've never met you in person, but we have talked on the phone. At Sidney Shapiro's suggestion, you very nearly agreed to be the principal American Jewish speaker, a few years ago, at a Convocation we held at Boston College for the U.S. Interreligious Committee for Peace in the Middle East. We had a couple of phone conversations and, unfortunately, our dates didn't fit your schedule. The couple of days' meeting did go well all the same, with Galia Golan and Hanan Ashrawi as our main overseas speakers, but I was sorry we didn't have you in it.

I'm enclosing here the basic documentation of a group visit made to the Middle East last month by a delegation of 24 of us from the Interreligious Committee -- I waited until you could get settled into your office before sending it. We were a mix of American Jews, Christians and Muslims, and I understood from practically all the people we met that this was the first time a group of quite that character had toured the Middle East on such a mission. We were cordially received in Israel, among the Palestinians, in Egypt, Jordan and Syria, and talked with many very significant people, as you will see from the items included here: a list of our delegation, the joint statement we prepared by the end of our tour, the Press Release statement we prepared for a press conference in New York after our return, and the itinerary with the list of the persons we met.

Our group had previously met with all the delegations to the peace talks last February in Washington, and had spent some time then with Mr. Djerjian and Dan Kurtzer at the State Department, all of these follow-ups to many other meetings. We had meant to get down to Washington just about as the new Administration came in, but found that Mr. Djerjian was a bit too tied up in transition matters to give us an appointment on the days that worked for us. Doubtless we will be there soon, and I hope we might have a meeting with you when we do. In any case, I felt you should have copies of this material.

I've also just written two letters of which I'll be sending copies to Mr. McClarty. One was to Mr. Ahmed Esmat Abdel-Meguid, the Secretary General of the Arab League, whom we had met on our trip. Toward the end of our meeting with him, Rabbi Joe Ehrenkranz of our delegation had raised the question of the Arab economic boycott of Israel, and gotten a good-try-but-no-cigar answer, which I summarize in my letter to him. I spoke with Abdel-Meguid myself as we were leaving. Since he had referred to President Hosni Mubarak's initiative of 1991, proposing to Israel that the boycott be lifted in exchange for an end to the settlements policy, and said Mubarak had gotten no reply, I proposed to him that the Arab League take some partial steps on the boycott, in response to what the Rabin government has actually

Mr. Martin Indyk, Jan. 29, '93 -- 2

done about the settlements, and in that way break the log-jam that has afflicted this issue. He was very clear that Israel had not done everything he would like to see about the settlements, but appeared interested in the proposition, so I promised that I would write to him. I discussed this a bit later with Mr. Pelletreau, and promised him a copy of what I would write to Abdel-Meguid, and I will send that shortly.

My other letter was to Mr. Rabin, giving him my thoughts on the deportation of the 400 or so Palestinians. My thoughts were very negative on the substance, but I tried as far as I could to find ways for him to get out of the hole he has dug for himself. I would think it very unfair if Mr. Clinton had to dig him out, or even dig a hole for himself over the matter.

I am in fact a bit at loose ends over how to communicate with the new team of you at the White House. I have been in serious contact with many parties to the Middle Eastern and several other conflicts, and those contacts continue. Back in the period 1985-'88 I developed a very close contact with Yasser Arafat, urging him over that time to the acceptance of the famous three pre-conditions, and eventually working closely with some others to bring about the U.S.-PLO dialogue that was announced at the end of 1988. I had talked extensively with Israelis through that period too, keeping both sides well informed of what I was proposing to the other. At that time I was seeing various people in the State Department and NSC to keep them informed. I had then rather easy access to Mr. Bush (still Vice President) and Mr. Baker, who were familiar with things I had done or written on this matter, on Lebanon and a few other conflicts, so they saw practically everything I was writing. Communicating with the Reagan White House was more difficult, especially as I had refused to deal with the Poindexters and Norths and distrusted the whole operation, but knew I had to get through to President Reagan himself. I did that consistently through William Wilson. While Mr. Bush was President, I sent things regularly through his Chief of Staff, first Mr. Sununu, then Mr. Skinner and eventually Mr. Baker himself. A correspondence I held with Prime Minister Shamir over that time -- he always responding through a third party rather than himself -- had their particular attention. Right now, for such letters as I have written to Abdel-Meguid and Rabin (my first to him), of which I must surely keep you informed, I will send copies by way of Mr. McClarty, if only by force of habit. I take it they will come your way.

I have an interest, too, in exploring whether there is a way to restore the direct communication between the U.S. and the PLO, which I think would be of value. When our Interreligious Committee delegation met Yossi Beilin last month, one of our Muslim members (Dr. Mian Ashraf) put the question of Israel's dealing directly with the PLO, as so many MKs, Meretz people but also many Labor members, would like to do. Yossi Beilin's answer was that the arrangements for the talks were not of the Rabin government's making, that they were working, and so don't ask this government to change them. But it was so immediately after that as to put it almost directly in that context that he told us it was the Israeli government's view that the strong mediator role of the U.S. and the new Administration would be essential to the talks if they were not to be a failure, and actually result in an eventual war. That was a very novel position for an Israeli government, as we noted. We're all used to hearing pleas for American mediatory activity from the Arab parties while we hear Israel asking for direct bilateral talks with no interference from anyone. We had in fact caught the letter that Gad Yaacobi, as Ambassador to the U.N., had published in *The New York Times* of November 27, just before we left, in which he had made the same plea for a strong U.S. mediator role, in very much the same terms of the threat of failure and even war if that did not happen, so we took it this is a very serious signal.

Mr. Martin Indyk, Jan. 29, '93 -- 3

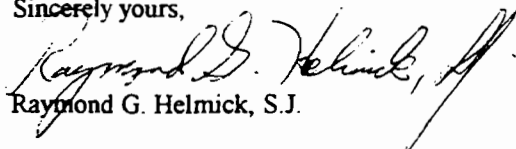
I understood quite well that it would be a political embarrassment, probably an unacceptable one, for Israel to open direct contact with the PLO leadership on its own initiative. And it would be unpardonably obstructive if the Palestinians were to make that a condition. This is just the sort of problem that mediators are for. If the U.S. were to resume dialogue with the PLO, it would make it much easier for Israel to do the same.

There is a bit of background to my raising this. Having had the experience of contributing to the 1988 initiation of dialogue, I had heard this brought up (not by myself) at a meeting several of us from the Interreligious Committee had with Dan Kurtzer in November 1991. Dan had said, rather Delphically, that the PLO knew quite well what it had to do to restore the dialogue with the U.S. From dealing with Arafat over the earlier period, I knew that that was not quite so from the Palestinian side. There was always great anxiety about whether important steps would be taken by the PLO toward both Israel and the U.S. and simply get no response, and a desire, under very forbidding circumstances, to have some idea what result would follow from what steps before stepping into a pit. The PLO also had the experience, many times over, of making the statements it felt were required, and being told "Nothing new," or "You didn't say it right," and in the final run-up to Arafat's speech to the General Assembly and then his press conference in Geneva in 1988 he had the experience of having the actual words relayed verbatim by the Swedish Foreign Minister from Richard Murphy at State before he could be deemed to have "said it right." But what interested me from what Dan Kurtzer told us was that apparently there were circumstances under which the U.S. would indeed resume the dialogue. I felt I should not take that up without first talking with my own normal Palestinian contact, who is Dr. Nasser al-Kidwa at the U.N. (Arafat himself had suggested that back in 1987, after I had had several meetings with him in Tunis and once in Kuwait, and I normally send and receive any correspondence with Arafat through al-Kidwa.) It seemed an outside chance, as I told al-Kidwa, since the talks were already in progress without direct (or admitted) PLO participation, and we could be sure the Shamir government would be very angry at any such development. (It would make me very nervous if the U.S. were, or could appear to be, merely an agent of Israeli policy on such a matter as this, but I realize there would be consultation.)

The matter came up again in the meeting that we had in February 1992 between our Interreligious Committee and Mr. Djerjian, with Dan Kurtzer present, just before our meetings with all the negotiating delegations. Djerjian put it just about as Dan had the previous November, and again I did not speak up, as I had not yet done my homework with Dr. al-Kidwa, to find out how the PLO would view this, what they understood to be the U.S. requirements for such a development, and whether they wanted to try the waters. By curious serendipity, without knowing it in advance, I twice phoned al-Kidwa to set up meetings on the matter, once on the day of Arafat's plane crash, and the other time on the day of his operation in Amman. Both times, of course, the answer was that we would have to see how things developed out of those days' events, and then consult about it. Once the election campaign was well under way, I decided to let it wait. The conversation with Yossi Beilin made it all an immediate issue for me again. I need to talk with al-Kidwa, and he doubtless will need to talk with people in Tunis. If this looks at all promising from their side, I will be addressing a letter about it directly to President Clinton, again with the expectation that it will pass by you.

Again, I want to wish you well in your position at the White House, and in doing so feel confident that I am wishing well to all my friends, Arab and Israeli, in the Middle East -- that your honesty and competence will serve them well in their need and search for peace.

Sincerely yours,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



April 21, 1993

President Yasser Arafat
Palestine Liberation Organisation

Dear President Arafat,

My letter of February 22 last to President Clinton, giving reasons why I would wish to see a renewal of the direct dialogue between the United States and the PLO, of which you have a copy, has drawn the enclosed response from Mr. Thomas McLarty, President Clinton's Chief of Staff. I had enclosed my letter to Mr. Clinton in a covering letter to Mr. McLarty, as a way of ensuring that it would not get lost in the shuffle of papers, asking him to forward it. He had written on a previous occasion that he had forwarded other correspondence of mine to the appropriate channels. In the case of this letter, a very long one, his statement that he has forwarded it "as requested" could mean that it actually was put before President Clinton himself, though I can't be sure of that. At any rate, my argument is in the system. The careful formula, "your views [are] noted," making no comment on their merit, is not surprising, since any comment would be a most unwelcome newsmaker. I find Mr. McLarty's letter an encouraging one.

It has been no matter of urgency for me to get this response to you more quickly, because I am sure you have better information than this, on the dispositions of the Clinton Administration, readily available, especially from President Mubarak's visit to the White House. My interest was far more in what I should write to you myself in consequence of this exchange. You recall that I had argued in my letter to President Clinton that it is actually very hard for the PLO to know what the U.S. government is looking for or requiring as condition for a dialogue at any given time, for lack of real communication. This letter of Mr. McLarty's gives no particular light on that subject. What I read in newspapers at the time of President Mubarak's visit indicated that Mr. Clinton appeared surprised at his raising directly the question of restoring the U.S./PLO dialogue, and answered then in terms of the 1990 demand that the PLO somehow repudiate Abul Abbas' attempted violent landing of boats on an Israeli beach.

You and I have been over that question exhaustively at the time, in 1990, and it is still my supposition, as I wrote to Mr. Clinton in February, that it is an old question now, overtaken by subsequent events, and not the real matter of any consideration of whether to renew the dialogue. I take Mr. Clinton's answer to President Mubarak -- if it was, as observers thought, a moment of surprise -- as an answer really meaning only "I hadn't been thinking of that." It interests me more that he had the 1990 state of the question fresh enough in his mind to revert to that for want of a more contemporary answer. Not being better informed as to his thinking, I won't even attempt to deal with that question of the boats. What you will have been told by President Mubarak will be more informative to you. Whatever seriousness the U.S. Administration now attaches to that matter, I would hope that you, having by now eased Abul Abbas out of his position on the Executive, won't feel obstructed from dissociating yourself and the PLO decisively from that silly outrage of another time.

I am more interested in trust-building measures just now, a subject that, I know, is always bound to arouse in you a suspicion that new demands are being made on you, and that it is in service of Israeli interests rather than Palestinian interests. This is, however, a time of terrible blows to mutual confidence, both for you and for the Israelis, as well as a critical time for progress toward the peace. Hence serious, and even gratuitous, trust-building initiatives are really important at this juncture, as much for your

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purposes as for the Israelis'. Do keep in mind, please, that the U.S. Administration has really given me no answer to my question about what the U.S. would require of you now to renew the dialogue. What follows, therefore, is entirely my own ideas, not anyone else's, in particular not the U.S. government's.

You have seen my letter, of January 27th last, to Secretary General Abdel-Meguid of the Arab League, recommending a partial step in relaxing the Arab economic boycott of Israel in response to the partial steps the Rabin government has taken in limiting the building of settlements in the occupied territories. I am not certain whether I sent you, along with the other materials I forwarded to you through Dr. al-Kidwa, a copy of Dr. Abdel-Meguid's reply, of which Mr. McLarty takes note in the letter of his enclosed here. In any case, I enclose here for you a copy of Dr. Abdel-Meguid's letter and the response I sent off to him the very day I received it. This is a small matter, important more as making a self-initiated trust-building gesture on the part of the Arab League than as an action of the PLO. But I would wish that you might, on behalf of the PLO, support my suggestion to Dr. Abdel-Meguid.

Far more important, though, are two recommendations I would make directly to you, as ways that the PLO could now significantly advance the cause of a just peace, which is your basic interest, by building up Israeli confidence, and at the same time demonstrate to all parties, including the U.S. and Israeli governments and publics, the important and indispensable role of the PLO in the advancement of that cause.

The first was recommended to me by an American Rabbi friend whom I trust greatly, Rabbi Joseph Ehrenkranz of Stamford, Connecticut, whom both Mr. Shaath and Mr. Hussein will remember from our December Interreligious Committee visit, and who is head of the Israel Committee of the Orthodox Rabbinical Association of America. Rabbi Ehrenkranz suggested to me that this would be the right moment for the PLO to delete from the famous Charter, in full official form, the claim to recover the entire land of Palestine, thus entirely destroying the State of Israel. I know this is old business for you, almost a reflex demand that you hear coming from Israelis and their supporters regularly. I have many times in the past supported both your Paris statement that the whole issue was, if I remember the word correctly, "*caduc*," and the general position that this item in the Charter was superseded by subsequent decisions and actions of the PLO and the PNC and hence should not be seen as an obstacle. The fact remains that it is an enormous obstacle in the minds of Israelis and their supporters; that whenever Israeli anxieties arise, this is one of the primary symbols of them.

I have argued, at various times past, also that raising the question of deleting this demand from the Charter would unleash all the crazies in the PNC, and compared it to the similar way it would arouse all the ugliest elements in the Herut Party if, at their assembly, someone were to raise the question of abandoning their party symbol, with its claim to both banks of the Jordan River as Eretz Israel. When my friend, Rabbi Ehrenkranz, brought back this traditional plea, though, I realized that this is in fact the right time for the PLO to do this.

The statement in the Charter about recovering the whole of Palestine does not in fact represent the policy of the PLO or of the Palestinian people. You could expect outraged cries from the Hamas people, of course, over this "abandonment" of a part of the original Palestine, but that would serve to distinguish the actual policy of the PLO and its public from the regressive stands of rejectionists. It has been your true policy for many years now to seek a Palestinian State on the lands occupied by Israel since 1967, and that this Palestinian State should live at peace with a State of Israel alongside it, each of these two states having secure and internationally recognized borders. The statement in the Charter about recovering the entire territory of Palestine is not only at odds with, and actually superseded by, your actual policy. It is also pure burden to you, to the PLO and to the Palestinian people, uselessly arousing the most

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paranoid feelings among your Israeli interlocutors. You would be better off without it, and your people are not so stupid that they will not understand this. This is what the *intifadah* is about.

Among the things the Palestinian public will understand is that their need for peace and a just settlement of their conflict with Israel is too urgent now to be trifled with by demagoguery. You are truly and properly under constraint right now to hold the line against any acceptance of the Israeli policy of expulsions, even as it is exercised against the regressive forces, your real enemies, of Hamas. I think you need a real line drawn between the realistic policies of the PLO and the destructive demagoguery of Hamas, and that taking this action now, revising this element in the Charter, will actually strengthen your position with your own public. It is a step that truly needs to be taken by the PLO at some point. I can think of no more appropriate time than now. You have in fact already taken the step, in its substance, long ago, in full seriousness and entirely publicly. Dealing now with the superseded formal statement in the Charter would strengthen your hand in every way, while removing one of the greatest psychological obstacles to your negotiating with Israel.

Remember: neither the U.S. government nor any agent of it has put me up to urging this. Joe Ehrenkranz put it before me, and I know that, coming from him, it originates in a genuine desire to promote the peace, a just peace for the Israelis and for you, and not from partisan motives. I accept it from him and urge it strongly on you, not because of urging on his part, but because I genuinely believe this would serve your interests and the cause of a just peace.

There is a second recommendation for confidence-building that I would make as well. This is that the PLO, and you yourself, take the strongest action you can to oppose and repudiate the violence that is taking place now in Israel and the Occupied Territories. The killings on both sides are an extreme danger to all your hopes. Israeli (and American) reactions that take note only of the violence directed at Israelis by Palestinians and pay no regard at all to the violence of Israelis toward Palestinians are of course no help. I understand the extent to which an accumulation of callous Israeli actions, from the stepped-up repression in the Occupied Territories under the Rabin government to the inexcusable expulsion of the 400, are cause of the Palestinian outburst of violence. There is also clearly an element of the Hamas people trying directly to sabotage you and the efforts of the PLO to bring about peace, an outcome that Hamas does not want. On both scores, that of meeting a dangerous crisis and that of asserting the policy of the PLO against the destructive measures of Hamas, this is a question of leadership on which the PLO needs to make its influence seriously felt.

It is also very clear to me that there are limits to what you can do about this violence. It is not open to you to cooperate with Israeli authority in suppressing Palestinian violence, by the unthinkable measure of identifying its perpetrators or in any other way. You have no means of policing the Palestinian community or occupied territories, and even if you were to attempt to oppose physically or punish such violence it would only be held against you, that the PLO somehow had the physical power and the will to impose itself and its policies on the Palestinian population, and that consequently its influence sprang from intimidation and not the genuine will of the people. That restricts you to moral opposition, condemnation and prohibition of this violence. I think it very important that you do this, as vehemently and as genuinely as is in your power. You serve the genuine interests of your people when you do this, and again, they are not so stupid as not to understand that.

Everything I have written you so far in this letter is bad-tasting medicine, things I urge upon you to make the Israelis feel better. I do understand, too, how necessary it is for you and the PLO to have accomplishments to show, ways in which you are winning in the contest for the rights of your people. I take that very seriously, and wish you success in it, not out of any ill will toward Israel but out of a commitment to justice for you and for them.

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It is my impression that the *intifadah*, when it broke out in 1987, came as a surprise to you and the PLO in important ways. I have admired the way you so promptly recognized its value and endorsed, even enforced its methods which, while not purely non-violent, were relatively so, in their use of stones rather than guns and bombs. The *intifadah* has been a *non-military* opposition movement, in contrast to the guerrilla raids of earlier times, and for that very reason it had a success that no amount of military or para-military resistance ever had.

The Israelis know what to do when they are faced with guns. They have more guns, and bigger ones, and they are far better trained in using them. Whenever it is a contest of guns, the Palestinians and in fact all the Arabs lose. I keep warning Israelis, for whom I have as genuine a concern as I have for you, that that cannot remain true forever, and that if their reliance is placed only on their guns rather than on peace and friendship with their neighbors, the time will come when their military advantage will be gone, and there will then be no saving them. But by that time the Palestinians would long since have lost everything, and there would be no regaining it even if the Israelis lost everything too.

Yet while the Israelis could, in present circumstances, beat anything the Arabs, even all the Arabs together, can bring against them militarily, and while anything the PLO or any other Palestinian group can do in a military or para-military way is a mere pin-prick to the Israelis, with no other significance than that it gives the most bloody-minded among them an excuse to exercise far more violence in retaliation, there was no way the Israelis could defeat the *intifadah*, try as they might, and however often they declared the *intifadah* at an end. What made the *intifadah* so unbeatable was not the stones, which were merely incidental as a means for young Palestinians to work off their frustrations in a distinctly *non-military* way. Rather it was the fact that it expressed, by a variety of means, all of them painful to the Palestinians who used them as well as to the Israelis, a principled and *political* rejection of the occupation.

This *non-military* character of the *intifadah* is one of the two great sources of its strength, all the greater when the *intifadah*, without losing its character of principled political rejection of the occupation, becomes more genuinely *non-violent*. That is what gives it its inner moral strength, and its identifiable public moral character. It is what has impressed public opinion all over the world and given the cause of the Palestinian people a resonance it has never had before.

The second source of the *intifadah's* strength has been the clear definition of its political purpose. The *intifadah*, from the start, has been directed not against the State of Israel, its existence or its safety, but *against the occupation*. The existence of two states, Israel and Palestine, in mutual recognition and acceptance of each other, has been the objective, and the people themselves who made the *intifadah* have never allowed any ambiguity about this. It was fundamentally because of an Israeli intervention, seeking as so often in the past for some Palestinians other than the PLO with whom they could relate, that the Hamas group came into existence. Israelis have become thoroughly disillusioned with them since, but their emergence siphoned off from the basic Palestinian movement that the PLO represents those who still rejected the very existence of Israel and plotted its destruction, leaving the *intifadah* securely in the hands of those, basically the PLO itself, who sought a just peace on the basis of mutual acceptance. It is this that makes it possible for Israelis who genuinely seek the peace, and for their friends and supporters abroad, to be supportive of the these aims of the *intifadah* and to promote direct dialogue and negotiation with the PLO as the true partner with which Israel can make the peace. By this time, even those, whether Israeli, American or whoever, who still adamantly oppose dealing with the PLO have a clear sense that they are being merely obstructive.

It is for this reason that I feel I am recommending things that are really supportive of the most basic Palestinian and PLO purposes when I make the recommendations I did earlier in this letter. Any

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use of violence has most destructive effects on the *intifadah* and its prospects of success. The Sharons and Eitans and Ze'avis and Levinsons who seek only the expulsion and destruction of the entire Palestinian people must be delighted at every shooting and every stabbing of an Israeli by a Palestinian. This is just the sort of thing they can deal with most easily. It is handed to them on a platter. For the defence of the *intifadah* itself it is in the urgent interest of the PLO, as representative and defender of the interests of the Palestinians, to oppose and condemn the Palestinian violence that is now afoot, and in whatever way you can to put an end to it. That is one of the two things I recommended as a trust-building measure toward the Israelis.

And the other serves a basic Palestinian interest too, to remove from the relation between Palestinians and Israelis the declaration in the Palestine National Charter, *caduc* as it is, that so much obstructs constructive dialogue between you. Nothing is clearer in the *intifadah* and the policy statements of the PLO over all these recent years than that the Palestinian purpose is not the destruction of Israel but a just peace with the Israeli state. I believe that a public revision of that aspect of the Charter now would be one of the most convincing steps you could take to promote the true and basic Palestinian interest.

All this I write as context for the protest action I would most expect and hope to see from the Palestinian population of the Occupied Territories, which I think would most clearly present the PLO as potentially demanding Palestinian rights from an unwilling Israel. It impresses me that the single most effective period of the *intifadah* activity was the tax protest carried on in Beit Sahur several years ago. Sustaining that protest was a frightfully painful thing for the people of Beit Sahur, but at no other time in the *intifadah* has the claim of Israel to rule unchallenged over the Occupied Territories been so endangered or the Israeli government -- Shamir government in that case -- and Right Wing so alarmed. It amazes me that the effectiveness of that protest was not marked out by the Palestinian leadership and that it was not emulated.

The people of Beit Sahur carried out that tax protest in isolation. Other Palestinians and much of the world community were very sympathetic, but the Beit Sahur people had to bear the draconian retribution for their action by themselves. There are economies of scale here. The massive punishment that the Israeli government allotted to Beit Sahur could not easily be visited on much larger parts of the population of the Occupied Territories, or on the whole of it.

As it was, the considerable part of the Israeli population that is actively in favor of peace and justice for the Palestinians became very actively engaged in organising support for the people of Beit Sahur, and the Shamir government had to invest nearly as much of its repressive effort in preventing the Israeli peace movement from coming to the aid of Beit Sahur as in trying to stamp out the resolve of Beit Sahur itself. That was truly effective Palestinian resistance to the occupation. It was entirely non-violent, not merely non-military as the stone-throwers are, and for that reason it kept the moral high ground. It was in no way directed against the existence or the safety of the State of Israel, only against manifest injustices to the Palestinian people, and this engaged the active sympathy of a significant part of the Israeli public and of a world public.

I must say that I make this suggestion with a good bit of trepidation. It is acceptable behavior for an American to recommend the peace, or urge you, the Palestinians, to do things that will make you less trouble to the Israelis. For one of us to recommend things to you that make your protest, and your rejection of occupation, more effective, that could truly stymie the Israeli effort to hold your people under occupation, is a risk. I will send a copy of this letter to the White House, through the care of Mr. McLarty, as I regularly do, and I can imagine that people there will be cheering me on through the earlier parts, but wringing their hands at this part. Recommending that your protest be more effective rather than less is not what nice people do here.

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However, I can also well imagine what effect a general tax strike would have. For the Israeli government it would create a serious crisis of the governability of the Occupied Territories. For you, to the extent to which this would very clearly be an organized action of which you were the authors, it would make you protagonists of the struggle over the occupation, giving you not only a very high and popular profile with your own Palestinian people, but a marked advantage over Hamas with its noisy but fundamentally ineffectual temper-tantrum politics.

In the Israeli public, you could expect to find as much support as was shown to the people of Beit Sahur when they went their lonely road of protest against the full might of Israeli retaliation. Very likely, with Israeli hopes for peace much more alive than they could ever be in the time of the Shamir government, the Israeli public sympathy for a Palestinian tax strike would be much greater. But the possibility of the government's exercising a like degree of repression against a much larger, or even general, strike would be much smaller.

The American, and other outside, response would be, in present circumstances, more positive than it was at the time of the Beit Sahur strike. The action would have all the moral advantages of non-violence, which the course of the *intifadah* has already shown to be so powerful. It would have the further moral edge, for all those who have basic sympathy for Israel, of being clearly a defiance of occupation, and no expression of rejection of the Israelis themselves, their State or their safety.

There is something very basic, for the American public, in a protest against taxation without representation. It appeals to all the deepest aspirations of American democracy, felt by every part of the American political spectrum. In your case, it is clear that the taxes assessed on people in the Occupied Territories are not only demanded without representation, but are used to provide none but the most negligible services to them, and in fact basically to their detriment, to deprive them of their rights.

A protest of this sort can be carried on simultaneously with the most constructive role in the peace negotiations, putting all the moral cards in your hands. Moreover, it would very likely be the most effective thing you could do to put an end to the wave of Palestinian violence against Israelis, the shootings and stabbings that so harm the Palestinian cause, since everyone in the Occupied Territories would understand that something immeasurably more effective was being done to make occupation itself impossible to maintain.

The basic message of your *intifadah* is "No!" — No to occupation, no to oppression, no to deprivation of people's rights. It is not hatred of anyone, nor an effort to deprive anyone else of safety or rights. This is what the tax-strike action would express.

I feel a bit presumptuous to recommend so far-reaching an action to you, emboldened though by my realisation that the original non-military (verging eventually on the non-violent) character of the *intifadah* came as an apparent surprise to you, but that you proved so immediately capable of understanding its promise. I think the value of Beit Sahur's experience has been largely missed, and so, with all the trepidation I mention, I call it to your attention.

With all best wishes, and my prayers for the accomplishment of a just peace,

sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



April 21, 1993

Mr. Thomas F. McLarty
Chief of Staff
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. McLarty,

As I mentioned when I wrote to you enclosing my correspondence on the Turkish Kurds, I planned to write to Mr. Yasser Arafat after receiving your response to the letter I had written to President Clinton February 22, about U.S./PLO dialogue.

It took me a while to figure out just what I wanted to say to him, but the letter is in the mail to him this day. A copy enclosed.

With all best wishes,

sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

September 20, 1993

Dr. Nasser al-Kidwa
Head of Mission
Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine
to the United Nations
115 East 65th Street
New York, N.Y. 10021

Dear Dr. al-Kidwa,

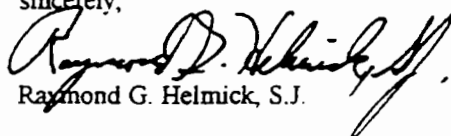
I trust you too were on that White House lawn last week to witness the great event of the signing of the agreement between the Palestine Liberation Organisation and the State of Israel. I was there, and found it a fulfillment of hopes such as I have never witnessed before.

I wrote to President Arafat last April, recommending, in a time when hope seemed very remote, a repetition of the protest tactic that had been so successful at Beit Sahur, early in the *intifadah*, a tax strike. I had no idea then that this back-channel negotiation was in progress, and it was of course reason not to go near such a tactic at the time. Now, however, I'm especially concerned that people in areas, like East Jerusalem, that will not be included in the Palestinian autonomy at present, have a way of expressing their adherence to Palestine and their insistence on self-determination, but one that will not disrupt the building of good feeling and cooperation between the Israeli and Palestinian peoples. That's basically the subject of this letter that I enclose for your uncle. I would appreciate your getting it to him.

My congratulations and best wishes to you, as to all Palestinians. I know very well what an important, constructive and intelligent role you have played in bringing about this great accomplishment. It is President Arafat himself, working all his life against the most adamant opposition, who has especially won this opportunity for Palestine and its people. You are all most fortunate to have him, his wisdom and his persistent effort.

I look forward to seeing you again soon. With all best wishes,

sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



September 20, 1993

President Yasser Arafat
Palestine Liberation Organisation

Dear President Arafat,

It was my great privilege to be there on the White House lawn the day you witnessed the signing of the Israeli-P.L.O. agreement and offered your hand to Prime Minister Rabin. This is exactly what I have hoped for since our first meetings in 1985 and 1986. I cannot adequately express my congratulations and admiration for what you have accomplished. I see it as the opening to a really satisfactory settlement for the Palestinian people, knowing full well that it is only a beginning and that there must be, and will be, much more. It is your people's support that you need, rather than mine, but I do entirely support what you have done. You have saved the Palestinian people in the time of their near despair.

Now I have worries about what could undo or diminish this great accomplishment, and I would like to make this a bit of an analytic letter to cover several such topics.

Your opposition is of several kinds. Most conspicuous, and threatening violence, are the rejectionists. That this is given a religious rationale by Hamas and a secular one by other rejectionists is not really so important as the fact of their refusal to grant anything at all to the Israelis. Their position is in fact symmetrical with that of the Israeli rejectionists, who are also a mix of religious zealots and secular extremists like Sharon, Eytan, Ze'evi and their parties. What all these people, Israeli and Palestinian fanatics, have in common is that they want the other side to get nothing at all.

These rejectionists can gain wider support if the wider population is disillusioned by what will follow now. For Palestinians, that means seeing no real results from the P.L.O./Israel agreement. It seems to me cynical to consider that the agreement will fail if there is not now concrete and visible economic development, especially in Gaza, but I believe it is so. I will write that in more detail to my own President, Mr. Clinton.

There has to be political progress also. Many Palestinians seem to feel that you have settled for too little, and that what you have gained -- Gaza and Jericho -- is all that will ever be gained now that the agreement has been signed. I feel sure that they are mistaken. It seems to me that even your own position, in the past, has been that everything should be agreed at once, in one package, and that nothing could be granted until the whole package was ready. I understand why many people still fear that after the many bitter experiences of the past. But I believe you were entirely right to accept this agreement, that the most important part of it, much more necessary than any of the details already charted, was the simple fact of deciding to deal directly with one another. I note that far more is in even the already written details: further withdrawal of Israeli troops from populated areas of the West Bank well beyond Jericho, etc., and that the questions postponed for the next two years -- agreement on the Israeli settlements, the Palestinian State, even the question of Jerusalem as capital for both peoples -- are truly open for that subsequent negotiation, in no way placed out of reach of the Palestinian people.

The Israelis have to see something reassuring happen too, so that a wider public does not ally itself to the rejectionists. In their case it is anxieties that have to be assuaged. They need to understand

that Palestinians -- and other Arabs -- are not their eternal enemies, but a people with whom they can live in mutual confidence. I will have more to say about that a bit further on in this letter.

If these kinds of progress can be assured, however, if the Palestinians are not left bereft of economic or political progress and the Israelis not confronted by circumstances and attitudes that further feed their anxieties, I have great confidence that the true generosity of both peoples will assert itself, and the rejectionism of both sides will find their influence shrinking rapidly. Both the religious zealotry and the secular extremism feed on frustration and anxiety, whether in Arab or Israeli camps, and will decline in the face of real progress.

The other kind of opposition you have faced in the last two years, within the P.L.O., is more serious, and I think its meaning is less obvious. Your negotiating team has been unhappy, Abdel Shafi thinking for some time that the Washington negotiations should be cut off. Faisal Husseini, Hannan Ashrawi and Saeb Erekat threatened resignation because they felt they were not consulted. Members of your Executive have actually resigned, Abdel Shafi with them, though basically because they thought the agreement contained too little. I think they will be back, when they see that more comes of the agreement than is there at first. It is clear to me that your agreement with the Israelis could not have been done other than through just the sort of secret back-channel negotiations that you used, and I'm sure your negotiating team will have realized that too, and their discontent will be overcome.

But behind all that is their experience of popular distress and disillusionment over these recent months. The common explanation in our Western media is that the style of government and negotiation in the P.L.O. has been too centralized and non-participatory, but I note that, even when the complaints were loudest, people did not want to lose your leadership, whose value they acknowledged, but only to have this distress addressed -- and by you yourself!

I believe this distress has been about something else, and not about an over-centralized decision-making system. Ordinary Palestinians living under occupation had the invigorating experience, for some years after the beginning of the *intifadah*, of being the protagonists. Everything that happened in Israel was a reaction, whether positive or negative, to what they were doing. They were setting the agenda, and after all the years of feeling helpless this was a very positive experience. Then for the last two years, since the beginning of the Madrid conference, Palestinians in the occupied territories have instead been people to whom things happened, through the doing of others rather than themselves. Since the beginning of the Rabin government, in particular, for all the renewed hope that had grown with his victory, people felt that everything was actually getting worse -- that more of their children were being killed, more arrested and abused, more houses destroyed, opportunities taken away with the closing of the territories and their separation from Jerusalem itself, the number of Israeli settlements and the confiscation of land actually increasing despite the apparent promise that they would be decreased, the 400 deported to the hillside in Lebanon -- while they had no way of responding except the Hamas and rejectionist way, by violence. The feeling of impotence that people have felt, after their experience of the *intifadah*, has not been about being excessively controlled by you, but about having no part in what was happening to them.

This is something so serious that I believe it should have your close attention now. If they are not to be disappointed and disillusioned by what happens after the agreement made last week, the people must have again the experience of being real participants, deciders of what shall happen and not simply people to whom things are done. This is not at all to say that the P.L.O. and you yourself should be less the leadership of what is done, but that people should have again that strong sense of doing things themselves, under your leadership.

President Arafat, Sept. 20, '93 - 3

Some months ago, in my letter of April 21, I recommended to you that people take up, under your clear leadership, a tax strike, on the model of what had been done at the height of the *intifadah* at Beit Sahur. I understand quite well why you did not take that up, as you were already being approached then for the Oslo process and could not afford to disrupt that. I could not, now, recommend that or any other single form of action, because I have not enough knowledge of how things are on the ground. But I am convinced that it is of central importance that people gain, once again, that sense of being protagonists of what happens, and not simply passive receivers.

In the areas that come under Palestinian autonomy - Jericho, Gaza, and other West Bank territories as they are brought within the Palestinian system - the active experience will be that of building the institutions of a society. That need involve no abrasiveness toward Israeli society, and in fact will be one of the things that reassures Israelis that the Palestinians are people they can live with.

More difficult to deal with will be those areas that are not, or are not yet included in the interim autonomy area, and above all East Jerusalem. Jerusalem will surely be the test for you, with all the people who are most doubtful about whether enough has been gained by this agreement.

Part of what your autonomy regime will have to do - absolutely necessary if the Israeli public is not to feel it has been deceived, and be tempted to renounce the agreement - is to show Palestinian readiness and ability to build a society compatible with and able to cooperate with Israeli society, to show that you are not enemies. The danger in that is of appearing to show your own people that they can only take what the Israelis give them. That is the impression that would destroy their sense of being masters of their own lives, exercising self-determination. It ought never be allowed to happen.

The great virtues of the *intifadah* have been, first, its non-violence, and second, its clearly being a protest against occupation, and not against Israel. Where it has been weak has been when it used even limited violence - the stones that were an alternative to guns or knives. Judgments were made, at the time it began, that the stones, as an outlet, were a necessary form of expression, and it was understood that their meaning was the restriction of violence, not its propagation. The *intifadah* was weakened, further, whenever it let itself be misunderstood as an expression of hatred for Israelis, rejection of them and their state, because then it lost the moral ascendancy that was its central strength, the reason Israel could not defeat it. There is no excuse or need for any level of violence now, whatever, and every care should be taken, both by the exclusion of violence and the close guard against anything that can smell of a rejection of Israel and its society, not to lose or risk that moral ascendancy. The Israelis have come to dread the *intifadah* itself, and many of the commentators over these last weeks have been demanding or even declaring that the P.L.O./Israel agreement include an end or "calling off" of the *intifadah*. Some write as though that were actually what had been agreed. Perhaps they understand the *intifadah* wrongly, as being either some form of violence, even attenuated, or the rejectionist platform. Or perhaps they even identify the *intifadah* with the kinds of outrage violence that has been practiced by Hamas, stabbings and shootings, kidnappings and bombs, all things that in fact are the very utmost enemy of the real *intifadah*. But however the definitions of what is or is not *intifadah* are drawn for purposes of agreement, what should by no means be lost is the people's expression of their rejection of occupation and insistence on self-determination. This will not be a problem in those areas, the new autonomy, where Palestinians will be occupied in the institution-building of their society. But ways will need to be found to express these things in other areas, and especially in Jerusalem, whose people must not be allowed to think themselves abandoned. They will need to express their insistence in ways that are non-violent and give no impression of rejecting Israel, but ways that express also their free choice of the leadership of the P.L.O.

President Arafat. Sept. 20, '93 - 4

I think that what you need, in this case, is not the advice of a foreigner far removed from the scene, like myself, but a Palestinian really expert in these matters of non-violent expression of dissent or insistence on self-determination. Earlier, before the *intifadah*, Moubarac Awad was in the occupied territories for some time, finally expelled by the Israelis out of very terror at the non-violence of his methods and his teaching. His activity appears to have had much to do with the way the *intifadah* itself eventually developed. I don't know whether he himself is presently available, whether he is adept, as a personality, at working with you and your immediate associates, or whether the Israelis, at this stage, would still be anxious or able actually to prevent his residence in the autonomy area. But he is a good individual representative of what is a fully developed professional discipline. There is a school of it here at Harvard University. I strongly recommend that you have someone, whether Moubarac Awad or another, though certainly a Palestinian, on your immediate staff to plan and organize such expressions of non-violent insistence on self-determination, not just someone who has read a few things about it but someone professionally trained. If he could not be resident in Jericho, he could be in Amman or elsewhere, but close by. He would have to be careful that the expressions of protest he organized were not open to that interpretation of being rejections of the Israelis themselves or of their state. Someone with a keen sense of humor could make such protests effective and take that sort of sting out of them.

There is just one other thing I want to recommend to you, unconnected with what I have been saying to this point except that it is also a matter of keeping the moral ascendancy. You will likely face some violent opposition from Hamas, especially when your new Palestinian police is first deployed in Gaza. I have heard people saying that, once the Israeli Army is no longer in the streets of Gaza, there will be no one to shoot at. I am not so optimistic. The Hamas will have the P.L.O. to shoot at. I am sure it will take some bit of time to have a Palestinian police force ready to take control of order in Gaza and Jericho. My recommendation is that, for a transition period, international peace-keepers be sought to keep order as the Israeli Army is withdrawn from the streets, and that as the first units of Palestinian police are ready to replace them, they be deployed in Jericho rather than in Gaza. My reason for this is that Hamas, claiming that the P.L.O.'s agreement with Israel is some kind of betrayal, could shoot at Palestinian police without losing their appearance of moral ascendancy, but they could not shoot at an international peace-keeping force without revealing themselves as the despoilers of the peace. I would be afraid, too, that if a Palestinian police force were in place from the start and responding to provocative violence with counter-force, it could quickly give the impression of being a new oppression, and lose its moral ascendancy that way. My supposition is that, within a relatively short time, there will be enough evidence on the ground of the benefits of the peace so that the people of Gaza would not tolerate attacks on the Palestinian police without condemning those who carried them out. For the short transition period until that is so, I would like to see these international peace-keepers in place instead.

With those serious concerns expressed, I want to offer you my most heart-felt congratulations on what you have accomplished by this agreement, and my happiness that the Palestinian people are at last on the way to achieving, through your action, the peace and justice and self-determination they have so long sought. I plan to travel to the Middle East from the last days of November into early December, as part of another delegation of the U.S. Interreligious Committee for Peace in the Middle East, with Ronald Young and others. I hope this time I may see you in Jericho. God's blessing on you and your people, and on the people of Israel as well.

Sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



November 13, 1993

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin
The Knesset
Jerusalem
ISRAEL

Dear Prime Minister Rabin,

Shalom!

It was very encouraging to see the successful course of your visit to Washington yesterday. I was privileged to be on the White House lawn to witness the signing of the Articles of Agreement between Israel and the P.L.O. on September 13th last, and have wanted since to write my congratulations to you, in terms that I have in fact used in commenting on it on American television.

You have joined a very select company of Israelis. There are only two other members of your club: Chaim Weizmann and David Ben Gurion. Your action, in reaching this accord, equals in courage and in long-reaching consequence the accomplishments of these founding fathers of the State of Israel. I am convinced that you have secured the lasting future of the nation they first built. It was evident, even in watching the interaction between yourself and Mr. Arafat there on the lawn, including the famous handshake, with how much difficulty and anguish you had come to this moment. You overcame all that for the good of Israel and it is a crowning event in the search for peace that will always live in history. I greet you with what I can only call reverence, an awkward thing to offer to so down-to-earth and unassuming a person as yourself, but something unavoidable that you have richly deserved.

When last I wrote to you, January 27th of this year, it was in consternation at the expulsion of the 400 Hamas and Islamic Jihad Palestinians, an action I felt was seriously mistaken, and I received then a very gracious reply from your office. I referred at the time to the correspondence I had held previously with your predecessor, Mr. Shamir, and with Chairman Arafat, all of which you have on file. I have been thus long in writing these congratulations to you only because I find that my good friends, others who share with me hopes for the peace and good of Israel and your Arab neighbors, differ with my assessment on the substance of what I wanted to write to you, and I gave their opinion long consideration before deciding that I should write it nonetheless. It is an opinion I had formed, and was on the point of writing to you, even before we heard of your great break-through with the P.L.O., and I felt I had to examine how far this new agreement changed the situation I was looking at.

In essence it is this. I find that the greatest single danger to Israel's prospect of realising the hopes of peace, the ticking bomb that could, more readily than any other, overturn the progress recently made and further poison Israel's relation with all your Arab neighbors, is in the situation of the Israeli troops in Southern Lebanon. You already had a demonstration of the dangers of that situation during last summer. Now I see it as the readiest weapon of the enemies of peace, and one of which, I believe, you could deprive them. Any agreement on Southern Lebanon, of course, would really be made with Syria, whatever formal deference were paid to the Lebanese government, and it is on this account that my friends tend to disagree with my assessment, they thinking that the Syrians would not agree to any easing of that situation but would hold it as a threat over Israel, I believing that that threat might be removed.

Prime Minister Rabin, November 13, '93 - 2

I have not believed, for some years, that the Israeli occupation of the Southern Lebanese "Security Zone," as it is called, is truly a defense of Israel, or a source of security for the Galilee. I see it rather as a liability for Israel, a ready excuse for attacks on the Galilee that would not otherwise be made, and last summer's events confirm me in that opinion.

This is familiar territory to me, not only in the sense that I have been through the area (quite some years ago, in 1982-83), but because I took up this matter with Mr. Arafat as long ago as 1988, at the time when a fair and constitutional election of a new President by the Lebanese Parliament was being subverted by a Syrian veto. My involvement with that aborted election was close enough so that I subsequently published, at his request, the correspondence, an often thorny correspondence, that I had had with M. Raymond Edde, who would have been elected President but for the Syrian veto, over the entire period 1988-1990 (under the title, *La question Libanaise selon Raymond Edde*, Paris, 1990) about the Syrian intervention in the election and its unfolding consequences. I had written to Mr. Arafat, with whom I had already had several meetings and a standing correspondence, earlier in 1988, urging that the Palestinians had incurred heavy moral debts to Lebanon and ought to give solid guarantees that Southern Lebanon would not be used as a base for any Palestinian attacks on Israel, undertaking to police and prevent any efforts even by Palestinian groups other than his own to attack or make raids into the Galilee, as a means of enabling Lebanon to obtain the withdrawal of Israeli troops. Arafat's very realistic response then was to say that he was very ready to prohibit any such attacks by anyone accountable to him, but that the main problem was with Palestinian rejectionist groups supported by Syria, with the result that no progress could be made in the matter without full Syrian agreement and cooperation. I could only acknowledge the truth of that, and it was not then in what Syria understood to be its interest to be helpful.

The dangers to Israel from Southern Lebanon have come from three sources. Initially, it was the principal base for P.L.O. attack, "Fatahland" as people liked to call it. By now it should be possible to cancel out that source of danger, as the security of Israel's border from anyone under Mr. Arafat's jurisdiction must surely be included in the accord between the P.L.O. and Israel. The rejectionist groups of Palestinians are a separate source of danger, but it should be entirely possible to rely on Syria to discipline them and prevent their attacks, if in fact the Syrians will agree to do that. The Syrians have, as I am sure you are aware, a most reliable record of keeping agreements once they have made them. They might want to have some facade of Lebanese patrolling of that border, but of course it would be Syria that would make any such agreement, and would then enforce it. The Lebanese Hezbollah is the third danger factor, but I believe that is also one that could be managed and obviated, the better without Israeli occupation of Southern Lebanon than with it.

Doubtless there are strong sympathy links between Lebanon's Hezbollah and the Palestinian Hamas/Islamic Jihad opposition to everything about Israel. Hezbollah, however, has never claimed a rationale or justification for raids across the border into Israel, and its rocket attacks on the Galilee even last summer were never presented as having any other justification than retaliation for Israeli attacks on civilian and military targets in Lebanon itself. It was disputed last summer whether the Israeli bombings or the Hezbollah rocket attacks came first, but no other plausible rationale for the Hezbollah attacks was ever forthcoming. The whole imbroglio appears to have begun with Israeli reprisal, not for attacks on the Galilee but for the killings of Israeli soldiers in Southern Lebanon itself. After the violence reached a level that created great international embarrassment for Israel, you were not able to negotiate any better agreement than that Hezbollah would refrain from renewed rocket attacks across the border (provided even yet that there were no Israeli attacks on the Lebanese population), and it was accepted that Hezbollah would still feel free to attack Israeli occupation troops in Lebanon. When subsequently, and very quickly after the initial agreement, more Israeli soldiers were killed there, Israel faced an impasse which, it appeared to me, may have been one of the motives for your agreeing to the accord with the P.L.O.

Prime Minister Rabin, November 13, '93 - 3

It was at that point, and before we outside the circle heard of the progress in Oslo, that I first decided to write to you on the lines of this letter: that the continued occupation of Southern Lebanon had become a terrible liability for Israel, a risk to any progress toward peace, and its termination should be a priority. Even as of then, it appeared to me that attacks by the P.L.O. were not any part of the program as the Washington negotiation efforts went on, that the Palestinian rejectionists could be controlled by Syria, and that the Hezbollah was a threat to Israel only so long as and for the reason that the occupation continued.

For Lebanon and its actually Syrian controllers, it was (and still is) a priority to disarm all the private militias that had torn up Lebanon among themselves throughout the period since 1975. This had been substantially accomplished with regard to all the others except Hezbollah, through Syrian decisions and military control that masqueraded, to the extent it could, as Lebanese. The disarming of Hezbollah itself was highly in the interest of Lebanese and Syrian authorities, at least as much so as the disarming of any of the other militias, for Syria itself even more so because of Hezbollah's Iranian links and rivalry with Syria's more pliant Shiite allies in Amal. But neither Syria nor anyone in Lebanon, government or representatives of the factions, could argue for the disarming of Hezbollah so long as Hezbollah could present itself basically as defenders of the independence and territorial integrity of Lebanon (Arab land) against foreign (Israeli) occupation. There was no way of arguing parity between Israeli and Syrian military occupation in Lebanon, and no way that any Lebanese government could lay claim to authority or respectability if it were publicly to acquiesce in Israeli occupation.

I believed then that this question could be raised with the Syrians. The truculence between Israel and Syria over who should make the first commitment, Israel to returning the Golan or Syria to the content of the peace, seemed largely a delaying action to excuse Syria from concluding an arrangement with Israel before the other Arab parties could simultaneously agree on the "comprehensive peace." Any agreement on the Golan would be seen by the other Arabs as the dreaded "separate peace" on Syria's part. An agreement on Southern Lebanon, however, would not have that character. The Syrians could do it, give the guarantee to Israel, even in the name of Lebanon, that Lebanon would not be a danger to Israel after an Israeli withdrawal of occupying forces. This would be gain, and something that could be publicly proclaimed as gain and progress toward the desired comprehensive peace, for both Israel and Syria. And the careful compliance of Syria, which is what I have learned to expect of any formal agreement Syria has once been brought to make, would be evidence to the Israeli public that an agreement with Syria that returned the Golan on terms of demilitarisation and guarantees of safety — who knows, perhaps even with the agreed lease of some of the land that Israelis have been cultivating back to Israel — could be trusted.

You would have had that letter from me if the Oslo agreement had not intervened. Now I look at the situation again to see what has changed. To me, this seems now a more plausible approach even than before, though I have waited to write it to you because of the doubts my friends express.

More than ever, the Israeli occupation in Southern Lebanon is ticking bomb. There is now much more concrete reason for the most violent rejectionist forces to try to subvert hopes of peace between Israel and the neighbors. This applies equally to the Damascus- (and Baghdad-) based secular rejectionists and to the resident Hamas/Islamic Jihad who have such easy access to Lebanon's Hezbollah. I see no easier place for them to stage wrecking outrages to destroy the peace. Hezbollah has publicly certified license to continue killing as many Israeli soldiers in Lebanon as it can. And so long as Syria and its Lebanese surrogates are inhibited from disarming and checking Hezbollah by the very fact of continued Israeli occupation in these exposed regions, there is no feasible way for Syria itself to police the secular Palestinian rejectionists, to expel their leadership from Damascus or to prevent their plots against Israel from Lebanese soil. Israeli forces, so far from controlling the dangers from Southern Lebanon, are hostages there to radical rejectionist forces and their hold on Syrian policy.

Prime Minister Rabin, November 13, '93 - 4

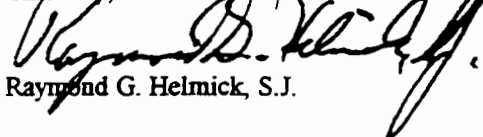
I have much sympathy for the view, imputed to you, most likely correctly, by American government spokesmen, that Israeli public opinion would be overburdened if people were asked just now, before they have seen it proven in their own terms that the agreement with the P.L.O. can be trusted, to accept the return of the Golan to Syria, in return for whatever terms the Syrians might offer. It is my strong impression that U.S. officials are urging you to prepare Israeli opinion for such an agreement with Syria, though in public, even in the statement President Clinton made at his joint press conference with President Mubarak, they support your position. At the same time, it seems to me most dangerous that Israel should be telling the Syrians just now, while they are feeling so hurt about the P.L.O.'s having made an agreement with you without consulting them, to sit about in the waiting room until you get around to paying some heed to them. Sooner or later, that is bound to make Syria the active opponent of the agreement.

My friends argue that Syria will not consent to an agreement with you over Southern Lebanon so long as they have the chance to use that situation as pressure against you over the Golan. I've considered their argument carefully, and do not believe it is necessarily true. All my instinct tells me that this is the area where you and the Syrians could come to a mutually reassuring agreement that would put the Syrian track back into the peace negotiations, provide evidence to the public in Israel that Syria can make an agreement and keep it, and by easing Syrian pressure on you and on the peace process, give you a bit of time to prepare the Israeli public for an agreement with Syria over the Golan. All this while defusing that ticking bomb in Southern Lebanon. I can't advance any certainty that this approach would work, but I think it is one that should be explored.

I will drop a copy of this letter down to Washington, by way of Mr. McLarty. And I will also write a letter, which will be mirror image of this, to President Asad, urging that he take up this question with Israel as a way of breaking Syria's current isolation in the peace process, neutralising the danger of shipwrecking all the hopes of peace on some crazy and unpredictable terrorist venture out of Southern Lebanon, and coming to a mutually beneficial interim agreement with Israel that carries no smell of the "separate peace."

My most cordial best wishes are with you and the people of Israel. You can see that they are with the Palestinians and your Arab neighbors as well. I congratulate you once again on the tremendously brave and far-sighted agreement you have made with the P.L.O. Coming from one to whom religious faith is a powerful motivating force, you have my prayers for peace and all its blessings on all your peoples.

Sincerely,



Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

STATE OF PALESTINE
PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION
Office of the President



١٤٦
ولة فلسطين
نظمة التحرير الفلسطينية
مكتب الرئيس

رقم :
تاريخ :

Father Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.
Jesuit Community
Boston College Chestnut Hill
Massachusetts 02167 - 3802
U.S.A.

Dear Father Helmick, S.J.,

Greetings,

Kindly find enclosed the Arabic original
and the English translation of the letter of
thanks from H.E. President Yasser Arafat, in
answer to your letter of 20 September 1993.

With my best regards.

Tunis: 27 November 1993

Dr. Sami Musallam

Sami Musallam
Director of the Office of the President



دولة فلسطين
منظمة التحرير الفلسطينية
مكتب الرئيس

الرقم :

التاريخ :

Father Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.
Jesuit Community
Boston College Chestnut Hill
Massachusetts 02167 - 3802
U.S.A.

Dear Father Helmick, S.J.,

Greetings,

With great appreciation I have received your valuable letter and read with great interest your views and pieces of advice. Thank you for your brotherly concern and sincere interest in the steps we are undertaking for the achievement of just peace in the area which guarantees for our people their freedom and independence and for the people of the area security, stability and cooperation.

I share your view that we have to exert big efforts in order to achieve tangible results on the ground which will enable our people to feel the results of peace and increase their adherence to it. This, however, depends on the implementation, by the Israeli side, of the agreement in good faith intention and with a spirit of understanding.

STATE OF PALESTINE
PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION

Office of the President



١٤٩
دولة فلسطين
منظمة التحرير الفلسطينية
مكتب الرئيس

رقم :

تاريخ :

It also depends on the readiness of the international community and its active forces, especially the U.S.A., to provide the necessary assistance needed for making this agreement succeed.

Thank you and wish you good health and success.

Tunis: 24 November 1993

Yasser Arafat
President of the State of Palestine
Chairman of the Executive Committee of the
Palestine Liberation Organization



دولة فلسطين
منظمة التحرير الفلسطينية
اللجنة التنفيذية
الرئيس

الأب الصديق ريموند .ج. هيلميك
الرهينة اليسوعية في بوسطن
الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية

تحية طيبة وبعد،

ببالغ التقدير، تلقيت رسالتكم القيمة وقرأت
بأهتمام كبير وجهات نظركم ونصائحكم. وإنني أشكركم على حرصكم
الأخوي واهتمامكم الصادق بالخطوات التي نقوم بها، من أجل إحلال
السلام العادل في منطقتنا والذي يضمن لشعبنا حريته وإستقلاله ولكافة
شعوب المنطقة الأمن والإستقرار والتعاون.

أشاطركم الرأي بأن علينا بذل مجهود كبير حتى
نحقق نتائج ملموسة على الأرض تجعل شعبنا يتلمس نتائج السلام
وتزيد من تمسكه به. لكن هذا يعتمد أيضاً على الجانب الإسرائيلي في
تطبيق الاتفاق بنوايا حسنة وبروح التفهم، ويعتمد أيضاً على إستعداد
المجتمع الدولي والقوى الفاعلة فيه وخاصة الولايات المتحدة
الأمريكية لتقديم الدعم اللازم والضروري لإنجاح الاتفاق.

أشكركم مجدداً، وأتمنى لكم دوام الصحة والتوفيق.

تونس في : ٢٤ - ١١ - ١٩٩٣

ياسر عرفات
رئيس دولة فلسطين
رئيس اللجنة التنفيذية لمنظمة التحرير الفلسطينية

יועץ ראש הממשלה ומנהל הלשכה
Head of the Prime Minister's Bureau

December 22, 1993
4Q.683

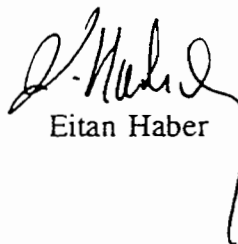
Mr. Raymond G. Helmick
Jesuit Community
Boston College
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts 02167-3802
U.S.A.

Dear Mr. Helmick,

On behalf of the Prime Minister, Mr. Yitzhak Rabin, thank you for your letter of November 13, 1993 expressing your support for the Declaration of Principles and the Agreement of Mutual Recognition signed between Israel and the Palestinians.

Your suggestions to Mr. Rabin have been noted.

Sincerely,


Eitan Haber

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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

March 1, 1993

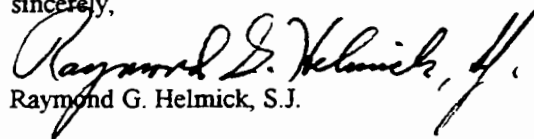
Mr. Thomas F. McClarty
Chief of Staff
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. McClarty,

The letter enclosed, from Eitan Haber, head of the Prime Minister's Bureau in Jerusalem, apparently the equivalent of Chief of Staff, came in response to the letter I had written January 27 to Prime Minister Rabin, which you have. I thought you should have a copy of this as well, and directly.

Best wishes,

sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



March 7, 1994

Dr. Nasser al-Kidwa
Head of Mission
Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the U.N.
115 East 65th Street
New York, N.Y. 10021

Dear Dr. al-Kidwa,

Salaam!


I am enclosing a letter for President Arafat. Dealing as it does with this enormous crisis that has come from the massacre at Hebron, which escalates so rapidly, I think of it as very urgent. I waited a long time for fear that I would only be a busybody writing at this time, but finally felt I had to speak my piece. Now that things are a bit more civilized than before between the U.S. and the PLO, I wouldn't hesitate, as I did before, to send this directly in the mail to Tunis. But I don't know just where President Arafat will actually be, and since I am sure you will know that, I would appreciate it if you would get this to him as quickly as possible, even by FAX.

As I note at the end of the letter, I will be sending copies of it off immediately to Prime Minister Rabin, whom it also concerns, to President Clinton and to Mr. Robert Pelletreau at the State Department. I've met him on my last two visits to Cairo, while he was still Ambassador there, and am more positively impressed by him than I have been by any other American diplomat for some time. I regard his role in American policy toward the region as good news for all the parties working so hard for a genuine peace.

I'm glad to see the transformation through which your own interventions at the U.N. are now taken so much more seriously by the major powers. You represent the Palestinians remarkably well, as I have known since long before you became Head of Mission.

With all best wishes,

sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

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March 7, 1994

President Yasser Arafat
Palestine Liberation Organization

Dear President Arafat,

Salaam!

May I complement you first on the steadfastness you have shown in these very difficult times of the search for a just peace. My heart has gone out to you constantly, as it has too for those Israelis most committed to the peace, as you have contended with so many obstacles and the attrition of support during these long delays. Because I am not in the middle of it, I have kept telling myself to keep out and not interpose my own opinions into the serious work you are doing. I am so concerned now that I think I should write to you simply to set in order what I see as the principle problems and the priorities in solving them.

The beginning of implementation for the Declaration of Principles, scheduled for December 13, has been so long delayed as to discourage Palestinians from believing it will ever come, eroding support both for the agreement and for you. That disbelief affects the Israeli public also, as the initiation of a new situation, which some welcome and some oppose or dread, recedes into an unpredictable future. I realize well that this is the obstacle you have been striving against ever since the December implementation date was first threatened. It remains the priority against which every more recent obstacle arising from the massacre at the Tomb of Abraham needs to be judged.

The most intelligent thing I heard about that priority, beginning to implement the establishment of your Palestinian authority in Gaza and Jericho, came from Robert Pelletreau during our U.S. Interreligious Committee visit to Cairo early last December, while he was still U.S. Ambassador to Egypt. Commenting on the erosion of support that had already taken place by then, he said it was to be expected that the confidence in any expectations from it would erode up to the time the implementation began, but that it would return as soon as people could actually see results on the ground: Palestinians seeing real improvement in their lives, Israelis getting the sense that threats to their security were actually receding. That, I believe, still remains the key. Implementation of that agreement should be sought with the greatest care, and response to the new developments calculated to advance, and not impede, that implementation.

This has been complicated by the Hebron massacre, which has brought into the spotlight of Palestinian and also world attention the fact, which you and many others of us knew perfectly well before, that the Palestinian public needs protection from these fanatic armed settlers. We were all aware beforehand that there would be outrages, often murderous, from the extremist opponents of the peace. Those of us who devoted our effort to advancing the peace were already telling one another and anyone else who would listen that it was essential not to be deflected from the agreed steps toward the peace by these predictable outbreaks of violence, and I heard it constantly too from all those, in your camp and in the Israelis', who carried actual responsibility for steering the process of negotiation. I think you and the many other Palestinians who say that the Hebron massacre has now changed the equation are correct, and that new agreements have to be reached now because of that event. My concern is that the kind of

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demands made by Palestinians, or the recalcitrance of Israeli government in meeting them, not be allowed to obstruct but should instead advance the implementation of the September agreement.

Since September I have believed that your agreement with the Israelis was good for the Palestinians, in the sense that it would bring them, through some intermediary steps, to the attainment of a Palestinian State, in all the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem, at peace with Israel and able to cooperate and prosper in genuine reconciliation with those who had been your enemies. I have argued against those, represented sharply in the U.S. by Edward Said and the many who rightly honor his long commitment to justice for the Palestinians, who have thought that too much was conceded by the PLO, and that those hoped-for results were even forfeited by the September signing. My considered opinion has been that you were embarked on the course that would really bring you to the goals your people sought, and not to the damage but rather the ultimate advantage of the Israelis too.

In the light of the Hebron massacre, I would say now that the element of securing the safety of the Palestinians under occupation was not adequately provided for in the September agreement. I don't say that to fault you at all, since I shared fully in advocating a calculated gamble that their safety could be nursed along until better protection became available through the progress of the peace. It was evident to me, as to all of you, that the Hebron-type settlement was a time-bomb (in Faisal Husseini's current phrase). The fault, I feel, has been basically on the Israeli side in this matter. Israeli government and public opinion, and their supporters elsewhere, have been preoccupied with the safety of Israelis. I can't quarrel with that, as Israelis have come under attack, both from the extremists in the recent circumstances since September, and through a long history of this conflict. The fault is rather that Israeli government and public have not recognized the threat to Palestinians and their need of protection, and this is what now urgently requires correction.

Both you and the Israelis have the responsibility to control your own fanatics, extremists and simple criminals. You are left with no constitutionally sanctioned means to do so because you do not yet have a Palestinian police or any other means of producing law and order among your own people. When the PLO, or such a group as the Fatah Hawks, tries to enforce discipline by any means not sanctioned by such recognized constitutional authority, you are open to the charge, readily brought by your enemies, of exercising some undemocratic or unconstitutional power over your own people. That is the urgency of getting to implementation of that part of the September 13 agreement. You have no means of demonstrating the good faith with which, in fact, you undertook that responsibility, until you have a Palestinian police actually operating in Gaza and Jericho, with the prospect that its authority will be extended to the rest of the Occupied Territories. I'm anxious to keep myself out of the condemnation business, and not excoriate the Israeli government for the delays in implementation. I understand how they have been responding to their public's fear of real Palestinian authority. But I see them as having been at fault in not recognizing that as a priority. I hear Israelis and their supporters claiming that it is the PLO that has been trying to push beyond what was agreed in the Oslo document. I don't know enough detail of your negotiations to judge that, but my sense is that the Israelis have failed to act on the urgency of this priority in particular.

You and the government of Mr. Rabin are now in so much need of one another that one major priority for each of you is not to undermine the other's credibility with your own publics. The fault I impute to Mr. Rabin and his government here offends that criterion: it has been constantly damaging you, and that is really against their own interest as well as yours. The fault I impute to you, and which I share with you, is to have underestimated the immediate urgency of providing protection to Palestinians from fanatics among the settlers. That offends, initially, not against the credibility of Mr. Rabin's government, but against your own (and my) estimate of how immediate the danger from the settlers was. But in

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responding to the new post-Hebron situation now, both you and Mr. Rabin need to avoid discrediting one another with your own publics.

What then are the requirements, for each of you, to respond to this massacre crisis without damaging the other's ability to advance the peace, or of course of sacrificing your own standing? I note that even President Clinton, who used to blame delays automatically on you and your negotiating side, has been speaking of your need to satisfy your own public and of the good faith with which you are meeting the crisis, and the need for patience on everyone else's part until you can bring the Palestinians back to negotiation. Under the circumstances, I'm not sure how much help that praise is to you with your own public, but I am glad to see that he has recognized that, and hope that it will go some way to establishing Palestinian confidence in American good faith.

The responsibility for controlling the violence of Israeli settlers is with the Israeli government. I know as well as you how much even Mr. Rabin himself is compromised, in Palestinian eyes, by the way he advocated violent suppression of Palestinian protest during the *intifada*, disproportionate — the breaking of bones, etc. — even to the level of violence used then by the Palestinians: stonethrowing, etc. I know too of the many Palestinians, most often young men but many times even women, children and the old, who have been killed or injured by the Israeli Army for manifesting their opposition to occupation in ways that were no conceivable threat to the lives of those who killed them. These are incomparably more numerous than the Israeli victims of Palestinian violence over these years, and this consistent violation of Palestinian rights, under occupation circumstances that placed the responsibility for the safety of the public (Palestinian as well as Israeli) squarely with Israeli authority, has to undermine and discredit any confidence among Palestinians of the Israeli Army protecting them. The appalling toll of Palestinians who have been killed by the Israeli Army in these last days, since the Hebron massacre, for their protests against it, has to confirm the terrible distrust of Palestinians for Occupation authority over them of any kind. That argues to the urgency of getting to the implementation stage of the Oslo agreement, which will put the protection of Palestinians in Palestinian hands.

What demands are, in those circumstances, going to advance rather than hinder the progress of that implementation? I hear demands for two things: disarming of the settlers and removal of the settlements. I agree that the issue of settlements has now been put upon the table in a way that was not provided for in the Oslo agreement, but rather postponed to a later stage. I hear, with much alarm, a lack of unity among the many PLO voices. That makes it far more difficult for the Israelis to respond. Some appear to be making maximal demands at this stage that look only toward assuaging the understandable outrage among Palestinians who are already disillusioned by the long delay of what should have been happening since December 13, but not paying attention to what Mr. Rabin must have if he is not to lose his standing with his own public. Just this morning (March 7) I hear reports that seven of the fifteen members of the Israeli cabinet have argued for removing the whole community of 400 (or 450 or whatever the number is) of settlers from within the city of Hebron itself. Frankly, I would argue against that, and advocate instead that the Israeli authorities set rigorous standards for the behavior of those settlers — not only those inside Hebron but in Qyriat Arba as well, with a view to extending it to all settlements in the Occupied Territories — and expelling, or in cases that call for it disarming, detaining or bringing criminal charges against those individuals, and those only, who offend the standards either by violent actions or threats or by hate-mongering. For that, I believe that Mr. Rabin would have the support of the Israeli public, all of it, that is, that is not in fact intent on depriving the Palestinians of their rights. It would not involve Mr. Rabin in the immediate decision to dismantle settlements — even the dismantling of a single settlement, however unruly, would raise the issue of the dismantling of all of them in the minds of the Israeli public, and that is something Mr. Rabin cannot afford. For you, too, that would mean destroying rather than advancing the possibilities of peace.

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My thinking on this is that such an action on the Israeli government's part would demonstrate, in a way the Palestinian public should be able to understand, that Israel takes responsibility to protect those it subjects to occupation from the depredations of its own extremists. This would of course have to be supplemented by the prevention of unjustifiable violence toward Palestinians by the Israeli Army itself. Given all the reasons Palestinians have fundamentally to distrust that army, that brings us back to the need to establish the authority of a Palestinian police promptly, as should have been happening since last December. But until the entire question of the settlements can be taken up, a thing which cannot be done now without destroying the Rabin government, the policing of these Israeli settlers must be done by Israeli forces. It is very new for the Israeli government or public, or their supporters overseas, even to think in terms of protection of Palestinians. To their discredit, their concern all this time, despite all the evidence of harm to Palestinians by official Israeli policy and private settler outrage, has been only for danger to Israelis, and of course they have had reason for that concern. The recognition of Israeli responsibility for the safety of Palestinians is on the Israeli and the wider Jewish conscience now, and the unacceptability of the settler violence and plans for further harm to Palestinians recognized and accepted. That is the one positive aspect of this Hebron outrage on which you can build now, and I believe you should be careful to build on it and not let the Israeli public be distracted by new fears of what Palestinians demand of them. This new fact should be exploited for building the peace, not be allowed to increase alienation.

What then of the two demands: disarming of the settlers and removal of the settlements?

I agree entirely that the arms-carrying is a great danger and fundamentally offensive. I spend a good part of my energies in the U.S. opposing the gun-crazy culture of my own country, where murder and suicide are so insanely rife because of the gun-toting, and realize how much the Israeli gun-toting is a cultural import from the U.S. I don't believe, though, that you can propose the disarming of all the settlers as an immediate consequence of the Hebron massacre, without again burdening the Rabin government of Israel with a demand that would destroy it. It is not all the settlers who pose this kind of danger. The people who have been attracted to the high-density settlements that are effectively suburbs to Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, or even to the other larger settlements where the inducement was financial subsidies, are not the ones from whom Palestinians are in danger. They carry their guns, but out of actual fear of attack on the roads.

I was present, last December 1st, along with our Jewish-Christian-Muslim group of the U.S. Interreligious Committee, just after the drive-by shooting that day of an Israeli settler car, when a young woman kindergarten-teacher and a teenage boy were murdered, both of them hitchhikers with an Israeli settler and his two children, all of whom were badly wounded as they were trying to repair their car by the roadside. It was an instructive day for all of us, as we were on our way to Bir Zeit, and found the university students there, all placed under curfew and ordered home over roads which, they knew, were filled with enraged armed settlers. It illustrated for me both the fears that lead even the least violence-prone of the Israeli settlers to insist on having their guns with them, and the real dangers to all the Palestinian residents of the Occupied Territories. We, having a bus with plenty of room in it, loaded up with as many of the young women students from as far away as Jerusalem as we could get onto it and brought them back with us for their safety.

The demand to disarm all the settlers at once would be an insupportable threat to life for all such settlers, even the ones who are Peace Now members but live, as many do, in this long-subsidized housing in the West Bank. The disarmament ought to come, but can only come when they have assurance of their basic safety on those roads. Surely, their protection ought to be the responsibility of police, not of themselves. But the macho self-defense image of the Israeli has taken such root now that such a possibility has to be built. It does not exist now.

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Meanwhile, the danger to Palestinians of those guns comes not from these people but from a hard core of militant extremists whose intention in carrying the guns is all malice toward Palestinians. These are not only the fundamentalist Rambo-fanatics from Brooklyn in the Kach and Kahane Chai factions. They are equally the Gush Emunin extremists like Rabbi Moshe Levinger, who has never been held seriously accountable for his many killings and who is so central to the whole mystique of the Hebron settlements. Practically as dangerous are the people under the spell of Generals Eitan, Ze'evi and Sharon. By the time all these are included -- as I would calculate it, some 10,000 among the 130,000 settlers in occupied areas apart from the extended boundaries of Jerusalem -- you are dealing with a political force whose strength is beyond the ability of Prime Minister Rabin simply to disarm them by fiat. Again, I urge you not to let the Palestinian demand be one that would destroy the government with which you can conclude the peace. This is why I believe the criterion of settler *conduct* should be established: that individual persons should be disarmed and/or expelled from the territories or formally accused of crimes on the basis of their actions or hate-mongering. That, I believe, would be accepted by the Israeli public, even strongly supported in the wake of their shame at the Hebron massacre, and is something Prime Minister Rabin could accomplish without endangering his government, even with credit to it in the Israeli public's eye. That Israeli public is really far more decent than Baruch Goldstein.

The dismantling of the settlements is equally not a demand that can promote progress on the peace at this time, and however attractive a proposition it is to the Palestinian public, or however golden an opportunity this crisis may seem to people in the PLO to raise a question that has been bracketed out of the Oslo agreement to be addressed only at a later stage, judgment should be made of it only on this basis: will it advance the peace or will it stop it cold in its tracks? Stopping it cold in its tracks is not in your or your people's interest. The question will come up, as it should, in the agreed agenda, at the agreed time, as you accepted in September. I think it must be clear to you, from the responses you hear from Prime Minister Rabin, how dangerous it would be to him and his government if this entire question were forced onto the agenda now.

I will tell you the context in which I say this. I do believe firmly that, from the very beginning in 1967, when the first settlements were set up in the Jordan valley for what were understood to be reasons of security, all these settlements have been entirely illegal: a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention's regulations for the administration of occupied territory, a violation of the United Nations Charter prohibition of the acquiring of territory by force, as underlined in the initial clauses of Security Council Resolution 242. This has been all the more true of the vastly expanded settlement policy initiated by the Likud governments since 1977, with its cynical "creation of facts" strategy to usurp Palestinian land.

Granted all that, I still don't believe that the final agreement -- something, as you have already accepted, that should be *negotiated* -- should involve the wholesale expulsion of this settler population. I've written to you before, several times, how I see this being played out, and you have seen it also in letters I have sent to both Mr. Shamir and Mr. Rabin, and shown to the U.S. governments as well. It is clear to me that it is extremely important to the Israelis and other Jews, as a constituent necessity of their self-understanding, not only for religious fanatics or secular racists but for quite reasonable people too, that it be possible for Jews to live in Judea and Samaria, as they prefer to call it. That is a different issue from the unlawful effort to usurp Palestinian land, or from the criminal "facts on the ground" policy to displace one population with another. I think that is a Jewish priority that deserves Palestinian respect, and that as a practical matter it is essential for establishing the peace and amity of the two peoples. It has its parallel in the equal right and importance of Palestinians to live in Haifa and Jaffa. In both cases it needs to be regulated, by full agreement between the peoples, in such a way that there is no attempt to reverse population balances by inundating either territory with excessive numbers.

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My own formula, which I have spelled out to you often enough that you may recall it readily, is that there should be an open border between Israel and Palestine, that it should be possible and accepted, with that limitation that the numbers be controlled by agreement, for Jews to live in Palestine, or Palestinians in Israel, choosing their own citizenship and voting in their own people's elections according to that choice, but subject to the law of the country, Israel or Palestine, in which they are living. In that way, the two peoples living side by side in these adjacent lands, each with so much interest in the other's land, would each have their own territory, the borders internationally recognized, but each people would also have access to the whole of the land, as each really wants and has wanted all the time.

Most obviously, the people who can live in one another's territory under those conditions are not the land-grabbing violent extremists. In the course of reaching such an agreed outcome, all of those would be expelled, the Israeli fanatics by the action of their own government in the manner I have described above, on the basis of their conduct, and policed by their own government if, after expulsion, they violated the agreed terms.

I hear consistently that, of the 130,000 population of Israelis living in settlements in the Occupied Territories, some large proportion -- 30%, 40% 50% according to various polls, of which I don't know which to believe -- would be prepared to move back to Israel if it were made economically feasible for them. I am told that the subsidies that made it so much cheaper to live in the Occupied Territories than in Israel itself have been ended, and I don't know whether that is yet entirely true or not. The actual cost of moving, and giving up the stake people have developed in their homes of many years, would call for some government compensation, which I am sure the Israeli government will eventually have to pay, and my understanding is that many people, in Gaza settlements as well as the West Bank, are hesitant to make the move they are otherwise ready to make until they know that that compensation will be given, quite understandably. The Israeli government, meanwhile, has just as understandably to calculate the effect that announcing such compensation would have, and its timing, as the announcement right now might simply set off a panic among the Israeli public which would not be in your interest or theirs. The right strategy, to my mind, in the present moment of crisis after Hebron, is to have that kind of prospect clear in the minds of your own leadership, discuss it with the Israeli negotiators at such time as you find that is feasible -- this is not something they should find threatening, as it has no resemblance whatever to the famous casting of the Israelis into the sea -- and, in the meantime, pursue the objective of having those particular settlers, and those only, who are a present threat to the lives of Palestinians, or the instigators of hate, dealt with summarily by the Israeli government. You should be sure that you can be satisfied yourself, and can satisfy your people, that this does not include only a token number of the worst offenders, who can be made an example, but all those who fit that description.

I have tried, in writing this letter, to limit the terms of what is demanded of the Israelis by the PLO in view of the really changed situation after Hebron, and have kept referring to things that would prevent your opposite number and actual partner in promoting the peace, Mr. Rabin, from ever accomplishing that goal. I am just as conscious of what would be so restrictive of your response to the crisis as to lose you any part of your standing with your Palestinian public, and I do not think that I have unrealistically framed my proposals in a way that would leave you damaged in their eyes. I know how much your political options have been limited already by the disillusionment that Palestinians have suffered from many sources over a long time.

Realizing how much you are challenged, not only by rejectionists, religious and secular, but even by PLO and Fatah leaders who are genuinely pained and cast into doubt by the many concessions and postponements in the agreements, and the insufferable delay in implementing what has already been agreed, I want to affirm again my own very strong support and admiration for the leadership you are

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giving your people. I believe strongly that the condition of your persuading your people of proposals such as I am offering here is that they see you as actively leading, and I say that in support, not in criticism. You are being required now to act in ways for which none of your experience to date has prepared you, and so I do not hesitate, or rather I overcome my hesitation, to offer you recommendations on what I see as the necessary style of that leadership now. These are all things I have written to you before, but I urge them in this crisis out of an awareness of what an unfamiliar situation you are now being called on to address.

Your people, I believe, have great need to understand that they are the protagonists of their own liberation and the making of the peace. I wrote to you last summer, before most of us knew anything of the Oslo negotiations, of how the Palestinians resident in the Occupied Territories had had the very novel experience, through the time of the *intifada*, of knowing that they were setting the agenda, that everything that was done in Israeli politics, or in American policy toward the Middle East, was a response, even when it was a negative response, to their initiative. That exhilarating experience was lost to them later, from the time the Madrid process started, and they became once again people to whom things were done, for whom decisions were made by others. They became disillusioned at the lack of results from the efforts of negotiators for whom they had at first had great enthusiasm. Even the quite necessary secrecy with which you negotiated the Oslo declaration, the great success to date of your whole life's effort to secure the future freedom of the Palestinians, was resented for precisely the reason that people, even those high in the negotiating team and others in significant positions in the PLO structure, felt they had had no voice in it. This was most serious among those who had led in the *intifada* on the ground, who had suffered in the prisons and built the network of solidarity through which people in the Occupied Territories maintained their great struggle. The most important element, I believe, in the securing of your valuable and even indispensable leadership in the new circumstances -- since the handshake on the White House lawn, since Hebron -- is that you find the ways of restoring to people that sense that they set the agenda, that the initiative is theirs.

I hear all the accusations of your autocratic leadership. I believe that those who make that charge, whether those who believe it and are genuinely grieved or those who throw it at you maliciously to undermine your leadership, are misreading the situation. I have every understanding of the need you must feel, faced with the machinations of all sorts of people who could pervert the whole course of your effort, to hold the lead. The condition of that, I believe, is that people feel themselves led and empowered by you, rather than circumscribed and controlled. I am sure you are at least as aware of this as I, and I have a sense of how uncharted must be the course for you to achieve this objective, which I am sure you share. I told you at the beginning of this letter that I wanted to be concerned with establishing priorities, and in this matter I see two major priorities for establishing that certainty of leadership.

A. Most important is the active involvement of the mass of the people, "the street" as we like to call it currently, in such a level of activity as people experienced at the heyday of the *intifada*.

As I wrote to you earlier, last summer, the *intifada* had two characteristics that made it eventually an effective appeal to the conscience of the Israelis. First, it was a protest against occupation, not a rejection of Israel, and that made it possible for the Israelis finally to hear what was being said. They could not have heard it with any kind of belief if it had been a rejection of themselves and denial of the legitimacy of their existence, any more than the Palestinians could ever hear with belief the denials of their legitimate existence by the Golda Meirs, the Eitans, the Sharons. Its second characteristic was its at least relative non-violence. That the rejection of occupation was asserted with stones and courage, rather than with guns and bombs, gave it a strength that no military or guerrilla campaign could have achieved. Israel was quite prepared to defeat anything the Palestinians, or even all the Arab states together, could

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bring against them militarily. The time would have come, perhaps in fifty or a hundred years, maybe sooner, when the Israelis would have lost that ephemeral military superiority and been defeated and destroyed, as I believe they eventually realized, but in the meantime they would have destroyed the Palestinians beyond recovery. The *intifada*, however, brought moral rather than military force to bear, and as hard as the Israelis tried to defeat it militarily and by suppression, there was really nothing they could effectively do against it. The eventual achievements of the Oslo accord, with their promise for the future, were won by that means.

For the people to have that same certainty of being the controllers of the agenda again, they need to duplicate those characteristics of the *intifada*. Their activity has to be purged of hatred, and express rejection of occupation and denial of their rights, not a rejection of the Jews or of Israel. And now, more than at any time in the *intifada*, they need to be absolutely non-violent in the expression of their determination and rejection. That is an indispensable requirement of their success. Any level of violence puts the success of the whole effort at risk, even stone-throwing. This is the time for a most indomitable campaign of civil disobedience and non-cooperation with the occupation and with the system that puts the Palestinians under the heels of violent settler extremism. It is essential that any such campaign be something the Palestinians do under their legitimate leadership, which is vested in yourself, but if either of those two requirements were violated, you would be discredited as a leader of the reconciliation itself. It all has to happen with the full participation of the people, and with full, and non-violent, respect for the Israelis. You need to be positively Ghandian in your leadership at this juncture, and you have my confidence that you can carry it off. I see no other course that promises the success of your people. I know that this is advice that will be very uncomfortable to the Israelis and their government, who have been accustomed to holding the initiative themselves, were terribly upset by the success of the *intifada*, and will be forced to accept your moral equality with themselves if you succeed. But such an effort on your part is, as I would read it, the only thing that offers a real prospect of success for them too.

You have the problem now of violence carried out by Palestinians, Hamas or the Damascus crowd of rejectionists, even some of your own more disillusioned adherents in the Fatah Hawks. Just like the violence of the settlers, even that of a Baruch Goldstein, this endangers the whole process of seeking the peace, and like Goldstein's violence, some of this Palestinian violence (not all) is deliberately calculated for just that purpose, to destroy any chance of peace. I see no other way that you will control this, as you really must, unless every Palestinian understands that such violence is a betrayal of and mortal danger to a non-violent campaign of rejection of occupation in which every one of them plays a part. It must be their campaign, not yours on their behalf.

B. The other major priority is to include the young leadership, the people who were in the jails in the *intifada* and are now the street leadership, and also the young professionals who bring real technical expertise to the problems of the new Palestinian society. You truly need them, both of these classes of people, for the solidity of your own leadership, and there is no substitute for giving them genuine positions of trust. You have been living among exile leadership all these years, so many years that the ages of the principal figures are much like your own and mine. I've met you in your own offices and other unpretentious places in Tunis often enough so that now, when now I hear the Occupied Territories Palestinians speak with dismissal of "the people who have lived in the four-star hotels," I know that is not you. The people who have borne the heat of the day in Palestine don't all know that, and they don't know either how much of the heat of the day the exiles have borne themselves. For much of the time of the Palestinian *diaspora*, it was simply too dangerous to entrust major leadership to the resident population in the Occupied Territories, because they were so subject to Israeli pressure and manipulation, and there seemed so much danger that they would make a peace for themselves and forget the exiles. Both groups are essential now to the authentic leadership of the Palestinians as a people. It would still be

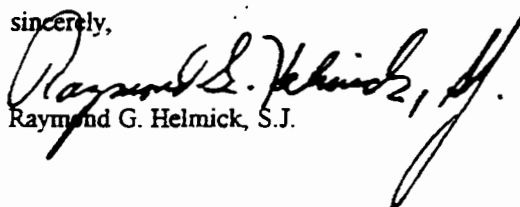
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too alarming to the exiles to see the traditional leaders, whom you have known so well over the years that you automatically turn to them, displaced. Equally, if the young leaders of the Occupied Territories do not have honored and prominent place, it is the whole popular sentiment of the resident population that will be lost, and you must not allow that. Even those of other Palestinian parties who have bravely carried forward the Palestinian cause need to be included now, and not assumed to be an opposition. You know very well who the opposition really are: they are the obstructors of the peace.

I have the feeling that this last subject is a sensitive one with you, and hope you will not be offended by it. I understand how difficult it is, for one who has fought such a lifetime's struggle as you have, surrounded by the companions of that struggle, to learn to trust another generation whose experience, as bitter as your own, has simply been quite different. As one of much the same age as yourself, I have had the wonderful advantage in recent years of teaching young people, learning the most generous enthusiasm that they bring to arduous tasks. I recommend to you the cultivation of a close, trusting and inquiring relation with them. Once established in Jericho, you will have opportunities for that that you don't have now. I recommended to you also, in an earlier letter, Mubarak Awad, who made so much headway as a teacher of non-violent protest in the Occupied Territories, and was expelled by the Israelis, who feared him more than any advocate of violence, shortly before the beginning of the *intifada*. Whether it be he or some other, I feel you need on your staff a really serious trained expert in non-violent resistance techniques.

I write all of this with a sense of great urgency, as I see the efforts of so many years endangered by the crisis this evil fanatic has created so deliberately in Hebron. And I venture what I would otherwise feel was impertinent advice because I don't sense that the PLO leadership has been speaking with one voice in these recent days, which have been so critical. I will forward this letter to you through Dr. Nasser al-Kidwa, who will know where you are and can get it to you immediately, even by FAX. Because its contents are pertinent to them, I will also send copies of it, immediately, to Prime Minister Rabin, to President Clinton, and to Mr. Robert Pelletreau. My best wishes and prayers for your success,

sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

March 7, 1994

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin
The Knesset
Jerusalem
ISRAEL

Dear Prime Minister Rabin,

Shalom!

I have just sent the enclosed letter to Mr. Yasser Arafat, in hope of being some help to him as he threads his way through the crisis raised by the massacre at the mosque in Hebron. As it pertains to you as well, I thought it best that you should have a copy of what I wrote to him without any delay. I hope he will see his way to considering this advice seriously.

Part of my recommendation to him, as you see, is to recognize that you and he are now embarked together on the effort for peace, and must avoid placing demands on one another that would destroy the other's chances to succeed at it. I have urged him, for that reason, against demanding either a sweeping disarmament of settlers, or that the issue of settlements be put on the table immediately, in contravention of the Oslo Declaration of Principles.

I do see the Hebron tragedy as having genuinely changed the context of the negotiations, and requiring that new issues be addressed. As I see it, the essential newly recognized issue is that the Palestinians urgently need protection against the rampages of the most intransigent of the settlers. That, rather than disarming of settlers or raising the question of settlements immediately, is what I believe you need to address to make it possible for the PLO to return to negotiations. That is not merely a question of Kach and Kahane Chai, but a much wider question that Israel has so far failed to address. I understand how important it is, and has always been, for Israel to protect the safety of Israelis. Israelis have long appeared not even to raise the question of the safety of Palestinians, and the current crisis reveals the dangers of that failure.

I hear it reported, as of this day (March 7), that seven members of your cabinet advise removing the settlers from Hebron. As I write to Mr. Arafat, I would myself advise against that. I would much prefer to see a stringent code of conduct imposed on the settlers, first those in Hebron, then of Qyriat Arba, eventually of all settlers, that would authorize the Israeli Army to remove, disarm, intern, bring criminal charges, or take whatever action is appropriate against any of these settler extremists who individually violated it. That would relieve you of having to shut down any particular settlement at this time, though few might remain in Hebron on that basis, thus raising the whole question of settlements with the Israeli public in an untimely way. I think that is an action that the Israeli public would accept, and I hope would be sufficient to bring the PLO back to the table.

I take it as most urgent that the implementation of the Oslo declaration, in respect of the Palestinian administration of Gaza and Jericho, not be further delayed. Not only does that delay cripple Mr. Arafat, as the Palestinian who can really make peace with Israel. It also prevents the Palestinians from demonstrating to Israelis that they can, in good faith, police the violent among their own ranks. The PLO has the responsibility to prevent Palestinian violence, just as you have to prevent Israeli violence against them. But until there is such a thing as a Palestinian police, the PLO has no effective means to

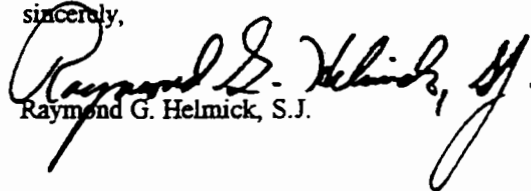
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Prime Minister Rabin, March 7, '94 - 2

carry out that responsibility. That is a disability that should not be permitted to exist any longer than can possibly be avoided.

I give you already more than enough to read in the copy of my letter to Mr. Arafat. Please accept the assurance of my genuine admiration and best wishes to you in the efforts you are making to achieve the peace under such a burden of difficulties.

sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

March 7, 1994

Mr. Thomas F. McLarty
Chief of Staff
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. McLarty,

Enclosed are copies of letters I have just sent off, a long one to Mr. Yasser Arafat and a shorter one to Mr. Rabin, enclosing a copy of what I sent Arafat. I wanted to be sure these were available to you and to the President at once.

I will also send copies along to Mr. Pelletreau at State.

With best wishes,

sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

March 7, 1994

Mr. Robert Pelletreau
Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and East Asian Affairs
Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Pelletreau,

My congratulations on your new position at State, of which I had heard the rumor on that day I last saw you in Cairo in December. Your presence there gives me far greater confidence than I would otherwise have about American policy on the Middle East.

I have yet to write the further letter to Mr. Abdel-Meguid of which I spoke to you in Cairo. This hardly seems the appropriate time to be raising the embargo question when so much more dramatic things are happening in the wake of the Hebron massacre. I have, however, just written at length to Yasser Arafat, hoping to encourage his return, on workable terms, to the negotiations, and a shorter letter to Mr. Rabin that enclosed a copy of what I had sent to Arafat. I sent copies of these to Mr. McLarty at the White House also, as I'm accustomed to doing. But since you are one of the officials who will have most to do with the matter, and the one in whom I happen to place the greatest confidence, I thought it well to send you copies as well.

With all best wishes,

sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

March 7, 1994

Ronald Young
U.S. Interreligious Committee
2920 Holme Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19136

Dear Ron,

Christ's Peace!

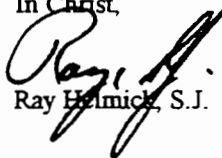
Excuse me for being so late getting back to you, on the February Executive Committee meeting and on the next one coming. I'll have to be on the phone to you about that. I've just been up to my eyeballs on Northern Ireland since getting back from there, writing to Gerry Adams, Dick Spring and many others on the scale I do habitually to Arafat and Rabin, as here. I just got galvanized enough today to write the two enclosed letters, to Arafat and Rabin, on their response to the Hebron crisis. I sent copies of these, also, to the White House (per McLarty) and to Robert Pelletreau. I'll get copies along to Joe Ehrenkranz tonight too.

I also did a characteristic thing for me. After picking up your letters, with the request that I take the Secretary job -- yes, gladly, and I'm honored by it! -- and get on the horn to all those Board members about money, I had to do something else (about Northern Ireland) right away. So I put those letters down in a prominent place where they would stare up at me demanding attention immediately, and as so often happens that meant I wasn't able to find them for a matter of a couple of weeks. I have found them now, and yes, I will be on the horn to all those folks.

I am going to be trouble about the dates for that next Executive meeting. Once the term has ended, I am going to take another of those Boston Theological Union workshop groups off on an ecumenical expedition like the one to Rome and Geneva last year, this time to visit with the Orthodox in Athens, Istanbul and Geneva. We leave on May 22 and get back June 8, which eliminates the May 24 or 25 dates. For April 5 I am at least still in the country, but since it is a Tuesday it is a class day for me, and I have already been missing classes (substituting videotape lectures for them) while I took off for Northern Ireland. I'd much prefer a date that doesn't mean my missing more classes if that is possible. That's what I'll be on the phone for.

Do please pursue me any time I fail to answer for that long. It almost always does mean that the papers are lost-- grrrrrr!

In Christ,


Ray Helmick, S.J.

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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

March 7, 1994

Rabbi Joseph Ehrenkranz
Congregation Agadath Sholom
301 Strawberry Hill Avenue
Stamford, Connecticut 06902

Dear Joe,

Shalom!

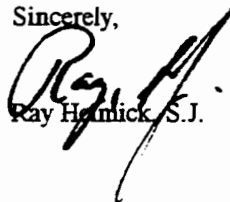
It's too long since I've seen or written to you. Looking around the chaos of paper on my desk, I could only find the Agadath Sholom address, not your home address, but I figure they will still know where to find you.

I've been writing today to both Arafat, at length, and to Rabin, more briefly but enclosing a copy of what I wrote to Arafat, and wanted you to have these as soon as possible. As always, I'd appreciate your thoughts on these matters, and as often, I've jumped in deep. I've just been off to Northern Ireland this last month, and have been behaving in a similar way about that.

I have also a very special need. I've gotten myself mezuzzahs to put on the doors of my rooms both at B.C. and at my brother's rectory in West Roxbury. Actually, I mentioned that I would like to have those while we were in Jerusalem in December, and young David Burstein said he would like to get me one, so I told him I would need two. Now I have my two mezzuzahs, but only one scroll to put in. I can write a little Hebrew myself, but not that much or that small. Could you get me somehow another scroll? I'd appreciate both having it and having it from you.

Best wishes to yourself and Sandra. I hope the teaching is going well.

Sincerely,


Ray Henrick, S.J.



מדינת ישראל
State of Israel

ראש הממשלה

The Prime Minister

ראש הממשלה
Prime Minister

May 10, 1994
GZ9.15

Dear Mr. Helmick,

Thank you for your recent letter. The massacre in Hebron profoundly saddened and shocked the State of Israel and its people, yet, it has only strengthened our resolve that the only way to end the bloodshed between our two people is through the continuation of the peace process.

We are making every effort to ensure that no such tragedy will ever occur again. My Government ordered the establishment of a five-man commission of inquiry, including an esteemed Israeli Arab judge, headed by the President of the Supreme Court. Furthermore, in order to restore stability to the city of Hebron and to calm its residents, we have agreed to a number of measures, including the stationing of a temporary international presence in Hebron. Most importantly, the Government has banned two Jewish extremist groups advocating terror and violence. Through these steps, my Government and I want to make it clear: No form of terrorism and extremism retains legal standing in Israel.

The recent conclusion of the Gaza-Jericho Agreement is proof that our mutual will to settle disputes through political dialogue remains stronger than the will of those who aim to thwart the peace process.

Sincerely yours,


Yitzhak Rabin

Mr. Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.
Jesuit Community Boston College
Chestnut Hill
Massachusetts 02167-3802
U S A



April 5, 1995

President Yasser Arafat
Palestine National Authority
Gaza

Dear President Arafat,

Salaam!

You have had a most frustrating and difficult year and a half trying to implement the Oslo Declaration of Principles. I congratulate you, along with your Israeli dialogue partners, on having instilled some new life into the effort recently, though you must still find the prospects discouraging and uncertain.

I would very much like to visit you in Gaza, to talk of the progress of the negotiation and try to be helpful about it. I find that the time I can best do it will be in August of this year. I hope that may be convenient for you.

Over the last few years I have done my travelling to the Middle East mostly in the company of our U.S. Interreligious Committee for Peace in the Middle East, the group that Mr. Ronald Young founded, which has brought groups of American Jews, Christians and Muslims each time, as is familiar to you. I think, for that reason, that I should now not come alone, but not in a large group either. I have asked two close friends to come with me: Dr. Mian Ashraf, President of the Islamic Center of New England, who has travelled with me before to the region; and Rabbi Joseph Ehrenkranz, Professor now at the Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding at the Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Connecticut, since retiring from the synagogue he led for forty five years in Stamford, Connecticut. It was Rabbi Ehrenkranz who first introduced me to General Secretary Abdel-Meguid of the Arab League, having had him as guest speaker at his synagogue some years back. Dr. Ashraf, along with his work for peace, has been building a new home for the Islamic Center of New England, and I, an habitual wood-worker, have promised, as a gift, to make the *minbar* for the new building. I have discussed with both of them the things I would like to talk about with you, and will have shared with them what I now write to you. It is in order that we may meet all our three schedules that I ask that it be in August that you receive us.

Living here in the United States, the Palestinian intellectuals whose opinion I hear most often are people very much at odds with you, like Professors Edward Said and Naseer Aruri. I have disagreed with their outlook, in many public forums and in conversation with a great diversity of persons. I have to concede to Said and Aruri a central point of their analysis: that the Oslo document gives no adequate legal basis to guarantee things central to Palestinian needs and aspirations, especially an independent State and the requisite return of territory. I argue, to them and to their many supporters among Palestinians in this country, that the value of the Oslo agreement is elsewhere, and that their criterion is not the right one by which to judge it. Oslo indeed leaves all these essentials -- sovereignty, territory, settlements, Jerusalem -- still to be negotiated, therefore uncertain. But its importance is that it broke the long refusal of the Israeli people to recognize the Palestinians as a people, and its genuine leadership in the PLO. It signified, too, the recognition of the Israelis as people and nation, with all the rights belonging to such, by the Palestinians and their legitimate PLO leadership, though in my own judgment that had actually happened some years before. This mutual recognition and acceptance makes the negotiation of all those essential

President Arafat, April 5, '95 -- 2

consequences possible, and gives good reason to hope for success in such a negotiation, provided the good will can be maintained. I don't in the least doubt the commitment of Edward Said and Naseer Aruri to a just peace between Palestine and Israel. They have worked for it all their lives. I admire them. But I think their present disillusionment with the Oslo commitment misplaced, and based on misunderstanding.

For some time I had the impression that a great part of the Palestinian population of Gaza and the West Bank shared the low opinion of Professors Said and Aruri for the Oslo Declaration and your role in accepting it. By now I have learned that your support there is far more substantial than many such people had represented to me, and I am very glad to hear that, as I have known throughout this time that your leadership was indispensable for the success of Palestinian aspirations for a just peace. Nonetheless, I see clearly two disturbing trends: first, the inroads made by rejectionist opinion, both the religious rejectionism of Hamas and Islamic Jihad and the older and more secular rejectionist groups, whose appeal remains; and secondly, the disillusion, among even the most devoted Fatah proponents of peace, with:

the slow progress of a constantly obstructed political process,

the dangerous spectacle of expanding Israeli settlements.

the continuing violations of Palestinian rights and dignity by the occupying forces and

the lack of economic improvement in the standard of living in the areas administered by the Palestine National Authority.

These are the things I want to talk with you about. for which I request a meeting in August.

I hear the demands made of you by Israelis, and faithfully echoed by American government, that you stop terrorist incursions, that you curb Hamas, that you jail them all. From the American Jewish organizations, many of them still Likud-oriented, we and our government in the U.S. get a constant barrage of complaints that you are not serious about these things or have not done enough. I'm sure you get plenty of that too. It is very clear to me that you must indeed do all you can to stop the terrorist incidents that have so often brought the Oslo process to a standstill (including, of course, Mr. Baruch Goldstein). It is just as clear to me that you cannot do this by police action alone. I even suspect bad faith on the part of those Israeli and Jewish critics who look only for police action on your part, since the Israelis themselves, with all their superior army, police and intelligence capabilities, have been just as helpless to stop such incidents in the West Bank areas that they still totally control and in Gaza before their redeployment. You are assuredly in a contest with Hamas (with them more than other rejectionist groups), but you have to win it by political rather than merely, or even mainly, police control.

You have got to be understood by your public as the *liberator of Palestine*. No other stance gives you or your people any prospect of success. If the impression is given, even mistakenly, that you have become the agent or enforcer of Israeli or Israeli/American policy demands, your leadership, and with it the hope of peace, either for your people or for the Israelis, has gone. I write this with knowledge of how frustrating the situation is, personally, for you. I put it so bluntly simply because it is the one most basic truth of the whole situation. Everything else, including your quest for peace and your effort to build trust among the Israelis themselves, must follow from that one premise, that you are there *to liberate Palestine*. None of the Israeli or American critics who keep demanding of you a further crackdown on terrorists are looking at that.

They are, of course, very ready to complain of violations of human rights or of due legal process when you arrest Hamas or other dissidents, and at that point so are the best of your Palestinian critics, the

people most devoted to Palestinian democracy and human rights, who should be treasured above all others and made your principal allies, even when, with their demands, they make themselves awkward.

I wrote to you last year my opinion that the Palestinian people have great need to be included as active participants in their quest for both justice and peace. Your people suffered too long as people to whom things happened over which they had no control. The 1987 *intifadah* changed that decisively. Ordinary Palestinians in the street, even children, became the protagonists of the struggle. Everything that happened in Israeli policy from that time, and everything in American or European policy that concerned the Middle East, was a reaction to the *intifadah*, even though most of it was negative reaction. To find themselves so decisively holding the initiative was exhilarating for the Palestinians. Their firm control of the agenda throughout that period, despite all the added suffering it brought, and even despite the diversion of the Gulf War, so destructive for the Palestinian people, is the reason you got, first, to the Madrid Conference, and subsequently to Oslo. I have always believed it was a surprise to you and the rest of the PLO leadership that such a movement as the *intifadah* would have that effect, and I have always admired the way you so promptly adopted it as your own and gave it leadership.

The people do not have that experience now, but have instead returned to the status of people to whom things happen that are not under their control. I see it as the next most important thing to be recognized in the Palestinian situation -- after that recognition that you must be liberator of Palestine -- that *the people need the intifadah experience back, and most explicitly under your leadership.*

Many of my friends disagree with me on this, and believe that a rekindling of the *intifadah* spirit is impossible. Those who agree with me do so, in some cases, from the wrong motives, feelings of resentment against the Israelis that should have no part in what I suggest and urge on you.

The original *intifadah* could be successful because of two essential elements. One was that it was at least relatively non-violent -- stones rather than bombs and bullets, weapons that were manifestly those of defense and protest, not of destruction. The other was the clear understanding, by the PLO and all the Palestinians directly engaged in it, that this was not a rejection of Israel, its State or its society, but a rejection of occupation. Without those two elements, the Israelis could have crushed it effortlessly. With them, the Israelis, who were militarily equipped to defeat any combination of forces that even all the Arabs together could have brought against them, were powerless to defeat the *intifadah*.

The spectacle of stone-throwing children assaulted by the vast military might of the Israeli army touched people all over the world, most importantly in the Israeli public and army themselves, and established unmistakably who were oppressors and who were victims. You live now in different times, of course. No violence at all is compatible with your need to demonstrate acceptance of Israel and its people even as you demand the freedom of your own State. The script for any popular involvement in protest or the rejection of any of the series of things -- delay in fulfillment of Oslo commitments, new settlements, curfews, indignities perpetrated on prisoners or others -- needs to come out of Ghandi. You and your people can even make it your good fortune that these offenses are committed against you: in the non-violent struggle, it is those who endure will who win. In both the Israeli public (apart from its own violent fringe) and in the world public to which your struggle is addressed, these protests will command solid moral response *if their non-violent character is indisputably established.* It was the relative weakness of the *intifadah* that even stones were thrown, leaving it open to its opponents to say that they did not favor any form of violence whatever, all evidence of the violence visited upon Palestinians notwithstanding. In the present circumstances, after Oslo, the *building of trust* has enormous priority. Protest activity has to demonstrate, at every point, *both* of those characteristics which accounted for the success of the original *intifadah* itself, the non-violent character (now made *absolute*) and its being anti-occupation, not anti-Israeli.

President Arafat, April 5, '95 - 4

A *power disparity* is at work here. The Oslo process does indeed leave all the essentials to be negotiated. The Israelis, supposing (as I do) that they signed in good faith, have all the same a near monopoly of power, and the temptation is always at hand for them to decide by power moves things that they have agreed formally to negotiate. There is no lack of experience, among them, in "creating facts," operating by *fait accompli* that is backed by the power of their occupying army. There is no genuine negotiation when the power disparity is so absolute. That means that it is not in the *Israeli* interest any more than it is in your Palestinian interest that it should be so. What the Israelis can be denied, by this power disparity, is peace, which can only be attained by a genuine negotiation.

You have as yet no comparable power, such as would make you a serious negotiator. You have not sufficient support from the Arab states, especially from the wealthier of them. You have, in your peace negotiation, no support that can be taken seriously from the Western powers, Europe or the U.S. The *only available source of genuine power* for your Palestinian cause will be in the *mobilization of your people*. And that mobilization is what I am asking for. It has not yet happened.

I don't ask this in any sort of hostility to Israelis or to the Israeli cause, as you will quite readily understand from all the contact you and I have had over the years. The only valid Israeli purpose in this is peace, with you, the Palestinians, and thereby with all the rest of their Arab neighbors. They can't have it with this total and unfair disparity of power. Anyone who wishes them well must hope for a truly tenable negotiating position for you and your people, the only basis on which you or the Israelis can come to a just and lasting peace.

As for Hamas and the other rejectionist groups, they will be no problem if you can once establish this: that the Palestinian people, mobilized again as it was in the *intifadah* but entirely non-violent on principle, is successfully winning the peace, winning it *from* the Israelis and together with them. If that is once clear in the minds of the Palestinian people, they will understand that every act of violence by a Palestinian is an act *against the Palestinian people and its true interests*, a subversion of the very struggle of the Palestinians for justice, an attack on Palestinians themselves. Violence, doubtless, there will be, but it would then have no base in popular opinion. In the frustrating situation of deadlocked negotiation that people are experiencing now, it is understandable that, after each bombing or terrorist outrage, there are those who proclaim the terrorists as heroes. That is no less true on the Israeli side, where crowds of settlers and some prominent political and religious leaders praise Baruch Goldstein as a hero, visiting and decorating his grave as a monument to his base deed. If the people's purpose of peace is something in which the whole population has built a stake as actual participants in a just and non-violent struggle, there will be no tolerance for such sabotage of their own efforts.

You have to be wary, of course, of Israeli backlash over such a renewed *intifadah* program. That is the importance of emphasizing the *anti-occupation but not anti-Israeli* character of the enterprise. Often enough I hear it said that, in Israel, there is no such thing as foreign policy: that all policy is determined exclusively by fear of Israel's own domestic right wing; and that, in particular, there is no real Israeli policy toward you, the Palestinians, only policies designed to placate that same violent fringe. I would hope that is not so in fact. Your opposite number, Prime Minister Rabin, does not seem a person of such timidity or weakness. There is always a temptation, when a leader such as he has absolute power in one direction, toward yourselves, and uncertain power in the other, toward reactionary politics, that he will try to give the appearance of strength by intimidating victims rather than by standing up to the crazies.

But Israeli public opinion is far more than the right-wing crazies. At the moment, seeing a succession of terror incidents from the Palestinian right-wing crazies, with no apparent means of bringing them under control -- Israeli forces aren't able to do it, and it has to be as visible to the Israeli public as it

President Arafat, April 5, '95 - 5

is to the rest of us that you can't do it *by policing alone* - the Israeli public is full of anxiety, and is demanding solutions without knowing how they can be attained. If in fact you achieved a situation in which Palestinian terrorism was isolated and rejected by a Palestinian public sure of its own purpose, do not believe that the Israeli public would be so unsophisticated as not to understand and appreciate your accomplishment. The professional haters on the Israeli right wing would of course be baying for vengeance as soon as they saw you and your people accomplishing such things, and trying to intimidate Prime Minister Rabin into breaking more bones. But the wider Israeli public would realize that you had created hope - of peace - for them too.

As I would see it, it is really only you, by instituting such a new sense of purpose and confidence in the Palestinian public as would be achieved by a renewed *intifadah* under your leadership, who could actually bring the Hamas-style terrorism under control, and that by winning the *political* consent of the Palestinian public, *not* primarily or exclusively by policing. Curiously, it is only you, despite the power disparity between yourself and Prime Minister Rabin, who have the option of meeting the terrorism crisis in this way. You would, of course, have to arrest and punish terrorist offenders, but that would first become a genuinely feasible proposition when it was done with the Palestinian people's understanding that you were acting *in defense of their interests and their intifadah* against those who were attacking them and their chances. I don't believe I am really advocating anything contrary to your real inclinations in asking for such a policy.

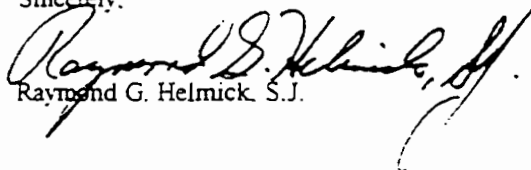
And even as you compete politically with Hamas and the other rejectionists in this way, I would see it as essential that you defend and even be the principal protector of their right to participate fully and without hindrance in the political process, compete in Palestinian elections and have the fullest freedom to express their dissent to your policies. I noted with pleasure that you stood for that principle of free political participation of your opponents in earlier discussions with the Israelis about elections. I trust you will stand firm in that position, and entertain no thought of their being excluded.

These are the matters about which I would like to talk with you in August. Bringing my friends, Dr. Ashraf and Rabbi Ehrenkranz, with me would ensure that we three will be in contact with a broad segment of American public opinion, not without influence, in support of such a program.

I will send this letter by way of Dr. Nasser al-Kidwa, and would hope that I may hear, through him, when in August you would be able to receive us, and as early as possible so that we may make our plans. We will seek to see Prime Minister Rabin also, and a number of other Israeli figures as well. And I will be anxious to consult, on a related subject, with President Asad in Damascus on that same visit, and to report both to King Hussein and President Mubarak on the results of our efforts.

Most immediately, I will send copies of this letter to Prime Minister Rabin himself, to President Clinton and to my colleagues, that there may be no uncertainty as to what is afoot. I wish you all God's blessings, for yourself and your people, and primary among those blessings a just peace.

Sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



April 8, 1995

President Hafez al-Asad
Damascus
SYRIA

Dear President Asad,

Salaam!

Quite some time ago, in November of 1993, shortly after the signing of the Oslo Declaration of Principles, I wrote to Prime Minister Rabin of Israel that I thought the most dangerous ticking bomb in the regional situation, the thing that could, at an unpredictable time, disrupt and possibly destroy all the prospects for a peace settlement between Israel and all its neighbors, was the occupation of the South of Lebanon, what they call their "Security Zone," by Israeli troops. I recommended that he address this question, in discussions that would be more seriously with you than with the Lebanese authorities themselves, whatever deference had to be paid to them.

At that time, I told him I would be sending a letter to yourself which would be a mirror image of what I wrote to him, raising this same question of removing Israeli troops from Lebanon. But within days of my writing to him, I found that our U.S. Secretary of State, Mr. Christopher, was on his way to Damascus and would be speaking with you. I had, of course, sent a copy of my letter to Mr. Rabin to the White House. I was reluctant to interject myself and my ideas at a time when there was such a high level of official diplomatic exchange in progress between my country and yours, and so I postponed writing to you. Each time I have thought again of addressing you, the same thing has happened, another of Mr. Christopher's or occasionally of Mr. Ross's visits to Damascus. By now I have watched so many of these, with such generally disappointing result, that I finally write this letter to you.

I think it a proper courtesy to you that I should enclose a copy of what I wrote to Mr. Rabin in that letter of November 13, 1993, so that you can compare this appeal to yourself with that of which it is intended to be a "mirror image."

As I see it, the Israeli occupation of Southern Lebanon, which I have regarded as illegal from the beginning and which is specifically prohibited by Security Council Resolution 425, has lost its *rationale* and is now maintained merely out of an emotional reluctance to back down from an entrenched position. Initially, the invasions of Lebanon by Israel, in 1978 and again in 1982, were motivated by a complex of reasons ranging from defense of the Northern Galilee to a desire to strike a knock-out blow at PLO guerrilla bases. When, after the *debacle* of the 1982 invasion and its unforeseen consequences, the Israelis were induced to withdraw their forces gradually from more and more Lebanese territory, they held on to this southernmost strip, with the assistance of General Lahad's South Lebanon Army, still out of mixed motives. Some Israeli policy makers seem to have believed it was realistic defence of Northern Israel from Palestinian and Lebanese attack. Israel's allies in U.S. government accepted this argument and complacently vetoed any efforts in the United Nations to require Israel's withdrawal from this last Lebanese bastion in conformity with S.C. 425. For other elements of Israeli government, the continuing occupation of South Lebanon was simply an assertion, in the face of world opinion, that the Lebanese could never expel Israel totally from Lebanon by any forces available to them. For these angrier Israelis, the fact that the occupation really damaged Israel rather than its enemies did not matter.

President Hafez al-Asad, April 8, '95 - 2

The dangers to themselves that Israelis saw emanating from Southern Lebanon were originally from the PLO and its guerrilla bases in what they called "Fatahland." The ability of Palestinians to mount raids from that territory was severely limited by the 1982 invasion, and even as some armed Palestinian units re-emerged in Lebanon over succeeding years their concern was more with the protection of civilian Palestinian population in Lebanon than with raids on Israel. The development of the peace initiatives - that of 1985 between Arafat and King Hussein, the 1988 acceptance of the three famous pre-conditions by the PLO and the initiation of a U.S./PLO dialogue, the Madrid Conference and subsequently the Oslo Declaration of Principles, have by now come to mean that there is no remaining military threat to Israelis from mainstream PLO forces in Lebanon. They have truly no way now of backing away from their Oslo agreement, and it would be utterly against their interests to risk a provocation from Lebanese territory.

Lebanon's Shiites had at first no inclination to attack Israel, the Imam Musa al-Sadr's Amal militia having been organized to protect Shiites against Israeli retaliation for Palestinian raids, despairing of any protection by Lebanese Government forces, but more disposed to blame the PLO than Israel for the sufferings brought on Southern Lebanon. Hezbollah's breaking away from the Amal movement was explicitly anti-Israeli and anti-American. By now they are closely in sympathy with the Palestinian Hamas and Islamic Jihad. Their formal complaint, though, is against the illegal Israeli occupation of Lebanese territory, and for this no Lebanese or Syrian government can hold them at fault. Even though it is the clear policy of the Lebanese Government, supported by Syria, to disarm all the private militias that once held sway in Lebanon and bring them under State control, Hezbollah is untouchable for this reason and this only: that they are the defenders of Lebanon's territorial integrity in the face of a foreign occupation condemned in international law. For Lebanon to act against them, or for Syria to countenance action against them, would be to connive with the Israeli occupation, something that would be as politically unacceptable as it would be indefensible in law.

Does Israel, then, get any of the security from guerrilla raids or artillery attack on Northern Galilee that is its supposed *rationale*, still countenanced by the United States, for maintaining the military occupation of Southern Lebanon? None whatever! Hezbollah has no proclaimed justification for any such actions, however much it might like to undertake them out of hatred for the Israelis or sympathy for the Hamas/Islamic Jihad rejectionist position among Palestinians. As of the summer of 1993, after the intense military activity of that period, Hezbollah has even formally agreed to mount no such attacks on Israeli territory unless in direct retaliation for Israeli attacks inside Lebanon. The Israelis, after having unleashed, at that time, the attacks that drove great waves of Southern Lebanese civilian refugees toward Beirut in retaliation for the killing of Israeli soldiers *inside* the Lebanese territory they occupied, had to accept an agreement that explicitly condoned attacks on their occupying forces as the price for Hezbollah's commitment to make no more assaults across the border into Israel *except in retaliation*. Israel's grievous embarrassment over that settlement appears to have played a part in motivating their acceptance of the Oslo document in September of 1993. It is still so dissatisfied with the situation that it mounts further punitive actions against rather random targets in Lebanon every time there is Hezbollah action against the occupation troops, and this periodically leads, not only to renewed terrorizing of Lebanese villages and towns, but to new Hezbollah shelling of Galilee, as we saw again just in recent weeks.

This is the ticking bomb I described to Prime Minister Rabin in November, 1993, still ticking away even this much later with the prospect of destroying and discrediting all the peace efforts so laboriously undertaken so far. It seems to me that it is very much in the interest of Israel to extricate itself from this altogether unserviceable and self-destructive posture.

Where is the Syrian, and the Lebanese, interest in all this? I assume you will already have given more thought to this than I, but from another point of view, so I will venture to give you my own assessment.

President Hafez al-Asad, April 8, '95 — 3

Syria and Lebanon, I would take it, have a high interest in coming successfully to a peaceful *modus vivendi* with Israel, despite all the history of conflict and the latent suspicions which rise from it. Settled relations with Israel are the map that promises success, prosperity and satisfactory international relations for your societies in the future. If that is not so, then the real texture of events is very obscure.

For both of your countries, there is disgrace involved in making a separate peace with Israel before a comprehensive peace can be arranged that satisfies the just aspirations of all the Arab countries contiguous to Israel and the Palestinians. That consideration is complicated by what has been done by Egypt, the PLO and Jordan, but remains of great importance.

Currently, the Israelis, under the Rabin government, have made it abundantly clear that Syria will have the whole Golan back once a peace settlement is reached, even though they don't say it quite as openly as that, for fear of giving an additional weapon to their Likud opposition. Prime Minister Rabin deals with a public anxious and agitated over continuing Palestinian rejectionist terrorism, and inclined, as a measure of their panic, to draw the rather irrational conclusion that all Arabs -- in a generalized sense that includes yourselves -- should be treated with distrust. He has also, more specifically, an opposition group among the Golan settlers, campaigning vigorously against the return of the Golan. Surely he is not going to give up the peace for the sake of the grape-vines on the Golan, but this opposition is an embarrassment to him, particularly as most of the Golan settlers are of his own Labor Party.

The peace settlement keeps being delayed for this combination of reasons, even though its shape is reasonable clear. Delay, and the appearance of simple stagnation, are eventually endangering the prospects of arriving at the settlement everyone can see, and Rabin's government drifts toward a new election with the appearance of impotence, leaving you with the prospect of having eventually to deal with a Likud government instead.

Lack of progress for the Palestinians is obviously the largest factor in this impasse, and has to be addressed. What relates to the problem of Israeli occupation in the Golan, and of course in Southern Lebanon as well, is much more within your capacity to address. My proposition is that, by facilitating the withdrawal of Israeli occupation forces from Lebanon, you could break the impasse, remove the ticking bomb I have been describing, give Mr. Rabin the opportunity and the encouragement to do something that shows him not afflicted with paralysis, and demonstrate to the Israeli public something which you know but they do not yet believe, namely that Syria fulfills its promises, adheres rigorously and honestly to the agreements she has made.

It is Syrian and Lebanese interest to have all the private militias in Lebanon subject to State authority. This has not been possible with Hezbollah for the reasons already mentioned, but would become so as soon as the Israeli troops were withdrawn. Lebanon then, with the Syrian backing which would be the reality behind the Lebanese action, could guarantee the safety of her border with Israel. No one in Israel would have any doubt that it was really Syria's decision that gave force to this removal of military threat to the Galilee and freed Israel from the embarrassment of its strategically worthless occupation of Lebanese territory. The good performance of Lebanese and Syrian forces in that area would be proof to the Israeli public that the return of the Golan to Syria could be done with safety for Israel. A great deal would be accomplished.

Moreover, this could be done without having any appearance or reality of a separate peace. Syria would be the guarantor of promises of a safe border made by the Government of Lebanon, enabling Israel to extract its forces.

President Hafez al-Asad, April 8, '95 - 4

A peace treaty need not be made until the comprehensive peace, including the Golan and real progress on the Palestinian question, could be attained. The Israelis would probably ask for a treaty with Lebanon, but there would be no need to grant this without the comprehensive peace. The Israeli action could be taken as conformity with S.C. 425, and the return on it would be the secure border itself. That would in fact, for Israel, be real peace with Lebanon, even though it would still leave the question of the status of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon to be negotiated as part of an ultimate comprehensive peace treaty.

The Lebanese have long held the suspicion that Israel's motivation in occupying Southern Lebanon was the annexation of the Litani River basin. The Israelis have made disclaimers about that for many years now. Reality, by this time, has come to dictate that Israel cannot annex these territories. I don't know enough about water policy even to guess at the interests involved, but I can see at least that, if Israel is ever to have any use of Litani water, it can only be through friendly negotiation with a Lebanon with which it is at peace. Nothing that Israel is doing at present is bringing it any nearer to that outcome.

As I write this, you will be aware that I have paid attention to Lebanese matters for some years, visiting Lebanon, writing reports on it and maintaining contact with a wide spectrum of persons in Lebanon since late in 1982. I corresponded extensively with M. Raymond Edde from the time of the aborted election for a Lebanese President in 1988 through 1990, and on his request that correspondence was published as a book, under my name, in 1990, titled *La question Libanaise selon Raymond Edde* (Paris, 1990). I would like to see the greatest possible independent freedom for Lebanon, but argued strongly, in my correspondence with M. Edde, that Syria has legitimate interests in Lebanon and her policy, and that a diverse lot of Lebanese Maronites had, at one time or another, given Syria reason for grave concern and offense: the Lebanese Forces, when they entered a military alliance with Israel from 1976 to 1982 against Syria; the government of President Amin Gemayel when he entered a military alliance with the United States against Syria; and General Michel Aoun when he entered a military alliance with Iraq against Syria. Hoping, as I do, that Syria will respect the independence of Lebanon, I recognize that Lebanon cannot simply shrug off those offenses, and that Syria has to have adequate guarantee against any repetition.

I have twice, in more recent years, visited Syria, in the company of delegations of the U.S. Interreligious Committee for Peace in the Middle East, the American organisation built up, as you will be aware, by the work of Mr. Ronald Young, in which, since its formation in 1987, Jews, Christians and Muslims have worked together to promote the peace. On the first of those occasions, in early December of 1992, your Foreign Minister, Mr. Farouk as-Sharah, very graciously received us. In the course of that conversation I brought up all these Lebanese questions, as he may recall.

I am planning to be, once again, in the Middle East in August of this year, have written to Mr. Arafat, with whom I have a long acquaintance, that I would like to see him at that time, and will be requesting meetings with Mr. Rabin and several other Israelis. Because I have been visiting the region in the company of our Interreligious Committee, I think I should not come alone, and I will be with two good friends in the Committee, both of whom were with us on the 1992 visit: Dr. Mian Ashraf, President of the Islamic Center of New England; and Rabbi Joseph Ehrenkranz, Professor in the Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding at the Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Connecticut.

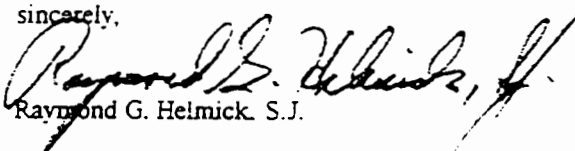
We would like to visit you in Damascus to discuss the matters touched upon in this letter. I would be very grateful if you would let me know, by whatever means is convenient to you, if that will be possible, and suggest when would be the best time in August for it. We will come with the greatest good will toward Syria, hoping that our visit may help to promote the peace.

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President Hafez al-Asad, April 8, '95 -- 5

My thanks for your attention to this long letter. A copy of the letter I wrote in November, 1995, to Prime Minister Rabin is attached. I will send a copy of this letter to him for his attention, and will send copies also to President Clinton and to my colleagues with whom I will be travelling to your region in August. I wish you and your country all blessings.

sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.", written in dark ink. The signature is fluid and somewhat stylized, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



April 8, 1995

Mr. Leon Panetta
Chief of Staff
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Panetta,

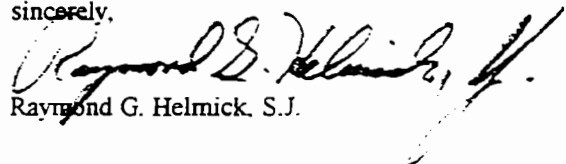
As promised, my letter to Mr. Arafat, of which I sent you a copy the other day, is now followed up by one for President Asad of Syria, of which I enclose a copy here.

As explained in the letter, I have enclosed with it a copy of one that I sent to Prime Minister Rabin, advocating very much the same things, the negotiation of a withdrawal of Israeli troops from Southern Lebanon, as long ago as November '93, in the immediate aftermath of the Oslo signing. You already have a copy of that letter in the White House files, but for convenience, that you may have at hand what President Asad is now receiving, I include a further copy of that one here as well.

I would much appreciate it if you would see that this is known to President Clinton. There will be a further letter within the next days to Prime Minister Rabin, which will enclose copies of what I have written to Mr. Arafat and President Asad. You will have a copy of the letter to Mr. Rabin also.

With all best wishes,

sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

April 20, 1995

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin
The Knesset
Jerusalem
ISRAEL

Dear Prime Minister Rabin,

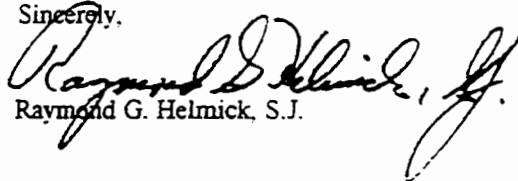
Shalom!

Recently I wrote to Mr. Yasser Arafat (April 5) and President Asad of Syria (April 8). With the letter to Asad I enclosed, as you will note in the text, a copy of one I had written to you, to which you graciously responded, just after the signing of the Oslo accord, on November 13, 1993. It has been my habit to send you copies, as I had previously to your predecessor, Mr. Shamir, of any such correspondence as it affected your interests, and so I enclose copies of both letters now.

I have meant to write a substantial letter to yourself also, but have found myself held from doing that by other duties for more days than I had wished. When I found now that I have to take off this day to attend a funeral in Europe, and hence will not get to my letter to you for another several days, I thought I ought not wait any longer to send you the enclosed copies of the letters to Arafat and Asad.

I will plan to write to you shortly. My best wishes for you and for Israel, and for the peace.

Sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



CARDINAL'S RESIDENCE
2101 COMMONWEALTH AVENUE
BRIGHTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02135

April 11, 1995

The Reverend Raymond Helmick, S.J.
The Jesuit Community
Boston College
Chestnut Hill, MA 02167-3802

Dear Father Helmick:

Thank you so much for the courtesy of copying me on your letter to President Yasser Arafat.

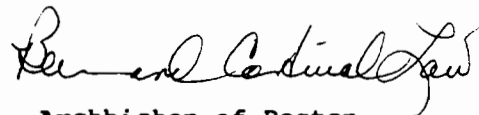
It is a fascinating letter and a fascinating proposal. You make a very compelling case, Ray. Obviously, it is one thing to call for a non-violent intifadah, and quite another thing to secure an intifadah totally committed to non-violence.

The pro-life movement offers an example. While violence is the antithesis of all that the movement is about, nonetheless, there are those who resort to it. Even those who eschew violence themselves cannot contain its outbreak; witness the elderly gentlemen hitting the woman on the mouth with his cane.

At any rate, I certainly join you in prayer for peace.

With warm personal regards and wishing you a blessed Easter, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,


Archbishop of Boston

BCL/ac



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

May 1, 1995

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin
The Knesset
Jerusalem
ISRAEL

Dear Prime Minister Rabin,

Shalom!

Just recently (April 20) I wrote, sending you copies of letters I had sent to Mr. Arafat and President Asad. I had, some time back, sent you a copy of what I had written to Mr. Arafat shortly after the Baruch Goldstein attack on the Hebron Mosque. I thought it well to send you, again, copies of what I had sent to both him and President Asad, as the letters pertained to the search for peace between Israel and your Palestinian and other Arab neighbors.

Like all friends of Israel, I was appalled by the murderous attacks on Israelis, soldiers and civilians, in the Gaza strip early in April. I don't know how to convey my condolences to the people of Israel or the bereaved families, but I express them to you.

I was glad to see that, this time, the outrage was not followed by a suspension of the negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian National Authority, nor by draconian measures against the Palestinian population at large, even though, since that time, the PNA-administered and fully occupied territories have been closed off again for Passover and are about to be for the Independence Day celebration. Even with full understanding of the safety concerns those closure decisions represent, it has always seemed to me that such measures have played directly into the hands of the extremist attackers. That has been equally true when the Palestinians suspended negotiations after the Hebron attack and when Israel has done so after each of several terrorist incidents. or, since Israel has powers of official and public retribution that the Palestinians have not, has closed off the territories in ways that are understood as collective punishment.

The course of the peace process appears to be going very poorly. What I have written to Mr. Arafat and President Asad has been intended to help in finding ways through the collection of assorted obstacles and impasses. I write to you now in the same spirit, concerned in the most friendly way for you and for them. None of you can afford to have this process fail. You have all, Israelis and Palestinians especially but to a great degree the Syrians as well, committed yourselves and your future to its success. and its failure would have the grimmest consequences for all of you. When you first agreed to the Oslo Declaration of Principles, clearly an anguishing decision for you personally and one on which you faced very heavy opposition, I congratulated you, in the letter (Nov. 13, '93) of which I enclosed a copy to President Asad, that you had joined a very select company of Israelis: that the only other members of your club were Chaim Weizmann and David Ben Gurion, whom you had equalled in courage and in the long-lasting consequence of your action; that it was the necessary thing that would secure the lasting future of the nation they had first built. I believe that and honor you for it, and would be as devastated as you would be yourself if the effort were now to fail.

Prime Minister Rabin, May 1, '95 - 2

What I expressed to Mr. Arafat, as you will have found, is that he needs to mobilize the energies of his own people for their own purposes. Of course he must do everything he can to police, prevent and punish the terrorists of the Palestinian side, but he cannot expect either to stop the sequence of such attacks or to defeat extremist opponents by policing measures alone. Israel was certainly not able to do that while maintaining total control of Gaza and all the West Bank. For Arafat to attempt that *alone* only makes him appear, to the Palestinians, the agent of Israeli and American policy. If he gives that impression, justifiably or not, he is finished and you have no negotiating partner with whom to conclude a peace.

He needs instead to show himself the leader of Palestinian liberation, as I'm sure you will realize. I write to you now partly to look for that recognition and understanding. Certainly it would be a greater inconvenience for you and your government to deal with a resourceful Palestinian leader who successfully presses Palestinian demands. But you cannot successfully deal with a compliant Palestinian leader. If that is what you get, the result will be that you get no peace with the Palestinians or, eventually, with any of the Arabs. It is your business to demand that Arafat pursue, arrest and make every effort to stop the violent Palestinian extremists, and equally it is his business to do so. But if that is all he does, that is the surest formula to bring Hamas to power with the widest backing of the Palestinian people.

I won't attempt to reargue the case I made to Arafat for stronger leadership of the Palestinian cause, as you have it before you in my letter to him. I made much of the power disparity between him and Israel, and his need to redress it, if he is to be a viable negotiating partner for the peace, by mobilizing his people for their own cause. If he were to do that, then Hamas and the other rejectionists would be no problem, as a Palestinian public mobilized by Arafat would understand that every act of violence was sabotage to their own cause, and would reject it.

Terrorist incidents there would still be, by both Israeli and Palestinian extremists. But their political effect, and therefore also their frequency, would be minimal if their own publics consistently repudiated them, and if the terrorists themselves were not rewarded by a complacent consent of the negotiating parties to suspend the very process which these provocations were intended to destroy. At the time of the Oslo signing on the White House lawn, all the parties professed that they already understood these obvious truths, anticipated the terrorist assaults that would be made on their peace efforts and would not be deterred. The subsequent performance has been poor.

I have felt that you in particular have been paralyzed by the traumatic events of this last year and a half, and that the genuine and lasting peace for Israel on which you so bravely embarked was now terribly endangered by the timidity of your policy. True, I have written to Arafat that he puts the peace at risk if he fails to provide more effective leadership. I believe you are entitled to expect that of him, even as I realize that you and your public might well be aghast when you saw him exercising it.

Frequently I hear the comment, from Israelis and others, that in presenting the case for the peace process to the Israeli public, both your more serious pursuit of the Madrid Conference when you were first elected and the Oslo agreement, you had placed more emphasis than was warranted on the prospect of personal security for Israeli citizens, when what could be expected was, more immediately, the security of Israel as a State. I bring that up not to rehash or complain about what may have been mistaken in the past, but to look at the realities of the present. It seems to me that safety of individual Israelis from terrorist attack cannot be promised now, but only sought for the future, and that in fact all of you recognized this when you predicted the extremist attacks on the peace process that you have since been experiencing. If your own presentation of the peace process is blamed for false expectations, then I think it has to be acknowledged that you, like many others, did give these realistic warnings yourself.

Prime Minister Rabin, May 1, '95 – 3

However, people ask: is this a peace? You must be hearing it all the time. Some, of course, make dishonest use of this complaint because they don't want the peace process, but others who have always promoted the peace say it too. What I would regard as basic unreality in this, for Israelis, is to expect that they should now be able to live with Palestinians as if the past had not happened, as if a stroke could be drawn under it and all the grievance of the past forgotten.

Looking at those two kinds of security, it seems to me that Israel's security as a State is very much enhanced by the peace process, as far as it has gone, will be far more assured if the process goes on to increasing success, and would be seriously endangered – to some extent right from the start but really massively in the long term – if the process were allowed to fail.

Your Likud opponents seem to posit that Israel can afford not to reach a peace settlement, and that everything in the process is a test – they think a naive one – of Palestinian and Arab good will, from which Israel could back away if not satisfied. That is an illusion, and you, even more than they, ought not to indulge it. I used to argue this in correspondence with your predecessor, Mr. Shamir. Israel, I believe, has only a temporary, not a permanent, respite from the superior strength of numbers which her Arab adversaries enjoy over her. It is true that Israel can now repulse any military attack that not only the Palestinians but all the Arabs together can bring against her – remembering, of course, the shocking test to which that belief was put in 1973. But this can only be true for a limited time, perhaps even another fifty years, perhaps more or less than that, but not for the length of time in which one must measure the enduring life of a nation.

Israel's security can be sought in military strength or in the friendship of her neighbors. Neither of these would I dare to see as exclusive of the other. As I wrote as long ago as 1990 to Mr. Shamir, I would not trust anyone who advocated that Israel rely only on the friendship of neighbors and neglect military security, even though Israel's military needs would be much more modest if that friendship were reliably assured. No more would I trust anyone who would put Israel's reliance only on being permanently a fortress in defiance of her enemies, to the neglect of the peace. They would doom Israel to eventual destruction as surely as any enemy. That is a tragedy that I was sure Mr. Shamir would not want to impose on the country he had worked and fought so hard to build and secure. I expect a far clearer view of this from you.

Having now peace treaties with Egypt and with Jordan, a measure of readiness to come to practical diplomatic and even trade terms with Israel on the part of Moroccans and several other Arab states, with murmurings of the same even from the Gulf states, Israel has achieved a level of security in the acceptance of her neighbors that has never been available before. Even those with the most malign intentions toward you have been put in check. Iraq and Iran with limited power to harm you. Libya a joke. The two parties with whom you most need to make peace, the Palestinians and Syrians, are both more than anxious to achieve it. If you succeed in that, Israel's security is indeed most firmly assured at such long term that entirely new circumstances would have to occur to disturb it.

Could all that be lost or reversed? Clearly yes, if under these favorable conditions a suitable settlement were not reached with the Palestinians and with Syria, both of whom are essential. You now face an election in something like a year's time. If your Likud opposition were to win, they appear to be committed to scuttling the Oslo accord and throwing the whole situation back to a relation of simple adversarial defiance with all the Arabs, which could then become Israel's permanent fate. Ultimately, I believe Israel would lose in such a confrontation. Some of my friends believe Likud would feel itself obliged by the agreements you have made, but those are not the noises I hear from Mr. Netanyahu, or Generals Sharon, Eytan and Ze'evi. It could be that they would keep the crazies of Gush Emunim and Kach out of their government, but I would not rely on it.

Prime Minister Rabin, May 1, '95 - 4

All that says to me that it is more important that you keep the Oslo process in vigorous motion, for the sake of the lasting future of Israel, than that you achieve any more particular objective whatever.

You disquiet me when you approve expansion of settlements in occupied areas, or when you give your personal approval to this latest massive confiscation of Palestinian homes in order to build new Jewish neighborhoods in Arab parts of Jerusalem, because that seems so directly subversive of the Oslo principles, but that is more specific than what I am writing about now. Delays in meeting agreed dates for military redeployment and therefore also for elections are even more disquieting, and seem to squander the limited time in which you have the opportunity to guarantee the peace and security of Israel for the foreseeable future. I hear this discussed in terms of popularity: that your popularity, because of the bombings, has slipped so far that you can't implement the Oslo agreement. I would think that nothing could be more damaging to the political future of yourself, your party, or anyone else committed to achieving the peace with all these benefits for Israel than a spectacle of paralysis.

I've acknowledged that there are things you need from Arafat to make continued motion possible. I have tried to specify them, to him as well as to you, in a direction which may have surprised you, namely that his leadership of the Palestinian freedom movement needs to be more vigorous and allow more popular participation than he has yet mobilized. I see that as the path to his necessary success against Hamas and the other violent extremists, as also against a simple rejectionism toward the peace on the part of Palestinians who are either irreconcilable or disillusioned.

The other security question is about the safety of individual Israeli citizens from terrorist attack. I don't in any way question the importance of this. But to subordinate the long-term issues of Israel's security as a State to public feelings of outrage about particular and foreseeable terrorist outrages is to forfeit *both* individual security *and* the long-term security of the State for no return whatever.

We are all conscious of the sufferings and grievances of Jews, before and during the Holocaust, and throughout the embattled history of the State of Israel itself. I am as concerned as you are that the people of this valiant nation not be faced with terrorism in their streets, or anywhere. I know how real and conscious a concern this is for the Israeli public. But it is true for the Palestinians too. They also are unsafe in their own streets and homes and workplaces, and have been for generations. They see their children and other citizens killed casually by militant settlers and understand full well that there are sinister forces at loose in Israel that wish to displace them, and are indifferent whether it be to exile or to death. The promises of peace to which they responded so enthusiastically in recent years have so far been disappointed. Israelis cannot expect that this part of the past will have no role in the present. Palestinian despair, their grievances will inevitably be expressed. The remedy ought not be to heap still further tribulation on them, but to create hope.

That is the context in which it should be seen that dangers to the individual security of Israelis ought not take precedence over the longer-term security of the State. Israel cannot live as if these things had never happened. I don't mean by that that Israel should take terrorist incidents for granted or not get excited about them, but that Israeli government should realize where they are coming from, and base its effort to make Israelis safe from such outrages on that knowledge. Deepening the wounds will not heal them.

This, I am sure, is less concrete a message than I have written to either Mr. Arafat or President Asad. I mean it as seriously, though, as a way of breaking through the impasses that are at present stifling the bold and indispensable peace initiative on which you so courageously embarked, in such profound responsiveness to the will of the people of Israel.

Prime Minister Rabin, May 1, '95 - 5

We are often shown pictures of Palestinians, in Gaza or elsewhere, celebrating the deeds of terrorist bombers and their crimes against Israel. We all know, as well, of the adulation and monument-building that goes on about the grave of Baruch Goldstein. These are not the people of Palestine or of Israel, but a fanatical fringe in each case. Others of either the Israeli or the Palestinian public can be driven into sympathy with the thinking of this pathological fringe by despair or discouragement. The terrorists of either side understand that well enough to count on it when they carry out their crimes, and there is a very evident common purpose between them, to jettison the efforts of their peoples for peace and return to unmitigated confrontation. That there have not been more Goldstein incidents recently can partly be attributed to the fact that the Palestinian terrorists are so successfully prosecuting that common purpose. Settler terrorists can for the time being let well enough alone and leave the opprobrium to Hamas, but if threatened with real progress toward peace between Israel and the Palestinians, the wilder of the settlers are quite likely to play their terrorist card as well.

As you have seen in my letters to both Arafat and Asad, I plan to visit Israel and other countries of the region in August. In recent years I have been with other American members of Ronald Young's *U.S. Interreligious Committee for Peace in the Middle East*, Jewish, Christian and Muslim, on several visits I have made to your countries. Consequently, I don't want to do it alone, as I often had in earlier years, but will be travelling with Rabbi Joseph Ehrenkranz, formerly Rabbi of a synagogue in Stamford, Connecticut, and now teaching in the Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding at the Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Connecticut; and with Dr. Mian Ashraf, the President of the Islamic Center of New England. Both of them, like myself, are Executive Committee members of the board of the Interreligious Committee. Our travelling together does not mean we agree on all points, as you will understand, but we find we can respect one another in our differences and work together for the peace. We hope to see both Mr. Arafat and President Asad, and would much appreciate it if we may see you also. I feel it would not be right for us to be discussing matters of such immediate concern to Israel with the others and not with you.

I will be writing again shortly to Mr. Arafat, and you will have a copy. You will hear directly from Rabbi Ehrenkranz, asking for the opportunity for us to see you. With the warmest regards and best wishes for you and for Israel, I am

sincerely yours,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



(A lapse in pagination here and on the next page. Nothing missing.)

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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

May 4, 1995

Mr. Leon Panetta
Chief of Staff
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Panetta,

Enclosed is a copy of the third of the letters I had promised on the Middle East peace process, this one to Prime Minister Rabin following the letters I sent to Mr. Arafat and President Asad. Since it took me longer than I had intended to get this letter written, I had already sent copies of the Arafat and Asad letters to Mr. Rabin with a simple covering note a couple of weeks ago. All these letters are preliminary to a visit I will make to the Middle East in August, together with other members of the *U.S. Interreligious Committee for Peace in the Middle East*, Rabbi Joseph Ehrenkranz of the Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding in Connecticut and Dr. Mian Ashraf, the President of the Islamic Center of New England. We hope, on that visit, to see each of these three leaders.

I wanted to make this letter, like the earlier ones, available to President Clinton. There will be a further letter to Mr. Arafat as well, of which you will have a copy. I'll also inform you of any response I receive.

With best wishes, I am

sincerely yours,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

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CARDINAL'S RESIDENCE
2101 COMMONWEALTH AVENUE
BRIGHTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02135

May 17, 1995

The Reverend Raymond Helmick, S.J.
St. Mary's Hall
Boston College
Chestnut Hill, MA 02167

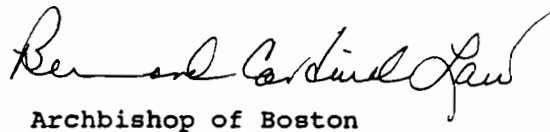
Dear Ray:

This is to acknowledge your note of May 4th with the enclosure of your letter to Prime Minister Rodine.

What you have not sent me is a copy of your letter to President Asad.

With warm personal regards, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,


Archbishop of Boston

BCL/ac



May 18, 1995

Rabbi Joseph H. Ehrenkranz
200 Fifth Street
Stamford, Connecticut 06905

Dear Joe,

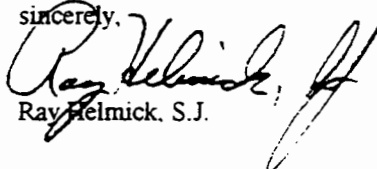
Shalom!

The series of these letters has gotten as far, now, as Rabin. It took me longer to get to that than I intended, so I sent him copies of the letters I had written to Arafat and Asad before heading off to Dublin for a funeral in the latter part of May. This letter, dated May 1, got started that day, and finished May 4. I ought to have gotten it to you faster, but as I just told you on the phone, I found myself in my normal predicament of not being able to find pieces of paper, and without any address I could lay hands on for you except the Congregation Agudath Sholom.

There will be another letter to Arafat, which I will write shortly, and then I'll get Nasser al-Kidwa on the phone and get a solid appointment set up in Gaza for August. It should be a delightful season there! I'm sure I'm going to end up relying on you to set up the actual appointments with Rabin and other Israelis. Having the meeting with Arafat set, and for the three of us, should make it more appealing for them to see us. You never know. Rabin could look at a letter like this, and the ones to Arafat and Asad of which he has copies, and figure: not on your life, no way I'll talk to these people. But then, it's always been my experience that when you write seriously people are ready to respond seriously. Shamir was, and Rabin will likely be much more so.

Do we see you at the Sharon Executive meeting, June 6? The public session with the talk by Richard Murphy and the responses of Al Vorspan, Dale Bishop and Dawud Assad will be the evening before, Monday June 5. I know most of the Executive Committee is going to be there, but it just occurred to me that you might already be on your travels by then. The best to Sandy, and my prayers for you both.

sincerely,


Ray Helmick, S.J.



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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

May 24, 1995

Most Reverend John A. Elya
Eparch of Newton
19 Dartmouth Street
West Newton, MA 02165

Dear Bishop John,

Christ's Peace!

When I saw you last I mentioned that I was having this heavy correspondence over the Middle East recently, and promised that I would send you copies. I'd very much value having your thoughts on this whole process, and figure we would do well to get together and talk of it.

As you see, there is a letter to Arafat of early April, one to Asad a short while later and one to Rabin of early May. In each case I told them I planned to visit the Middle East in August and would like to see them. I used to do such travelling by myself, but have been there several times now in the company of groups, up to twenty five at a time, of the Interreligious Committee, our mix of American Christians, Jews and Muslims that has been very effective on each of those trips. I think now that I should not go alone, but for this kind of conversation I should not go with a large group either. So I have asked Mian Ashraf, whom you know well, and Rabbi Joe Ehrenkranz of Stamford to come with me, as they have both agreed to do.

Joe was Rabbi of an Orthodox synagogue in Stamford for forty five years, and retired just over a year ago. Since then he has been a Professor and assistant Director of the Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding at the Sacred Heart University in Fairfield. He was also, though, for some years, the head of the Israel Committee of the Rabbinical Association of America (the Orthodox rabbinical association), so his credentials are extremely good with the Israelis, and he has extended himself most impressively to come to an understanding of the Palestinian and Arab situation. When I was with him in the Middle East, he was able to arrange for our reception at the Arab League through his old friend, Secretary General Abdel Meguid.

There will be a further letter to Arafat very soon, as there was more to be said to him than I could get into one letter. I think I'm in a very good position to be sure we have the opportunity to talk with him, even at considerable length. We will need to talk not only with Rabin but with each of several people who could be his successor. Joe is in a better position than anyone else I know to make sure that happens, and I'm quite confident it will.

The weakest point in my asking for meetings is with President Asad. You notice that what I'm asking to talk with him is quite different from the main line of what I want to talk with Arafat and Rabin. It's so obvious as to be a truism that you get nowhere on a peace effort for the Middle East unless you bring in both the Syrians and the Palestinians. I'm not treating that, though, as simply an abstract proposition. What I want to discuss with Asad and Rabin is a quite separate concern, but, like the land and leadership questions for the Palestinians, central to the prospects of the peace. It may be that I do as much as I can just by raising these matters to Asad, but I think it would be helpful to talk with him. That face to face contact and knowledge is always very important.

Bishop John Elya, May 24, '95 - 2

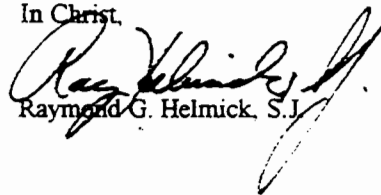
Asad could be reluctant to meet me in view of my association with Raymond Edde and my publishing that book of my 1988-1990 correspondence with him. I've been a nuisance to Asad's efforts to control Lebanon, though I think he will understand that this has never been unfriendly to Syria, and that I stood up for genuine Syrian interests even in the face of Edde's refusal to recognize them.

I'm describing all this, though, because I wonder if you might not help me get to Asad. Patriarch Maximos was prepared to help me in that nine years ago, when I so nearly got to Syria in 1986. I had to pass up the chance that time, because my contacts with Israelis and Palestinians became so complex that summer and demanded more of my time than I had anticipated. I have since talked at length with Foreign Minister Farouk as-Sharaa, but have never met Asad himself. He, of course, will have made up his mind what he thinks of my proposition about seeking Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, and if he doesn't like it he won't want to see me. But if he is tempted at all to see it my way, he might need to hear from someone who knows me before deciding he will meet, or have someone meet me in his name.

So I do indeed very seriously want to hear what you think of all this, the proposals in the letters and the chances of following through on them.

I hope you'll be able, in the meantime, to get to that June 5 session at the Islamic Center in Sharon, where we will have Ambassador William Murphy. My prayers and best regards to you and to Bishop Joseph.

In Christ,



Raymond G. Helmick, S.I.



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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

May 24, 1995

His Eminence
John Cardinal O'Connor
Archbishop of New York
452 Madison Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10022

Dear Cardinal O'Connor,

Christ's Peace!

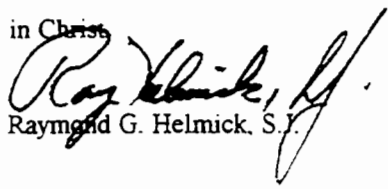
As you can see from the enclosures, I've been fueling up my Middle East correspondence again lately. I'm planning to visit the region, and all the three people I've written to here -- Arafat, Rabin, Asad -- in August. These letters are the basic text of the visit, though there will be a further letter to Arafat, as there was more to be said to him than could be done in one letter. You'll have a copy of that when I write it, but having let these three accumulate, I thought I should not delay any longer in getting copies of them to you.

When I wrote to Asad, I enclosed for him a letter I had sent back in November '93 to Prime Minister Rabin, of which this letter to Asad is described as a "mirror image." I sent you a copy of that at the time, but since it is a long while ago I enclose a further copy now. I also sent Arafat a copy of what I wrote to Rabin, and sent Rabin copies of what I had written to both Arafat and Asad. The White House, also, has copies of all of this, as have Cardinal Law and Archbishop Cacciavillan.

The visit in August will be made with two others, Rabbi Joe Ehrenkranz of Stamford and Dr. Mian Ashraf, the President of the Islamic Center here in the Boston area. I used to do this sort of thing by myself, but I've been to the region several times over in the last several years with groups -- up to twenty five at a time -- of our U. S. Interreligious Committee for Peace in the Middle East: mixed groups of American Jews, Christians and Muslims. So I don't think I should go alone this time, but neither should I be with a large group. I've been with both Joe Ehrenkranz and Mian Ashraf on previous visits there. Joe, in some of the years he headed a congregation in Stamford, was President of the Israel Committee of the Rabbinical Association of America (he's Orthodox), and Mian has been, because of his cooperative work in this field with Jews and ourselves, a frequent White House invitee and President Clinton's guest at the signing of the Israel-Jordan peace treaty last November.

I would highly value your thoughts on all this. Best wishes.

in Christ


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



May 24, 1995

His Excellency
Most Reverend Agostino Cacciavillan
Apostolic Pro-Nuncio to the United States
3339 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008

Dear Archbishop Cacciavillan,

Christ's Peace!

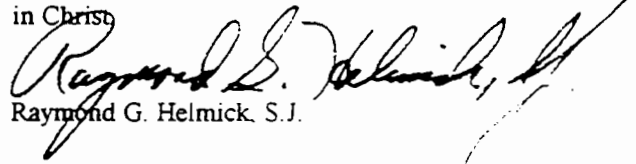
Recently I've been corresponding with President Arafat, Prime Minister Rabin and President Asad, in preparation for a visit I will make to the Middle East in August. The letters enclosed here will constitute the text of the conversations I hope to have with each of them at that time. There will, in fact, be a further letter to Arafat, as there was more to be said to him than could be put into just one letter. But having let this many letters accumulate, I thought I should not delay any longer before putting them before you. I will send you a copy of my further letter to Arafat soon, when I have written it.

Copies of these letters are with the White House, Cardinal Law and Cardinal O'Connor. In my letter to President Asad, I enclosed one that I had written back in November, 1993, to Prime Minister Rabin, of which my letter to Asad is, as I called it, a "mirror image." And though I did send you a copy of that letter at the time, I enclose another here for reference. I sent copies of what I had written to Asad and Arafat to Prime Minister Rabin, and of the letter to Rabin to Arafat.

It used to be my custom to make such visits to the Middle East by myself. But in recent years I have several times travelled there with groups, up to twenty five at a time, of our U.S. Interreligious Committee for Peace in the Middle East: a mixed American group of Jews, Christians and Muslims. Hence I thought it better this time not to travel alone, nor, for such conversations as these, with a large group, but with two companions: Rabbi Joseph Ehrenkrantz of Stamford, the former head of the Israel Committee of the Rabbinical Association of America, and Dr. Mian Ashraf, the President of the Islamic Center of New England, both of them enjoying well recognized standing with the various parties involved.

I would very much value your thoughts on this enterprise. With all best wishes.

in Christ


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

May 26, 1995

Dr. Nasser al-Kidwa
Head of Mission
Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine
to the United Nations
115 East 65th Street
New York, N.Y. 10021

Dear Dr. al-Kidwa

Salaam!

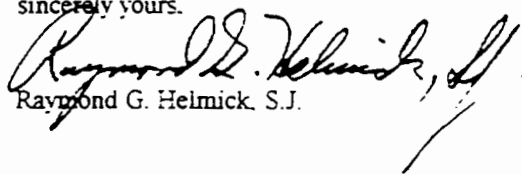
This is rather a heavy bundle of material. Once again I've written to your uncle, President Arafat, and would appreciate it if you will transmit the enclosed letter to him.

Since I last wrote to him, through you, on April 5th, I've written also to President Asad and to Prime Minister Rabin. I always prefer, when writing to people whose interests are so much affected as by such letters as these, not to conceal what I've been writing to the others in the circle, but to send them copies of my own part in the correspondence. So I enclose here, along with the letter to himself, copies for President Arafat of what I wrote to the others. That is what makes this such a bulky packet.

I had asked, when I wrote in April, that I might visit President Arafat when I come to the Middle East in August, with two good friends and associates, Dr. Mian Ashraf and Rabbi Joseph Ehrenkranz. I know it takes time to set up such a meeting. I've repeated the request in this letter, as you will see, and I will phone you sometime over the next week to ask if anything is developing about it.

With all best wishes, I am

sincerely yours,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



May 26, 1995

President Yasser Arafat
Palestine National Authority
Gaza

Dear President Arafat,

Salaam!

When I wrote to you, on April 5 of this year, detailing my worries about progress on the peace and asking that I might see you, there in Gaza, in August, in company with my friends, Dr. Mian Ashraf and Rabbi Joseph Ehrenkranz, I realized that there was more I wanted to write to you than could be contained in one letter, and that I would have to follow it up with this present letter. I would like now to repeat my request for a meeting with you in August, and in fact, after sending this letter to Dr. Nasser al-Kidwa for forwarding to you, I will get on the phone to discuss that with him and find a suitable time.

Since writing to you, I have also written to President Asad of Syria and to Prime Minister Rabin. My letter to President Asad made reference to a much earlier letter, of November, 1993, that I had sent to Mr. Rabin, in the context of the Oslo agreement, urging agreement with Syria on a termination of Israeli occupation in Southern Lebanon. What I wrote to President Asad was, as I called it, a "mirror image" of what I had urged on Prime Minister Rabin at that time. I subsequently sent copies of what I had written to you and to President Asad to Mr. Rabin himself, with the aim that none of this should be behind others' backs, and for the same reason I now enclose for your information, with this letter, copies of what I have written to both President Asad and Prime Minister Rabin, including a copy of that November '93 letter.

The substance of my earlier letter to you was an appeal for a popular mobilization of your Palestinian people along the lines of the *intifada*, a totally non-violent one this time, on principle, and like the original *intifada* directed consciously against occupation, and in no way against the existence or rights or peace of the State of Israel. I argued for this on the basis of giving the Palestinians a participatory role in the determination of their own future, and as a corrective to the power disparity that consistently leaves you at a critical disadvantage in negotiating the peace with the Israeli government. You will see that I put this same point in my letter to Prime Minister Rabin, arguing that he himself was left without an effective negotiating partner if you remained as powerless as Israel's military position left you.

It always distresses me to see my own country's policy, which should be and, I believe, is truly intended to be helpful to the peace, coming out one-sided and biased. The veto exercised by the U.S. in the Security Council, giving free licence to Israeli confiscation of Palestinian property in East Jerusalem, was a case in point. I was astonished and gratified to see the Israelis back away from that action. And though it was clearly something they did unwillingly, I regard that as the most positive single thing that has happened, with regard to peace prospects between you and them, since the actual signing of the DOP. I hope you are able to see through such American foibles on the path of negotiation to the genuine desire to promote the peace which, I believe, animates this American Administration. But the episode illustrates the need, of which I wrote before, for a base of negotiating power in the mobilization of your Palestinian people.

President Arafat, May 26, '95 – 2

I admired the restraint with which you yourself refrained from taking issue in this matter in any way that would have been ineffective for its purpose, but would have damaged the more fundamental prospects of peace. An accidental combination of forces, Prime Minister Rabin's Likud opposition being prepared to join, in paradoxical contradiction of their own principles, in the no-confidence motion of the Arab parties in the Knesset, brought about the change in Israeli policy, but at the risk of bringing down the Labor government and with it the Oslo agreement itself. You would have been well served, and could have avoided the excessive risks, all of them beyond your control, that this episode involved, if you had had available to you a mobilized movement of Palestinians that responded directly to your leadership. This is what I meant by my appeal to you, in my April letter, for such a mobilization.

I have shared that letter with a very few other persons, those from whom it would be wrong of me to conceal it and those on whom I relied for counsel: Rabbi Ehrenkranz and Dr. Ashraf, who will be with me on the visit in August; Mr. Ronald Young, of the *U.S. Interreligious Committee for Peace in the Middle East*, with whom I always try to work closely in concert; the White House, and Prime Minister Rabin; and the small circle of leading Catholic churchmen whom I always keep informed in these matters. Several of these friends express their apprehension to me that any renewal of *intifada*-style mobilization among Palestinians would be bound, despite all efforts to the contrary, to involve some violence. One cited the way opposition, in the United States, to abortion has been accompanied by sporadic instances of violence, always more discrediting to the anti-abortion forces than anything their opponents could do to them.

I take the point, and feel it is one to which I must respond in this letter to you.

Over many years I worked with my friend, now dead, Richard Hauser in London. Besides meeting and working constantly with people in many conflict situations, we developed a lot of analytic principles which guided our approach. One of our observations was that people faced with conflict crises would meet them commonly with two parallel responses: *apathy* or *violence*.

Both of these responses seemed wrong, but as we studied them and looked for alternatives we concluded that these are in fact the most basic and human responses, and that, as destructive as they can be, they cannot be ignored or wished away, but must be dealt with. Ultimately, we came to believe that these responses, of apathy and violence, must themselves be used as the antidote to the destruction they can cause.

We found there is a *gradation* within them, and began speaking of *degrees of apathy and violence*.

The *least* degree of violence is *indignation*, the readiness to make a commitment of oneself, even at the cost of sacrifice, to oppose what we see as an evil. The least degree of apathy is a combination of *curiosity and doubt*, a readiness to question the received answers and to seek alternatives. These, in fact, are the useful social forces, complementary to each other and the resource for any progress we are going to make in resolving issues of conflict, or in putting the worse manifestations of violence and apathy behind us.

Measuring both violence and apathy on a scale of ten degrees (an arbitrary number of course, as we could imagine any number of degrees we wanted), we looked for the *next step*, the second degree of both apathy and violence, and tried to see what would cause it. Our conclusion was that the critical factor was *frustration*, that if frustration were introduced, the result was that the *indignation* changed to *hatred*, the *curiosity and doubt* to *cynicism*. These were *entirely without positive use* for any social purpose. Hence the requirement for any progress was to *purge the frustration out of the popular response*.

President Arafat, May 26, '95 - 3

The remaining degrees of either violence or apathy vary according to the particular situations. The kinds and extremity of violence used in one conflict will differ from another, up to genocide in some cases, running to different kinds of extreme in others. The apathy responses tend to be very individual, various ways of *dropping out* or evading problems. Social organization of their response to trouble was alien to the people whose reaction was apathy.

When it came to the reaction of the people of good will who try, in one way or another, to help others in their trouble, we found that most of the volunteer effort was focussed on those who made an apathy response to their problems: the alcoholics, the drug addicts, the drop-outs of many sorts. Their plight appealed to the conscience of those willing to help their fellows in need, whereas those who resorted to violence in the same kind of situations were classified as wrong-doers, to be disciplined or repressed or destroyed rather than cared for. Having seen that, I have myself put most of my own efforts for many years into trying to find ways out of their dilemmas for those whose response fell into the violent category.

But the two typical responses, apathy and violence, turn out, in our experience, to be practically interchangeable. Richard Hauser and I took to describing apathy as a frozen form of violence, a way in which people turn their violence inward upon themselves, out of discouragement or despair of their efforts making any difference or for whatever reason. But this apathy is a volatile condition, that can suddenly and unpredictably explode again into violence, a degree of violence equivalent to the degree of apathy that has been reached. The violent, too, can just as suddenly and unpredictably become tired and lapse into apathy. Those whose formula is peace at any price are often inclined to welcome the situation when people enmired in a violent conflict stop out of simple exhaustion, as often happens. In view of this analysis, I always find that a very treacherous situation, one in which people are liable to accept a seeming solution to their conflict that is not just. They will recognize that later, when they awake from their exhaustion, and the violence will then resume, worse than when it ended.

The peace-makers, and those who work with the apathetic and drop-outs, are often inclined to think that they have improved the situation if they have helped people come back from some more extreme degree of either violence or apathy to a lesser degree: on my arbitrary scale of one to ten, from a seventh or eighth degree back to a third or fourth. My analysis tells me that this is never enough, but that to get to a situation in which people are able to resolve their crises it is *always* necessary to get back to the *first* degree of both: to the indignation and the curiosity and doubt, the socially useful and mutually complementary forms, purging out of them the frustration element that turns them to hatred and cynicism. To be satisfied with less than that is, in every case, to fail.

All this may sound very abstract. Richard Hauser and I never took it as a prescriptive formula to apply to the conflicts we dealt with, but kept consistently finding it manifested as we dealt with quite concrete problems. For me, it has become a matter of principle not to try to fit the real problems people have to meet into preconceived theories, but to test any such formulas as these against the realities of people's real experience. I look at your Palestinian experience and find these analytic tools so useful for my own understanding of your situation that I commend them to you.

I think all of this has been illustrated at many points of the hard experience of Palestinians. The same has been true, of course, for Israelis and all other Jews, and I think it important for Palestinians and Jews to understand that of each other, and to have useful analytic tools with which to understand one another's experience. You may recall that in our meetings of March, 1986, in Tunis, you and I talked in equally abstract analytic terms, I attempting an interpretation of what had been the actual experience of Palestinians under your leadership, a quest for self-determination and a recognition of self-determination as a right of Israelis, implying, at that time, a basis for your reconciliation with them.

President Arafat, May 26, '95 - 4

It is in this context that I now make my appeal for a renewed, but totally non-violent, *intifada*, a mobilization of Palestinian resolve to have their own independent life, alongside of and fully respectful of the life of Israel. Involvement of your whole population in the initiative of this effort is an antidote to the frustration that I see behind the violence of Hamas and the other religious and secular rejectionists. The relief of that frustration is the way to drain out the hatred and cynicism that make the daring exploits of terrorists so appealing even to those who would undertake no such violence themselves but who are reduced to cynicism about their future, and in many cases despair of any effort to improve it. When the people were mobilized in the *intifada*, they had a sense of accomplishment that made possible a discipline of the *intifada*. People realized that offenses against the spirit of the *intifada*, such as the use of guns, or the rejection of the Israelis themselves rather than simply of the occupation, were subversion of their own efforts and self-expression, destruction of their own hard-won gains.

They were sometimes mis-led, most often by the various rejectionists, for instance into turning their resentments inward into violence against Palestinians whose despair had led them into collaboration of various sorts. The deficiencies of the *intifada*, though, could mostly be attributed to the leadership being so far removed, in Tunis, and the direction on the ground being consequently so difficult. Those are defects that could be remedied in a renewal. Most important would be the purging of either hatred or cynicism from the movement. Important too, for all Palestinian participants, would be a recognition of what produces either hatred or cynicism among the Israelis, and cooperative work with the many Israelis who themselves are dedicated to the peace -- not traitors to Israel but people who commit themselves to the good of their own nation and of you.

That bit of theoretical analysis was one of the two things I most wanted to communicate to you in this letter. The other is to make the process more concrete, by indicating some of the issues that such a campaign could address.

All the hopes of the Palestinians are bedevilled by the problem of the Israeli settlements in your midst, built up over the years since 1967 with the deliberate intention of "creating facts on the ground" in the favorite euphemism.

You have heard me, over many years, arguing that for all the illegality of such confiscation and colonization of land occupied by conquest, it is clearly of great importance to Israelis that Jews should be able to live in Judea and Samaria, and that Palestinians should come to terms with that. If Palestinians are to accept the presence of Jews among them with grace, there have to be agreed parameters. The program, so evident throughout the settlement period, of trying to displace Palestinians from their homeland, and fill the territory with an alternative population of colonists so as to change the balance, has to be renounced by agreement. The acceptance that Jews live in Palestinian territory has to be met with reciprocal agreement that Palestinians be able to live in Jaffa and Haifa and the other places dear to them, but with the same understanding, that by agreement this should not be done in such numbers as to shift the balance of population, or with that intention.

I think Hebron should be seen as a test of such acceptance by Palestinians. It is among the most polarized places in the West Bank, and for that reason a good place to heal the hatred. All the time since the murderous attack on Palestinians at the Ibrahimi Mosque in February '94, it has been the Palestinian population of Hebron that has been subjected to curfews, brutalized, shut off from the centers of their life for the protection of a violent group of settlers whose reason for living in the middle of Hebron is to set them at defiance, and for the free access to the center of Hebron of other settlers, a great proportion of them equally violent, on the fringe of the city. It is all debilitatingly unfair, and as an understandable result the Palestinians of Hebron are among the most resentful of Jews and of Israel. Nothing could be more effective than to confront and heal the hatred and cynicism here.

President Arafat, May 26, '95 — 5

What place in the West Bank could be more precious and important to Jews than Hebron, given its associations with Abraham and the other Patriarchs, yours and theirs? It should never be forgotten by Palestinians that the hostility shown there by Jews is the aftermath of the murder and expulsion of Jews many years earlier. That too calls for healing and the expunging of hatreds.

Israeli government is massively reluctant to remove these settlers from Hebron, though many Israelis and their friends abroad think it an opportunity lost that this was not done at the time of the Goldstein assault. Prime Minister Rabin apparently feels that the removal of Jews from this or any settlement would be taken as the signal that *all* were to be removed, and that the possibility of Jews living in Judea and Samaria, so precious to them, would be precluded.

Clearly the people who are there now, whose purpose is to get rid of Palestinians, who shoot your people without compunction and who know that they always get away with it, are not the ones who should be living there. Why not find the group of peace-loving Jews who would live there in friendship with the Palestinians and for the building of the peace? Then you demonstrate the willingness of Palestinians to live in peace with Israelis, and you have found the Israelis who can help you do it. It would mean leading the Hebron Palestinian population to a reexamination of their own consciences. They would gain enormously by doing so, and your leadership would be vastly confirmed by bringing them to it. They would have to become the guarantors and protectors of the Israelis who lived among them, with an interval in which it was your authority that provided that protection. Your moral position and that of the whole Palestinian cause would be heightened before Israel and before all the rest of the world, to your great advantage in negotiating the free future of Palestine. One of the sorest points in the whole issue of settlements would have been made a source of further progress.

Further on settlements.

For years Palestinians argued that "Zionism is racism," and even got the General Assembly to pass a resolution to that effect. The position was an entire rejection of the legitimacy of Israel as a people and a nation. Reversing it was as important as it was for the Israelis to stop characterizing the PLO, as the representative of all Palestinians, as "terrorists," equally a way of delegitimizing the Palestinian people as such. Both sides have had to retreat from those positions. The U.N., with Western prompting, reversed that resolution ahead of you, but the effective end of the "Zionism is racism" concept was in the PLO's acceptance of Israel, in the PNC decisions and your U.N. speech of 1988, in the participation in the Madrid Conference and in the Oslo DOP. The DOP, by itself, was the end of the Israeli delegitimization of the Palestinians.

But there is racism in Israel all the same, just as there is in Hamas and other rejectionist positions among Palestinians. The Israelis have their Baruch Goldsteins, their Ariel Sharons and many others. At an institutional level, however, the principal racist provision is that the housing put up in these West Bank settlements is exclusively for Jews and no others. If anyone were to attempt such a racially exclusivist housing policy in the U.S., in any nation of Europe, in any nation in the world that made a claim to civilization, it would be regarded as intolerable. It is far more so on occupied territory that is Palestinian.

This, more than anything else, is in my opinion your issue about the settlements. That they are set up as a way of displacing Palestinians is legal offense in itself. But the exclusionary policy, that no Palestinians are permitted to live in them, is your local issue.

Here again, you have reason to require that murderous bigots whose aim is the death or other removal of Palestinians from their own land should not be accepted as residents on Palestinian territory.

President Arafat, May 26, '95 -- 6

You have reason, too, to reject the policy of deliberately overturning the population balance, in violation of clear obligations in international law, in militarily occupied areas. But in making an issue of the racial exclusionary policy of these housing areas, you would give all the signs appropriate to the *intifada*: an acceptance of Israel; acceptance of Jews living among you in such numbers as are not intended to displace you, and in peace; readiness to live in peace and friendship with them on that basis; but equally a rejection of occupation, of illegality, of injustice, of racist practice.

A campaign to insist on this would take the form of non-cooperation with any of the provisions of service on which those settlements have to rely, unless they drop the exclusionary basis of their residence. You would have to ensure the peaceful character and behavior of Palestinians who took up residence in these housing units. It would be in the interest of all Palestinians that they should move in in peace, and you could see to it that the whole Palestinian population understood the importance of this, and recognized that any violation of that trust would be an attack on their own interests.

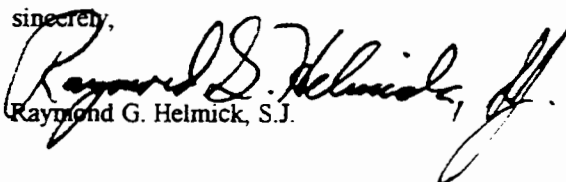
The result of such a policy on your part would be to disinfect the settlement issue. You could be sure, and the Israeli government, once it accepted this on principle, would be responsible to enforce it, that any Israeli residents of the settlements whose purpose in being there was to do harm to Palestinians, would leave or could be removed. Some others who were not comfortable with living alongside Palestinians would go back to Israel, leaving you a Jewish population in Judea and Samaria that was not such a threat to the balance of population. And those who chose to remain would be those -- a large proportion even of those now living in the Occupied Territories -- who were prepared to live in friendship with Palestinians.

Protection of the settler population would then, by incremental degrees, cease to be a reason for keeping an Israeli garrison on Palestinian territory. You, of course, would have to be responsible for their safety instead. But you would have chosen an issue on which the entire problem of settlements could be removed as an obstacle to Palestinian freedom, one also on which the entire Palestinian population of the West Bank could be participants, and in the process learn the ways of peace.

I bring up these two issues, Hebron and the exclusionary policy in the Israeli settlements, simply as a sampler of what could be the concrete issues of a popular mobilization. There are others, but these two would be especially important, particularly as they signified acceptance of Jews and Israel at the same time as they rejected the injustices done to Palestinians. Would there be violence? No doubt there would, but nothing like the amount of violence that there is now in the atmosphere of frustration and absence of such a mobilization. And what greatly reduced violence there was would be without popular acceptance. The violators of the peace would be isolated, rejected by those in whose interest they claimed to act, for the well-understood reason that their actions were contrary to those very interests. And the position of your leadership among Palestinians would be in no way diluted or weakened, but strengthened out of recognition by the involvement of the whole population in taking initiative for their freedom.

I trust I will be seeing you in August, with my friends. You have, as always, my prayers and best wishes,

sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

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May 26, 1995

His Eminence
John Cardinal O'Connor
Archbishop of New York
452 Madison Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10022

Dear Cardinal O'Connor,

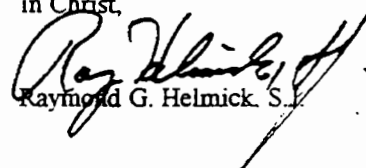
Christ's Peace!

A copy of my further letter to Arafat, to supplement the set of letters I sent you the other day addressed to him, to President Asad and Prime Minister Rabin, is enclosed here.

I will want to talk all these subjects with him when I see him in August, together with Rabbi Joe Ehrenkranz and Dr. Mian Ashraf.

Best wishes,

in Christ,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

May 26, 1995

His Excellency
Most Reverend Agostino Cacciavillan
Apostolic Pro-Nuncio to the United States
3339 Massachusetts Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20008

Dear Archbishop Cacciavillan,

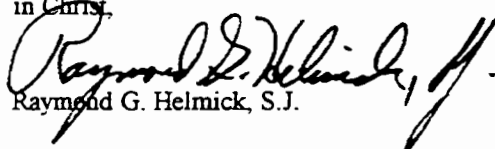
Christ's Peace!

As I promised the other day, when I sent you copies of my recent letters to President Arafat, Prime Minister Rabin and President Asad, I enclose here a copy of the further letter I have just now sent to President Arafat.

There was more to be said to him than I could get into the first letter. In August I expect to see him in Gaza, together with two good friends who are my associates in the *U. S. Interreligious Committee for Peace in the Middle East*, Rabbi Joseph Ehrenkranz and Dr. Mian Ashraf.

I will keep you informed of what comes of all this. Best wishes,

in Christ,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

May 26, 1995

Dr. Mian Ashraf
358 Glen Road
Weston, MA 02193

Dear Mian,

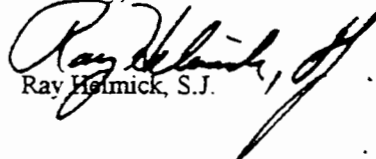
Salaam!

Another of these letters. I had much more to say to Arafat than I could get in to just the one letter I sent him April 5th. This is the supplement, and very much what we talked about when I was over to your house last week.

I look forward to the June 5th meeting. I'm sure I'll be talking of it with you in the meantime.

Best wishes,

sincerely,


Ray Helmick, S.J.

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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

May 26, 1995

Rabbi Joseph H. Ehrenkranz
200 Fifth Street
Stamford, Connecticut 06905

Dear Joe,

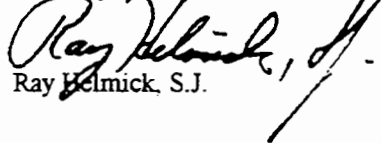
Shalom!

I'm a little quicker off the mark this time. I've just sent the enclosed letter to Arafat. I always send things to him by way of his nephew, Dr. Nasser al-Kidwa, who heads the Palestine Observer Mission down in New York and has been my contact with Arafat these many years. Sometime next week I'll get on the phone to al-Kidwa and find out what's happening about an actual date for a meeting.

I'm very anxious to have your thoughts on all this. I'm sure you must look at much of it with some apprehension. There's no harm in our representing, as we always must, different points of view when we see these people. I think the common concern for their peace will shine through.

Greetings to Sandy, and my best to you both,

sincerely,


Ray Helmick, S.J.



May 26, 1995

Most Reverend John A Elya
Eparch of Newton
19 Dartmouth Street
West Newton, MA 02165

Dear Bishop John,

Christ's Peace!

By way of supplement to the great heap of letters I sent you the other day, here is another to Arafat that I just sent off today.

There was much more to be said to him than I could get into the one letter alone. This one rather completes the text of what I want to talk to him about when I see him, as I trust I will, in August. I always send these things to him by way of his nephew, Dr. Nasser al-Kidwa, who heads the Palestinian Observer Mission at the U.N. in New York and has been my regular contact with Arafat for many years now. I'll phone him sometime next week and find out what is happening about an actual date for a meeting.

Best wishes,

in Christ,


Ray Helmick, S.J.

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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

May 26, 1995

His Eminence
Bernard Cardinal Law
Archbishop of Boston
2101 Commonwealth Avenue
Brighton, MA 02135

Dear Cardinal Law,

Christ's Peace!

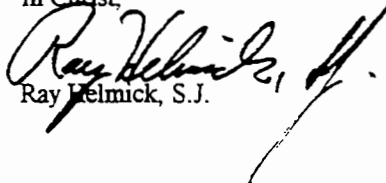
My further letter to Arafat, supplementary to the one I sent him April 5th, has just gone off today. A copy is enclosed here.

There was simply much more to be said to Arafat than I could get into the one letter alone. This will fairly complete the basic text of what I want to talk with him when I see him in August.

It did amaze me to see the Israelis back off the other day from confiscating that additional land in East Jerusalem. I know it wasn't done willingly, but it is the best news I have heard from there since the signing of the Oslo Agreement a year ago September. It opens the way to a much more fruitful dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians.

Best wishes,

in Christ,


Ray Helmick, S.J.



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CARDINAL'S OFF
1011 FIRST AVE
NEW YORK, NY 10

May 31, 1995

Dear Father Helmick,

Many thanks for your recent letters, together with enclosures. I am grateful for your thoughtfulness.

I look forward to an update after your August meeting.

You are in my Masses and prayers.

With best wishes and

Faithfully in Christ,

Archbishop of New York

The Reverend Raymond G. Helmick, SJ
Jesuit Community
Boston College
Chestnut Hill, MA 02167-3802



CARDINAL'S RESIDENCE
2101 COMMONWEALTH AVENUE
BRIGHTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02135

June 6, 1995

The Reverend Raymond Helmick, S.J.
Jesuit Community Boston College
Chestnut Hill, MA 02167-3802

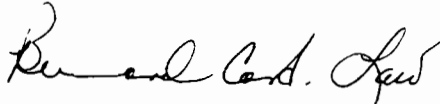
Dear Father Helmick:

Thank you for sending me the copy of the supplementary letter which you sent to President Arafat on May 26, 1995.

When you get a response from these letters, I would be interested to hear what the responses are.

With kindest personal regards, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,


Archbishop of Boston

BCL/ac



452 MADISON AVENUE
NEW YORK, NY 10017

June 16, 1995

Dear Father Helmick,

Many thanks for your letter of 24 May, together with enclosures.

I am deeply grateful to you for sharing with me your plans for your forthcoming visit to the Middle East and your letters to President Asad, Chairman Arafat and Prime Minister Rabin. They certainly communicate a thorough and comprehensive appraisal of the political scene and offer positive suggestions to advance the peace process.

Be assured of my best wishes and prayers for the success of your efforts. It will be quite extraordinary if you and your colleagues are able to dialogue with each of them as you hope.

You are in my Masses and prayers.

With best wishes and

Faithfully in Christ,

Archbishop of New York

The Reverend Raymond G. Helmick, SJ
Jesuit Community
Boston College
Chestnut Hill, MA 02167-3802



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

July 11, 1995

President Hafez al-Asad
Damascus
SYRIA

Dear President Asad,

Salaam!

Since writing to you on April 8th of this year, I have continued observing the two things on which I concentrated in that letter: the dangerous situation occasioned by the Israeli occupation of Southern Lebanon, and the still apparently desultory results of Syrian-Israeli negotiation over the Golan and the counter-balancing issue of a peace treaty.

As I explained in my earlier letter, I had hesitated to write to you because there was so much official diplomacy going on, with Mr. Christopher and Mr. Ross from my country constantly visiting you in Damascus, and I felt I should not interfere by offering different proposals unrelated to their work. I held to that hesitation even though I had much earlier (November, 1993) indicated to Mr. Rabin that I planned to write to you about the Southern Lebanon occupation as the "ticking bomb" in the middle of all your efforts to establish regional peace. You have a copy of the letter I had sent him so long before I wrote to you, which is mirror image to that which I sent you this last April.

Now you have had further conversation with Mr. Christopher, and the Washington meeting of Syrian and Israeli Chiefs of Staff. Progress is hard to measure for one like myself who stands outside, but it appears only to inch along in an area that is of tremendous urgency for you as well as all other parties. I don't know what your feelings may be about the suggestion I made both to you and to Mr. Rabin, that it would be helpful to address the Southern Lebanon problem. Even in most recent days, unspeakable violence there has again, as so often, raised the specter of creating uncontrollable crisis.

I understand the constraint under which you deal with the Israelis over the Golan/peace treaty issue. Trust is minimal on either side, and it does not suit you to make any agreement on phased Israeli steps toward withdrawal of their occupation, because the very essence of your distrust of Israel is that its government will lay claim to full rewards for some partial fulfillment of its promises and will then renege on fulfilling the rest. You see that constantly in the case of the Palestinians.

It is my belief that you could come to an agreement with the Israelis on their withdrawal from Southern Lebanon, in return for your agreement, along with the Lebanese government, to ensure the safety of Israel's Northern border from guerrilla attack, and that this would not incur the odium of your having made a partial deal with Israel over Syrian territory. If you accomplished this, you would not only neutralize the "ticking bomb" of which I have written to you both. You would also convincingly address the essence of the distrust with which Israelis view Syria, demonstrating what those of us who observe you more carefully have long known, that you consistently deliver what you have promised when once you have reached an agreement.

Whether it is attractive to you to meet an outsider like myself and discuss such a proposal is quite another question, and I can understand many reasons why you might not want to do that, even if the proposal itself may interest you. I would be quite satisfied to have raised this suggestion in your mind and Mr. Rabin's, though I think it would be valuable, in such a matter, to meet face to face.

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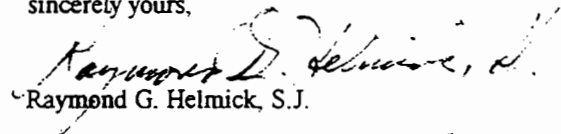
President Hafez al-Asad, July 11, '95 - 2

I still plan to make my Middle East visit during August, to meet with both Mr. Rabin and Mr. Arafat. Because my visits to the Middle East in recent years have been done in conjunction with other American Jews, Christians and Muslims in the context of the *U. S. Interreligious Committee for Peace in the Middle East*, I will travel, as I indicated earlier, with Rabbi Joseph Ehrenkranz and Dr. Mian Ashraf, highly distinguished and influential members of their respective communities in the United States, though this initiative is my own, and not that of the Interreligious Committee as such. We have not yet made any travel plans to get to Damascus on this visit, and you will understand that the time is now getting somewhat short for arranging everything from visas to transport, things that people like ourselves cannot do in an instant. I would still find it most welcome if you would agree to see us on this matter. If it is advantageous to you that such a proposal should be advanced, we could be some help.

All three of us, on a previous visit in December 1992, were present at a meeting of members of the Interreligious Committee with your Foreign Minister, Mr. Shara. If it were not possible or desirable for you to meet with us yourself, we would be happy to meet with him or with some other whom you would designate. If in fact you would prefer not to have us come to Syria at all, but would still like to explore this proposal in some way, I would gladly take it up with one of your Ambassadors, whether in Washington or at the U.N.

With the most cordial best wishes and my prayers for you and for the peace of Syria and all the countries and peoples of the region, I am

sincerely yours,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

July 22, 1995

Dr. Nasser al-Qidwa
Head of Mission
Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine
to the United Nations
115 East 65th Street
New York, N.Y. 10021

Dear Dr. al-Qidwa

Salaam!

By this time I begin to worry about becoming a nuisance, and hope I will not. I called your office a couple of times a week or so ago, hoping for a date that would be better than other dates for visiting President Arafat in Gaza during August. I do fully understand how difficult that is, with the continued flow of more important events. I am anxious to have this visit, though, and arranging it will become far more difficult for me once the academic year gets under way again in early September. I believe it is, in fact, more important that I should have conveyed to President Arafat the ideas I have included in the letters, but I still think it is helpful to meet face to face. I surely will not be trying to argue him out of using his own better judgment about the things I suggest. I see them from a distance, he from close up, he with responsibilities that I don't carry, each of us with the advantages and disadvantages of those positions.

Meantime, the hunger strikes of Palestinian prisoners have me concerned enough that I thought I should write again, out of my own close experience with the hunger strikes in Northern Ireland in 1980 and 1981. I take your observation that a letter written in this size of type can't easily be FAXed right over to Gaza, and since this matter is coming to a head very soon and hence urgent, I've written the letter in a larger type so that you can FAX it. I would much appreciate it if you would do so.

With best wishes, and full sympathetic understanding of the quandary I put you in any time I press you for a date,

sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.
Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



July 22, 1995

President Yasser Arafat
Palestine National Authority
Gaza

Dear President Arafat,

Salaam!

During these months in which I have been hoping to see you soon, events have been moving rapidly. That requires that the analysis I have been putting before you in my earlier letters of this year should be constantly reexamined in the light of the most current prospects of negotiated agreement with the Israelis. Things I have said about a renewed, though scrupulously non-violent, *intifada* have to be looked at in terms of whether they would help or reduce the possibilities of the withdrawal/redeployment of occupying troops or any other advantage the Palestinians can gain by cultivating the confidence of the Israelis.

Just now, as I watch the delicate progress toward an agreement which might or might not come soon, and simultaneously the hunger strike in the prisons and the popular demonstrations supporting it, I have the impression that you are in fact implementing a policy not unlike what I envisioned, a widely participatory movement of the whole people under your leadership. It is not altogether clear to me how willingly you support these popular protests, or how far they may be things you cannot choose but support. Hunger strikes are a very familiar field to me, as I was very close to the leadership of both the IRA and the British government's Northern Ireland Office during the hunger strikes of 1980 and 1981, and after much other intervention actually mediated between them for a six-week period in August and

President Aafat, July 22, '95 -- 2

September 1981. As I see both risks and attraction of the protest by and on behalf of Palestinian prisoners now, I thought that, even though I look forward to seeing you very soon, I should write to you once more out of the rather specialized experience that has given me.

Dr. Al-Qidwa, through whom I send you this, tells me that the tight print I normally use makes it difficult to FAX my letters to you. Hence I use a larger print this time.

I am glad to see this popular protest, anxious as I always am that it should be exactly non-violent. You are, of course, inevitably exposed to such actions as the murder of the two young Israeli hikers on the road to Jericho last week, claimed this time by the PFLP. Even the Israelis, by this time, have recognized that your efforts to curb such violence, always directed as much against you as against them, have become more effective than even they had expected. Stone-throwing or other minor violence always detracts from the character that any Palestinian protest should have under current circumstances, and I would hope for training of your public in the more effective ways of non-violent protest.

The hunger strike itself, though, alarms me. I know how difficult it was to manage the internal dynamics of the 1980 and 1981 Irish hunger strikes. The first came to a humiliating failure in December 1980, because these dynamics had not been thought through. When the 1981 hunger strike began in March, the careful way the sequence of new entrants onto the fast was designed, so as to prevent the problems that had afflicted the 1980 action, involved new problems that left the strikers no way of ending their fast short of death, and therefore drastically limited the freedom of their effort. As I watch, with little information, the Palestinian hunger strike, it seems to me damagingly unplanned: a mass strike, in which large numbers will be approaching the final crisis simultaneously, leaving little or no

President Arafat, July 22, '95 -- 3

flexibility, or opening for negotiation with those against whom the protest is directed, to any leadership. The Israelis, meantime, have so effectively limited information about the hunger strikers coming out from the prison that the direct political effect of their strike is small.

I am left supposing that the actual decision to hold the hunger strike itself is not yours, however much you may favor the support demonstrations outside the prisons. The Irish hunger strikes, I well remember, were held by the prisoners themselves in defiance of opposition from the IRA leadership, which was left no option but to support them. They too had the complication of rivalry within the hunger strike between IRA and INLA, not as extreme as what you face between *Fatah* and *Hamas* strikers. Your situation must be even more difficult, as the *Hamas* contingent may likely be seeing this as a direct challenge to your own leadership.

My experience of that internal dimension of the hunger strike is more complex than I can include in a letter. I would be glad to work through it with you and your advisers when I see you.

What especially alarms me about the hunger strike, though, is that, if it leads to actual deaths in the prison, it will foment violent protests outside that may be altogether uncontrollable, and terribly compromise all your efforts at establishing a just peace. I know it may be extremely difficult for you to command or control any change of tactic within the prison, but I would recommend it, if you are able, even if it is only to bring the *Fatah* participants to a different strategy. If, like the IRA hunger strikers of 1981, they are so frustrated by their long imprisonment and the failure of Israeli government to address the prisoner issue that they will resist even your efforts to curb the strike, there is no use in asking them simply to call it off. You need an alternative strategy, to be adopted under your direction, that will be so effective that it is useless for any *Hamas* hunger strikers to deny that

President Arafat, July 22, '95 -- 4

your strategy is superior to theirs.

That superior strategy, to my mind, would be a non-cooperation policy by the prisoners. No prison, as again I have learned by close observation of the Northern Irish Long Kesh, the British Wandsworth and Maidstone, and a great variety of German, Jamaican and American prisons, can run without cooperation between prisoners and guards. The Irish have developed the prison uniform and "dirty protest" forms of non-cooperation, which I don't believe are really well designed. There are far more effective ways simply to throw all the frustration onto the prison administration and guards, leaving them to do, most onerously, all the infinite number of things that they can hardly manage without the cooperation of the prisoners.

While the Israeli censorship has been able to bottle up news of the suffering of the hunger strikers in their prisons, it would be far more difficult to prevent news of the frustration of the administration and guards from leaking out. This would become something that the Palestinians outside the prison could actually celebrate, as showing the victorious and peaceful ingenuity of their hero-prisoners. In this shape of celebration, with overtones of humor, the protests would take on a far sunnier character, which, along with the demonstrated peacefulness of the protest within the prison, would add immeasurably to the frustration of the Israelis themselves, bring about Israeli public shame at the failure to address the issue of continued detention of these prisoners, win further Israeli allies of the Palestinian protest, and hence lead more effectively to the release of prisoners.

I would like to draw a more general principle about the character of any such Palestinian non-violent protest as I have recommended to you in my earlier letters of this year: *no pain or damage occasioned to Palestinians through these protests should ever be a direct result of their own actions, but should always be inflicted directly by Israelis.*

President Arafat, July 22, '95 -- 5

There is no way protest can be carried out without pain. People accept this because it is preferable to the unacceptable conditions that are imposed by others. But it is dispiriting that the pain should ever be self-inflicted. If that is seen as a general principle, it has very wide effect on the types of non-violent protest that will be adopted. The protest should in every case be the occasion for Israelis to be ashamed of their treatment of Palestinians, never giving them excuse to regard it as afflictions the Palestinians have brought upon themselves.

I should perhaps end this letter right there. But since I have seen these protests over prisoners as something consonant with what I was recommending to you earlier in the year, and yet worried about them, I will add that I think it advisable to broaden the range of topics on which protest is mounted if there is to be a participatory popular campaign. In my last letter, of May 26, I already mentioned several topics -- Jerusalem, the settlements (especially the fact that, although on Palestinian territory, they are kept exclusively for Israelis, and Palestinians are not allowed to live in them), delay in the promised redeployment, etc. I see no need to go into detail over them now.

I would like, though, before concluding, to refer to what I wrote then about keeping the popular response at the level of indignation, curiosity and doubt, and preventing it from running (out of frustration) to hatred and cynicism. The generalized principle I suggested, that no pain or damage be self-inflicted by Palestinians but always have to be recognizably the work of Israelis, is one way of keeping the frustration out of it, and leaving both the frustration and the shame to the Israelis themselves. This will gain you Israeli allies, who are most important to have if your people and theirs are to come to a warm peace. Humor is important too, that your people be able to laugh at what Israelis do in their frustration, and the Israelis realize the foolishness in the way they treat Palestinians. Especially the most vicious of the right-wing settlers should find themselves ridiculous figures of fun. They will do

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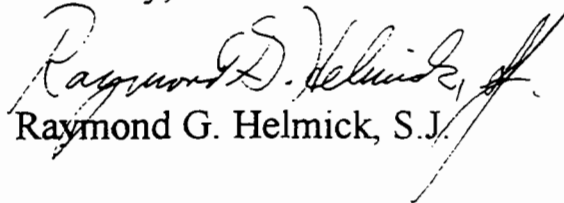
President Arafat, July 22, '95 – 6

some outrageous things as a result, but in doing so lose whatever public support they have in the rest of the Israeli population.

I have felt some bit of frustration myself in waiting for a good date to come to Gaza, with my friends Rabbi Joseph Ehrenkranz and Dr. Mian Ashraf, some time in August. I understand and appreciate the difficulty of giving me a date, when I see that the agreement that was not ready for July 1st is now hoped for by July 25th, and yet that even Palestinian spokesmen now say that the date is not sacred and that a Washington signing could be in the first week of August. When I read that, I quickly fill in that, in the first week of August, we may well be hearing that it may be the second week, and in the third week that everyone hopes it may be ready some time in October. There is much more reason for me to cultivate some patience about this than there is for you. But I do look forward to seeing you, and hope I may have a date soon.

With best wishes, and my prayers for your success in concluding a peace that will satisfy the needs of both Palestinians and Israelis,

sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

223

July 25, 1995

Dr. Nasser al-Qidwa
Head of Mission
Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine
to the United Nations
115 East 65th Street
New York, N.Y. 10021

Dear Dr. al-Qidwa

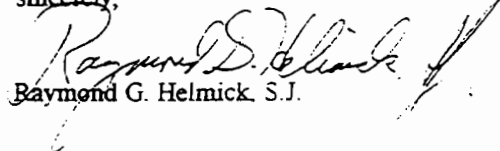
Salaam!

Thank you for calling. So little information comes back from Palestine in our news sources that I had not seen that the hunger strike had been stopped. I'm glad, in that case, to have the letter I wrote to President Arafat in that matter go to him in the ordinary way.

As you suggested, I enclose a short letter to President Arafat, suggesting dates for our visit to Gaza. I've again used the larger print so that you can FAX this to him, and I would be grateful to hear whether the dates suit him soon enough so that we can go ahead and order tickets.

With best wishes,

sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

July 25, 1995

President Yasser Arafat
Palestine National Authority
Gaza

Dear President Arafat,

Salaam!

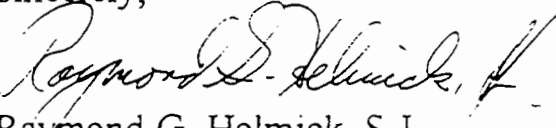
The visit I have planned to the Middle East will come during August if it is possible to see you in Gaza during that time. I would like to make it the third week of August, arriving in the region on August 14th, a Monday, and remaining until Monday, August 21.

I will have two companions with me, Rabbi Joseph Ehrenkranz and Dr. Mian Ashraf. They know the letters I have written over this year to you, to Mr. Rabin and to President Asad.

I hope these dates will suit you. I have asked Dr. al-Qidwa to FAX this request to you so that I may know. If the dates are not workable, we will schedule our visit differently.

With best wishes,

sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

225

August 15, 1995

Dr. Nasser al-Qidwa
Head of Mission
Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine
to the United Nations
115 East 65th Street
New York, N.Y. 10021

Dear Dr. al-Qidwa

Salaam!

I'm very grateful for your recommendation, earlier, that I send a letter to President Arafat simply suggesting a date for visiting him in Gaza and saying nothing else in the same letter.

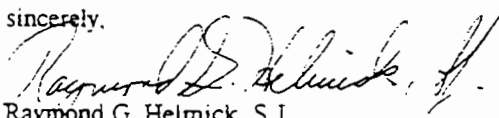
With the date gone by now, I rather wish this had worked out, but entirely understand how, over this summer, he and his negotiating partners have all been involved in a concentrated period of intense negotiation. I spoke with my colleagues, Dr. Mian Ashraf and Rabbi Joseph Ehrenkranz, yesterday evening, and we concurred in the conclusion that, for that reason, this was probably just not an appropriate time for the meetings we had hoped for.

We all agreed that we would try, instead, to make this visit in the winter, shortly after Christmas. That is the next time that all three of us will be free to travel together.

I enclose a letter for President Arafat proposing that, and suggesting dates. I would be grateful if you would forward it to him.

With all best wishes,

sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



August 15, 1995

President Yasser Arafat
Palestine National Authority
Gaza

Dear President Arafat,

Salaam!

As I observe the work load that has burdened you over these recent weeks and months, my sympathy and good wishes are with you.

As you know, I have been hoping that there would be an opportunity to visit you during the summer, accompanied by my friends, Rabbi Joseph Ehrenkranz and Dr. Mian Ashraf. We three have conferred now, seeing that the time available to us has pretty well run out, and recognized that the concentrated period of intense negotiation that you have been through has really left you no chance for such meetings as we had requested, and that in fact this was not even a good time for the kind of discussion we had hoped for. We do fully appreciate that.

We would like, instead, to make the visit in the winter, shortly after Christmas, and would suggest that we arrive New Year's Day, January 1st, and stay for whatever time seems necessary.

With best wishes,

sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

*Permanent Observer Mission
of Palestine
to the United Nations*



البعثة المراقبة الدائمة
لفلسطين
لدى الأمم المتحدة

Ref: GC.153/95

2 November 1995

Father Raymond Helmick
Jesuit Community
Boston College
Chestnut Hill, MA 02167-3802

Dear Father Helmick,

Enclosed please find a letter addressed to you from H.E. Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and President of the Palestinian National Authority, as well as a translation of the letter in English.

Please accept my best wishes and warm regards.

Sincerely,

Dr. Nasser Al-Kidwa
Permanent Observer of Palestine
to the United Nations

Father Raymond Helmick
Jesuit Community
Boston College, Massachusetts

Dear Father Helmick,

Warmest greetings. It was with great pleasure and interest that I received your recent letter expressing your solidarity and support for the genuine and peaceful efforts that the Palestinian National Authority is exerting to achieve a just, comprehensive and permanent peace in Palestine and in the region, to ultimately enable the Palestinian people to live in peace and freedom on their own land.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend a most sincere and warm welcome to you in response to your expressed desire to visit Palestine. We look forward to receiving you and those who will be accompanying you in Gaza at the time you deem appropriate.

I extend to you my best regards and wish you health, happiness and success in all your constructive and good efforts.

Sincerely,

Yasser Arafat
Chairman of the Palestine Liberation
Organization, President of the
Palestinian National Authority

Gaza, 8 October 1995

PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION
Palestinian National Authority
The President



منظمة التحرير الفلسطينية
السلطة الوطنية الفلسطينية
الرئيس

عزيزي السيد ريموند هيلمك
الجالية اليسوعية
بوسطن كوليج-ماساشوسيتس

تحية طيبة وبعد،

ببالغ التقدير والاهتمام تلقينا رسالتكم، التي عبّرتم فيها عن تضامنكم
ودعمكم للجهود السلمية المخلصة، التي تبذلها السلطة الوطنية الفلسطينية من أجل
إقامة السلام العادل والدائم في فلسطين والمنطقة، وتمكين الشعب الفلسطيني من
العيش بحرية وسلام فوق أرضه.

أغتم هذه المناسبة لأعرب لكم عن ترحيبنا الكبير بزيارتكم لفلسطين،
وتطلعنا لاستقبالكم واستقبال الأصدقاء المرافقين في غزة، في الوقت الذي ترونه
مناسباً.

أحييكم أطيب تحية، وأتمنى لكم موفور الصحة والسعادة والنجاح في
جهودكم الخيرة والبناءة.

مع أطيب التمنيات

غزة في: ١٩٩٥/١٠/٨

ياسر عرفات

رئيس اللجنة التنفيذية لمنظمة التحرير الفلسطينية
رئيس السلطة الوطنية الفلسطينية



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

October 28, 1995

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin
The Knesset
Jerusalem
ISRAEL

Dear Prime Minister Rabin,

Shalom!

It was already my intention to write, congratulating you on the conclusion of the Stage Two agreement with the PNA and giving my thoughts on the problems still raised by the more militant of the settlers in Hebron and elsewhere, when the recurrent crisis of guerrilla attacks in Southern Lebanon, of which I have written to you before, came back to haunt us all again.

It grieves me, as it does you and as it does their families, to see these precious young Israeli soldiers killed. My prayers, for whatever that is worth, are with them all. I understand and share the heartbreak this involves all over Israel.

I also believe, as I wrote to you as long ago as November 13, 1993, that this is a danger to which young Israelis should no longer be subjected, that the reasons for maintaining the Israeli military occupation of that part of Lebanon you have called your "security zone" are past, and that the presence of Israeli troops there is now the ticking bomb that could, more readily than any other factor, overturn the progress you have made toward regional peace.

In that letter, of which I provide a file copy here for easier reference, I argued that the original danger of PLO ("Fatahland") attack from that area, the reason why Israel had first siezed the area in 1978 and still retained after withdrawing even from the 1982 invasion of Lebanon, no longer obtained after the Oslo agreement, and in fact had not been a valid argument for quite some time before. There remain dangers from two other sources: Hezbollah and the Damascus-based Palestinian rejectionist movements (which can do nothing the Syrians do not permit). They can be more effectively dealt with in ways other than Israeli occupation, whereas continuation of the occupation only provokes and occasions their attacks.

In the case of Hezbollah, you have the one and only private militia in Lebanon that has not been disarmed, by the Syrians themselves or by Lebanese government forces that are actually surrogates for Syrian control. As much as you may complain about Lebanese, Syrian or Iranian licensing of Hezbollah, they are in fact politically untouchable by any of those governments. They are able to present themselves as the entirely lawful Lebanese resistance to Israeli occupation, their struggle validated by the now 17-year-old UNSC Resolution 425. President Hrawi said as much last week in response to Israeli objections to the support of Hezbollah "terrorism." Hezbollah may have darker intentions than that, but they have no validating ideological rationalization for attacks on Israel as such. Israel has had to acknowledge their position to the extent of renouncing random retaliation against Lebanese villages and civilians in response to Hezbollah attacks. It has been only in retaliatory retaliation that Hezbollah has launched the familar Katyusha rockets into Northern Galilee for some time now. In consequence, Israel is left humiliated as the helpless giant, to the outrage (and perhaps secret glee) of your Right-wing critics, after such an episode as the recent land-mine killings of Israeli soldiers.

Prime Minister Rabin, October 28, '95 -- 2

For Syria and Lebanon, their continued countenancing of Hezbollah represents only an anomaly in their policy. It is to their interest to disarm and control Hezbollah as much as they have any of the other militias. Israeli occupation is the only thing that prevents their doing so.

What has changed since I first wrote all this to you in November, 1993, is that now similar things are being written in the Israeli press and recommended by such prominent figures Ron Mivarg, in his *Maariv* article, your own close friend Motta Gur before his death in July, and Yossi Beilin on government radio last week. There is, however, still a very significant difference in what I hear them saying and what I recommended to you those two years ago and still firmly believe.

Your Israeli critics, commentators and many friendly advisers are apparently calling for a unilateral withdrawal of your troops from Southern Lebanon. I don't at all believe that this should be unilateral, but instead that it should involve an agreement with Syria and Lebanon.

When I first wrote of this to you in November '93, I told you that I would be writing a mirror-image letter to President Hafez al-Asad of Syria, recommending that this was a matter of common interest on which Israel and Syria could agree, prior to a comprehensive agreement between your two countries (i.e., one that dealt with the Golan), but, since it would regard Lebanese rather than Syrian territory, without involving Syria in a partial agreement of the kind that President Asad has pledged himself not to accept. A great deal of trust-building is still required before you and the Syrians can come, without unacceptable political consequences for either or both of you, to a full treaty that deals with the Golan along lines that are easily discernible already. You may even prefer to have another election behind you before taking steps in that matter that people generally foresee. The Syrians still have serious doubts that the Palestinians will be fairly treated, and may hesitate to settle with you until they see further signs (like your recent Stage Two agreement) that things are indeed proceeding encouragingly.

After telling you two years back that I would write on those lines to President Asad, I delayed doing so until April 8th of this year, 1995, simply because I saw so much traffic of American diplomacy, Secretary of State Christopher and his assistant Dennis Ross going back and forth to Damascus at a dizzying pace all the intervening time, and I was reluctant to interfere when such high-level diplomacy was in process. I wrote the "mirror-image" letter last April only after concluding that little if anything was happening in all those State Department visits, and you have already a copy of what I wrote to President Asad at that time. (A further file copy of that letter enclosed here for easier reference, and you recall that I sent him a copy of what I had originally sent to you in November '93. The White House, too, has copies of all these letters.)

I remain convinced that Israel would be much better off out of Southern Lebanon. To withdraw unilaterally would be to forfeit the highly beneficial agreement that could be made with Syria and with Lebanon in the context of such a withdrawal, that Syria and the government of Lebanon that so sedulously follows Syrian direction would guarantee the safety of that border. That would mean the disarming of Hezbollah and the policing of their activities and those of the Damascus-based Palestinian rejectionists from that area, all of which is easily within Syrian capacity. Your Israeli advisers are able to recommend to you a unilateral withdrawal only because this is so much in the interest of Syria and Lebanon that they would probably do it anyway, without the agreement. The advantage of the agreement would be that it broke the ice between you and the Syrians. Israelis are reluctant to believe one of the already well-established truths, that the Syrians very reliably keep formal agreements they have made. Obtaining such an agreement from them would be to your political benefit. They and the Lebanese government would benefit politically from getting your agreed withdrawal from the occupation zone, and would have strong motivation to adhere closely to the agreement. With regard to Hezbollah and the rejectionists, you would then have reliable guarantees rather than merely sanguine hopes.

Prime Minister Rabin, October 28, '95 -- 3

I would recommend strongly against one of those things to which I see Israeli diplomacy as easily tempted, that you should make such an agreement conditional on Lebanon's signing a full separate peace treaty with Israel. The partial agreement should be sufficient: you and the Lebanese both make vast gains. Whereas a partial agreement would violate policy to which Syria, rightly or wrongly, has committed itself, that is not true for Lebanon. The Syrians would be spared the embarrassment of the partial agreement they so wish to avoid, since it is not their territory that would be affected, but would share the political credit for obtaining your withdrawal, and build a great deal of that trust without which you and they will not get to the eventual agreement you both seek. You in Israel would spare yourselves these needless deaths of your young men, would meet, to international approbation, legal demands that have been outstanding ever since the passage of UNSC Resolution 425, and would have a Northern border much safer without the occupation of your neighbor's territory than it is with it. The signing of any full peace treaty between you and Lebanon would really be a Syrian decision. They would have persuasive reason not to allow Lebanon to sign such a treaty until they were ready to do so themselves, which involves the still unsettled Golan and the assurance that Israel's settlement with the Palestinians will be just.

Israeli Settlers the West Bank:

I put in this sub-heading to mark off the very different theme on which I had first meant to write to you even before this recent Hezbollah episode.

Hebron is really the test case for Israeli settlements in Palestinian territory. The whole matter of settlements, with its crucible in Hebron, constituted the most stubborn obstacle to your recent Stage Two agreement with the PNA, and will surely continue to be such in future negotiations.

It has long been clear to me, and is something I have for many years urged on Mr. Arafat, that it is of tremendous importance to many Jews, especially the more religious, whether Israelis or not, that Jews be able to live in Judea and Samaria. I see it as altogether unjustifiable that this be claimed at the price of expelling Palestinians to whom this same territory has been home for more centuries than can be remembered, or that they be reduced to foreigners residing in their own ancestral land. But ought Jews live there, even (and especially) in Hebron? Of course!

The trouble is that you have the wrong ones there. The spirit of the Hebron settlement (not necessarily of every person), and of Kiryat Arba, is one of hateful attack on the Palestinian population native to the place. Some individuals, like the late Mr. Goldstein, are murderous assailants, intent simply on intimidating or brutalizing the Palestinians into abandoning their rightful homeland.

This is clearly not true of all Jewish settlements. The estimate that I commonly hear is that perhaps some 10,000 settlers of all the many in various parts are of this type, or verging on it. I am sure that the Palestinians have to make up their minds that numbers of Jews who come to live in peace must be welcomed to live among them. That has to be reciprocal, that numbers of Palestinians be free to live in Israel, and in each case with an carefully observed agreement that the numbers not be such as to overturn population balances.

Given those suppositions, I believe it is the responsibility of your Israeli government to set a *behavior standard* for settlers. The degree of control you are practicably able to exercise over them is obviously far higher than what the PNA is able to exert, even with great effort, over Palestinian extremists. It should not be necessary for a settler to go to the murderous extremes of a Baruch Goldstein to be regarded as unfit, in Israeli terms, to live among occupied people. Without calling for the closing of any particular settlement, I would expect you to expel individually those who show themselves so unfit.

Prime Minister Rabin, October 28, '95 -- 4

This would obviously mean drastic action on such extremist settlements as the Hebron center or Kiryat Arba. I understand, though I do not endorse, your insistence on not actually closing down any particular settlement prior to the final status negotiations. Given my own suppositions in the matter, as outlined above, disbandment is not what I would look for even then, but rather the renunciation of any plan to disrupt the basic population balance and a code of conduct that it is for Israel to enforce on its citizens.

I know full well how delicate a political question this is for to raise with your own citizens. What will they tolerate or endorse? I believe the Israeli public would be far readier to support the removal of those who are seen as disruptive of the peace and an embarrassment and disgrace to Israel than to accept the dismantlement of any particular settlements, and that doing this would prepare the way for you to deal with the settlement question when it does come up insistently in the final status negotiations.

What of the Palestinian position? It is my contention that they should be willing to welcome some Jews to live in what, to Jews, is Judea and Samaria, on the reciprocal terms I mentioned above. Right now, when Hebron so asserts itself as test case, is the very time to get a commitment on this, as a matter of principal, from the PNA. They, of course, will be suspicious that there is an enormous hidden land-grab scheme behind it: Ma'ale Adumin to the East, pushing Israeli confiscatory settlement right down from Jerusalem practically to Jericho, and comparable projects to the North and South calculated to eviscerate the remaining Palestinian homeland, and they would need to have reassurance that this is not so before endorsing the proposal that Jews, in agreed numbers, should be free to live in West Bank territory. I see no sign that the PNA has any 'Judenrein' policy. If the issue were put in terms of religious access to a shrine as important as Hebron, and handled with equal respect to the rights of all, I don't believe that even Hamas would hold out against a humane and reasonable agreement. Palestinians, clearly, committed a crime against the Jews of Hebron in 1929, as grave as what the present Jewish settlers are now visiting on them in turn, and that should be acknowledged.

That issue of access to religious sites, I know, is one on which Israel has prided itself throughout the time of its occupation. The trouble has been that it does not apply to Palestinians. They, the actual native community of the place, whether Christians or Muslims, are the ones who are excluded, and have been throughout the occupation, from access to the holy places of their faith, whether by exclusion orders from Jerusalem (for being Palestinian, of course, rather than for being Christian or Muslim), or by the armed camp that has been made of Hebron for the protection of the violent knot of Jewish settlers there. Foreign Christians, who have hardly noticed this exclusion of their Palestinian co-religionists from the shrines of their faith, happily take their holidays there themselves. Foreign Muslims have been far more sensitive to the situation of their Palestinian brethren, and since these are excluded, the others have felt it would be betrayal to come themselves.

If Hebron were suddenly held to the criterion I suggest, and those whose aim in being there is to attack and intimidate Palestinians were individually excluded, it would be important to have seriously religious Jews who would represent the religious community's readiness to live among Palestinians in peace, who would have credit with them and win their acceptance. I would look for Mr. Arafat's cooperation in providing for their welcome, and I know just where to look for them: with Yehezkel Landau and his *Oz v' Shalom* movement. Looking for the help of so extraordinarily committed a group of religious peace advocates would, of course, set a particularly high standard for this one extreme situation of Hebron. It would, however, establish a much more reasonable standard, of readiness to live in peace, from which eventually to negotiate the final status of settlements, as must be done in coming years. What is available here, out of the critical situation of Hebron, is the opportunity eventually to resolve the settler question in a way that is conducive, rather than thorny obstacle, to the peace between your peoples. That, I would think, is worth everyone's working for.

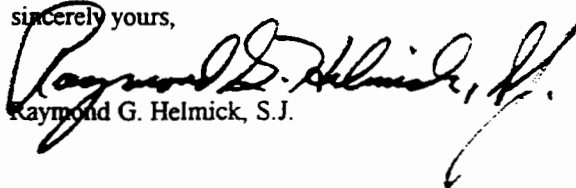
Prime Minister Rabin, October 28, '95 - 5

Lest this seem to be based on concealed premises or hidden agendas, I will tell you how I visualize the eventual relation between an Israeli and a Palestinian people and state, with, however, the understanding that this is not the only possible outcome of the measures I am advocating here. I fully expect the current process to lead to a Palestinian state, alongside and at peace with Israel, quite likely in some confederal arrangement with both Israel and Jordan. That this should be sufficiently satisfying to the national aspirations both of Jews and Palestinians to be the basis of lasting peace, I think it will be necessary for both states to have full jurisdiction within their own territories and access to each other, both for residence within agreed limits and for travel: a fully open border, like that between erstwhile enemies France and Germany, or between Massachusetts and Connecticut. For those who choose to live in one another's territory, I would want to see a free choice of citizenship, one or other but not both: Jews or, for that matter, Israeli Arabs living in Palestinian territory free to have Israeli citizenship and to vote in Israeli elections, but subject to Palestinian law as residents in the Palestinian state; and *vice versa* for Palestinians living in Israel. In this way, each people would have a state, with its own territory and international recognized borders, its own laws and society intact, and at the same time each people would have the whole land open to it.

I know that all of this remains to be negotiated by yourselves, the parties involved on each side, and that you might well find some other arrangement better met your satisfaction. What I present is rather a visualization, an arrangement that I would find the most satisfactory myself if the choice were mine. I spell it out simply to reassure you that the suggestions I make in the latter part of this letter, though grounded in such a visualization, are not a way of entrapping you into it.

With best wishes for you and your people, and for the peace between you and your neighbors, I am always

sincerely yours,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

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November 11, 1995

Mr. Uri Savir
c/o Prime Minister's Bureau
The Knesset
Jerusalem,
ISRAEL

Dear Mr. Savir,

Shalom!

In the plethora of information coming out of Israel in these troubled days, I have not yet even learned what position you hold in service to the new government of Mr. Peres, but I assume you must be still there at his right hand.

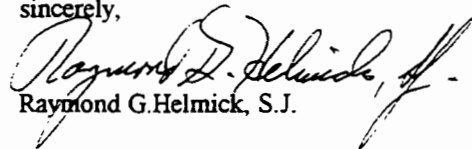
You may remember the meetings we had in Jerusalem in July of 1986, when Mr. Peres was last Prime Minister. I had been several days earlier that year meeting Yasser Arafat in Tunis to urge on him the acceptance of the famous pre-conditions for the PLO's even taking part in dialogue on the peace, and had gone to Israel to report on those conversations, as I had earlier in Washington. You were most helpful to me then, and I have always been grateful. It was a reassurance to me to see how prominent a role you then took in the negotiations leading to Oslo and beyond.

Now I realize the welter of paperwork that must be confronting Mr. Peres as he takes over the office of his murdered predecessor. Consequently I place the enclosed letter to him, with its attachments of earlier letters to Mr. Rabin (October 28, '95 and November 13, '93) and to President Asad (April 8, '95), in your hands simply to ensure that they do not get lost in the shuffle.

I had been expecting to get to the Middle East, to meet with Mr. Rabin, Mr. Arafat and if possible also with President Asad (who has never responded directly), during the last summer. I planned to travel with two friends, Rabbi Joseph Ehrenkranz, who has been President of the Israel Committee of the Orthodox rabbinical association in the U.S., and Dr. Mian Ashraf, President of the Islamic Center of New England. Despite occasional encouragement, dates were never set for that, and we all realized that the intensive negotiation of this last summer had precluded that -- it also meant that it would not have been a good time for such meetings. We are, however, planning to make that visit together early in January, and I hope I may see you then.

With best wishes,

sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

November 11, 1995

Prime Minister Shimon Peres
The Knesset
Jerusalem
ISRAEL

Dear Prime Minister Peres,

Shalom!

In the aftermath of the shocking murder of Mr. Rabin, as you take up the reins of government, I hesitate to burden you with paper. I had, however, written to Mr. Rabin himself as recently as October 28 on matters that are of as immediate concern to you as they were to him. I will make this covering letter brief and enclose copies of the relevant material I had sent to him.

The Syrian government, to the surprise of any of us who are always left guessing as to their intentions, has made overtures through the British Foreign Minister and their own press to reopen negotiations with you. One theme of my letters to Mr. Rabin had been a recommendation to approach the Syrians first on the matter of Southern Lebanon. I have long regarded the Israeli military occupation there, as you see in the enclosed letters, as no longer serving the purposes for which it was instituted, and as a "ticking bomb" endangering the entire peace process. I wrote this to Mr. Rabin shortly after the Oslo signing, in November 1993, and told him at the time that I would be sending a "mirror image" letter, arguing the same case, to President Asad. Because official U.S. diplomacy toward Syria immediately reached so high a level, with repeated visits of Secretary Christopher and Mr. Ross to Damascus, I waited a long time to write that "mirror image" letter, so as not to get in the way of their efforts. I finally did write to Mr. Asad in April of this year, sending a copy of that letter, which I again enclose here, to Mr. Rabin. The issue came up again in recent weeks, with the killings of Israeli soldiers by land-mines in the occupation zone. That was the occasion for my October 28 letter.

In the situation created now by the Syrian government's new overtures, I want to recommend the course I have already been suggesting, to tackle first this matter of Southern Lebanon. You have made it clear that you will continue Mr. Rabin's peace policies (which of course were your own all along), undaunted by the attack this murder represents. A sudden agreement on the entire matter of the Golan could still be more than you can carry with the Israeli public before further preparation of public opinion. It has been my belief all along that both Israel and Syria could regard a termination of the Southern Lebanon occupation, with Syrian/Lebanese guarantee of the safety of Israel's Northern border, as a great gain; that confidence would be built in the Israeli public as they witnessed the reliability with which the Syrians carried out (as they consistently do) the agreement that would be made, and the way then prepared for dealing with the Golan question without creating a fire-storm in Israeli opinion.

The second matter I took up in my October 28 letter to Mr. Rabin was that of West Bank settlements and the extremists among the settlers, the very concern that has now leaped to the top of everyone's agenda because of his murder.

I have always queried the wisdom of Mr. Rabin's decision not to have the evacuation of any single settlement prior to the final status negotiations, but have understood why he took that position. In this matter, again, as you now carry forward his policy, I could not recommend any reversal.

Prime Minister Peres, November 11, '95 - 2

Instead, I would urge on you what I was recommending to him, that a behavior criterion be set for any Jewish settler to live in the occupied territories, and those who do not meet it be individually expelled for that reason.

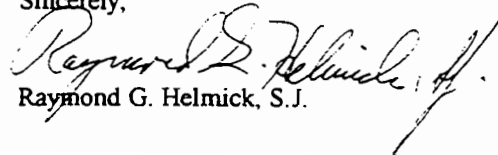
This also is a question of what the Israeli public will most probably support. A reversal of Mr. Rabin's policy of closing no settlements would, I expect, raise opposition that you are better without. But the Israeli public is now shocked enough by the murderous behavior of the zealots that it would, I believe, support the expulsion of real troublemakers.

It has been my contention for many years now, which I have often put before Mr. Arafat, that it is so important to so many Jews that they should have access to living in "Judea and Samaria" that the Palestinians should accept this on principle, with clear and solid agreement that it should not be in such numbers as to overturn the population balance of the occupied territories, nor so constituted as to amount to a renunciation of their own aspirations and rights. This need not be incompatible even with the establishment of a Palestinian state. It would have to be reciprocal, with Palestinians allowed to live in Israel, with the same solidly agreed provision that the numbers not be such as to upset population balances. The ramifications of this are spelled out in the enclosed letters I have written to Mr. Rabin.

Hebron, with the small band of mostly extremist settlers in the center of the city and the large Kiryat Arba development on the fringe, is a test case. If the clearly trouble-making settlers were removed, for their individual bad behavior, those two settlements would be decimated. I would think this should be done with provision, supported and defended by the PNA and with the agreement of the Hebron Palestinian population secured, that Jews who were there to live in peace replace them. I know just where such Jews could be found: in or through Yehezkel Landau's *Oz v' Shalom* movement, highly religious Jews committed — religiously! — to the urgent pursuit of peace. I first brought this up in a letter (not enclosed here, so as not to make this too massive a bundle of paper) to Mr. Rabin immediately after the Baruch Goldstein assault on the Hebron shrine.

I will break off this letter at this point, mindful of the enormous task you face, not only in taking over responsibility but simply in reading the paperwork. My prayers and the pledge of any work I can do for the promotion of the peace and safety of both the Israeli and the Palestinian and Arab peoples are with you.

Sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

November 11, 1995

Dr. Mian Ashraf
358 Glen Road
Weston, MA 02193

Dear Mian,

Salaam!

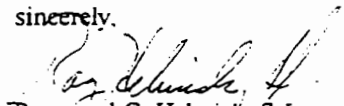
Enclosed is the whole packet of material on the Israeli occupation forces in Southern Lebanon that I am anxious to get to President Hafez al-Asad as quickly as possible. I was very happy to hear your suggestion that Mr. Tamim al-Madani could help with that.

President Asad has already taken the initiative of signalling to Prime Minister Peres, this soon after the assassination of Mr. Rabin, that Syrian-Israeli negotiation should be moved along urgently. For that reason, before leaving tonight for my week-long visit to Northern Ireland, I got a letter off to Mr. Peres, outlining as briefly as I could the thoughts I have already been presenting for some time on the dangers inherent in the Southern Lebanon occupation, and enclosing what I had written just as recently as October 28 to Mr. Rabin.

I'm anxious to remind President Asad of this area that, in my opinion, could open up discussion between Syria and Israel without involving any abandonment of principle, especially the principle of comprehensive settlement, by Syria. Besides a letter to President Asad himself, I've enclosed here copies of what I wrote just today to Prime Minister Peres and what I had written October 28 to Rabin. In addition, for convenience of reference I've enclosed file copies of things he already has: what I had written on the subject to Rabin two years back, November 13, '93, and what I wrote to President Asad himself April 8, '95.

I would be very grateful to your good friend, Mr. al-Madani, if he could get this to President Asad quickly, while the issue is still waiting to be addressed. My thanks and best wishes to him and to you.

sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



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November 11, 1995

President Hafez al-Asad
Damascus
SYRIA

Dear President Asad,

Salaam!

In the wake of the assassination of Prime Minister Rabin of Israel, I note that you have made serious overtures to his successor, Mr. Shimon Peres, to the effect that this is a proper time to renew the efforts to negotiate a genuine and lasting comprehensive peace among Israel and the Arab countries.

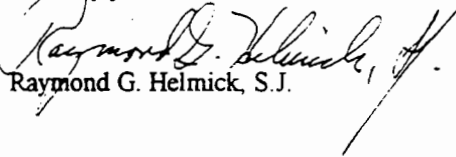
I had recently (October 28) written to Mr. Rabin himself, after the two incidents of last month involving the deaths of Israeli soldiers in Southern Lebanon, reminding him, as the same situation came back once again, of the recommendation I had made to him as long as two years ago that he needed first to address the "ticking bomb" danger involved in the Israeli occupation of Lebanese territory. I am well aware of your rejection of partial rather than comprehensive settlement, but this remains a distinct matter, of Lebanese rather than Syrian rights, governed by UNSCR 425.

I have written now to Mr. Peres, as briefly as I could in view of the welter of business he has now to confront as he takes over the office of Prime Minister, putting that same recommendation before him, and enclosing, for his perusal, copies of the letters on this subject which I had previously sent to Mr. Rabin (October 28, '95 and November 13, '93) and to yourself (April 8, '95). If serious effort is now to be made at reaching an agreement between Syria and Israel, which of course has to settle the matter of the Golan, it seemed to me still that there would be a better chance of resolving the Golan problem, even of resolving it reasonably quickly, if the Southern Lebanon matter were addressed first.

It seemed a proper courtesy, then, that I raise this matter once again with you. The arguments have not changed, so I simply enclose copies of what I have written to Mr. Peres and, so recently as October 28, to Mr. Rabin. For your convenience of reference, I also enclose file copies of my earlier letters to yourself (April 8, '95) and Mr. Rabin (November 13, '93), which spelled out my understanding of the problem.

I hope this suggestion may be helpful to you and the Israelis in getting these difficult negotiations under way. With all best wishes, I am

sincerely yours,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

March 17, 1996

His Eminence
Bernard Cardinal Law
Cardinal's Residence
2101 Commonwealth Avenue
Brighton, MA 02135

Your Eminence,

Christ's Peace!

Congratulations on your fine St. Patrick's Day message. I hate to miss that Mass, and normally do so only when St. Patrick's Day comes on one of my teaching days. But this year we had the Costas Consultation on, the annual two-day lecture program mounted by the Boston Theological Institute, and I was one of the organisers/hosts of the program. It was an interesting one, on Christianity in China, with theologians to speak for the Catholic Open Church and Underground Church, the Protestant Registered churches and house churches. A couple of our Chinese seminarians at St. John's, John Chen and Joseph Li, were among the speakers for the student workshops.

I would like to ask you, though, if you would receive a very prominent Palestinian visitor, Mr. *Faisal Husseini*, who will be here in Boston April 17th through 19th (Wednesday through Friday).

Mr. Husseini is very probably the most important Palestinian after Arafat himself, though not very well known in this country. I met him, as I often have, during my January trip to the Middle East, heard he was going to be visiting the U.S. and told him I would help as much as I could in making appointments. If there were a leadership crisis among the Palestinians, his would be the most likely single name to emerge as potential leader. He is a very well-spoken and reasonable moderate; a Palestinian, I think, whom it would be good for you to know. My friend, Rabbi Joseph Ehrenkranz of Stamford, who has been President of the Israel Committee of the Orthodox Rabbinical Association of America, shares that opinion well enough that he will be introducing him to Senator Lieberman of Connecticut privately in his living room.

He is head of the most distinguished of the traditional Jerusalem Palestinian families, the Husseinis. At the same time he has very high standing by reason of his personal accomplishment. Even before the beginning of the Madrid Conference, he led a Palestinian delegation that met with James Baker to lay the ground for the start of peace talks between the Palestinians and Israel. At Baker's insistence he was made head of the Palestinian team for the Middle East Peace Conference, despite objections from the Shamir government to having a Jerusalemite.

You remember the distinction that was made: that no one from Jerusalem could be on the actual negotiating team, but Jerusalemites (including Hanan Ashrawi and Hanna Siniara) could be an advisory team. Because he was not allowed into the negotiating room, Faisal seldom came to Washington, and we saw more in the news of Haidar Abdel Shafi, who headed the negotiating part of the team. But Faisal was the ranking leader, and presided over all their preparatory meetings in Jerusalem. He made Orient House, an old Jerusalem mansion of his family, the headquarters of the Palestinian Delegation to the peace talks. It remains the center of Palestinian political, social and cultural activities in the city. It is still where foreign dignitaries visit to meet Palestinian representatives in the city.

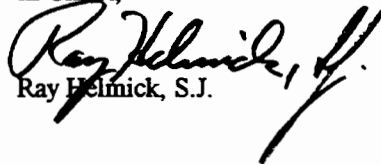
Cardinal Law, March 17, '96 -- 2

My own acquaintance with Faisal goes back to 1980, when I suggested to the then head of the next most prominent of the traditional Jerusalem families, old Rashid Nashashibi, that the Palestinian experience ought to be documented. He told me that was already being done, and brought me around to meet Faisal, who had just founded the Arab Studies Society in 1979, and was assembling a library of such documentation. This became much more essential two years later when, in the course of occupying West Beirut, the Israeli Army completely burned out the library of the Insitute of Palestine Studies. Faisal's Society was closed down from 1987 (start of the *Intifada*) to 1991, but reopened on American demand in 1991 when the Madrid process started with so much of the initiative coming from Faisal. He is now the highest-ranking Fatah official in Jerusalem and a very close aide to Arafat.

While he is here in Boston April 17-19, he will be giving a seminar at the Kennedy School that will have him occupied during the Wednesday and Thursday (17th and 18th), but he would gladly interrupt that and come over to see you at any time convenient to you on either of those days or the Friday. For myself, since I'll be trying to put together a schedule for him, I'll be happier the sooner I know a good time for it if you can do it.

All best wishes,

in Christ,


Ray Helmick, S.J.

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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

April 13, 1996

President William Clinton
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Clinton,

Christ's Peace!

The clashes between Israel and the Lebanese Hezbollah have once again, as many times in the past, gotten to the point where they threaten Israel, threaten Lebanon, threaten Syria and seriously threaten the whole prospect of peace in the region.

As far back as November 1993 I wrote to Prime Minister Rabin on this subject, describing the situation of Israeli troops in Southern Lebanon as a "ticking bomb," that more readily than any other cause could overturn the progress made toward the peace -- this was my letter congratulating Prime Minister Rabin on the Oslo accord. I promised him at the time that I would write a "mirror-image" letter to President Asad of Syria, making the same recommendations for dealing with that problem as I made to him, but in fact delayed that letter until April 1995 because I did not want to get in the way of the high-level diplomacy of Mr. Christopher's and Mr. Ross's visits to Damascus. I returned to the theme later last year, both with Mr. Rabin just before his assassination and with Mr. Peres afterwards. Copies of all these letters have gone to the White House when they were first sent, but I enclose them again here to have them all together.

Now the same situation recurs, as predicted. Israeli attack on Beirut, with civilian casualties, and yesterday's attack on Syrian military at the Beirut airport, killing one and wounding others, even if without knowing their identity, as claimed, raise the stakes higher than they have been before.

This is unnecessary and avoidable conflict, I believe. The *rationale* for Israeli occupation of the Lebanese territory, which was to protect Northern Israel from Palestinian attack, no longer holds. Attack, since many years ago now, comes only from Hezbollah. They are permitted by Syria, on whose licence they are altogether dependant, to attack over the border only in retaliation for Israeli attacks on Lebanese civilians. The whole business could be stopped by arranging an agreement between Israel and Syria (the consent of the Lebanese government would be given, in fact, only on Syrian permission) to end Israeli occupation of Lebanese territory in return for Syrian guarantee of the safety of that border.

As the public comment on this goes now (with some Israeli voices found in the discussion), it is said that Israel could not unilaterally withdraw from its "security zone" without danger of Hezbollah attacks from close to the border. That would be true only if Syria would not agree to give the guarantee.

In earlier stages of the discussion, people felt that Syria would be unwilling to agree on this, because only a comprehensive settlement of all the Middle Eastern questions would satisfy Syrian requirements, no partial settlement. Currently it is to Israel that it is attributed to say there would have to be a comprehensive settlement before this question could be addressed. I'm convinced this is not truly the case, but that there is room for agreement between Israel and Syria on this matter, with the willing concurrence of the Lebanese government, to resolve the Southern Lebanon matter to the satisfaction of all and the safety of Israeli and Lebanese citizens who are now endangered.

President Clinton, April 13, '96 - 2

The Syrian insistence on a comprehensive settlement, as against the long-standing Israeli desire for separate unilateral agreements with each Arab nation, is a resistance to a separate peace, trading the Golan and removing Syria from the Arab side (as Egypt was removed) without settling Palestinian and other Arab questions. Israeli occupation of Southern Lebanon is separable from that. In Syrian and any other Arab eyes, this is a matter of the never implemented Security Council Resolution 425 of 1978. The one thing that would make an agreed separate resolution of the Southern Lebanon matter impossible, and which should be guarded against, would be if it were made dependent on a separate peace treaty between Israel and Lebanon, as that would once again encompass the removal of an Arab participant nation from the comprehensive negotiations.

It has been clearly Syrian and Lebanese interest to disarm and neutralize all the private militias that, up to 1990, dominated Lebanon and produced the civil war in that country. Every other such militia has now been disarmed, with the exception of Hezbollah. It has been Israeli and American policy to demand of Syria and Lebanon that they disarm or control Hezbollah, or somehow get it off Israel's back. This has been asked for the benefit of Israel, but in either Syrian or Lebanese eyes, this would be simply a facilitation of the continued Israeli occupation of Lebanese territory. For that reason, Hezbollah has been politically untouchable for either Syrians or Lebanese. It is seen simply as the defender of Lebanese territory against a foreign occupation explicitly prohibited by the United Nations (and, indeed, when the resolution was passed, with U.S. concurrence). It remains strongly in Syrian and Lebanese interest to be rid of Hezbollah, and if the Israel were to agree to end the occupation, there is every reason to expect that Syria and its Lebanese creatures would agree to guarantee the safety of the border. It would be to everyone's advantage.

Hezbollah undoubtedly has another agenda, to provoke Israel into actions that would plunge it into a war in which it could be destroyed. Neither Syria nor Lebanon is looking for this. Hezbollah may yet be able to accomplish the creation of a new major crisis if it is left all the excuses to keep picking off Israeli soldiers in the occupied zone until one of the periodic escalations leads to the definitive explosion. If the occupation ended and a Syrian (Lebanese) guarantee of Israel's border were given, Hezbollah would simply be disarmed and neutralized like all the other militias and would cease to be a threat. That would also tend to break down further the residual alliance between Syria and Iran, another advantageous result for all parties: ourselves, the Israelis, Syria and Lebanon, everyone looking for the peace.

I've spelled out the circumstances so often in writing to Prime Ministers Rabin and Peres and to President Asad that I won't repeat them here but refer you to that correspondence.

I realize well how political this proposition is just now, as Prime Minister Peres faces his May election. No one could wish more than I that he succeed. It may be that he cannot take such a step as I suggest right now. If so, it should be U.S. policy to contain this dangerous situation and calm all sides. It is negligence that this problem was not resolved earlier. It makes no sense that we should now claim that only Hezbollah and those who fail to curb it are at fault. That's not the truth. And once Israel's election is over, it is no service to Israel or its interests for the U.S. to support those who want to save face by continuing this worthless and counter-productive occupation of Southern Lebanon.

With all best wishes,

in Christ,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

April 13, 1996

Mr. Anthony Lake
National Security Adviser
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Lake,

Christ's Peace!

I enclose a letter for President Clinton on the crisis in Southern Lebanon, and with it copies of correspondence I have sent, since 1993, to Prime Ministers Rabin and Peres and to President Asad on this subject. I have already previously sent all those letters to the White House, but include copies here simply to have them together for easy reference.

It has been my habit to send copies of any such correspondence to the President in power or his assistants. In President Reagan's time, I did so through Ambassador William Wilson, who could always get the material before the President. In President Bush's time, I regularly sent it through the successive Chiefs of Staff, and continued that practice with Mr. McLarty, to be sure the letters did not just get lost in the shuffle. I always heard back from them, normally with some indication that the material had been referred to the President or other appropriate persons. I simply have never heard whether such things were even received when I have done so through Mr. Panetta. Hence I send this through your care, since I have heard from you when I have sent you Northern Ireland material.

I don't know that this is what anyone at the White House wants to hear about the Hezbollah crisis. I am very devoted to the interests of Israel, and to the interests of Israel's neighbors as well, and believe that all of them are badly served by prolonging or encouraging the present ill-conceived policies.

With best wishes,

in Christ,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 7, 1996

Dear Father Helmick:

I appreciated receiving your letter regarding the Middle East peace process and the situation in southern Lebanon.

I understand your concern at the tragic consequences of this situation, provoked by Hizballah extremists opposed to the peace process, for civilians on both sides, and the President has expressed his sorrow at the deaths of innocent Lebanese citizens. From the beginning, our priority was to bring about an end to the suffering of Lebanese and Israeli civilians as soon as possible. I am pleased that Secretary Christopher's efforts produced an agreement on a cease-fire and new Understanding between the parties which will help restore stability and security on both sides of the Lebanon-Israel border and make possible the return of inhabitants to their homes.

I can assure you that the United States will do all it can to see that the Understanding is upheld and to continue our work toward a comprehensive and lasting peace in the region. Such a peace, including Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, can only be achieved through direct negotiations between the parties. The President is committed to doing all he can to help make this possible.

Thank you for sharing your views with the President and me on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Anthony Lake

Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs

The Reverend Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.
Jesuit Community
Boston College
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts 02167-3802



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

May 16, 1996

Mr. Anthony Lake
National Security Adviser
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Lake,

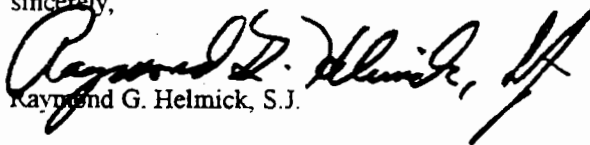
Thank you for your very considerate and courteous response to the bundle of material I sent you about the Israelis in Lebanon, with the letter to President Clinton and the file of back letters to Prime Ministers Rabin and Peres and to President Asad on the problem.

I'm not satisfied, as you realise, simply to say: Hezbollah did this, Hezbollah has all the responsibility, the Israelis none. That is not from any desire to blame Israelis, not does it mean any affection for Hezbollah. It is rather that this is a constantly repeating situation, and I don't want to see the Israelis betray themselves into becoming enmired in it, or the Lebanese continue to suffer from it. I don't expect that you or the President actually differs much from me on that. I've believed all along that this can be addressed through the Syrians, and separately from the rest of the comprehensive settlement -- short-hand for Golan -- that has to come some day. Many of my friends differ from me on that and think the Syrians are holding Israel hostage to its occupation in Southern Lebanon. Maybe. I'd want to see this tested and find out whether the Israelis or the Syrians are the block.

In any case, with this letter I wanted to enclose copies for you of what I've just sent to the IRA's Army Council people. I did it by FAX through Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness, whom I wanted to include in it. And since the UVF cease-fire is so much under stress, I sent a copy, by way of some little encouragement, to David Ervine, but by mail rather than FAX, so that the Army Council people would see it before others already had it.

Best wishes,

sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



May 28, 1996

His Excellency
Mr. Riad Tabbarah
Ambassador of Lebanon
2560 28th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008

Dear Ambassador Tabarrah,

Christ's Peace!

A year ago December I had planned to come by to see you after we had met at Msgr. Lahoud's home in Boston, but I had to cancel the appointment when my visit to Washington at that time was postponed. If you recall, I had visited and written a good deal about Lebanon beginning in the early 1980s, have kept many contacts there, carried on a long correspondence 1988-90 with Raymond Edde beginning from the interference with the presidential election of 1988, a correspondence published in book form in French in 1990, and have, since 1993, been writing regularly to Israeli Prime Ministers Rabin and Peres, to Syrian President Asad and to President Clinton about the Israeli occupation of South Lebanon, which I've been describing all that time as a ticking bomb that recurrently risked all hope of a general peace settlement in the region and that could be terminated by agreement.

I wrote again to President Clinton during last month's Israeli incursion into Lebanon, enclosing my letter with a covering note to Tony Lake, who has been in the habit of responding to my letters on a number of conflict topics, and providing a back file of correspondence on this matter to have it all together, a correspondence already familiar to you. Mr. Lake's response was appreciative of my putting all this before the President and him, but framed it in terms of Hezbollah's sole responsibility for all that happened and American determination to help the Israelis bring peace. I enclose copies of that exchange for your information.

Next month I will once again be in Washington for a few days, and would like if possible to see you on Thursday the 20th or Friday the 21st of June, on either of which days I will be free, if that is convenient to you.

I have argued to all concerned that the Israelis could come to agreement with Syria and Lebanon that their Northern border be secure in return for their withdrawal from the occupation, that it is in both countries' interest to have Hezbollah's militia disarmed and subjected to the authority of the state like all the other militias that so recently plagued Lebanon, and that this could be a confidence-builder agreement between Israel and Syria at a time when a Golan deal still remains out of reach. I hope, like most of us who look for regional peace, for Mr. Peres' reelection, find his behavior in Lebanon last month a terribly shameful way to win the election, yet recognized, in writing to Mr. Clinton, that practical American insistence on this question might have to wait until after the Israeli election, which is now at hand.

My friends tend to disagree with my analysis, and think that Syrian policy is to offer the Israelis no agreement that would facilitate their departure from Lebanon, but hold them practically hostages to their past misjudgments as a way of exerting pressure on them for purposes hard to define. I don't truly believe that, and would like to have your reading on whether it is possible to gain an agreement that would get the Israelis out of Lebanon with a safe Northern border. I will still be arguing this.

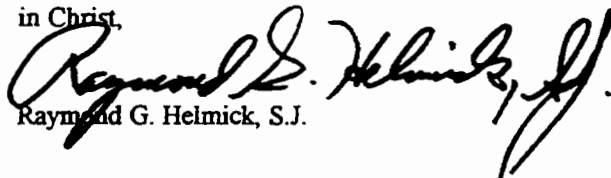
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Ambassador Tabbarah, May 28, '96 - 2

I remain very conscious of the way that American policy convenience permitted the massive Syrian intervention in the 1988 presidential process in Lebanon, how the Bush Administration practically signed over control of Lebanon to Syria in return for the 1990 Syrian participation in the Gulf War coalition, and how little care there appears to be for Lebanon's territorial integrity and independence in the present American administration. I am anxious, as I have always been, that dealings over these questions not further compromise Lebanon's status but contribute to the recovery of the country's independence, integrity and prosperity. As I continue to write on this subject to the various parties in ways that are sympathetically concerned also with the interests of Israel, Syria and of course my own country, I feel I should hear from you what concerns are most sensitive to you in the matter. I will be fresh from some meetings with Administration officials which will take place on Wednesday the 19th, and will be writing follow-up letters to them.

With best wishes, I am yours,

in Christ,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

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May 30, 1996

Mr. Faisal Husseini
Orient House
Jerusalem
FAX 011 972 2 274020 -- first of 4 pages.

Dear Mr. Husseini,

Shalom!

Excuse me for intruding at this time. I customarily address President Arafat by way of Dr. Nasser al-Kidwa in New York, but in the present circumstances I thought I should get the accompanying message to him more immediately.

The Israeli election result disappoints me as it must all of you. I won't presume to know better than you how to respond to it, but if my thoughts can be of any help to you in this time of crisis I would feel very remiss not to have offered them.

It was both surprising and very gratifying to me to hear, when I asked you about it during your Boston visit, how calmly and hopefully you yourself were able to contemplate the emergency that a Likud victory would present. I do indeed believe it is a crisis that you and your people, with Mr. Arafat's leadership, can successfully overcome. If you preserve the necessary discipline, will and hope of the Palestinian people through this severe trial, you will truly have earned your country.

With all best wishes,

sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



May 30, 1996

His Excellency
President Yasser Arafat
Palestine Authority
c/o Mr. Faisal Husseini
Orient House
Jerusalem
FAX 011 972 2 274020

Dear President Arafat,

Shalom!

With yesterday's critical Israeli election producing, so far as we can yet see, a victory for Mr. Netanyahu as the next Prime Minister, you face the most important crisis yet in your the search for a just peace. I share what I assume is your disappointment at this election. Even if it should turn out that Mr. Peres wins a narrow victory, the near future will contain new difficulties, but I write on the supposition that Netanyahu wins.

Over recent years I have often written to you of the need for some equivalent, for the Palestinian population, of the level of participation they had during the *intifadah*. Just recently, I put my correspondence on that subject at the disposition of the people at Orient House, and also of Afif Safieh, who will therefore be familiar with it. I would like to raise that subject again with you now, though it may seem more than ever a dangerous topic. Your whole peace effort is, in fact, at great risk now, and the kind of popular mobilisation of which I have written is one resource that should now be looked at.

My fear is that the angriest forces among the Palestinians will now come to the fore in response to a reversion to Likud policies. If you do not control and actually lead a mobilised popular rejection of these policies, then the most violently inclined Palestinians will do so instead.

Palestinians acted with tremendous responsibility and restraint during the *intifadah*, expressing their rejection of occupation while making it clear that this was not a rejection of the state of Israel, but a demand to live as a nation at peace with the nation of Israel. At that time the Palestinians used stones instead of guns or bombs. As I have written several times, any renewed Palestinian mobilisation needs to act in the most disciplined non-violence, without stones but only with its non-cooperation.

President Arafat, May 30, '96 -- 2

It seems to me that the most dangerous concern you face now will not come from Mr. Netanyahu, but from Ariel Sharon and Rafael Eitan, both of whom, by the character of the new Likud party structure, are bound to figure prominently in a new government. Both have long established their contempt for restraints of law, and were uncontrollable even by Menachem Begin. Mr. Netanyahu speaks of continuing the peace process at a slower pace, but proclaims his intention to expand the Israeli settlements in Palestinian territory and to reject any return of the Golan to Syria, policies incompatible with pursuit of the peace. Even if he could be taken seriously in his claim to remain true to the peace process, he will likely be no match for Sharon and Eitan, who will unhesitatingly scheme behind his back to produce a situation of violent confrontation, as an excuse to do irreparable damage to the Palestinians.

In the face of that, any Palestinian violence, even stones, will suit them perfectly as pretexts. They are immeasurably stronger than the Palestinians, even your security forces, and will win any engagement. The actual presence of your security forces is important, and should not be put at risk. Simple acquiescence in whatever a Likud government might wish is no alternative, as that would put the initiative into the hands of those Palestinian elements most dangerous to your own hopes. I have written this before, but repeat it in these circumstances: the way for you to prevent Palestinian violence is to be unquestioned leader of a popularly organized non-violent resistance. That will give your people the realisation that any violence is sabotage to their own successful efforts, against their interests.

I was most positively impressed when Mr. Hussein was here in Boston, and when asked what it would mean if Likud won the election, answered very calmly as follows. If a Likud government tries to abandon the peace process, it will have half the Israeli public against it. With that and the international pressure that would be brought to bear on it, such a government could not succeed. It might delay the peace settlement, but could not prevent it. As soon as it resumed the peace effort, it would have the whole Israeli public with it.

That, I believe, is true, and I was encouraged to hear, from Mr. Hussein, that level of confidence in the Israeli public, which I share despite their negative vote of panic in this election. The one reservation I would have is the one I have just mentioned, that there will be unscrupulous figures in a Likud government who will take advantage of any Palestinian false steps to do you tremendous harm. But I think it equally true and important to note that you will have immense need of Jews of good will, of whom there are a vast number both in Israel and in such other places as the American Jewish community. Their support will be critical for you in this next dangerous stage of your quest for a just peace, and an appreciation of them and their role should be cultivated among Palestinians and their help intelligently utilized. You can't do without it, and, I would think, should acknowledge this plainly and gratefully.

President Arafat, May 30, '96 -- 3

You have need of the United States, also. Its power is unreliable for you, as it has habitually been supine, especially in this Administration, before even the worst demands of an Israeli government, as was demonstrated in Lebanon. When, in 1989 and 1990, you found a supposedly responsive American government simply deaf to Palestinian needs, you turned to Iraqi support, and despite the great provocation that was an error, which I hope you will not repeat now.

The American Administration will not happily cooperate with the negative actions of a Likud government, use its veto in the U.N. to support them and cover up for them internationally. But it will nevertheless be under vast internal pressure to do so, happily or not. One of the results of Israel's incursion into Lebanon last month is that the American monopoly of diplomatic influence over Middle Eastern events was broken, by the French. They by themselves are no adequate counterpoise, but a united European influence, if you courted it, would be the counterpoise to any American inclination simply to go along with whatever a Netanyahu government wanted. The United States would not want to quarrel seriously with all its European allies over things it did not really believe in. This can give you access to an American public instinct for fairness, which again should be courted, not approached with scolding but with an appeal for justice.

The incursion into Lebanon has also produced a new unity among the Arab states which is to your advantage. It is for you to lead them, not to confrontations, which you and they would lose, but to make a persuasive international appeal for justice.

With these strands, I believe you can still lead the Palestinian people successfully to the realisation of their national aspirations despite this serious failure of nerve by the Israeli public. Their failure is not irrecoverable, and with a policy of firmness, patience and responsibility at this time you can yet win their friendship and their acceptance of your people's just demands.

With all best wishes,

sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



May 30, 1996

Dr. Nasser al-Kidwa
Head of Mission
Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the U.N.
115 East 65th Street
New York, N.Y. 10021

Dear Dr. al-Kidwa,

Salaam!

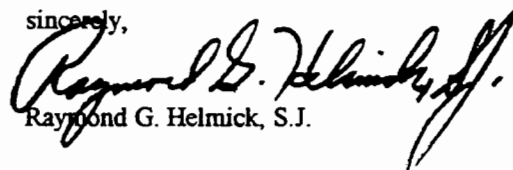
The Israelis have certainly proven that they are not the only ones who can't lose an opportunity to lose an opportunity. I'm assuming, as is not yet altogether clear, that Benjamin Netanyahu has won the election and will be the next Prime Minister.

Normally I would address President Arafat through you. I wrote to him in January by way of Hasan Abdel Rahman simply because I knew from him that you were already in Gaza at that time, and I wanted to get the final dates of my visit to Palestine over to your uncle before I left. For reasons that were quite understandable in the immediate aftermath of the Palestinian elections, I failed to see him on that visit, and was sorry not to.

In this case, I was anxious that this message, of which I enclose a copy, get to the President very immediately, and so sent it by way of Mr. Faisal Hussein at Orient House. I do want to be sure that you have any communications I make to President Arafat, since I am most grateful to you for being my normal and reliable way to communicate with him.

I hope you are not too discouraged by the Israeli vote. This too can be overcome. With best wishes,

sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

May 30, 1996

Mr. Anthony Lake
National Security Adviser
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Lake,

In view of the Israeli election, I sent the enclosed message to President Arafat, FAXing it by way of Mr. Faisal Hussein at Orient House so there would be no delay about his having it.

I'm very conscious of how much hope President Clinton and his Administration have invested in the Peres government in Israel for advancing a Middle East peace process, and am sure all of you share the same disappointment I feel myself at the outcome of the election. I know that every American government gives its basic support to the state of Israel and its government, and hence will look, as it must, for whatever cooperation can be had with a Netanyahu government. I know also that every conceivable pressure will now be put on our government to be uncritically supportive of anything the Netanyahu government does or wishes. I count myself unflinchingly a friend of Israel, and as such feel as much bound to take a critical view as I do with any American government. I hope the Administration will be wary of the kinds of influence that will be coming, in a new Israeli government, from Ariel Sharon and Rafael Eitan, among other really negative forces, and will not find itself collaborating in dreadful things that will ultimately embarrass it.

For myself, I will still be communicating, as helpfully as I know how, with all the parties to this development -- a letter to Mr. Netanyahu will go out as soon as it is clear which way the wind blows. I never want this to be interference with the diplomacy of my country, and so I will carefully keep you informed of whatever I write to them.

With all best wishes,

sincerely,



Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

May 30, 1996

Ron Young
U.S. Interreligious Committee
FAX (215) 333-7750

Dear Ron,

Christ's Peace!

I'm sure you need it more than usual today.

I'll talk to you on the phone after sending this. I just sent it off to Arafat, this time by way of Faisal Hussein so that there wouldn't be any delay about his getting it. I enclose the other covering letters with it, as I sent copies along to Nasser al-Kidwa and to Anthony Lake.

In Christ

Ray Helmick, S.J.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ray Helmick, S.J.", written over the printed name.

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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

February 24, 1997

Mr. Dennis Ross
Special Middle East Coordinator
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520
FAX (202) 647-4808

Dear Mr. Ross,

Just as we all congratulate ourselves -- and you especially, for your enormous efforts -- that the Middle East peace process is back on track through the Hebron agreement, another crisis looms that could run it off the rails, with the decision on a new Israeli housing development at Har Homa/Abu Ghoneim. I hope you are working as hard to prevent this from becoming a catastrophe.

Mr. Netanyahu is clearly under great pressure to approve this development, which I would regard as very damaging. The pressure comes from those very forces that he offended by agreeing to the Hebron redeployment, and who are struggling to regain decisive power in his government. The fact is that the Prime Minister, by choosing as he did over Hebron, has made irreconcilable enemies, not only in the settler movement, but also of the right-wing extremists in his own cabinet, people who have always been a danger to the peace and whose power he has now partially neutralized, by isolating them even within his government.

That is a tense situation, one into which Mr. Netanyahu may have gotten himself reluctantly. But sooner or later it is bound to mean the break-up of his present coalition, in which the far right is so essential a component, driving him to seek a broader coalition. Much better for him, and obviously much better for the peace, if that break come sooner rather than later, over this issue of Har Homa. If he refuses to go ahead with this provocative new settlement, or even postpones it, that will likely precipitate the break. If he goes ahead with Har Homa, he will have gravely harmed the prospects of peace, as well as made himself hostage to these newly made enemies, and the break will come anyway. Better it come before the damage is done than after, when his capacity for a peace policy will have been compromised.

I'm sure you are hearing, from many people, details of the harm this settlement would do, as well as arguments in favor of it from its advocates. I foresee great harm, and will spare you what you must be getting from elsewhere. But the critical thing is that this issue may determine whether all the work you and many others have put in to advance the peace will quite deliberately be set to nought, by people who have made precisely that their objective and who are using this plan for Har Homa as instrument for that end. I hope you will argue this viewpoint, within the Administration and with Mr. Netanyahu.

With great admiration for your many accomplishments in advancement of the peace,

sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.", written in a cursive style.

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.
Professor of Conflict Resolution
Boston College



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

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February 24, 1997

The Honorable Madeleine Albright
U.S. Secretary of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520
FAX (202) 647-7120


Dear Mrs. Albright,

Your initiation as Secretary of State into the repeating crises of the Middle East peace process is going to be the impending Israeli decision on whether to build a new and highly provocative settlement at Har Homa/Abu Ghoneim. In your case, those forces, this time on the Israeli side (the Palestinians have some too), many of them actually within the government, who are most opposed to a peace settlement as such, are depending on it that you are new and won't see that you and the United States are being toyed with.

The danger created by the Har Homa plan has been recognized by the head of the Israeli General Security Services, Ami Ayalon, who has taken the extraordinary step of giving public warning that "construction in Jerusalem can arouse fierce and unpredictable protest that Arafat cannot control." In the event, with great concern for the safety and interests of Israel, I would regard that danger as gratuitously, and quite unjustly, created by the Israeli government itself. Leaders of the Israeli Peace Now movement have said that they will themselves fight the decision "in the courts and in the streets." I have written myself to Mr. Arafat, urging the critical importance of keeping any Palestinian protest strictly non-violent, even of using cooperation with the Israeli Peace Now protests as a way of preempting violent protest on the Palestinian side, and enclose a copy of that letter.

I have also just written to Mr. Dennis Ross, who has so devotedly promoted the peace during his long tenure as Special Middle East Coordinator within the State Department, and include a copy of that letter here as well. I hope that you, returning from your arduous diplomatic journey around the world, will take judicious action in this matter and come through your first of many Middle East crises with full respect for both Israeli and Palestinian needs and successfully advancing the peace which is their interest and ours.

Sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.
Professor of Conflict Resolution
Boston College

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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

February 24, 1997

Mr. Faisal Hussein
Orient House
Jerusalem
FAX 011-972-2-6274020

- 1st of 4 pages.

Dear Mr. Hussein,

Salaam!

Another of these recurring crises is upon us, as you yourself have been warning, with this Har Homa/Abu Ghoneim settlement project.

I've been writing to several parties this day, among them to President Arafat. None of this can wait for the slow process of the mail, and so I once again ask your courteous help in delivering the letter to Mr. Arafat, and with it the accompanying copies of what I wrote to Mr. Dennis Ross and Mrs. Madeleine Albright.

I hope I am right in believing that Mr. Netanyahu made an irrevocable step when he agreed to the Hebron redeployment: committed himself, however reluctantly, to pursuing the peace process, and made himself the right Israeli enemies, even within his own cabinet, who will ensure that he has now no other course. I admired the diplomatic skill with which Mr. Arafat secured that agreement, playing from a desperately weak initial political position. This new provocation over Har Homa could blow up all that has been gained, and that is surely the intention of those who are urging it on Mr. Netanyahu, who may yet find it tempting to back away from the whole effort at peace, seeking the comfort of people on his own right wing who will, in fact, never forgive him.

I have often urged on Mr. Arafat, as you know, the organization of strictly non-violent popular protest among Palestinians, as an arm of his own leadership, a way of giving people a stake in the process of their own liberation, and the best way of heading off the kind of violent disruption that can only harm the Palestinian cause. I have full understanding and admiration for the way President Arafat has held back from this available course, so as not to work through provocation himself. I come back to it now when, once again, it may be the only effective weapon he has to restrain violence from other Palestinian parties.

In this case, even more than normally, he could rely upon, and can programmatically cooperate with, protest activity by the Israeli Peace Now movement. To have that dimension, peace-seeking members of the Israeli public and Palestinians working together to prevent grave injustice and secure the future peace of both peoples, would in my opinion be the most effective course he could take.

With all best wishes,

sincerely,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.
Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



February 24, 1997

President Yasser Arafat
Palestinian Authority
FAX c/o Mr. Faisal Husseini, Orient House, 011 972 2 6274020

Dear President Arafat,

Salaam!

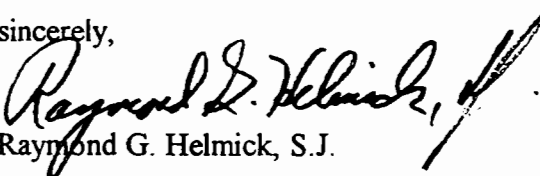
The looming crisis of the Israeli decision to build a new settlement at Har Homa/Abu Ghoneim raises acute dangers of violent Palestinian protest, much as did the deliberately provocative affair of the archaeological tunnel in Jerusalem last year. Even the Head of the Israeli General Security Services, Ami Ayalon, has warned his government publicly that this could "arouse fierce and unpredictable protest that Arafat cannot control."

There is great responsibility on Mr. Netanyahu's government, not to precipitate such a crisis. You surely know what enormous pressure is brought to bear on the Prime Minister to approve the project, precisely by those within his government who took the greatest offense at the Hebron agreement and whose real aim is to end the peace process as such. This matter will be a test of him and his commitment to peace. But if it comes to a crisis, it will also be a test of your responsible leadership of the Palestinian people to a peaceful course in pursuit of their rights.

You have heard often from me to the effect that your leadership of peaceful, non-violent public protest is your own best weapon for preventing violent Palestinian protest, branding it as destructive of your own people's best interests. In this case, the Israeli Peace Now movement has promised to oppose this Har Homa project "in the courts and in the streets." Close cooperation on your part with them, so that any demonstrations are joint protests by Israelis and Palestinians who seek a just peace, may be exactly the margin you need to make opposition to this settlement plan both successful and peaceful.

With best wishes,

sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

February 24, 1997

Mr. Ronald Young
U.S. Interreligious Committee
for Peace in the Middle East
922 131st Street, NW
Marysville, WA 98271
FAX (360) 652-4285 -- 1st of 5 pages.

Dear Ron,

Christ's Peace!

I've been writing this morning, to Dennis Ross and Madeleine Albright, to Arafat and Faisal Husseini, with copies of the Dennis Ross and Arafat letters to Mrs. Albright, and the whole works to Faisal, to be handed on to Arafat. There is more to come, a letter to Clinton and a covering letter to his new National Security Adviser, the first I'll have written to him, but here are copies of that much.

I'll send copies also to a new contact, Ibrahim Souss, who has been the PLO's representative at UNESCO since the 1970s and, after the murder of Issam Sartawi, ambassador also to France. He was got into that work at the urging of Sartawi and, especially, Said Hammami, when the two of them became the first PLO officials to approach Israeli and other Jews with peace proposals right after Arafat came to the chairmanship in 1970. Now he has become a brother-in-law to Arafat -- each of them married to one of the Tawil sisters. He was estranged from Arafat over the Gulf War, and left his diplomatic position after Mitterand's retirement. (He had been a personal friend of Mitterand long before Mitterand became President, and that gave him a privileged position among ambassadors.) Being out of the ambassador business, he wants to go completely academic, and approached me just before Christmas with the idea of setting up a Middle East Institute at B.C., which we have been pursuing since.

When I first met him in December, he and Arafat were still cool to each other over Gulf War issues, and I spent part of our conversation defending Arafat to him. But then their two wives got together, arranged a meeting and reconciliation, and Souss is now appointed senior consultant to Arafat on international relations, and will accompany him to Washington next week, coming up to Boston afterwards to talk this Institute with our new B.C. President, Bill Leahy, and other officials of the school. I'll send all this stuff along to him in Geneva so that it will be fresh in his and Arafat's mind when they talk to Clinton next week.

As I write this, you are twice in the mail to me, once with the same things you FAXed, and the other with things I will shortly get a look at. All the best,

in Christ,

Ray Hermick, S.J.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Ray Hermick, S.J.", with a long, sweeping flourish extending from the end.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

February 24, 1997

President William J. Clinton
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Clinton,

After the enormously hard work done by U.S. diplomacy, especially by Mr. Dennis Ross, in bringing about the Hebron agreement and thus keeping the Middle East peace process on track, against great odds, the whole thing is endangered again if Mr. Netanyahu is persuaded to authorize the building of a new Israeli settlement at Har Homa/Abu Ghoneim.

I have written today on this subject to Mr. Ross, whose efforts will go for nothing if this happens, and to Mrs. Albright, hoping it can be averted. But I know it is for you ultimately to make the choice, whether Mr. Netanyahu is to be urged against the Har Homa development or not.

It may seem that even-handedness dictates that he be given the benefit of the doubt in this case, having been urged to agree to the Hebron redeployment. I believe that would be a mistake, and in fact no service to Mr. Netanyahu or to Israel. I already explained to Mr. Ross my sense that this is a last-ditch effort of people, even within the Israeli cabinet's right wing, whose real motive is to reverse the peace process itself. (Copy of my letter to him attached.) I don't believe they would be mollified by his consenting, but would still be out to undermine him even after aborting the peace process by this action.

I find this a delicate matter to raise, because of my own abhorrence for interfering with the internal workings of another country's government, but it seems essential to me to understand what is happening. The whole extreme right wing voted against the Hebron agreement in cabinet. All of them who were still in the cabinet voted for it in the Knesset next day, as a matter of cabinet responsibility. But Mr. Benjamin Begin resigned from the cabinet instead.

I understand this to indicate the right wing's clear recognition that the Hebron agreement meant the proximate break-up of Mr. Netanyahu's coalition, and that Mr. Begin was being anointed as the right wing's chosen successor. I don't know what Mr. Netanyahu may have said or not said to Mr. Aryeh Deri before appointing Mr. Bar-On as Attorney General, but it seems the likeliest explanation for the hounding of Mr. Netanyahu over this matter that it is vengeance for the Hebron agreement itself. The right wing is making a gamble on destroying Mr. Netanyahu, in hope that a new election may put Mr. Begin in place as their willing tool. The strategy is risky enough that they prefer wrecking the peace process in advance of such an election, if they can manage. That, I believe, is what the Har Homa adventure is about. And consequently it is no service to Mr. Netanyahu, whom, they now implacably oppose, or to Israel and its peace, to leave him exposed to the pressures of these, his newly made enemies.

With best wishes,

sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

February 24, 1997

Mr. Samuel R. Berger
National Security Adviser
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500
FAX (202) 456-9300 -- 1st of 5 pages

Dear Mr. Berger,

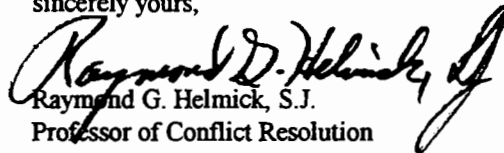
May I congratulate you on your new responsibility as National Security Adviser.

Attached is a letter for President Clinton on the Har Homa situation. While Mr. Lake was in your job, it was my habit to enclose any such letter to the President in a covering letter to him, so that it would not be lost in the shuffle. I would appreciate it if you would bring this letter to the President's attention.

I mention in it having written already this day to Mr. Dennis Ross, whose work over the Hebron agreement, and more drastically all his work for Middle East peace is put at risk, once more, by this new looming crisis. I attach here, for your own information, the three letters I have written on the subject today: to Mr. Ross, to Secretary of State Albright, and to Mr. Yasser Arafat.

With best wishes, I am

sincerely yours,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.
Professor of Conflict Resolution
Boston College



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

February 24, 1997

Mr. Ronald Young
U.S. Interreligious Committee
for Peace in the Middle East
922 131st Street, NW
Marysville, WA 98271
FAX (360) 652-4285 -- 1st of 5 pages.

Dear Ron,

Christ's Peace!

Second note of the day!

Here's the rest, the letter I sent to Clinton and a covering note to Samuel Berger.

And having done that, I also got time to look at your second letter of the day, on the May Board meeting and the September Middle East trip.

I'll be at the Board meeting. I was wondering if it was all day May 2nd, and see that you're taking people on a car trip around the Cascades up to 3:00 P.M. that day. That means for me, since I'll have class on the Thursday (May 1), that I should fly out on the 2nd itself. I'm going to have to fly back through the day on the Sunday, May 4th, because I give my first Final Exam for the term on Monday the 5th.

The Middle East trip, though I would love to be with you, I can't make it for the same reason it is the attractive date, the anniversary of the Oslo signing. My friend Ibrahim Souss, of whom I wrote to you earlier today, is Special Coordinator, on Arafat's request, for a conference to be held in Washington for that same occasion, under the auspices of UNESCO. He's asked for Boston College's participation, and that means me. He has Shimon Peres' cooperation, presence and participation, and Uri Savir will be Peres' Special Coordinator. Kofi Annan has agreed to come and participate also. Big deal! I'll have my hands full. Arafat himself will also come, and plans to come and speak at Boston College after it.

I'll let you know when I have plane reservations set up for Seattle in May. Do reserve me a single room at that hotel for Friday and Saturday, May 2 and 3.

All the best,

in Christ,

Ray Helmick
Ray Helmick, S.J.



March 8, 1997

Dr. Nasser al-Kidwa
Head of Mission
Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine
to the United Nations
115 East 65th Street
New York, N.Y. 10021

Dear Dr. al-Kidwa,

Salaam!

The U.S. veto of the Har Homa resolution in the Security Council yesterday must have been a major disappointment, even if not altogether a surprise, since the U.S. had already expressed explicit opposition to this new settlement. You consoled yourself, in your public statements after the vote, with the observation that there was a significant international rebuke to the Israeli settlement policy by all the other fourteen Security Council members. But of course no Resolution.

It strikes me that, in your stated intention of referring the matter to the General Assembly, there is better consolation to be had, even a significant breakthrough. This unanimity of the U.S.'s European allies, against U.S. opposition, which the Netanyahu spokesmen take as a sign that Europeans should be further excluded from the peace process, seems to indicate a readiness on their part to look for a genuine alternative to the Israeli strategy as supported by the U.S. I hope your suggestion of a General Assembly appeal is not merely rhetorical, as it could have very important substance to it.

There is some great merit in the U.S. position that Ambassador Richardson enunciated yesterday. Israeli-Palestinian relations were transformed by the Oslo agreements and the initiation of a partnership for peace, which is no mere rhetoric. It would be altogether retrograde now to let that relation become basically hostile again. That is the advantage of insisting that Israel and the Palestinians resolve their differences by negotiation. Do give the U.S. government credit for recognizing that. You had trouble with the Rabin and Peres governments, which tried to limit drastically the benefit to Palestinians of a negotiating process. Netanyahu tried, both in his election campaign and in the earlier days of his government, to return Israeli policy to the dismissive hostility it had maintained before Oslo, but he has failed in that. Oslo was too strong, and he is back to the drastic limitation policy of the Rabin and Peres governments. It would only play into the hands of the intransigents on the Israeli scene if Palestinians let the whole process become merely adversarial again, characterized by condemnations and insults.

The problem with the U.S. insistence on leaving everything to Israel and the Palestinians to negotiate, without U.N., European or any other interference (ostensibly even without U.S. interference, though that works only on one side of the street) is its failure to acknowledge the *imbalance of power between Israel and the Palestinians*. The U.S., while appearing (and perhaps even believing itself) to champion an uncontaminated mutual accommodation between Israel and the Palestinians, in fact removes the constraints of international legality which, by right, must figure in any just resolution of this problem.

It would be a great mistake, for Palestinian policy and that of your friends, to let this issue lead to hostile opposition to Israel or to the U.S. Instead, your advantage is in attacking the specific problem, the failure to address this imbalance of power, rather than the intentions or actions of particular powers. And for that, the General Assembly is the proper instrument, for you and for the Europeans.

If Europeans are to be your effective friends, they may not be enemies, to the U.S. or Israel.

Dr. Nasser al-Kidwa, March 8, '97 — 2

I don't want to be a busy-body about this, but I think there is advantage for you in framing the *demarche* along these lines:

1. The United Nations, which in 1947 laid down, through Resolution 181 of its General Assembly, the basis in international legality for both Jewish and Arab states in Palestine, retains responsibility for the just implementation of its resolution.
2. Though an effort has been made in the U.N., over subsequent years, to deal with recurring crises in the region through the Security Council, which is its emergency forum, the General Assembly remains the proper forum for carrying out basic normal oversight, by the international community, of the U.N.'s continuing responsibility in this matter.
3. That responsibility is, in essence, for the maintenance of legality. That involves such things as the Geneva Convention of 1949 regarding the Protection of Civilians in Time of War, the U.N. Charter's Article II, by which all members have renounced acquisition of territory by force, and principles of equity in adjudication and negotiation of disputes.
4. The international community is not hostile, and intends no injustice, to either party in the dispute, but is responsible to maintain, impartially, the rights of both, to which the 1947 action of the General Assembly remains pertinent.

If those lines are followed, I think you are on solid ground to reinstate, not just for this particular episode but as a matter of principle, the authority of the General Assembly as oversight body for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian dilemma. A resolution along the lines you proposed to the Security Council yesterday would doubtless get the approval of practically every member of the Assembly except the U.S. and Israel, and might have some actual influence on the Har Homa decision — Israel would have a lot to lose by defying it, especially as the U.S. itself would be in sympathy with the intent of the resolution while opposing only the appropriateness of the forum. But more important, the general indignation over this particular Israeli action can be the occasion for establishing the General Assembly as the normal and normative forum.

If that is done, you are past the veto problem. It will be a stormy session, and you can hope for European cooperation in it only because of their indignation at this particularly flagrant Israeli offense. It then becomes essential that your advantage in the General Assembly be used responsibly and with discretion, and be seen so at once, so that the actually superior power of the U.S. will not be used to stifle it altogether. The reluctance of the U.S. to let any part of the U.N. function as judge over Israel should be respectfully acknowledged even when not accepted. The genuine interests of Israel should be treated with real deference and courtesy. Those will then be your best means to reach just accords.

The allies you should then rely on will be the European powers, and among them those who, as permanent members of the Security Council, supported you in yesterday's vote, and the Scandinavians, particularly the Norwegians, who helped *both sides* so significantly in the Oslo process, and the Swedes, who were so helpful in the Stockholm process of 1988.

You cannot expect that the majority of members (those who have been admitted to the U.N. in the post-imperialist context) would respond to Israel other than through their impatience. There will have to be serious leadership in the Assembly to see that Israeli interests are not slighted, and it should come from you, the Palestinians, in your search for genuine peace with Israel, in conjunction with the major European powers. And you should consistently look for the cooperation of the U.S., which will be granted only if it can be seen that the process is not abused.

Dr. Nasser al-Kidwa, March 8, '97 - 3

You've seen me often, in letters to your uncle, President Arafat, urge the mobilization of a rigorously non-violent citizens' movement, analogous to the *intifada* but without the stones, as a way of redressing the imbalance of power between the Palestinians and Israel. I have the greatest understanding and respect for the way in which he has held back from this for so long, so as not to create antipathy with the Israelis. Acknowledging his restraint, I am glad to see that he is now using this resource of popular mobilization, with admirable discipline over any tendency toward violence, and joining it with the protest activities of the Israeli peace movement, in face of the new level of provocation he meets from the Netanyahu government. I think it very useful, and have confidence that he will use it wisely and well.

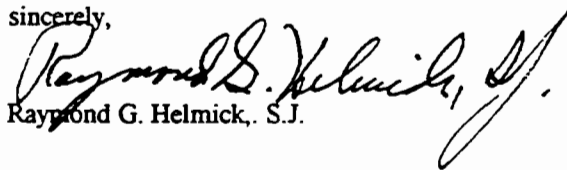
That matter of power imbalance, and the bad decisions that were always likely to come of it, has worried me from the start of the Oslo process, especially as the U.S. government has been so indisposed to acknowledge it. I believe this present episode at the U.N., a veto by the U.S. like many others before, but in a situation that puts not only the European allies but the U.S. Administration's own real sympathies *against* this use of the veto, a very reluctant one, may have created the critical mass that empowers you to move the U.N.'s basic oversight concern for this situation from the Security Council to the Assembly. I hope it may be so.

I would send this to you by FAX, but I can't put my hand on the appropriate number. It's probably as well that you have it on a proper piece of paper. Meanwhile, I will have sent a copy by FAX to Faisal Hussein's Orient House office, with a request that President Arafat be made aware of it.

For your own background information, I enclose here copies of the correspondence I sent to various parties over the Har Homa crisis at a different stage, a couple of weeks ago.

With all best wishes,

sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

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March 8, 1997

Mr. Faisal Hussein
Orient House
Jerusalem
FAX 011-972-2-6274020 -- 1st of 4 pages

Dear Mr. Hussein,

Salaam!

I'm sure all Palestinians will have reacted with the usual disappointment at the U.S. veto, yesterday, of the Har Homa resolution in the Security Council.

It struck me as I read of it this morning that, in fact, this issue could be useful for making a fundamental shift in the U.N.'s dealing with the Israeli-Palestinian issue, putting it normatively before the General Assembly rather than the Security Council.

I've written to Dr. Nasser al-Kidwa, who will have the immediate responsibility for developing a strategy in his appeal to the General Assembly. As a foreign policy matter, it comes very much on your plate too, so I attach a copy here of what I wrote to Dr. al-Kidwa. And I would much appreciate it if you would bring this possibility to the attention of President Arafat, who will ultimately have to decide what course is followed, as well.

With best wishes,

sincerely,



Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

March 18, 1997

Mr. Faisal Hussein
Orient House
Jerusalem
FAX 011-972-2-6274020

Dear Mr. Hussein,

Salaam!

With the actual beginning of work on the Har Homa settlement, protest demonstrations become inevitable. Already today, I see, there was direct confrontation between protesters, both Palestinian and of the Israeli peace movement, and army troops. It will be worse when there are bulldozers and not merely surveying instruments.

If the protests become violent, as Mr. Netanyahu constantly points out, they will be suppressed. Of course the violence will then escalate. The Palestinians will be blamed, while suffering most of the damage, and the Israeli right wing will exult that the Palestinian violence has itself been their victory. The settlement building, in that case, will go right ahead.

What I would see as the main priority right now is that your Palestinian Authority have actual control of the protest, and keep it rigorously non-violent. The side that resorts to violence, quite simply, will lose. That could be the Israeli government. You need to make sure it is not you.

I don't see that you can do that if the leadership is coming from anyone else but yourselves. Surely, if it is led by Hamas or Islamic Jihad, it will be or become violent. If it is left to develop itself spontaneously, without central direction and rigorous discipline, the violence will set in when the people find themselves frustrated.

Having so long argued, in many letters to President Arafat, that there should be a mobilization of popular protest by Palestinians, I feel responsible to think my way through this dilemma, and I have a thought that could be helpful to you. I would write this to President Arafat himself, but I feel sure that he must be too occupied with the crisis to read such things as this right now. Hence I write it to you.

If your Palestinian people are not to turn violent, however responsibly the leadership appeals to them, they need to be seeing real success, and not merely frustration, in their opposition to the Har Homa project. It strikes me that, with unarmed and non-violent protesters against armed troops, the army can break up the protests very easily. That can happen because the protest is concentrated in one place, which the army can readily control.

The protest could, however, be all over the West Bank, and still rigorously non-violent, if people, in great numbers, simply blocked the roads used by the Jewish settlements, that would be an obstruction that the Israeli state could not afford to accept. The government would be forced to scatter the army all over the territory, dissipating its concentration at Har Homa, and that would give the protesters at the building site an opportunity to block the process successfully.

The key to this is non-violence. If the Israeli army, or settlers, resort to violence, both world opinion and the far more important opinion of the more progressive Israeli public will demand a halt. The longer such anti-protest violence continues, the more absolutely the government will lose.

Mr. Faisal Hussein, March 18, '97 -- 2

The most critical moment will come when (or if) the Israeli army first turns to violence. Then the Palestinian protesters -- and, I would hope, Israeli peace movement protesters will be there among them -- must show the discipline of not responding in kind. That is what your leadership is for. It needs to be thoroughly impressed upon the whole Palestinian public that this protest is the work of their whole community, under the leadership of its Authority, and that anyone who makes use of violence is the enemy of all Palestinian hope.

I suggest this strategy with some humility, knowing that I am at a distance and that you, not I, are able to judge things on the spot. I hope it may be useful.

Sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

Keep Jerusalem under Israeli sovereignty

LAWRENCE LOWENTHAL

Daily news reports of tension and violence over Israel's Har Homa development project in the southern part of East Jerusalem clearly indicate what Middle East observers have long predicted: that of all the issues left to be negotiated within the peace process, the status of Jerusalem is clearly the most contentious.

But the Har Homa neighborhood issue is merely a smokescreen clouding over largely-ignored facts about the plan to build new Jewish housing in the city. Many media outlets are erroneously referring to this neighborhood as part of "Arab East Jerusalem," when, in fact, that area is within the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem and is not part of the West Bank. Israel has every right to construct infrastructure and establish a new neighborhood for its citizens within its capital city. Israel is building 3,105 new homes for Arabs in Jerusalem, as well.

Contrary to perceptions of the Har Homa project as a violation of the Oslo Accords, it should be noted that Article XVII of the Interim Agreement clearly places the city's final disposition in the hands of the Permanent Status negotiators. Until then, neither the Declaration of Principles nor the Interim Agreement places any restrictions on Israel concerning Jerusalem.

Furthermore, of the 1,850 dunams (about 460 acres) expropriated by the government for the project, 1,400 dunams are owned by Jews, most of whom purchased the land before 1948. Even though Arab and Jewish owners were offered full compensation for the land taken, they fought the expropriation in court only to have their claims denied by Israel's highest legal authority.

Pursuing the Har Homa project is not a "right-wing plot," but rather a reflection of a broad-based Israeli accord.

Any plan to repartition the city would be a step backward.

A Dabaf poll revealed an overall support rate for Har Homa at 69 percent, with only 24 percent opposed.

Historically, Jerusalem — the city as a whole and not just specific sites or holy places — has always been central to Jewish tradition and national aspirations, even during periods of exile. The Jewish people, whose presence in Jerusalem dates back more than 3,000 years, are the only ones ever to have made the city their national capital. Today, Jews represent a majority of the city's residents, and they have been the single largest religious group there since 1844.

While Christianity and Islam revere the holy sites in Jerusalem, historically, they have not held the city as a unique entity or as the focus of prayer or nationalism.

Since the reunification of Jerusalem under Israeli sovereignty in 1967, freedom of religion and access to the holy places for the three monotheistic faiths have been guaranteed as never before. This stands in stark contrast to the grim period from 1948 to 1967, when Jewish holy places in the Old City were barred to all Jewish worshippers, ancient synagogues were wantonly destroyed, Jewish cemeteries were defiled, and the city's eastern half, unlawfully annexed by Jordan, was closed not only to Jews but to Israeli Muslims and Christians as well.

Jerusalem is united under Israeli sovereignty and should remain that way. Any plan to repartition Jerusalem between Palestinians and Israelis would only be a step backward — toward two police forces, two legal codes, two sets of customs duties, and two municipal governments. Such an arrangement could only lead to confusion and continual mistrust and, ultimately, to the violence and bloodshed that the peace process is hoping to eliminate. History has shown that divided cities do not serve the best interests of their residents or contribute to peaceful coexistence of neighbors.

Lawrence Lowenthal is the executive director of the American Jewish Committee.



JERUSALEM: TWO PEOPLES, THREE FAITHS, WORLD INTEREST

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

(Submitted for the Op-Ed Page of The Boston Globe, March 28, 1997.)

Larry Lowenthal, who argued for keeping Jerusalem under Israeli sovereignty (*Globe* Op-Ed, Sunday, March 23, '97), stands out among Boston's Jewish leaders as an eminent peace-maker, always concerned for the good and safety of Israel but consistently seeking justice and a meeting of minds with local Arabs and Muslims. Valuing him and his good work as I do, I need to disagree with his position, both with his seeing the Har Homa project as innocent new development and on the eventual status of Jerusalem.

Jerusalem's municipal boundaries have seen several changes, the last of them drawn by Israel for purposes of strategic control after capturing the Arab-inhabited part of the city in the 1967 war. The international community, including the United States, has not recognized the Israeli sovereignty unilaterally declared over a Jerusalem so defined at that time, and in fact the stated (though not always implemented) United States policy has always been that the future of Jerusalem should be determined by negotiation, not by unilateral action. All the building of vast and exclusively Jewish neighborhoods to encircle Arab Jerusalem has been unilateral effort -- "facts on the ground" -- to preempt possession of this ground, as important to its Palestinian inhabitants as to Israelis. Given the Oslo Declaration of Principles and Interim Agreement assignment of the permanent status of Jerusalem to negotiation, it makes no sense to deny that building Har Homa is preemptive unilateral action, filling in the last "hole" (the very name, "Har Homa," given to what Arabs call Jebel Abu Ghneim, means "Wall Hill") that allows Arab access to any part of Jerusalem.

That an Israeli court, even its highest legal authority, has approved expropriation of this land gives no further claim. International law grants that court no jurisdiction over conquered territory. Nor does it matter that 1,400 of the 1,850 dunams of land had been purchased by Jews. Many individual Japanese owners, and the Vatican State as such, have held title to many properties in New York and elsewhere in the United States. That confers no sovereignty over that land upon either Japan or the Vatican.

Two peoples live in Jerusalem. Three faiths hold it sacred. Its significance reaches the whole world. Exclusivism in its possession cannot make for peace.

Even the claim that access to their holy places has been guaranteed to the three monotheistic faiths since 1967 as never before, under Israeli management, has to be heavily qualified. There is access for foreign pilgrims. It is drastically curtailed for the native, resident Palestinian Christians or Muslims. Foreign Christians, who can travel about the area at will, tend not to notice this, and always need to be reminded not to treat

Jerusalem..., Op-Ed, March 28, '97 -- 2

this holy place as a kind of Jesus Theme Park, whose real inhabitants have no importance. Muslims have been more sensitive. Seeing their Palestinian co-religionists excluded from these sacred sites, they have thought it disrespectful to them to visit despite the closure. Surely, the division and exclusion between 1948 and 1967 was quite as grim and unjust to Jews as Larry and others depict it. But the present situation disguises a comparable exclusion for those, the people born in the place, whose rights are actually paramount, and is nothing to boast of.

Nor does this situation arise from anything so simple as Israeli malice or deliberate intention to exclude. It is structurally inherent in exclusive Israeli control over the city, unavoidable under those terms. So long as Israel imposes its sole sovereignty upon this unwilling native population of the city and closes it off from the rest of a population for whom it is the essential center of their lives, valid security considerations will not allow the necessary conditions either for justice or for peace in the status of the city.

I understand clearly why Larry Lowenthal took the position he did. As he says in closing, he does not see divided cities as serving the best interests of their residents or contributing to peaceful coexistence of neighbors. But no one in fact proposes division of the city. All the proposals look instead to the sharing of an undivided city. The difference is real, and many proposed ways of sharing are on the table. To ignore them and work by unilateral seizure is also no way to peace, or to the long-term security of Israel.

What does Israel really require for its own existence as the state its people long for? Simha Dinitz taught me this, many years ago. Three things!

1. Israel must have democracy. It is very much endangered by its own radical right wing, that sees a choice to be made between being Jewish and being democratic.
2. Israel must remain Jewish: cannot, after the traumas of Jewish history, especially in this bloody century now expiring, commit its fate to the control of any others. This requirement is more endangered by the effort to hold other people under its control than by anything else, and is the reason for the menacing genocidal language, antiseptically called "transfer," from the extremist fringe in Israel.
3. And Israel must have security. That means necessarily care for military strength, but it cannot, safely, mean living as a fortress in perpetual defiance of all its neighbors. It has to mean accommodating them and winning their friendship, especially those native to the same land. The present military superiority of five million Israelis to over a hundred million Arabs cannot last for long enough to be of real significance in the life of a people. It is a perishable commodity, and must be used for winning peace, not for imposing dictates. That was Yitzhak Rabin's conclusion. The chance for peace he won is the chance for the enduring life of Israel in that region. It ought not be squandered.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

May 12, 1997

Mr. Faisal Husseini
Orient House
Jerusalem
FAX 011-972-2-6274020 -- 1st of 6 pages

Dear Mr. Husseini,

Salaam!

Once again I request you to put a letter before President Arafat. Under normal circumstances I try to do this through Dr. Nasser al-Kidwa at the U.N., but this is another case in which I felt it is necessary to get these thoughts to Mr. Arafat as quickly as possible.

My argument, as you will see, is about the death penalty decreed against Palestinians who sell land to Jews, and about the apparent carrying out of such a penalty against Mr. Bashiti last Friday.

You are familiar with the argument I have kept presenting to President Arafat ever since the Oslo Accord and the establishment of the Palestine Authority, that I would like to see him, on the one hand, making use of the mobilized solidarity of his people, protesting injustices under his leadership in the manner of the *intifada*, and on the other hand keeping this protest rigorously non-violent, so as not to give the Israelis excuse for further repression, and to put the moral onus on them for every effort to suppress the protest. I have not gone back over that ground in this letter, but I am very conscious of the public spectacle that the Palestine Authority is presenting to the world in this death-penalty decree, of arbitrary violence practiced by and in the name of the authority itself, and turned self-destructively on its own people. It gives weapons to all your enemies, who are gleefully commenting on how it discredits the Palestinian cause.

I know very well how frustrating your people's experience of Mr. Netanyahu's deprivations has been. Part of his strategy is to tempt and provoke you to ill-considered actions that can be used against you and your cause. This is an outstanding instance of it.

With every best wish for your good, and for justice for your people,

sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

May 12, 1997

President Yasser Arafat
Palestine Authority
c/o Mr. Faisal Hussein
Orient House
FAX: 01197226274020

Dear President Arafat,

Salaam!

Would you permit me to argue to you against the recently announced policy of passing death sentence on Palestinians who sell land to Jews.

I find the public comment surrounding the announcement, and around the death of Mr. Bashiti last Friday, catastrophically negative for the Palestinian cause.

I am one who disapproves of a death penalty for any reason, and I will not argue that point. I also believe firmly that due process of law is essential to any civilized society, and that acceptance or tolerance of summary execution critically diminishes the moral stature of any society. I won't try to distinguish between the gravity of land sales and the taking of life, as I know that sovereignty over the land is of life and death importance for all your future generations. I will argue only that, for the purpose of regaining your land, the moral standing of Palestinians as a people is of immeasurable importance, and that this policy, in damaging that, damages your prospects of regaining the land as well. This offends terribly.

Among the ways it offends, apart from the obvious appearance of injustice from the lack of process, is that it turns the entirely just anger of the Palestinian community over the land transfers in upon itself. Your community's anger ought not be directed, hurtfully, against Palestinians. And you will not be finding effective ways to combat the injustice of the land seizures themselves until you sublimate that anger and direct it into useful ways of opposing the arbitrary Israeli encroachments on Palestinian land.

Where are your alternatives? Your Justice Minister, Mr. Freih Abu Middein, is entirely right in pointing out, as the problem, that "Israel does not distinguish between ownership of land and sovereignty over it." (I have that quotation from this day's *New York Times*.) That is a matter for legal challenge. It is open to you to declare, through your own legal system (in courts, in legislation) that you do not recognize any Israeli sovereignty on the basis of land ownership, and to fight this through every available international forum, including the U.N. General Assembly, where you were so successful in the recent appeal against the building project at Har Homa/Jebel Abu Ghneim.

President Yasser Arafat, May 12, '97 -- 2

I had occasion myself to argue this recently, when I wrote a response to a Boston newspaper Op-Ed by a good Jewish friend who normally takes a far more constructive view of Israeli-Palestinian relations, but who had argued for total Jewish sovereignty over Jerusalem. *The Boston Globe* did not print my response, but I managed to circulate it very widely anyway, and I attach a copy here.

My argument was that land ownership has no effect on sovereignty. Individual Japanese, and the Vatican as a sovereign entity, own substantial tracts of property in New York and elsewhere in the United States. That gives them no claim to sovereignty here.

What is the usefulness of such argument, or legal decisions by your own or other authorities? It will raise question of the Israeli claim to legitimate *sovereign* possession, and assert this as an issue that must be addressed in the ultimate resolution of the whole sovereignty question.

You can further declare any such sales of property something void if done without the license of the Palestine Authority, in that way raising question of the actual property title of anyone who has bought such property without *your* license. You have already, in international law recognized by every country other than Israel and the United States, the non-recognition of any sovereignty claim by Israel over this land by right of conquest, on the basis of Article 2 of the U.N. Charter and the 4th Geneva Convention of 1949. By such a declaration of a licensing requirement for sale to a foreign purchaser (there are many precedents for that in other countries) you can undermine the property title of the new owners as well, and so make their property claim practically untransferrable among themselves even before an eventual judicial finding of its illegality. We have these cases all the time now in the United States, where Native American Indian claims of prior title to property make it unsaleable until the case is decided. And that decision will ultimately be by courts other than the Israeli.

I would recommend to you, also, care in the use of language about these property cases: that you not specify that property cannot be sold to Jews as such, but that it cannot be sold to non-Palestinians. Every expression that reads as hatred of Jews as such, as you must well understand, is held against you and your people and their claims to justice. As a condition of successfully pursuing your claims, you should be constantly sensitive to this.

You can further declare the sale, on the part of the Palestinian owner who makes it, illegal, confiscate all the proceeds of the transaction and levy further heavy financial penalties as well. Here you would touch the real motive -- profit -- of any Palestinian who would sell property in this way. You take away the profit -- plus title to the illegally sold property itself and further financial damages as well -- and you will quite as effectively stop Palestinian land-owners from selling it so as by this grievously offending death-penalty. More so, because they will think they can escape detection in the face of the

President Yasser Arafat, May 12, '97 -- 3

death penalty, but will worry forever about the financial loss, which affects their families and heirs as well as themselves, and can be held against them for the indefinite future.

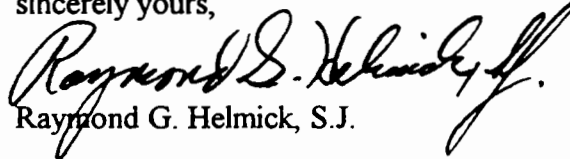
This penalty will be understood, by all those who pass moral judgment on you over this death-penalty decree, as just, and proper to the offense, in complete contrast to the negative judgment that people all over the world are passing on your death-penalty ruling.

I cannot urge this strongly enough. You are faced with Israeli courts, which make unjust rulings for the convenience of those who want only to grasp more of your land. They are able to do their will for only one reason, that they rely entirely on the brute force of an army that you have no capacity to resist. Your appeal against them can only be to higher courts elsewhere, in the international system, and there you always have to reckon with the disposition of U.S. authority to throw its weight behind anything the Israelis want, just or unjust. Public opinion, in the United States and everywhere else in the world, is among your strongest assets, and if favorable will have great influence on the decisions eventually made by international authority.

By this death-penalty decree, which panders to the understandable anger of your own people, you squander that valuable asset of world opinion, for the very good reason that we all see this decree as unjust, excessive punishment, carried out arbitrarily without due process. It is discreditable to you and to your people. Much more effective alternatives are available to you, which will pass this test of world opinion and will work to your credit every time the institutions of international legality turn their attention to you.

With the deepest respect, and understanding of the terrible frustrations your people suffer, I am

sincerely yours,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



August 22, 1997

Mr. Faisal Hussein
Orient House
Jerusalem
FAX 011-972-2-6274020 -- 1st of 3 pages

Dear Mr. Hussein,

Salaam!

May I impose upon you once again to put a letter before President Arafat. I see this now as most urgent.

This present crisis is the most dangerous I have seen since the beginning of the Madrid and Oslo processes. I am very conscious that I am repeating arguments that I have put before President Arafat often, and that in many ways he has acted as I have urged and hoped he would.

As I read the reports now, the two things that most impress me are:

1. that any further violence against Israelis by Palestinians can only do immense harm to the Palestinian cause. It will do harm to the Israelis and all their deepest interests too, because the vindictive responses you can expect from the Netanyahu government and a frightened Israeli public will further undermine their chances, also, of reaching the peace that you and they both need. Prevention of violence is as important to your Palestinian Authority as is resistance itself to the outrages that Israeli government is doing to you.

2. that American and Israeli misunderstanding of what Palestinians are doing, and anything that lets them feel justified in seeing Palestinians as their enemy, only increases the danger to Palestinians. Opposition to oppression has to be firm, but clear in its aims and its limits.

Best wishes,

sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



August 22, 1997

President Yasser Arafat
Palestine Authority
c/o Mr. Faisal Hussein
Orient House
FAX: 01197226274020

Dear President Arafat,

Salaam!

Your effort to implement and remain faithful to the Oslo process has my sympathy, even as you face the most severe crises. Reading the very partial American reports of such developments as your unity meetings, I see it as important for your Palestinian people that Americans and Israelis understand properly what is happening.

The essence of the Oslo accord was that your two peoples, Israelis and Palestinians, formally and publicly recognized one another's legitimacy as peoples, after many years of refusing that recognition. I believe that you had reached that point some years earlier, and credit you with having brought your people to that recognition. Nearly all conclusions about concrete points of agreement were left undetermined, to be drawn from that recognition, and many of your people were shocked and disappointed that more detail was not included, but it was a good basis for negotiation.

Prime Minister Rabin at first granted the recognition only reluctantly and with misgivings, seeing no other choice, but your good faith gradually won his acceptance and growing enthusiasm for it, right up to the time he was murdered for his own faithfulness.

With Prime Minister Netanyahu, the central purpose of his government has been, from the beginning, to withdraw that recognition, whatever the details of his particular provocations. The good news in this is that he has found it so difficult as to be nearly impossible to withdraw the recognition once granted. He is now using last month's terrible bombings in Jerusalem for that purpose. It is very important that you and your people not be or not even appear to be a mirror image of his sabotage of the peace.

Even from the biased American reporting of events, I can see that you have not withdrawn recognition of the legitimacy of the Israeli people. I wish it might be a guiding principle of Palestinian statements and actions that you are not imitating Mr. Netanyahu in that effort to destroy the mutual recognition of the two peoples' rights and dignity, that you reaffirm your commitment to the legitimacy, rights and safety of Israel and its people even as you resist the indignities and harm that the Netanyahu government heaps upon you. For the sake of your people, Israelis and Americans need to understand that.

President Arafat, August 22, '97 -- 2

I appreciate your effort to establish unity among Palestinians by inviting Hamas and Islamic Jihad into the political resistance to Israeli affronts. It has always been my opinion that you should ensure the human rights and political freedom of Palestinians like these, who are your own political opposition.

It is not clear to me on what basis, other than a desire to present unacceptable ultimatums, the Israeli government is demanding arrests of Palestinian militants. Those against whom there is genuine evidence should be arrested, but I support your refusal to violate the rights of your Palestinian opponents by arresting them without evidence.

What I would wish constantly to hear from you, along with these rejections of arbitrary procedures, is an equal rejection of violence in Palestinian resistance.

You cannot do other than resist now, when Israeli government builds settlements in Jerusalem designed to exclude Palestinian claims, expands West Bank settlements and confiscates land for roads, confines your citizens in small enclaves with the deliberate aim of destroying their liberty and economy, and in every way seeks to defame and humiliate your people. Not to oppose this would mean that you were not leading your people.

But every act of violence only arms those who want to do you harm. Opposition, clearly stated and enforced by yourself and your Palestinian Authority, to all violence by Palestinian organisations hostile to your own peace efforts or by any Palestinians, is the one thing that will give most credibility to your efforts for peace. It will place the basic responsibility for the present crisis where it belongs, with the Netanyahu government, and ensure you vitally needed support from those many Israelis who want the peace as you do.

I breaks my heart, President Arafat, knowing as I do your many accomplishments for the rescue of your people's future, to hear your own people speaking in disillusionment about many aspects of the Palestinian Authority's work. I wish it might be made clear, especially to your own people, that you are the leader of the real opposition to Israeli occupation and oppression, but not the enemy of the Israeli people whose rights and legitimacy you and they have recognized. For that, you have to be the genuinely effective opponent of violence and of every ill-considered action that can only harm the prospects of your people. I have urged this often, as a true popular basis for your authority and your best support in working for your people's interests. My prayers are with you.

Sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

December 24, 1997

President William Clinton
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Clinton,

Christ's Peace!

And every good wish for you and our country in the coming year.

At present, I find myself more apprehensive about developments in the Middle East than at any time since the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982. Hearing your own cautious hope that new life may be brought into the peace process there in the new year, I thought I should express this to you. I have been traditionally an optimist on the choices for peace there and in many other conflict situations, as you yourself have several times noted and acknowledged, and I felt my dim reading might count with you.

The relation between Israel and the Arabs, Palestinian and other, is currently headed for war, in my view. I hate that prospect, out of great love and concern for both Israeli and Arab peoples.

I think it self-deception to blind ourselves to that prospect of war. The war is likely to be nuclear, as it cannot be expected that the present government of Israel will refrain from using such weapons if under attack from Arab nations. I don't believe the war will happen out of concerted plan, but because the parties lose control under the grievous provocation of the events unfolding over the last two years.

Israel will win such a war hands down, but it will in the course of it have utterly destroyed the resident Palestinian population, all who do not escape into exile. Israel will thus be indelibly stained with genocide in the eyes of others, even of our European allies and many of our own American people. The war, however, will not be the end, but only the first of several wars that will end in the destruction of Israel itself. The United States, for its part, can expect a terrible harvest of terrorism over many years.

I do not believe this is an irreversible course, but it is the way things are going at present.

The fundamental accomplishment of the peace process between Israelis and Palestinians, for all the fears that have accompanied the Oslo process on both sides, has been the public and solemn recognition, by both parties, of one another's legitimacy as peoples, something neither had succeeded in articulating before. That was the genius of Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres and Yasser Arafat. There was reason to believe the peace could be built on that, and much progress was made.

From its inception, and consistently since, the Netanyahu government has set it as its most basic purpose to rescind that recognition. The only good news has been that they found this very difficult to accomplish. Every action, every refusal on their part has that aim. It has come to the point by now that I can see no reason for the Palestinian leadership to accede to any request to maintain the appearance of negotiation. The intention of Israel's present government is to take everything from them and leave them isolated and helpless in deprived bantustans. They ought not cooperate in that objective.

I recognize entirely the need for Mr. Arafat and his Authority to work incessantly against Palestinian terrorism. I believe, though, that this very concept has been shamefully abused, as the Netanyahu government has consistently invoked it as excuse not to fulfill its own obligations. I cannot say that Arafat or his Authority has been the source of any of the terrorism, while I can say with full

President Clinton, December 24, '97 - 2

conviction that this present government itself has been the source of repeated default on agreed obligations on the Israeli side. Arafat's very capacity to oppose or effectively police terrorism is progressively eroded by the demeaning treatment of Palestinians by the Netanyahu government. I cannot conclude other than that this erosion is deliberate policy, and that the objective is the war of which I warn, for the purpose of removing the Palestinians from the territory.

Mr. Netanyahu himself impresses me as not being smart, in ways that all earlier Israeli Prime Ministers have been. I believe he fails to foresee or understand the consequences of his actions. Mr. Sharon rather than he has become the true driving force of policy.

That he is unable to do other than he does because of his need for the support of such extremists as Mr. Sharon, Generals Eytan and Zeevi and the fringe elements of the settler movement, is simply untrue. He has always had the option of a government of national unity in which he could pursue a more peace-creative policy. He uses the threat of the fall of his government as blackmail on the United States.

In recent statements from your Administration I think I see much impatience with the Netanyahu government and even some glimmering of this view of the present situation, though you understandably shrink from seeing it in such stark terms. It would in any case be impolitic for you to say it in public as bluntly as I do here. I write this with as much love and concern for Jews and the state of Israel as you have yourself, and I do not question that you and your assistants also share fully my concern for the Palestinians and other Arabs. I understand the constraints under which you operate from an intemperate and one-sided Congress. I have great respect for the heroic work of Dennis Ross and many others in your Administration, who genuinely work for peace, as you and your two Secretaries of State have clearly done, against all odds. It has always been my impression that Martin Indyk, likely with the best of intentions, and doubtless others, have always functioned as monitors, internal gates set in your Administration by outside interests for purposes other than the good of the United States.

I mention foreseeable consequences -- long-term terrorism -- for the United States if the course of this Israeli government is not reversed. Our country will be held complicit in what is done for one basic reason, because of our condoning of the settlement policy by which this and earlier Israeli governments have tried to preempt any and all Palestinian claims by creating "facts on the ground." Our American administrations all recognized the illegality of these settlements until the time of President Reagan, whose Administration softened the judgement to "obstacles to peace." It remained for your own Administration to weaken this stance further, calling the settlement policy merely "unhelpful" and calling for only a "time-out" for what, in the view of all the other nations of the world except our own, that of Israel and Micronesia, is still illegal action contravening the Fourth Geneva Convention of August 1949. We make ourselves outlaws by not acknowledging that, and cannot but expect consequences. I write this though I have always argued to Mr. Arafat and other Palestinians that it is a necessary test of Palestinian friendship for the state of Israel that they allow some Jews to live in peace in the territories so important to them, Judea and Samaria.

It is without pleasure that I write these dire warnings, but I believe I must, and I deliberately chose Christmas as the time to do it. I see it as within the capacity of the United States to reverse this threatening situation. My hopes and prayers are with you,

in Christ,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

January 8, 1998

Mr. Raymond G. Helmick
Jesuit Community
Boston College
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts 02167-3802

Dear Raymond:

Thanks for sharing your views with me. The historic progress we have witnessed since September 1993 holds forth the promise of hope for all the people of the Middle East. For too long, conflict has robbed that region of its potential, and, most important, the lives of so many of its sons and daughters. Now there is an opportunity to define the future of the Middle East in terms of reconciliation and coexistence rather than confrontation and violence.

Since coming to office, we have worked carefully with the parties to the peace process to help them make progress. Those efforts continue today, and we are concentrating on restoring energy to the negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians so that they can deal with the difficult issues before them. A credible negotiating process is the best and surest way to make progress, and the parties need to have confidence in that process. For negotiations to succeed, both parties must exercise the leadership necessary to make difficult decisions.

As we have seen from bitter experience, there are still those who want to see the process fail, and they will go to any extreme to derail it. That is why it is so important that both sides do everything they can to prevent terror. Security and vigilance against extremists must be a full-time job. Violence and the threat of violence have no place in the negotiations.

The progress already made in the peace process is substantial. We must actively safeguard that progress, forging ahead toward a comprehensive peace to include Israel and all its neighbors. The United States has an interest and a responsibility to help this historic process succeed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Bill Clinton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.



January 19, 1998

Mr. Faisal Hussein
Orient House
FAX: 01197226274020 -- 1st of 6 pages

Dear Mr. Hussein,

Salaam!

Once again, I ask that you would assist me in getting a message to President Arafat very quickly, before his departure for the United States.

I was very much pleased and impressed by his *intifadah* statement in Gaza yesterday, even though I realized that it would cause some consternation and would be used against him and the Palestinians by your enemies if they were able. I have been, for several years now, constantly advocating mobilised popular resistance by Palestinians, a rigorously non-violent *intifadah*, as an available and useful instrument for bringing about a just peace. Now I am very anxious that the raising of this possibility should help and not hinder the cause.

I think it useful that you have a copy of a letter I wrote December 24th of last year to President Clinton. I sent a copy at once to Nasser al-Kidwa, so it may have reached President Arafat already, but you should have it on record. It received an answer from President Clinton, a personally signed letter from him. His letter did not take up any of the particular issues on which I had written, and I understand that it would have been difficult for him to do that. But it is an indication that, as I had hoped, he did actually see my letter.

Best wishes, and thanks,

sincerely,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

January 19, 1998

President Yasser Arafat
Palestine Authority
c/o Mr. Faisal Hussein
Orient House
FAX: 01197226274020

Dear President Arafat,

Salaam!

I hear that yesterday, speaking in Gaza, you raised the prospect of a renewal of the *intifadah*. Since I have advocated all the years since Oslo that you needed the active mobilisation of your public, you will understand that I find your statement very satisfying.

Now that that word is out, it will be a major topic of questioning during your visit this week to the United States, from President Clinton as well as the public. Already I have heard it said on the radio this morning, "Arafat calls for a return to violence." It will be very important to counter that impression.

Please do not give your enemies clubs with which to beat you. Mobilised but non-violent resistance by your people is a way to *prevent* violence, in fact the best way to carry out the clear responsibility you have to work against terrorist violence during this volatile period. The humiliations heaped upon the Palestinians by the Netanyahu government are constantly eroding your capacity to prevent terrorism. It is only by clearly leading a non-violent resistance, by a mobilised people, that you will be able to control it.

Like the original *intifadah*, this one should bring to your people the admiration of world opinion and of those Israelis who are working for the peace. Everything about it should be planned for that purpose. If the Israeli opponents of the peace, Sharon and the others, see the excuse for it, they will use their armed power to crush your people. The original *intifadah* was a kind of relatively non-violent resistance against which the Israeli Army was helpless, however much pain they inflicted upon your people. Every bit of violence now, even stones, but particularly guns or bombs, works totally against the true interests of your people. You need to make that fully understood among them, and be the leader of a resistance that is rigorously non-violent.

The other characteristic of the original *intifadah*, which legitimized it in the eyes of the Israeli peace movement and others who care for the safety of Israel, was that while it rejected occupation and oppression, it was not a rejection of Israel, but the offer of real co-existence and even genuine peace between an Israeli and a Palestinian state. That too should be made amply clear now, that it is a way to peace, not to war.

President Arafat, January 19, '98 -- 2

You face enemies in the Netanyahu government, and will face them in parts of the American media and political structure that you will meet this week, who would see this reference to a new *intifadah* as an opportunity to destroy you. If you use it well, making it plain that you and your people want the peace and the friendship of the Israeli people, not their harm, you can repeat the success of the earlier *intifadah*. What you say during this week in Washington will be critically important in that regard.

Hatred has no place in this. Your people's mobilised action, and your visible leadership of it, will be the more effective the more hatred is purged out of it entirely, and replaced by massive commitment to the peace of all concerned, both Israelis and Palestinians.

I wish you peace, and success in that great endeavor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02467-3802

June 25, 1999

Prime Minister-Elect
Mr. Ehud Barak
The Knesset
Jerusalem, ISRAEL

Dear Prime Minister-Elect Barak,

Shalom!

The peace of Israel, and of the Palestinians, has concerned me for a long time. From 1985 I saw much of Mr. Arafat, urging on him the acceptance of Israel embodied first in the three famous pre-conditions and then in subsequent agreements. I corresponded much about the peace with your predecessors in office Shamir, Rabin and Peres, but never found there was anything I could write to Mr. Netanyahu. I dealt much, also, with the conflict in Lebanon, since 1982, and urged on Israel and Syria the "Lebanon First" policy of an agreed Israeli withdrawal from the Lebanese "security Zone" as an avenue to peace with Syria.

Your election fills me with hope that you will bring the moribund peace process back to life. I credit you fully with good will in this and welcome your arrival in office.

The Oslo process has suffered greatly through the Likud government's years, to the point that many Israelis and Palestinians lost confidence in it. I have always believed that its essential element, for all the absence of detailed agreement, was the solemn and public recognition that each side, Israeli and Palestinian, made of one another's legitimacy as peoples, a recognition that had eluded both before. The basic thrust of Mr. Netanyahu's government, as I understood it, was to rescind that recognition, however much lip service he gave to some minimal obligations under the agreement. He did enormous damage in that pursuit. The good news was that the recognition, once given, proved extremely difficult to withdraw, with the result that the prospect of peace survived that damage.

I write to you now to say, as simply as I can, that the terms you will negotiate with the Palestinians need to be generous if there is really to be peace either for Israelis or for Palestinians. I'm sure you know that, but that you are subject to many other pressures from people who will want the narrowest possible terms. They will not serve the purposes of peace, which are the only purposes that will meet the needs of Israel.

You have quite rightly kept your counsel, and left us all wondering as yet about your policies. I appreciate your care to include as many parties as possible in your new government. Those who are not a part of the peace you will strive to make with the Palestinians and other Arabs will have no commitment to it, and could become irredentist opponents. I am glad to see that Shas will apparently be in government. As a Jesuit priest, I am a man of religion, deeply conscious of our American insight into separation of Church and State. I have no liking for any religious effort at domination of a society. Yet I value the Shas commitment to the peace. I know the contribution they can make as religious Jews who learned long ago how to live with Arabs and Muslims. And I trust that you will have won agreement with them to let other Israelis live according to their consciences, as condition of their participation.

A Likud role causes me more apprehension, though I understand its importance. General Sharon has never been friend to Palestinians, and I always believed that he was the force behind the most destructive things done by the Netanyahu government. If you can bring him to commit himself seriously to the peace, you will have my congratulations. I would expect him more than others to urge annexation of so much territory that the Palestinians would be left with wretched remnants.

Mr. Ehud Barak, June 25, '99 -- 2

For this reason I want to say now that, if the Palestinians receive only isolated Bantustan-like fragments of territory, the meanness of the settlement will deprive Israel of its peace. There are two basic perspectives that I would urge upon you in this regard.

The first is a concept of the relation between Israeli and Palestinian states that I have proposed to Mr. Arafat and to Mr. Rabin long since.

It is of obvious importance to Israelis, and to Jews elsewhere, that Jews should be able to live in Judea and Samaria. Palestinians should be ready to accept this. I even read the protestations of many in the Jewish settler movement that they need to have the whole of their ancient Eretz Israel. I know this is true. It is also true of the Palestinians that they need the whole of what has, for nearly two whole millennia, been their land.

The arrangement needs to be reciprocal. As it is possible for Jews to live in Palestinian territory on the West Bank, it should be possible for Palestinians to live in Jaffa and Haifa. In both cases, it should be agreed between the two peoples, and made truly effective between them, that this will not be an attempt to overturn population balances or establish juridical control over territory to which the other has legitimate claim. Numbers should be agreed.

Those who choose, either as Jews or Palestinians, to live in territory that belongs to the other, should be able to choose their citizenship: one or other, Israeli or Palestinian, not both. Those we have known as "Israeli Arabs" will likely want to retain their Israeli citizenship. Jews in the Palestinian territory would likely be less inclined to choose Palestinian citizenship. But any who would choose to live in one territory as citizens of the other should be free to vote in their own elections, but be subject to the law of the nation in whose territory they live.

You will recognize the supposition behind this: that the border be open. The idea of physical separation between the two peoples, implying walls and fences and checkpoints, is the most negative thing I have heard in statements of yours and would, I believe, be a practical impossibility. If the border is open, with the kind of situation I have described above, then the two peoples each have their state, with its own institutions and citizenship, and with internationally recognized territorial boundaries. But at the same time, each of these peoples has the whole land and its freedom. Each truly needs that. Neither Israelis nor Palestinians should be confined to the narrow bounds that have until now been theirs. For Israelis, this would mean to freedom to range throughout the lands of the Middle East as well, in ways that have not been open to them before.

I believe this perspective would throw the entire question of settlements, of the forced annexation of territory acquired by war, of boundaries into a new light. I would not delude myself that this could be done without careful provision, by both sides, for security of persons and of the two states. But the satisfaction of both peoples that would arise from the arrangement would, over time, make the security questions less urgent and threatening, and the provisions needed less burdensome.

The second perspective I would urge on your consideration has to do with ethnic-religious discrimination.

For many years we had to deal with the proposition, inscribed in a UN General Assembly Resolution, that Zionism was racism. All of us who counted ourselves friends of Israel and of the Zionist enterprise opposed that steadfastly. I used to feel that this offensive proposition was paralleled by the proposal that Palestinian equaled PLO equaled terrorism, and that both slurs should be removed at once. I was somewhat disappointed that the rejection of the two was not strictly in parallel, but glad to see that both were eventually discredited.

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Mr. Ehud Barak, June 25, '99 -- 3

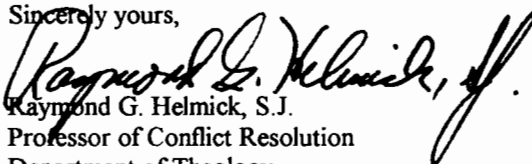
Racism, nevertheless, discrimination on the basis of race, remains a conspicuous feature of Israeli society, one with which Israel needs to come to terms. And its most obvious context is the exclusive right of residence, for Jews only, in residential settlements that are actually on territory acquired by war.

I could see some justification for such segregated housing in settlements whose *raison d'être* was specifically for some particular religious purpose, as for *Hasidim*, or Lubavitcher or something as pointed as that. But this is not the normal situation of settlements, in Israel or in the West Bank or Gaza. They are open to residence of a general public, except for non-Jews. I've just recently been in South Africa, and have seen the malign effect of such "separate development" settlements and townships, closed except on a basis of race. It is not a tolerable situation anywhere, and has shown its evil effects in Israeli society, as it did when it was still accepted in American society.

Clearly there are some people in the settlements who would not choose to live there if they had to live in association with others, just as "white flight" has been a feature of desegregation in American or South African society. This would not be altogether a disadvantage. In the establishment of Jewish settlements in Palestinian territory, some -- by no means all -- have moved into the territories explicitly in order to drive others out. Accepting as I do, and as I expect Palestinians to do, that it should be possible for Jews to live in Judea and Samaria, in Hebron and in other places that are holy to them, I see those as the wrong Jews to be there. In the situation of right by which both peoples feel their true entitlement to be in these places, those who reside there ought not be people whose purpose is the eviction or destruction of others, but those whose purposes are peace. If racial segregation were not accepted and even fostered as the basis of these settlements, the people who so evidently should not be there would get out and some of the most fundamental problems of Israeli society would thereby be solved.

Mr. Barak, I ache for your peace and the peace of those others among whom you live. I have devoted my own activity for many years to fostering peace, not only in your part of the world but in Northern Ireland, in the Balkans and other places, none of them more dear to me than among your peoples. I wish you every success and blessing in the vital work that lies before you. If, by thinking and writing, by meeting and discussing with people, I can be any help in that work of peace, I will gladly do so.

Sincerely yours,



Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.
Professor of Conflict Resolution
Department of Theology
Boston College



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 021

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July 8, 1999

Mr. Sandy Berger
National Security Adviser
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20504

Dear Mr. Berger,

Christ's Peace!

Thank you for having Mr. Greg Schulte write, for you and the President, in acknowledgement of the various things I had written after returning from Belgrade with the Jackson expedition. I'm glad to see more recent developments in that quarter, and appreciated the remarks Mr. Schulte made for you.

I've been in the habit, for many years and several presidents, of sending copies of anything I wrote that could have political consequence to the White House, to be accessible to the President or his assistants. While Tony Lake was in your position, I always knew he was the proper person to route these things. I've been less certain since.

But quite soon after his election, I wrote to Mr. Ehud Barak, resuming what had been a rather substantial correspondence with his predecessors, Shimon Peres, Yitzhak Shamir and Yitzhak Rabin. I had never known what I could usefully write to Mr. Netanyahu, and so never attempted it, though I had continued correspondence with Yasser Arafat and many other Israelis and Palestinians. I thought this letter ought to be known in the White House.

And working at a different level, I've been writing the last couple of days to UUP figures in Northern Ireland, people I've known closely over many years now, Roy Beggs and Ken Maginnis. I've never felt that Roy ought to be among the No voters on the Good Friday Agreement. He has in the past recognized some elements in the situation that must be nagging at his very active conscience now. If he could be persuaded to change his position now, it would make a serious crack in the rejectionist camp. And while Ken, always a very demanding monitor of what the IRA is doing, has been very constructively on side all the last year, my friends and I felt he needed some encouragement just now too. I spent a while sweating over my computer, trying to compose a comparable letter to Martin Smyth, a long-time good friend, but didn't feel anything I could say would move him.

With best wishes,

In Christ,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

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JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02467-3802

August 13, 1999

President Yasser Arafat
Palestine Authority
C/o Dr. Nasser al-Kidwa

Dear President Arafat,

Salaam!

With this letter I am enclosing a copy of one I sent to the newly elected Prime Minister Barak not long after his election, while he was still forming his cabinet. I have always felt that what I write to an Israeli government should be known to you and vice versa. I follow with great interest the progress of initial negotiations between you, and your dealings about implementation of the Wye agreement. Those are much more particularized issues than those I deal with here. I would like to commend to you the basic concepts I urged on Prime Minister Barak. I did send a copy of my Barak letter to President Clinton before Mr. Barak's visit to Washington.

On the premise that anything less than very generous terms will produce no real peace between Israelis and Palestinians, and that you could not be left with a collection of little Bantustans and call it a Palestinian state, I tried to communicate two main ideas to Mr. Barak.

The first is one I have written often before to you and to Mr. Rabin while he was Prime Minister. It is a concept of how the peoples of two states, Israeli and Palestinian, can relate to each other at long term. I recall times, in early years of your efforts at negotiation, that you asked me to leave this aside because it was not yet time to discuss such permanent arrangements.

Its basis is a recognition of how important and inevitable it is that some Jews will live in their ancient home territories of Judea and Samaria. This has been made the basis of territorial claims by Israelis which cannot be supported. But it is important that Palestinians accept a Jewish presence in those places. It cannot be allowed that this licenses the seizure of territory, as that would be flagrant injustice to Palestinians.

The arrangement has to be reciprocal. If it is accepted that Jews live in these Palestinian territories, it must also be accepted that some Palestinians be able to return to their former homes in Jaffa, Haifa and elsewhere in Green-line Israel. But for that to happen without overturning population balances, there must be agreement on the numbers of Jews who would be permanent residents in Palestinian territory and of Palestinians who would return to Israeli territory.

President Arafat, August 13, '99 – 2

Ideally, I would see this as meaning that the pre-1967 border would be restored. I know that there is likely to be some revision of that line, negotiated between you on grounds of security. But I think they could be made minimal, and need not be made on the basis of Jewish residence in those settlements that have been constructed over the years since 1967 as “facts on the ground.” I see no basis in international law for the claim so often made by Israeli settlers that the transfer of property rights (done justly or unjustly) entails transfer of sovereignty over territory. We never see Japanese or Vatican ownership of property in Los Angeles or New York as meaning such a transfer of territorial sovereignty, and I see no justification for making Jewish purchase of property in Palestine any different.

However, I would want to see it agreed that Jews living on Palestinian territory or Palestinians living in Israel should be able to choose their citizenship, whether Israeli or Palestinian. They should be able, by agreement between your governments, to choose one only, Israeli or Palestinian. Dual citizenship should not be an option. Those living on Palestinian territory who choose to retain Israeli citizenship should be free to vote in Israeli elections, but be subject, in their residence, to Palestinian law. And *vice versa*, Palestinians living in Israel should be free to vote in Palestinian elections but be subject to Israeli law.

The supposition of this arrangement is that the border between Israel and Palestine be open. Nothing I hear from Mr. Barak's early statements, or have heard in the past from Mr. Barak's early statements, or have heard in the past from Mr. Peres, is more alarming or impractical than the proposition that the two peoples be separated, and closed borders set between them. I have realized that for a very long time, that seen even exclusively from the point of view of Israeli interest, that border must be open, and both peoples be able to move freely across it while respecting the principle that neither will set out to overturn population balances.

On that supposition, both peoples, Israeli and Palestinian, will have a state with all its proper institutions and internationally recognized permanent borders. And at the same time, each people will have the freedom of the whole territory, subject to law.

You have already a large number of Israeli Jews living on Palestinian territory captured in 1967. Some are there as an expression of enmity to Palestinian people and their territorial claim, and express their hostility to Palestinians in ways that deserve the judgement of terrorism as much as any actions of Hamas or Islamic Jihad. It is Israel's responsibility to control that settler violence and withdraw any protection that has been given to it by the Israeli state, just as your Palestine Authority has responsibility for preventing Palestinian terrorism. If it were once understood and agreed that Jews living in Palestinian territory, while free to retain Israeli citizenship, would be subject to Palestinian law, it is unlikely that those whose purpose was to make a territorial claim on Palestinian land would choose to remain there. Others would remain to live in peace.

President Arafat, August 13, '99 -- 3

In many instances, you simply have the wrong Jews living among you. Many of those in Hebron or Qiriat Arba, with their shrines to the most murderous of their heroes, may be numbered among those. But Hebron is a test case, as I have written to you before. It is Palestinian territory, but of great importance to Jews because of Abraham and the fathers.

There are other Jews who are there in friendship. Many have lived in settlements encircling Jerusalem and Tel Aviv simply because of financial inducements. Those include some of the Israelis best disposed to peace with Palestinians. Some of those who have lived longest in the earliest of the West Bank settlements, most of them in small, remote places like the Jordan valley, have done so out of a genuine responsibility for the safety of the state of Israel. That need imply no hostility to you, but the basis of security for both your states will in the future be quite different. And there are Jews whose desire to live in Judea or Samaria has a genuinely religious basis, which implies no hostility to Palestinians.

I would anticipate that the arrangement I have described would mean that the right Jews would choose to live among Palestinians, on territory which they recognized as Palestinian and that those who were there in enmity would move out. The presence then of Jews in Palestine and of Palestinians in Israel would form a bond of friendship between your two peoples. It would make most of the territorial demands that Israelis have made on your territory unnecessary to them.

That is one perspective that I have urged on Prime Minister Barak. I hope it might be a fundamental outlook, for you and for him, as the final status negotiations are carried forward.

The second concept I have urged on Prime Minister Barak is to recognize that the practice of segregation in the settlements built by Israelis on occupied territory, the exclusion of any non-Jewish or Palestinian residents from them, is essentially racist and would no longer be tolerated in any civilized society. We have had to contend with racial segregation in housing, in education, in all kinds of opportunity and in all public access in the United States, and have learned that it is a long, hard road to achieve racial justice in these matters, but that we must persist with it. South Africa is now in the throes of the same necessity to overcome racial segregation and exclusion, the limiting of opportunity on the basis of race. That is as much incumbent on Israeli society as any other.

For many years, the famous resolution was upheld in the General Assembly of the United Nations that Zionism was racism. All of us who counted ourselves friends of Israel, as I do, had to oppose that as a slander on the basic aspiration of Jewish national life in our time. It was closely parallel to the converse slander, by which Israelis and their friends saw Palestinians as PLO as by nature terrorists, intent on the destruction of Jewish life and their state.

President Arafat, August 13, '99 -- 4

Both slanders had to be retracted, and the legitimacy of both Israelis and Palestinians as peoples recognized and accepted by one another. I believe that you did this first, that it was the explicit and public meaning of your acceptance of the three famous pre-conditions in 1988 and of the Palestinian *intifada*, which from its beginning was always a protest against occupation, and not against the existence of Israel. The UN Resolution on Zionism as racism was eventually retracted, and the PLO recognized by Israel as the legitimate representative of the Palestinians as a people entitled to their full dignity. As much as many Israelis and Palestinians have felt disappointed with the 1993 Oslo process, this was its fundamental genius. That mutual recognition made such a fundamental difference in the relation of the two peoples that, even though Prime Minister Netanyahu devoted all his three years in government to an effort to retract it, he could not succeed.

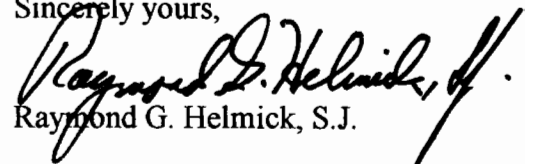
Yet as much as it is a slander to describe Zionism itself as racism, evidences of anti-Palestinian racism are commonplace in Israeli society, and nowhere more flagrantly than in the segregation of housing in these settlements, exclusively for Jewish residence, on territory seized by force from Palestinians. I don't hear people saying this, but it seems to me one of the most basic injustices that needs to be reversed in any final status agreement. Palestinians should have access to residence in any of these settlements, use of the access roads constructed between them, and of all amenities associated with them. Anything less is the institutionalizing of racism.

There is practical connection between these two ideas, the choice of citizenship for residents of either state and the non-acceptance of a strictly racist segregation in the settlements. Both will be inducements for the Israelis and Palestinians who have truly peaceful reason for living in one another's states, and disincentives for those who would want to live in the other's state merely as troublemakers. If these two basic principles could be realized in the final status, I believe they would beneficially transform the whole context for dealing with borders and settlements, and create opportunities for the two states, Israel and Palestine, to live side by side in friendship and peace, open to one another.

Having put this before Prime Minister Barak, I thought I should spell it out just as explicitly to you, President Arafat. Like my letter to Mr. Barak, I will send a copy of this to President Clinton as well.

With all best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

August 13, 1999

President William Clinton
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Clinton,

Christ's Peace!

Shortly before Prime Minister Barak visited you in Washington, I sent you a copy of a letter I had addressed to him on June 25th of this year, while he was still in the process of forming his cabinet. In it I had taken up some very basic ideas, which I had shared over a period of years with former Prime Minister Rabin and with President Arafat, for the final status negotiations that, we may hope, will soon begin.

It has always been my feeling that suggestions of this kind that I write to one side should be put before the other also. I left time enough for Prime Minister Barak to deal with that letter, but have now sent a copy of it along to Mr. Arafat (through his nephew, Dr. Nasser al-Kidwa, who heads the Palestinian Permanent Observer Mission at the U.N., and is my normal contact with Arafat). With it I sent a parallel letter, laying out rather much the same ideas in a way calculated to address President Arafat's point of view.

I thought you too should have this letter on record. The prospects for really serious peace negotiations are so much better now that I don't want to see any of the basics neglected in favor of the tired formulas that have served us so ill in the past.

With best wishes, I am yours,

In Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

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