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State Formation and War: The Case of Palestine

DIETRICH JUNG

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ROBERT SCHUMAN CENTRE
FOR ADVANCED STUDIES

State Formation and War: The Case of Palestine

DIETRICH JUNG

Copenhagen Peace Research Institute

EUI Working Paper **RSC** No. 2000/45

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I. Introduction[1]

In the light of the ongoing discussions about the 'end of territoriality' and the 'decline of the nation-state' the Palestine conflict represents a painful remnant of the national conflicts that politically characterized the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[2] Looked at from this perspective, a certain flair of antiquity surrounds both the motto of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations 'land for peace' and the public appearance of Yasir Arafat, the Fatah leader and president of the Palestinian authority. In particular his guerilla attire, which reminds us of the nationalist liberation struggle during the 1960s and 1970s, looks increasingly anachronistic. Nevertheless, there is little doubt that the so-called peace process, initiated by the Madrid conference in 1991 and gathering momentum with the Oslo agreements between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1993, will eventually lead to the foundation of a Palestinian nation-state on parts of the West Bank and Gaza. Moreover, Yasir Arafat, the living icon of Palestinian nationalism, will most probably become the first head of an independent Palestinian state.

In spite of being almost an anachronism in the currently dominant globalization discourse, the territorial consolidation of Palestinian nationalism points precisely to the core of this century-old conflict: the asymmetric power struggle between two nations that claim the same territory. Given this territorial core of the conflict, the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel seems to be an inevitable precondition for peace. The immanent relationship between land and people, which makes a major motive in the writings of the famous Palestinian novelist Ghassan Kanafani, has molded Palestinian nationalism and the national political identity of a people held together by shared experiences of flight, expulsion and occupation. After decades of marginalization and statelessness, anything short of the foundation of their own nation-state would be unacceptable for the Palestinians. But does the territorial compromise between the Israelis and the Palestinians deliver what a simple reading of the slogan 'land for peace' implies? Does the foundation of a Palestinian state mark the end of a conflict that shaped Middle Eastern politics for decades? Is the Middle East on the road to peace?[3]

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[1] I would like to thank the staff of the Mediterranean Programme for their help and the external reviewers for their valuable comments. Moreover, I am grateful to Catherine Schwerin and Ulla Holm who read earlier drafts of the paper.

[2] Concerning these discussions about the future of the nation-state, see Badie (1995), Brock and Albert (1995), Neyer (1995), Rosecrance (1996), Ruggie (1993),Strange (1996), Zürn (1992).

[3] For recent inquiries in this direction, see Inbar and Sandler (1997), Khouri (1998), Lalor (1999), Perthes (1999). The Oslo process is described in Makovsky (1996), Maoz (1995), and Savir (1998).

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In addressing these questions, this paper does not give yet another assessment of the ups and downs of the often ailing peace process. Rather it proposes to put the Palestine conflict in historical perspective. The development of the conflict is inseparably bound together with two other historical processes. In the first place, the national history of Palestine has been shaped to a large extent by the emergence of the international system as a 'society of states'. Particularly with regard to the still state-centered character of the international order, the foundation of a Palestinian nation-state seems to be a late but necessary adaptation to the rules of the international game. Secondly, the Palestine conflict has been an integral part of regional state formation, conditioning both the development of regional inter-state relations and the evolution of actors and ideologies in Arab politics (cf. Sela 1998). In this regional dimension, the Palestinian-Israeli relationship will maintain its crucial role as a 'continuous theme in Arab politics' (Kazziha 1990: 300). Moreover, the violent history of Arab-Israeli relations – including warlike forms such as popular unrest, communal riots, anti-colonial insurgencies, guerilla attacks, as well as civil and inter-state wars – will remain an essential element of the political consciousness of both the Arab and Israeli peoples.

Regarding the external and internal aspects of state building processes, the war-torn formation of European states has told us that there is no direct road from the foundation of nation-states to peaceful cooperation and democratic rule. On the contrary, the evolution of the modern democratic state based on the rule of law was in itself a violent process in which inter-state conflicts and conflicts about the internal consolidation of statehood have overlapped. In this respect the formation of Middle Eastern states is still an ongoing process, and the achievement of the formal insignia of modern statehood – territorial integrity and political sovereignty – alone does not make a Palestinian state. Therefore this paper will argue that the foundation and international recognition of a Palestinian state will open a new phase of the conflict rather than indicate its end. It is further argued that the future character of the conflict depends on the dynamics of regional state formation in general and the inner consolidation of Palestinian statehood in particular.

In order to analyze the past and future of the Palestine conflict, first a general theoretical framework concerning the linkage between state formation and violent conflicts will be presented. These theoretical assumptions rest on some considerations of IR theory and of historical sociology, thus linking external and internal aspects of state building processes. The third section then examines the evolution of the Palestine conflict against the background of historical changes in the international system. It further presents four analytical dimensions of the conflict that help us to better understand how local, regional

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and global aspects of the conflict are interrelated. The fourth section applies a more sociological perspective and links the Palestine conflict to some societal aspects of regional state formation, as well as to the social dynamics of Israeli-Palestinian relations. The paper concludes with a very tentative scenario for the future.

II. State Formation and War: A Theoretical Framework

II.1 State Formation in IR Theory and Political Sociology

In his analogy of 'war making and state making as organized crime' Charles Tilly got to the heart of the relation between state formation and war in concluding that wars make states and states make war (Tilly 1985). Although based on the European history of state formation (cf. Tilly 1975 and 1990), Tilly's conclusion seems to be equally suitable regarding the violent nature of state building processes in the Third World. There, more than 196 wars since 1945 have accompanied the processes of decolonization and state formation, processes which turned out to be particularly belligerent in the Middle East, in Sub-Saharan Africa, as well as in South and South-East Asia (Jung and Schlichte 1999: 38). There is no doubt that the various paths which Third World countries have taken toward modern statehood are substantially different from the European experience. Yet for a better understanding of contemporary state building processes, that does not exclude the applicability of some general theoretical aspects that are derived from European history.

In theorizing about state formation, we first have to give a brief definition of our conceptual understanding of the state. There are basically two perspectives from which this definition can be made: from an external or from an internal point of view. Externally, the state can be defined as the principal actor and the core institution of the international system. From this IR theory perspective, states are autonomous entities, which pursue interests such as security, economic gain or ideological goals on rational cost/benefit calculations (Gilpin 1981: 11-13). Together they form an international system in which political authority rests on autonomy and territories within which 'domestic political authorities are the only arbiters of legitimate behavior' (Krasner 1995: 119). In the framework of the so-called Westphalian model of the international system, states are rational actors 'striving to maximize their utility in the face of constraints that emanate from an anarchic although interdependent international environment' (Krasner 1995: 122). According to the distribution of power among these states, the international system has historically formed three types of international relations: imperial/hegemonic, bipolar, or balance of power systems (Gilpin 1981: 29). War is then the result of rationally calculated action

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of a state or a group of states that expects benefits from taking action toward systemic change.

While classical IR theory defines the state as a unitary actor pursuing its interests among other states, sociological theory tends to conceptualize the state from within as a particular political and social order. According to Max Weber, the modern state is a political community 'that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory' (Weber 1991: 78). Political power is based on legal authority with a formal order subject to change by legislation (Weber 1968a: 56). In spite of the fact that both theoretical approaches share key elements in defining a state, such as the monopoly of physical force and territoriality, processes of state formation are looked upon in different ways. Whereas IR theory is interested in state formation from an external international system perspective, political sociology concentrates more on internal mechanisms behind the monopolization of legitimate violence by the state as a political-territorial association (cf. Weber 1968b: 904-5).

Parallel to the monopolization of the legitimate use of physical force, the modern state has acquired the monopoly on taxation and established a political order that rests on legal authority. In Weber's terms, 'legal [rational] authority is resting on a belief in the legality of enacted rules and the right of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue commands' (Weber 1968a: 215). Unlike traditional rule, which is based on personal authority and the obedience to age-old rules, legal systems of domination rest on an impersonal purpose and the obedience to abstract norms. Accordingly, state formation means both the expropriation of all autonomous actors who formerly controlled the means of physical force by the state and the transformation from traditional political orders to legal rule, i.e. from the personal authority of rulers to legal political authority based on formal regulations. In the European example, the establishment of legal authority can be observed in a process of four waves of 'juridification':

Firstly, the Absolutist State signified the formation of the state monopolies of taxation and physical force which, secondly, in the constitutional monarchies became legally anchored in political institutions and civil law. The emergence of the democratic constitutional state marked the third wave in which bourgeois revolutions brought about the nationalization of the two state monopolies, thus breaking absolutist power. Finally, the formation of the welfare state tamed the autonomous dynamics that spring from the accumulative logic of the economic system and its generalized medium money. It was not before the very end of this process lasting many centuries that representational forms of government, democratic procedures, and formal norms had been firmly established

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(Habermas 1986: 356ff). Yet, Norbert Elias reminds us that these processes of internal pacification and the establishment of democratic rule were not at all peaceful developments. He traced the origin of the state monopoly of physical force back to its opposite, the unrestricted and violent elimination contest in which any individual or small group struggles among many others for sources not yet monopolized (Elias 1994: 351). Two phases of the monopoly mechanism can be distinguished:

'First, the phase of free competition or elimination contests, with a tendency for resources to be accumulated in fewer and fewer and finally in one pair of hands, the phase of monopoly formation; secondly, the phase in which control over the centralized and monopolized resources tends to pass from the hands of an individual to those of ever greater numbers, and finally to become a function of the interdependent human web as a whole, the phase in which a relatively 'private' monopoly becomes public (Elias 1994: 354).'

Putting IR and sociological perspectives together, state formation is a contradictory process in which the state appears as a cause for both war and peace. The internal pacification of social conflicts and the evolution of a 'society of states' that is built on Westphalian principles such as territorial integrity, political sovereignty and non-interference were interrelated, while violent processes contributed to the emergence of distinct realms of state and civil society (cf. Krause 1996: 326). Based on the civil claims of protection (security) and the states need of extraction (taxation), European state formation has taken a contradictory trajectory. This contradiction is manifested in the 'central paradox', 'that the pursuit of war and military capacity, after having created national states as a sort of by-product, led to a civilianization of government and domestic politics' (Tilly 1990: 206). Regardless of the particular ways in which the bargain between war-makers and state-makers brought the 'civilized' standards of international law and democratic rule about, these standards are the normative constraints under which current processes of state formation take place. Concerning the Palestine conflict we can therefore follow Tilly who concluded: 'Israel's territorial wars with its neighbors would have surprised no European of the eighteenth century, but in the period since 1945 they have become anomalies' (Tilly 1990: 181).

II.2 Options and Constraints of State Formation in the Middle East

Not only Israel's territorial ambitions have been constrained, but also – and even more severely – those of other state-makers in the Middle East and other parts of the Third World. Referring to Middle Eastern state formation, Ian Lustick (1995) explained 'the absence of Middle Eastern great powers' with the normative and power-related constraints that were imposed on regional state

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formation by an existing international order. Under the impact of international norms and great power policies, Middle Eastern state-makers were not able to fight those large-scale state-building wars as their European predecessors did. Being from its inception dominated by the larger unit of the Western state system, the Middle Eastern system was not allowed to operate by the same rules (Lustick 1995: 655-63). In this way, the concepts of 'free competition' or 'anarchy', i.e. the absence of any super-ordinate authority, are only of a limited explicative value in explaining the evolution and shape of the Middle Eastern state system. In pursuing their interests, the political entrepreneurs of the Middle East had to conform their actions to the already existing norms and power relations of a hegemonic international system.

Analyzing the historical background of the Ottoman Empire's decline, Carl Brown (1984) derived characteristic patterns of the close interaction between the emerging Middle Eastern and the international system of states. This organizing and explanatory device he called the 'Eastern Question System'. According to Brown, the intense interrelationships between the unequal power systems led to a center-periphery struggle in which domestic and international politics became thoroughly blended and confused (Brown 1984: 72). On the one hand, the Middle East provided European powers a convenient arena in which to fight out their rivalries with little risk, while on the other hand, regional and local forces were able to instrumentalize great power politics to their own ends. This entire confusion of international, regional and local levels is then expressed in the systemic characteristic that no outside state has been able to dominate and organize the Middle East, just as no state from within was able to do so (Brown 1984: 270-74). With regard to the Arab-Israeli conflict this systemic characteristic is reflected in the fact that all Arab-Israeli confrontations have been stopped by international diplomatic intervention, yet so far outside intervention has not been able to bring about real peace (Brown 1984: 241).

One aspect of the Eastern Question System is that it shaped to a large extent the existing territorial political landscape of the Middle East. The boundaries of Middle Eastern states reflect compromises of both the interests of international great powers and the assertions of regional actors. More closely linked to the internal dimensions of state formation is another crucial difference between the Middle Eastern and the European examples. The competitive nature of European state formation resulted in a concept of security that was predominantly externally oriented. This stress on external security permitted a strong identification of state security with the security of its citizens and thus a high legitimacy of state rule (Krause 1996: 320). The overlapping notion of security together with the bargaining processes between military men and entrepreneurs resulted in the subsequent subordination of the military to the civil state elite (Krause 1996: 325). The two steps of juridification that lead from

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absolutism to constitutionally based democracy reflect the historical development of this specific civil-military relationship. The authoritarian nature of Middle Eastern politics has its origin not least in the fact that as political and economic rent-seekers, Middle Eastern regimes have been able to extract their material needs from international resources. Bargaining processes between the military and civil society comparable to the European experience were thus essentially hampered.

In order to sum up this brief examination of external and internal aspects of state formation and war, the general conditions under which state formation in the Middle East and other developing regions currently takes place can be put under the category of an 'inner consolidation of formally established statehood'. This category points to the fact that in many developing societies a huge gulf exists between political and societal integration, leading to a chronic deficit in the legitimacy of state rule. Not the postcolonial state but tribal, ethnic or religious groups are the essential points of reference for shared identities and political loyalties. The modern state only exists in its external representation, i.e. as a formal territorial framework guaranteed by the world state system and by international law. Whilst accepted as a formally equal member of the society of states, from a sociological perspective state formation is still an ongoing process and the internal institutional setting of modern statehood has still to be consolidated (Siegelberg 1990: 89; Jung and Schlichte 1999: 37).

III. The Palestine Conflict in the Context of International Developments

III.1 Emergence and Institutionalization of the Palestine Question

The origin of the Palestine conflict can be traced back to the late nineteenth century when the first Zionist settlements were established in the then Ottoman province of Beirut and the *Sancak* (district) of Jerusalem (Sayigh 1997: 5). The complex interplay of historical processes in Europe and the Middle East provided the background for the genesis of the conflict. In combination with the dismantling of the Ottoman Empire, the aggravation of the imperialist power struggle offered Zionist and Arab nationalist movements the opportunity to pursue their interests in alliance with one of the great powers. In applying the nationalist discourse of the time, non-state actors claimed their right to establish their own states based on the principles of the Westphalian order. In this regard the still virulent antisemitism in Europe was instrumental for the justification of Jewish nationalism. The title of Leo Pinsker's book 'Auto-emancipation' (1882) became a keyword for the Zionist movement. The Zionist ideology opposed the principle of emancipation through assimilation that had so far prevailed among Europe's Jewry. On the occasion of the first Zionist World Congress (1897),

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Theodor Herzl brought this critique against the liberal societies of Western Europe to the programmatic conclusion that the national liberation of the Jews could only be accomplished by the establishment of a Jewish nation-state (Schölch 1981: 39-40).

The chance to transform their national aspirations into action came for both Zionists and Arab nationalists with the breakdown of the international balance of power system in the First World War. The territorial distribution of the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire at San Re.no (1922) resembled the power relations among the asymmetrical elements of the Eastern Question System.[4] Dominated by the interests of the colonial powers Great Britain and France, the interests of less powerful regional actors are nevertheless clearly visible in the territorial delineation of the mandate territories. Particularly the division between the newly established territories of Palestine and Trans-Jordan was a clear expression of Britain's wartime commitments (cf. Gil-Har 2000). Two aspects of the mandate period were particularly crucial for Middle Eastern state formation:

1) The principle of territoriality was introduced and sanctified, creating among others a political entity of Palestine for the first time.

2) With regard to the internal aspects of state formation, modern administrative and military structures, which had first been introduced by the Ottoman reforms,[5] were enhanced and monopolies of physical force more firmly established.

Although characterized by restricted sovereignty and deprived of political independence, the mandate period introduced the political matrix of the international order to the region, and thus shaped both the territorial structure of the Middle Eastern state system and the coordinates of the Palestine conflict. The Zionist movement now had the opportunity to put its ideas into practice by colonizing the British mandate of Palestine. Yet mass immigration of European Jews to Palestine did not happen until the German Nazi regime began its policy of extermination against the Jews. From 1933 to 1935, for instance, approximately 135.000 Jews emigrated to Palestine (Flores 1981: 112), more than in the 15 years since the end of the First World War (Eisenstadt 1987: 434). Regarding inter-Arab politics, the 1930s were also the period in which the systemic structures of regional inter-state relations were implemented.

[4] A historical account of the dismantling of the Ottoman Empire gives Anderson (). Hurewitz books (1956a and 1956b) contain the legal diplomatic documents of Middle Eastern state formation.

[5] For a general description of the Ottoman military and administrative reforms in the nineteenth century (*Tanzimat*), see Lewis (1961) and Zürcher (1993).

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Revolving around themes such as the 'Arab Caliphate', the Hashemite-Saudi Conflict, the Syrian Kingdom and the Palestine question, the characteristic patterns of unity and disunity among Arab states were institutionalized (cf. Podeh 1998).

Whereas the multi-polar structure of the international system facilitated the transformation of the Ottoman Empire to a Middle Eastern state system, it was within the coordinates of bipolarity in which the consolidation of the regional state system took place. The Palestine conflict was now articulated in pan-Arab terms, and the conflict became 'a rallying point for internal solidarity in many Arab societies' (Kazziha 1990: 318). Generally speaking, four crucial developments can be observed in the Cold War period:

1) In the first place, a regional system of great power clientelism emerged in which Israel and the Arab states acted as political rent-seekers on the international level while pursuing relatively independent regional interests.

2) Within this clientelistic arrangement, regional and international confrontations became blurred, tying the Palestine conflict tightly together with the East-West conflict.

3) This identification of international with regional perspectives facilitated the extreme militarization of Middle Eastern states, whose regimes used the thus-acquired means of force to both stabilize their authoritarian rule and fight limited regional wars.[6] The Palestine conflict in particular escalated into a series of wars which further enhanced its interrelatedness with internal and external aspects of regional state formation.

4) It was then the poor military performance of Arab regimes in these wars against Israel that contributed decisively to the fourth development during the Cold War period. Beginning with the humiliating Arab defeat in the 'Six-Day War' (1967), the PLO increasingly had taken the initiative and developed into the organizational core of a specific Palestinian national movement. From this point onward, the articulation of the Palestine conflict has shifted from a pan-Arab to a Palestinian nationalist discourse, demanding the establishment of a Palestinian nation-state.[7]

[6] For the aspect of authoritarianism in the Middle East, see the book review of Crystal (1994).
[7] For a detailed history of the PLO, see Rubin (1994) and Sayigh (1997).

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III.2 Four Analytical Dimensions of the Palestine Conflict

From the first Zionist settlements in the nineteenth century to the major military confrontation between the PLO and the Israeli army during the latter's intervention in Lebanon (1982), the Palestine conflict has developed in complex interrelation with regional and international political structures. From an analytical point of view, this complex interrelation falls into four dimensions of conflict:

1) The *Israeli-Palestinian dimension*, which comprises the relation between the Israeli state and the Palestinians who live either in Israel itself, in the occupied territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, or as refugees and expatriates outside Palestine. The Israeli-Palestinian dimension is of a territorial and political demographic nature. At the center of the territorial aspect stand Palestinian claims based on UN Assembly Resolution 194 of December 1948. They comprise the right to their homeland, the right of return for the exiled population, and the right of self-determination, i.e. to establish an independent Palestinian state. The demographic aspect is a result of the explicitly Jewish character of the Israeli state, which seems to be incompatible with the Palestinian right of return.

2) The *Israeli-Arab dimension* reflects the complicated relationship between Israel and the Arab states. In the first place, there are issues such as military security, border demarcation, water distribution, and territories under Israeli occupation that have shaped the relations between Israel and its direct neighbors, the so-called confrontation states: Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon.[8] In the second place, there is the ideological aspect of the Israeli-Arab conflict dimension that rests on pan-Arab claims to the whole of Palestine. This ideological aspect affects the political legitimacy of all Arab regimes. The – albeit often rather rhetorical – support for the Palestinian case has therefore been an important variable for both the internal political stability of Arab states and the quest for leadership amongst them.

3) The *Jewish-Islamic dimension* of the conflict has an impact on the relationship between Israel and the Islamic world. From an Islamic point of view, the territory of the Israeli state is an integral part of the *dar al-Islam*, the lands belonging to the Islamic community. The very existence of a specifically Jewish state within the *dar al-Islam* poses a permanent

[8] It is not possible to present here the complexities of water conflicts in the Middle East. For further reading, see Beshorner (1993), Kliot (1994), Lancaster (1999), Lowi (1993), Murakami (1995), Ohlson (1992), Rogers and Lydon (1994) Rouyer (1997), Trotter (2000).

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challenge to the ideal of Islamic supremacy. Furthermore, ranking behind Mecca and Medina, Jerusalem represents the third most important place among the holy cities of Islam. Thus the fact of 'Jewish rule on Islamic territory' and the issue of Jerusalem make the Palestinian question also an Islamic one.

4) The *colonial/Western dimension* of the conflict, which is a result of the historical trajectory that the formation of the Israeli state has taken. Given the involvement of the colonial powers in Middle Eastern state formation and Western assistance to the Zionist movement, it comes as no surprise that the Arab world perceives Israel as an 'outpost and symbol of Western imperialism', a perception that has been further strengthened by the almost unconditional support that the United States have granted to Israel since the 1960s. The historically constructed notion of Western conspiracy against the Arab world has been further enhanced by the high standards in the fields of technology, education and economy which distinguishes Israeli society decisively from its Arab neighbors.

In reality, however, these four dimensions of the Palestine conflict are almost inseparably knitted together. The analytical distinction presented here serves as a heuristic instrument in order to better understand the complex conflict structures of the region and their interrelations with the Palestine question.

With regard to analytical purposes, it makes sense to further distinguish between conflicts of interest and conflicts of ideas. Whereas the territorial and security issues of the Israeli-Palestinian and the Israeli-Arab dimensions, as well as matters concerning the repatriation and re-compensation of Palestinian refugees, are primarily conflicts of interests, which principally can be solved by negotiations, the conflicts of ideas that characterize the Israeli-Arab, Jewish-Islamic and colonial/Western dimensions are more difficult to overcome. As integral parts of the political worldview, the pan-Arab and Islamic claims to Palestine, as well as the conviction that Israel is an unacceptable relict of colonial domination, are not subject to negotiations. Although a fair solution to the above-mentioned conflicts of interests might have an impact on this worldview, a change of perceptions takes time. The ideational components of the Palestine conflict will therefore survive even a successful outcome of the final status negotiations, and they will also in future play a major role in motivating and shaping political action in the region.

Ideological aspects of the Palestine conflict seem to be particularly important in combination with the generally conflict-prone internal consolidation of Middle Eastern states. Given the violent history of the Palestine conflict, the above-mentioned worldview can be instrumental in securitizing

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other domestic and regional conflicts that occur in the ongoing process of regional state formation. Theoretically, securitization is an extreme version of politicization, and it presents an issue as an existential threat. To securitize an issue is a move to require emergency measures and the application of extraordinary means (Buzan et.al. 1998: 23-26). In this way, both Israel and the Arab states have highly securitized regional politics. In the Israeli case, regional conflicts and the country's own state of security have been viewed against the background of the Holocaust, making Israel into a 'fortress state' and leading to two preventive wars (Suez War 1956 and the Six Day War 1967).[9] Arab regimes have also used the ideological dimension of the Palestine conflict to justify the use of military force against both internal and external threats. Moreover, the ideological dimension of the Palestine conflict plays a major role in the strategies of Islamist movements in legitimizing the application of violent means in their political strife.[10] In the run-up to the Second Gulf War (1991), this overlapping of interests and ideas in Middle Eastern conflicts was clearly visible.

III.3 The End of the Cold War and the Beginning of the Peace Process

After Iraqi troops had occupied Kuwait in August 1990, Iraq's President Saddam Husain linked the question of an Iraqi withdrawal to the solution of the Palestine conflict. While the West heavily rejected this package deal, it was almost enthusiastically received among the population of the Arab states. Pursuing his own power interests, Saddam Husain used the Palestine conflict as the classical rallying point for inter-Arab solidarity. He combined the four dimensions of the conflict with his own interests and was thus able to stir a major legitimacy crisis for many Arab regimes who supported international demands of an unconditional Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait. Particularly in Jordan, political order was at the brink of collapse and King Husain had to distance himself from the anti-Iraq coalition, while preparing for the use of coercive means to suppress popular unrest. Although Saddam Husain's attempt to draw the entire region into a disastrous war eventually failed, the Palestine conflict was again on the international agenda. The structural context for the explanation of both the Second Gulf War and the peace process are to be found in the decisive changes in the international system which occurred with the end of the Cold War.

With the demise of the Soviet Union the post-1945 clientelistic arrangement between the bipolar international and the regional state systems broke down. The end of the East-West conflict deprived the regional states of a

[9] An overview of the development of Israeli security perceptions gives the article of Schiff (1999).

[10] For an analysis of the Egyptian example, see Endres and Jung (1998).

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major source of military and economic resources. The peace process is therefore not a result of major structural changes in the Palestine conflict itself, but the outcome of an adjustment process to the new international conditions by the regional players (cf. Beck 1997b). In this way, the shift from the bipolar international system to US hegemony was reflected in the mere fact 'that each party's decision to participate in the negotiations emerged largely from its calculations about its relationship to the United States' (Kelman 1992: 20).[11] The West in general and the United States in particular were now the only sources of economic rents left. Accordingly, joining the peace process was the appropriate move to guarantee the continuous influx of politically motivated economic resources. A brief glance at the Israeli, Syrian and Palestinian example will show how this shift to a new version of the Eastern Question System functioned.

Considering the Israeli position in the early 1990s, a statement of the former US ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Robert Neumann, is telling: 'The collapse of the Soviet Union has substantially diminished Israel's possible role as a strategic asset. To be sure, other conflicts in the Middle East loom, but, as the Gulf War of 1991 demonstrated, in such conflagrations Israel is a potential hindrance rather than an asset' (1992: 49). The political and economic dependency of the Israeli state on US support, exceeding an annual amount of three billion US dollars (Paulsen 1999: 11), left then Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir no other choice than to sit down at the US-sponsored negotiation table. Shamir's strategy to delay any agreements as long as possible, while creating a *fait accompli* in expanding Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, was partly countered by US pressure. The linkage of a ten billion US dollar loan-guarantee for the integration of Russian Jewish migrants with the settlement policy of the Israeli government stressed the determination of the Bush administration to take steps toward resolving the Palestine conflict and contributed to the victory of Yitzhak Rabin's Labor Party in the 1992 Israeli general elections (Telhami 1999: 386).

Even more difficult was the situation for the Syrian government, which had not only lost its major supplier of military assistance, the USSR, but also the benefits granted for its role as a confrontation state by the rich oil monarchies. In spite of the deeply rooted rejection of Israel's legitimacy, the still pan-Arabist oriented Syrian regime, in order to avoid marginalization, had no alternative but to participate in the peace process. Additional moves such as the rapprochement with the United States, the participation of Syrian troops in the Second Gulf War, and the normalization of Damascus' relationship with Egypt and with the

[11] Concerning the crucial role of the United States even before the demise of the Soviet Union, see the article of Telhami (1999) who describes the Camp David Process as an Israeli-Egyptian competition for alliance with the United States.

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PLO were all related to this necessary re-orientation of Syrian foreign policy in a new international order. Yet, as the tough negotiation attitudes of the Syrians have proved, this re-orientation did not necessarily sacrifice the essential foreign policy principles which the country under the autocratic leadership of late President Asad previously had been following (cf. Hinnebusch 1996).

In the immediate aftermath of the Second Gulf War, the Palestinians were certainly in the weakest position. The 'strategic mistake' of the PLO of associating itself with Saddam Husain under the impact of the new international order brought the organization to the brink of economic collapse.[12] For decades, the Palestinian communities in the Gulf States had to a large extent secured the funding of the PLO. The Kuwaiti government, for example, collected a 'liberation tax' among Palestinian employees (al-Husseini 2000: 55). The Second Gulf War and the subsequent expulsion of more than 250.000 Palestinians from Kuwait suddenly deprived not only the PLO of major financial resources, but also many refugee families who relied on the remittances of their relatives (Beck 1997a: 639). Given its full dependency on political rents and the rising political assertions of the population in the occupied territories, the PLO leadership in Tunis had no other choice but to join the peace process to at first unfavorable conditions. Since the Oslo agreements, however, international assistance of 2.5 billion US dollars for the period 1994-1998 has granted a large 'peace dividend' to the Palestinian authority under Arafat (Brynen 1996: 79).

Against the background of international change, the conclusion that 'peace was made out of necessity' seems evident (Maddy-Weitzmann 2000: 44). Triggered by the end of bipolarity, the peace process can be interpreted as the rational adaptation of regional states to the conditions of a new international system. Viewed through the prism of international structures, three major steps in the evolution of both the Palestine conflict and the Middle Eastern state system find their explanation in close relation to international change:

> 1) The creation of Palestine as a political entity and the transfer of the territorial principle occurred together with the break-down of the multi-polar order. The fact that both Zionists and Arab nationalists associated themselves with Britain laid the foundation stone for the so-called two-state solution of the Palestine question, which sporadically escalated into armed clashes that were confined by limited sovereignty.

[12] I thank one of the reviewers for the hint that in retrospect this strategic mistake can be seen as a necessary adjustment to the support that Saddam Husain enjoyed by the Palestinian people. Indeed, a major cleft between the international and the societal level of analysis is here visible. While the PLO became temporarily isolated in the international arena, joining the Iraqi side was vital in order to guarantee public support for the PLO leadership.

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2) In the context of decolonization and superpower confrontation, the territorial political structures of the mandatory period were put into the legal framework of the Westphalian system. Accordingly, the Palestine question appeared as an Arab-Israeli state conflict fought out in the classical form of inter-state warfare, both escalated and limited by the opportunities and constraints that the international system provided the regional actors.

3) Finally, the end of the Cold War offered an opportunity for negotiations. Under the new hegemonic order, the internationally dependent regional states and the PLO had to adjust to the new rules of the game that the United States dictated. The Oslo process and the mutual recognition of Israel and the PLO, then, completed the return to the Palestinian-Israeli core conflict, a historical process whose beginning was in the 1960s.

IV. The Palestine Conflict and the Internal Consolidation of Statehood

IV.1 The Arab-Israeli Dimension and Regional Intra-State Conflicts

The previous section underlined that an international perspective is salient in understanding the historical development of the Palestine conflict. In particular the successful launching of a negotiation process after the Second Gulf War, bringing the Arab states, Israel and the Palestinians together for the first time, was to a large extent due to international factors. Yet to analyze the future prospects of the conflict, it is equally important to sketch out how the ongoing internal consolidation of Middle Eastern statehood relates to the four dimensions that the Palestine conflict has acquired during the last century. For this reason a brief examination of the general conflict situation in the Middle East will be useful. It will show that internal aspects of state formation could play a crucial role in future developments.

Since 1945, the Middle East has been the stage for more than 43 wars and violent conflicts of which only 14 were classical inter-state wars (Jung 1997: 337-38). This series of war is a clear sign for the belligerent paths that modern state formation has taken in the Middle East. Yet in contrast to the European example of inter-state warfare, the violent formation of Middle Eastern states is characterized by a remarkable predominance of intra-state wars. The state building process in Yemen, for example, has up to now led to ten wars, and the Kurdish question escalated nine times into armed conflicts between Kurdish insurgents and the respective security forces of Turkey, Iran and Iraq. But also the four confrontation states Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt experienced

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violent intra-state conflicts that apart from their domestic causes were more or less linked to the Palestine question. Generally speaking, two causal complexes characterize the internal conflicts of the region:

> 1) Most Middle Eastern states are confronted with a serious legitimacy deficit on the side of the ruling state elite. The monopoly of physical force is still a precarious social institution, held by authoritarian rulers and challenged by their opponents. The nation-state tends to exist as a mere legal framework, whereas extended family, local, tribal or religious affiliations still represent essential points of reference for political loyalty and collective identity.
>
> 2) Parallel to processes of state formation, the societies of the Middle East are confronted with a massive social transformation. The integration of the region into the capitalist world economy engendered a social crisis that has been manifested in phenomena such as rural migration, urbanization, proletarization of labor and the destruction of traditional norms and values.

The specific relationship between these two general complexes of intra-state conflict can be summarized in the structural characteristic that Middle Eastern states are usually not capable of mediating social conflicts which result from society's transformation into capitalist modernity. In its long history, the Palestine conflict has been linked in various ways to this complex relationship, engendering somehow contradictory political patterns. On the one hand, the military confrontation with Israel stabilized authoritarian regimes in providing them with arms and ideological justification. The external conditions thus hampered substantially any bargaining process that could democratize state rule, and they offered the ruling elite a valve to channel popular unrest. On the other hand, the subsequent defeats of Arab states were also instrumental in triggering regime changes.

In this regard, the Arab defeat in the Arab-Israeli war of 1948/49 initiated a first political transformation in which new radical political forces with a middle-class background took power and became increasingly involved 'in a process of outbidding each other over the Palestine question' (Kazziha 1990: 303). The Arab monarchies, which were dependent on the colonial powers, had proven their disability to support the Palestinian course. From now on, parties such as the Nasserists in Egypt and the two branches of the Baath Party in Syria and Iraq combined social revolutionary ideas with the decolonization of the Middle East and the Palestine question. This 'alliance of Zionism and colonialism', and therefore Israel's imperialist image, were confirmed by the second Arab-Israeli war, which began with a joint military assault of Israel,

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Britain and France against Egypt. The Suez War (1956) facilitated the rise of Egypt's President Nasser as the almost undisputed champion of Arab nationalism, who engaged in a dangerous rhetorical war against Israel. The Six-Day War (1967), then, marked the beginning of the end of pan-Arab radicalism. The humiliating Arab defeat and the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza shattered the high expectations that the radical rhetoric of the pan-Arab discourse had raised. Although not abandoning authoritarian politics, since then the Arab regimes have gradually shifted their political orientation towards the West and introduced policies of economic liberalization, thereby leaving behind radical approaches to Islamist movements.[13]

In the long run, the current peace process itself could lead to another shift in the composition and ideological orientation of Arab regimes. The cautious approach to a peace settlement of Syria's former President Asad indicated a case in point. Replacing the original anti-colonialist motive of the Baath Party with the liberation of the Arab world from Imperialism and Zionism (Koszinowski 1981a: 319), the domestic legitimacy of his autocratic rule had for decades been based on the confrontation with Israel. Thus anything but a full Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Golan would severely endanger the political stability of the Syrian regime. Making amicable relations between the two states seem to be an illusion. The latter also applies to Israeli-Egyptian relations. More than twenty years after the Camp David accord (1979), peace between Israel and Egypt has basically remained an arrangement between two regimes. Arab societies in general and the Egyptian populace in particular are still far away from an acceptance of neighborly relationships with Israel (Inbar 2000: 63).

It comes therefore as no surprise that Islamist opposition movements have heavily capitalized on the ideological power that the Israeli-Arab and the Jewish-Islamic dimensions of the Palestine conflict offer.[14] Various militant Islamist groups in Egypt, for instance, equate their struggle against Egypt's authoritarian state elite with the Arab-Israeli confrontation (cf. Endres and Jung 1997). Another example is the 'Islamic Resistance Movement in Palestine', *Hamas*. In line with the analytical distinction of the Palestine conflict, *Hamas* delineates its anti-Zionist struggle into a Palestinian, an Arab and a Muslim sphere. In its manifesto, *Hamas* opposes the idea of a secular Palestinian state and reminds the Arab and Muslim people that it is a personal duty for all Muslims to fight against the Israeli state (Azzam 1990: 130-146). Yet, although

[13] For a general discussion on policies of liberalization in the Middle East, see the two volumes of Brynen *et al.* (1995). The Syrian example is covered by Kienle (1996).

[14] Given the bulk of literature about political Islam, it is impossible to present here a fair bibliographical account. For a first reading, see Arjomand (1984), Etienne (1987), Esposito (1997), or Jansen (1997). Abu-Amr (1994) deals with the phenomenon in the West Bank and Gaza.

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the Jewish-Islamic dimension can serve as an ideological platform to undermine any kind of peaceful relationship with Israel, concluding peace is nevertheless possible from an Islamic point of view. It is not a matter of substance, but a matter of interpretation. This was demonstrated in a legal ruling (*fatwa*) of the highest legal body in Sunni Islam, the Egyptian *Al Azhar*, in which the treaty of Camp David, and thus peace with Israel, was approved as in the interest of the Muslim people (Hartert 1982).

To be sure, there is no necessity that the ideological aspects of the Palestine conflict will lead to further violent conflicts or wars. But the signatures of autocratic Arab leaders under peace agreements with Israel will not be able to guarantee peaceful Arab-Israeli relations either. So far, the peace process relies on the ability of authoritarian Arab regimes to control state behavior according to the rules of the international system. Internally, however, essential state-building processes have not yet been completed. The monopolization of physical force has not yet reached its second phase, in which the 'relatively private monopoly' comes under public control, nor has state power been tamed by processes of juridification that are comparable to the European example. Together with the rapid social transformation of Arab societies, this situation bears a potential for severe violent conflicts. The danger is that in the violence-prone consolidation of Arab states, the ideological dimension of the Palestine conflict could again become instrumental in directing violence against the Israeli state. The quality of Israeli-Palestinian relations is therefore decisive in order to avoid this scenario.

IV.2 The Israeli-Palestinian Dimension: Collective Traumata and Structural Asymmetries

The inner dynamics of the Israeli-Palestinian dimension can best be explained against the background of two constants that have characterized the state and nation building processes of both Israelis and Palestinians. The first constant is that the nationalist ideas of the two communities are inseparably linked with the collective traumata they faced. The Jewish nation as target of European antisemitism and later as victim of the *shoa*, the genocide perpetrated by the German Nazi regime against the Jews, and the Palestinians as victims of *al-nakba* (the catastrophe), the expulsion from their homeland in 1948/49. These historical legacies deeply molded the worldview of both people, and they view the conflict between each other as a struggle for survival in which compromises necessarily lead to defeat (Gaede 1992: 221). Consequently, both sides perceive the conflict in essentialist terms and they therefore share an extremely high

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propensity to securitize all of its aspects. Thus Israelis and Palestinians perceive their relationship basically as a zero-sum conflict.[15]

The second constant of the conflict can be found in a structural asymmetry concerning the organizational level of Israeli and Palestinian political institutions. Already during the mandatory period, the Zionist movement had a clear programmatic strategy, and, with the Zionist World Congress, the Jewish Agency, the *Histadrut* (trade union federation) and the paramilitary *Haganah*, powerful organizations at its disposal which facilitated the Jewish colonization of Palestine. At the same time, traditional forms of political factionalism severely limited the efficiency of Palestinian resistance. Moreover, at that time a distinct notion of Palestinian nationalism scarcely existed, rather there was a competition of pan-Arab, Arab-Islamic and Palestinian-Arab ideas (Diner 1982: 61). This structural asymmetry also conditioned the developments after the United Nations presented a partition plan for Palestine in November 1947. Whereas the Zionists had already developed a state-like institutional structure that now could be merged with the assigned territory, the Arab response was based on a diffuse rejection front tending to be motivated by the competing interests of Arab states rather than by the interests of the Arab population of Palestine.

On the occasion of the seventh summit of the Arab League in Rabat in 1974, more than 27 years since the release of the UN partition plan, the PLO was officially announced as the 'sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people', aiming at the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. Yet as Palestinian nationalism had matured and liberated itself from Arab tutelage, there was no more territory left. On the contrary, in the same year of the Rabat summit, the Jewish settler movement, *Gush Emunin* ('Block of the Faithful'), began with the programmatic colonization of the occupied territories. Ironically, the PLO now faced a comparable situation to that with which the Zionists were confronted earlier in the twentieth century. With the Palestinian National Council, the Executive Committee, the Palestinian National Fund, and its various military organizations, the PLO had developed into a 'state in exile' (Sayigh 1997). Thus Palestinian state formation followed the 'Zionist example', i.e. building state-like institutions without having a territory and enjoying political sovereignty.

[15] There is no doubt that this essentialist view was broken during the secret negotiations in Oslo. There, it was possible to create among parts of the Israeli political elite and the PLO leadership an unprecedented atmospher of dialogue leading to an overt mutual recognition of the legitimate rights of both sides. Indeed, given the long history of mutual non-recognition a major success of Oslo (cf. Behrendt 2000). Yet, for how long this atmosphere prevails and whether it will trickle down from the elite level are the decisive questions on which the future of the peace process depends.

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The 1967 occupation of the West Bank and Gaza had a tremendous impact on the internal evolution of both Israeli and Palestinian society. Indeed, besides the previously examined crucial role of changes in the international system, it was the societal developments in the aftermath of the Israeli occupation of the remaining territories of Palestine that prepared the social background against which the peace process was initiated. In 1977, the election victory of the Likud Block marked a watershed in the political history of Israel. For the first time, the representatives of the revisionist Zionist wing replaced the so far dominant Labor Zionists in governing the country. The founding father of the Revisionists, Jabotinsky, demanded already in the 1930s the establishment of a Jewish state in the whole of Palestine. It was precisely this goal the Likud Prime Ministers Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Shamir pursued with their settlement policies. The Likud governments massively supported the settler movements, and the number of Jewish settlers in the occupied territories rose between 1977 and 1985 from 5.023 to 53.000 (Lustick 1993: 11).

The social changes of the 1970s and 1980s culminated in the *Intifada*, the uprising in the occupied territories that broke out in December 1987.[16] The *Intifada* symbolized two interrelated but nevertheless distinct developments: the erosion of consensus in Israeli society and the move of the political initiative from the Palestinians in exile to the Palestinian people of the West Bank and Gaza. The Israeli army, so far involved in a series of inter-state wars and guerilla attacks, was suddenly confronted with stone-throwing youths who brought the violent face of the conflict into the center of Israeli society. There and in the outside world, the Palestine conflict acquired an image of heavily armed Israeli soldiers fighting Palestinian civilians. But the uprising did not only damage Israel's public image worldwide, it also caused heavy social and financial costs.[17] Eventually, the policy of the 'iron fist', announced in 1985 by the then Minister of Defense Yitzhak Rabin, turned out to be a political and economic disaster for the country, putting the question of the occupied territories high on the agenda of both Israeli and world politics.

From a Palestinian perspective, the *Intifada* was, on the one hand, a response to twenty years of occupation, to being gradually deprived of their land by Jewish settlers, and to a deteriorating security situation under the daily experience of military force. It was estimated that until 1984 approximately 200.000 inhabitants of the West Bank, i.e. around 20 per cent of its entire

[16] The following books give a comprehensive account on the *Intifada*: Flores (1989), Hunter (1991) and McDowall (1989).

[17] Concerning the economic losses that were caused by the *Intifada*, see Hunter (1991: 147-48). The political and social transformations of Israeli society are the topic of Eisenstadt's book (1987), Zadka (1999) briefly presents the polarization of Israeli society that was brought about by these transformations.

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population, had been in Israeli prisons (Flores 1989: 47). Under Israeli military administration, the rule of law was almost abolished, and people were frequently confronted with human rights abuses. On the other hand, the uprising was also an expression of the social crisis that affected the entire region. The socio-economic transformation of the West Bank and Gaza even accelerated under Israeli occupation, and the structures of Palestine's traditional agricultural society eroded. On the eve of the Intifada, nearly 165.000 Palestinians were working in Israel under legally insecure conditions (Samara 2000: 22). In economic matters entirely dependent on Israel, the prospects for the Palestinian youth were bleak. Taking into account that approximately 46 per cent of the population in the occupied territories were under fourteen years of age (Khalidi 1988: 498), in retrospect it did not come as surprise that the Palestinian youth and not the established guerilla fighters spearheaded the uprising. However, both the PLO and the Islamic resistance movements[18] were at first taken by surprise, and it was the young Palestinian middle class that strove for political participation and demanded the foundation of a Palestinian state on the territory of the West Bank and Gaza.

IV.3 Building and Consolidation of a Palestinian State

The initiative from the occupied territories put massive pressure on the PLO leadership in Tunis, which came in danger of losing political control. In November 1988, at the session of the Palestinian National Council in Algiers, a majority of the representatives endorsed the new political program that linked the establishment of a Palestinian state in the occupied territories with the acceptance of the Israeli state. Although the Palestinians were, in the beginning of the peace process, only represented in a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation, the PLO was able to consolidate its leadership behind the scenes. Since the Oslo agreements, the PLO has officially retaken the political lead. In the light of the findings that the inner consolidation of formally established statehood is the major problem of regional state formation, the Palestinian experience is somehow paradox: In a region of states without nations, the Palestinians developed into a nation without state. It is therefore crucial to ask the question of whether the integrative power of Palestinian nationalism would be strong enough to facilitate the internal consolidation of Palestinian statehood or not. Will a Palestinian state face the same internal conflicts as other regional states?

In order to answer this question it is necessary to first take a glance at the clefts in Palestinian society. Basically the Palestinians are divided in three groups: Palestinians in exile, both refugees and expatriates; the populace of the

[18] About the strategic changes in the policies of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood and of *Hamas*, see Shadid (1988) and Abd al-Qadir (1990).

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West Bank and Gaza; and the Arab population of Israel. The Palestinian refugee problem began with the first Arab-Israeli war (1948/49) in which more than 700.000 Palestinians fled from their homes (Flores 1984: 384).[19] During the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza in the Six-Day War of 1967, another 300.000 persons were displaced (Shiblak 1996: 40). According to current estimations, the number of Palestinians in exile is in the range of 4 to 4.5 million people (Smith 1999: 25), thus by far exceeding the population of the occupied territories. More than half of them are registered as refugees by the UNWRA (Brynen 1997: 49), 'the United Nations Relief and Works Agency' for Palestinian refugees. The UNWRA was created in December 1949, and since then it has been providing the refugees with state-like services in the fields of education, health care and social services (Al-Husseini 2000: 51).

While the envisaged proclamation of a Palestinian state would reconcile political sovereignty and home for the Palestinians in the occupied territories, the simultaneous acceptance of the Israeli state deprives the expatriates of their right of return. That had to be transformed into compensation and resettlement schemes. On the one hand, this is not an easy task, as the refugee camps are still perceived as symbols of the right of return, and generations of refugees grew up with the ideal narratives about the return to their Palestinian homes (Al-Husseini 2000: 60). On the other hand, a Palestinian state could solve some of the political-administrative problems and civil right restrictions most of the refugees have been confronted with for decades.[20] This ambivalent effect of the peace process is reflected in the resentments that, in contrast to the population of the West Bank, the majority of the refugees had against the Oslo agreements (cf. Smith 1999: 26 and Mi'ari 1999).

Looking at the performance of the Palestinian authority up to now, the skeptical attitude of Palestinian refugees towards the peace process seems to be justified. Not only that at Oslo all questions related to the crucial refugee issue were postponed until the final status negotiations, but that during the entire peace process the refugees have been marginalized and their interests have almost been neglected by the Palestinian authority (cf. Brynen 1997). The only expatriates who profited from the peace process seem to be the members of Arafat's *Fatah* movement. So far, the establishment of the Palestinian authority, and therefore the institutional building process of the Palestinian state, resembles an uneasy compromise between the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza and expatriates close to the PLO leadership and to *Fatah*. After the first years of autonomy rule under Arafat, Rex Brynen came to the conclusion: 'The office of the President has retained a role in many projects, and aid has

[19] A comprehensive study about the emergence of the Palestinian refugee problem provides Morris (1987).

[20] A brief account about these civil right restrictions gives Shiblak (1996: 42-45).

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been used to advance the political (and sometimes financial) interests of Fatah' (Brynen 1996: 84).

Still lacking the state insignia of political sovereignty and territorial integrity, the Palestinian authority has shown a tendency to following the same authoritarian path of rule that has characterized the formation of other Middle Eastern states so far. In a mixture of coercion and cooptation, Arafat has to a certain extent used the newly acquired political rents and his former guerilla forces to consolidate the power positions of himself and his associates. Palestinian politics therefore display the same phenomena as Arab politics in general: wide spread corruption, parallel budgets, rampant patronage, and a lack of democratic accountability of the government (Samara 2000: 24). Apparently, the undemocratic structures of the Fatah-dominated PLO have been transferred to the Palestinian authority. The leader of the Palestinian delegation at Madrid, Haidar Abd Al-Shafi, closely predicted this development before the negotiation teams of Israel and the PLO had even met (Abd Al-Shafi 1992: 66).

If there has been a 'peace dividend' for the Palestinians, up to now this has largely been pocketed by Arafat and his associates. In spite of massive foreign aid, the economic performance under autonomy rule could hardly be worse. To strike the balance for the population, ordinary people have been confronted with rising unemployment rates and shrinking real incomes as a result of negative economic growth, decreasing export rates, and a continuously low level of investment (Beck 1997a: 632). Giving the extremely low standard of industrialization, the comparatively high salary level presents a further obstacle to foreign private investment (Samara 2000: 28). Even rich Palestinian expatriates have so far abstained from investing in the occupied territories due to the political and economic conditions.

Referring back to the previous section, this brief examination of the political and economic developments under autonomy rule depicts that the inner consolidation of a Palestinian state will be confronted with similar difficulties to other Arab states. Internal state formation will be characterized by the power struggle among different former guerilla groups, between traditional notables and the political representatives of the new middle class, as well as between refugees and the populace of the West Bank and Gaza. As in neighboring states, there will be a danger that these power conflicts will not be executed by legal means, and that state authority will not rest on a democratic consensus, but on military force. Given the history of Palestinian nationalism, whose common point of reference was the struggle against Zionism and the Israeli state, there might be a high propensity that the ideological components of the Palestine conflict again become instrumental in directing the grievances of the people

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about a unifying enemy. The future securitization of Israeli-Palestinian relations will be very likely.

V. Conclusions

From the historical perspective of this paper, it becomes evident that the evolution of the Middle Eastern state system has taken a violent path on which state formation and the conduct of war have been as closely interrelated as in the European example. Yet given the dominant role of the international system, this interrelation was of a different nature in Middle Eastern state formation. In the Middle Eastern example, the pursuit of war and military capacity has not yet led to a civilianization of government and domestic politics, as Tilly argued regarding European state formation, rather it strengthened the coercive capacities of Middle Eastern rulers vis-à-vis their own societies. Due to the particular historical context the interrelation of war making and state making had a different result. Engendering specific patterns of interaction between regional and international actors, the international system was both a resource and a constraint for the power ambitions of regional forces. As a result of these historical conditions, Middle Eastern states are largely characterized by a dependency on external political and economic rents, as well as by authoritarian political systems based on a strong security apparatus. These general features of Middle Eastern state building also apply to the emerging Palestinian state.

The coordinates of the Palestine conflict have been shaped by the dynamics of the overlapping international and regional state systems. In this setting, the history of the Palestine question was to a large extent the history of internationally constrained competition among Arab states, and between them and Israel, thus leading to a confusion of international, regional and local influences on Palestinian nation building. Taking the role of UNWRA into account, Palestinian national consciousness was partly molded by an international organization providing the necessary civilian framework for a nation-building process that was in its political and military dimension conducted by the PLO. This Middle Eastern context is clearly noticeable in two aspects of the peace process. First, the state-centered environment in which the Palestine conflict has been embedded from its beginning makes the foundation of a Palestinian state a logical end of the peace process. Only lacking its formal approval, a Palestinian state became almost a *fait accompli* (Inbar and Sandler 1997: 23). Second, the more the Palestinian authority acquired a state-like character, the more it adapted to the coercive political means prevalent among Arab states and lost the pluralistic and democratic credentials the PLO enjoyed while being an exile organization.

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The first aspect of the peace process, the formative power of the international system, will continue after a final status is achieved. With regard to the initial question of this paper, future wars in the sense of inter-state wars such as the previous Arab-Israeli wars seem to be very unlikely. The peace process has strengthened the already existent patterns of the Westphalian system in the region, and particularly under US hegemony inter-state relations will most probably follow the established rules of international relations. In this way, the peace process marks the transition to non-military forms of inter-state competition (Perthes 1999: 3). Looked at from a system perspective, the foundation of a Palestinian state will only add a new player to the state-centric Middle Eastern paradigm that Saad Eddin Ibrahim proposed as one out of four 'future visions of the Arab Middle East' (Ibrahim 1996: 428-430). This paradigm includes Arab and non-Arab states, and reflects US and Israeli dominance in the 'new Middle East', a dominance that was further enhanced by the conclusion of the Turkish-Israeli alignment (cf. Jung and Piccoli 2000). Yet, the Achillees' heel of this state-centered paradigm is its rather hostile reception by the Arab public and the possible (militant) action of non-state actors against it (Ibrahim 1996: 430).

This brings us to the second aspect of the peace process, the visible patterns of authoritarian rule shown by the Palestinian authority. Together with economic frustrations, the performance of the autonomy administration has decisively contributed to a declining support for the Oslo process. In sharp contrast to Tilly's findings, in the Middle Eastern cases there has never been an intense bargaining process between state makers and their societies. Rather, we observe this crucial social process on the international level where the PLO, for example, is in intense bargaining with state and non-state actors. This exclusion of the society at large applies in particular to the 'new cooperative spirit' between Israel and its Arab neighbors that so far has been limited to the ruling elite. Confronted with political suppression at home, the Arab people therefore perceive the Middle Eastern paradigm as a continuation of colonial politics, and this situation confirms the strong Arab sense of being exploited by Israel (Khouri 1998: 341).

Given the close interplay between external and internal factors of state formation, the struggle for democratic rights has an increasing propensity of being associated with the Palestine conflict as a whole. American-Israeli supremacy in the region becomes synonymous with authoritarianism at home. In this regard, the peace process could be on its way to even reactivating the ideological aspects of the Arab-Israeli, the Jewish-Islamic, and the colonial dimensions of the conflict. There is unfortunately an apparent tendency in the Arab world to link democratization with anti-Israeli and anti-Western politics.

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Although it is difficult to predict any future events, the scenario presented at the end of this paper does not look very promising. If its right that the 'peace process has realised most of its potential' (Inbar 2000: 55), then the future of Israeli-Arab relations is not bright. The societal problems engendered by the inner consolidation of Arab states in general and the Palestinian state in particular will be the coming security threats for Israel. The attempt to contain these threats by classical military means is a flawed approach which will not be able to prevent violent escalations of the Palestine conflict comparable to the communal riots under the British mandate or during the *Intifada*. Then, Carl Brown's claim that outside intervention in the Palestine conflict has so far not been able to produce real peace would again have been confirmed. If this happens, one could even come to the point of abandoning the idea that the Oslo accord initiated a peace process. Against the background of global war development, which displays a bold shift from inter-state to different forms of intra-state wars (cf. Jung and Schlichte 1999), the next stage of the Palestine conflict would then be nothing more than an adaptation to these global developments.

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