

**THE WORLDWIDE PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN
AGAINST ISRAEL**

**SPONSORED AND FUNDED BY
THE UNITED NATIONS**

AN ANALYSIS PREPARED BY

AMERICAN JEWISH INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS INSTITUTE

JULY 2005

AJIRI, P.O. BOX 341197, BETHESDA, MD. 20827

THE WORLDWIDE PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN AGAINST ISRAEL
SPONSORED AND FUNDED BY THE UNITED NATIONS

Executive Summary

United States policy objectives for a more effective United Nations seek to ensure the highest standards of integrity, to promote efficiency, to allocate resources to high priority programs, and in doing so, to adhere to the letter and spirit of the UN Charter.

In this context, it is important to note that the UN has sharply deviated from these standards in its treatment of Israel. Many UN entities spend a substantial amount of time as well as resources listening to virulent attacks against Israel. More than 25% of the General Assembly Resolutions adopted at each session are directed against Israel.

Even more important: a UN-sponsored anti-Israel propaganda apparatus directed from an office in the UN Secretariat functions year-round and worldwide. This anti-Israel apparatus has created a comprehensive program to de-legitimize Israel - all of it bearing the imprint of the UN and paid for by the UN.

For the last thirty years, this anti-Israel program has been extended year after year through the adoption of General Assembly resolutions on the Division for Palestinian Rights (DPR), the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP) and the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Human Rights Practices Affecting the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (SCIIHRP). Funds to support this effort are contained in the UN budget.

At the heart of the UN's anti-Israel program is the DPR, an arm of the Secretariat. The UN's organization chart shows the DPR on a level equal to that of six other divisions, *each of which has a broad regional or worldwide mandate*, with DPR staffing roughly equivalent to that of the Americas and Europe Division, the Asia and the Pacific Division, and each of the two Divisions which serve Africa:

UN Department of Political Affairs
Under-Secretary-General

Assistant Secretary- General	Assistant Secretary- General
------------------------------------	------------------------------------

<u>Americas and Europe Division</u>	<u>Asia and the Pacific Division</u>	<u>Division for Palestinian Rights</u>	<u>Africa I Division</u>	<u>Africa II Division</u>	<u>Security Council Affairs Division</u>	<u>Electoral Assistance Division</u>
<u>Decolonization Unit</u>						

According to the DPR's own Website, the DPR supports the work of the CEIRPP and the SCIIHRP. The mandates of all three entities are renewed annually by the General Assembly, authorizing them to lead a worldwide effort to: convene international conferences, create a network of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to organize additional anti-Israel activities, provide a special pro-Palestinian Website (UNISPAL) and orchestrate an annual "International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People" at which Israel is singled out for condemnation. These programs have expanded over the past thirty years and continue even as the U.S. and the international community are seeking to bring peace to the region.

Discussion

The Anti-Israel Propaganda Apparatus

While the General Assembly's overwhelming focus on condemning Israel is widely known, the year-round UN campaign against Israel, directed from the Secretariat, has passed under the radar screen of many interested individuals and organizations. In fact, the Secretariat supports three entities whose agendas are fully committed to anti-Israel propaganda -- the DPR, the CEIRPP, and the SCIIHRP.

The Division for Palestinian Rights (DPR)

The DPR's Website makes clear that the sole function of this arm of the UN Secretariat is to lead a worldwide propaganda effort against Israel by

- (a) providing substantive support and secretariat services to CEIRPP, assisting the Committee in the exercise of its mandate and planning and organizing the Committee's program of international meetings;
- (b) consulting and maintaining liaison with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) active on this issue;
- (c) organizing the annual "International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People;"
- (d) preparing studies and publications on "the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people" and promoting their widest possible dissemination, in cooperation with the UN's Department of Public Information (DPI); and working with the DPI to assure that the UN's Website itself links directly to UNISPAL and other Palestinian-related sites; and
- (e) maintaining and developing the Web-based United Nations Information System on "the question of Palestine," UNISPAL.

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP)

The DPR, as its Website states, does the substantive work of the CEIRPP. The CEIRPP provides an organizational front that makes the anti-Israel campaign appear to be run by the General Assembly when it is in fact run out of the Secretariat. International meetings are called in the name of the CEIRPP, rather than the DPR, and it is the Chair of the

CEIRPP that presides over the meetings. However, the representatives of Member States who serve on the CEIRPP, including the Chair, are diplomats accredited to the UN who have many other responsibilities. As a result, it is the DPR that does the real work of the CEIRPP.

In organizing the CEIRPP, a special effort appears to have been made to reach beyond the Arab League. Only one member state, Tunisia, belongs to the Arab League. Most European and Latin American states stay off the Committee. (Hungary and Romania resigned recently.) The non-Arab members are divided as follows: East European Group: 2 (Belarus, Ukraine), Latin American and Caribbean Group: 2 (Cuba, Guyana), European Union and West European and Others Group: 3 (Cyprus, Malta, Turkey), Asian Group: 6 (Afghanistan, India, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Pakistan), African Group: 7 (Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone). The current Chair of the CEIRPP is Senegal. One of the Vice Chairs has for years been Cuba, which plays a major role in the anti-Israel effort at the UN.

The Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Human Rights Practices Affecting the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (SCIIHRP)

There may have been a historic reason why there are two UNGA committees dealing with Israel and the Palestinians. SCIIHRP, which has only three members (Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Senegal) was created in 1968, followed by CEIRPP in 1975. Their respective reports have overlapped. It is likely that the same personnel write the CEIRPP and the SCIIHRP reports.

The Vehicles Used in the Propaganda Effort

International Conferences. Guided by the DPR, the CEIRPP organizes international conferences on the Palestinian issue, conferences loaded with anti-Israel invective and anti-United States rhetoric. Ten such meetings, sponsored and paid for by the UN and attended by country and NGO representatives as well as representatives of other UN agencies, were held during the last three years, including three each in New York and Geneva, and one each in Beijing, Cape Town, Kiev, and Rabat. The UN budget proposal for 2006 and 2007 calls for eight such meetings in that two-year period.

The most recent meeting, held on March 8-9, 2005 in Geneva, was devoted to the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Israeli security barrier, which most speakers at that meeting called “the wall.” All of the 19 speakers, including one Israeli, denounced Israel’s security barrier (which for most of its length is a fence, rather than a wall). No one who might question the correctness of the Opinion or who would explain the changes in the route mandated by the Israeli High Court of Justice appears to have been asked to speak.

NGO Network. Led by the DPR, the CEIRPP, according to its reports, “has developed a network of more than 1000 NGOs from all regions active on the question of Palestine. National and international NGO’s, political and humanitarian organizations, NGOs promoting human rights or economic and social development, solidarity-, charitable- or action-oriented groups, churches, trade unions and professional associations, organizations with special focus on women, children, refugees, and detainees, are part of the network.” However, it appears that only those NGOs that subscribe to the CEIRPP/DPR line of thought participate actively in the network.

According to the DPR reports, “specific NGO meetings in support of the Palestinian people are being organized every year... Regional meetings [on the Palestinian question] usually include a one-day workshop of NGOs, in order to discuss the relevant issues and to encourage participating organizations to adopt a plan of action for the foreseeable future in support of the Palestinian cause.” Topics on which recent workshops were held include “How to Work with the Media,” “The Question of Palestine within the Global Peace Movement,” and “Sporting, Cultural and Economic Boycotts” of Israel.

Day of Solidarity. The DPR also plays the key role in the “International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.” This annual event, sponsored by the United Nations, is another occasion on which Israel is singled out, as the UN makes special arrangements for vilifying one of its members.

The International Day, held on November 29 each year, commemorates the official vote by the UN General Assembly on November 29, 1947 recommending that the Palestinian Mandate be divided between a Jewish and an Arab state. The DPR arranges this anniversary of an important UNGA Resolution to be a day of mourning. “Commemorative activities are organized”, including “a solemn meeting” of the CEIRPP and “a Palestinian exhibit sponsored by the CEIRPP and presented by the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine.” There are meetings in observance not only in New York but also at UN offices in Geneva and Vienna.

It is clearly highly inappropriate for the UN Secretariat to take a position favoring one side on an issue that is in sharp contention among the interested parties and in which the UN is to be an impartial mediator of the dispute -- and to advertise its one-sided position on its Website. But that has not stopped the DPR from highlighting in its “Information Note” on the “Day of Solidarity” the Palestinians’ alleged “right to return to their homes and property from which they have been displaced”. The so-called “right to return” is one of the issues which is in dispute between Israel and the Palestinians. Under the “road map,” it is to be resolved in the “final status talks.” Implementation of the “road map,” a carefully balanced document, is vested in the “Quartet,” which consists of the European Union, Russia, the United States, and the UN. By prejudging this issue, the DPR, in effect, undermines the role to be played by the UN.

UNISPAL. The UN's obsession with condemning Israel is also illustrated by the DPR's work with the UN's Department of Information (DPI), and the creation of the Website of the UN Information System on the question of Palestine (UNISPAL). The UNISPAL Website reveals that these agencies of the UN Secretariat are neither fair nor evenhanded, as they repeatedly distort the history of the last sixty years. But they are very energetic and effective in their propaganda effort: According to their report, in the year ending September 2004, DPI issued 49 press releases on the question of Palestine. Its Arabic Website was visited 112,000 times. News stories concerning the conflict were included in its E-mail service, which has 27,000 subscribers. Further, United Nations radio covers the question of Palestine in six official languages. UNISPAL provided footage on the destruction of Palestinian housing to international broadcasters, trained Palestinian television and radio broadcasters, and arranged briefings on Palestine for students visiting the United Nations.

Legal and Factual Misrepresentations in the Annual Reports of the CEIRPP and the SCIIHRP

Relatively few people at the UN or elsewhere take the trouble to read lengthy documents prepared under UN auspices. That is undoubtedly also true of the annual CEIRPP and SCIIHRP reports. The most recent CEIRPP report, dated October 8, 2004, is 23 pages long. The report of the SCIIHRP, dated September 23, 2004 is 24 pages.

Both documents are nevertheless significant in that they reveal most vividly and in detail the outrageous disinformation – distortions, half-truths and false statements -- distributed by the UN's in-house anti-Israel propaganda apparatus. The reports, presumably authored by personnel from the Division for Palestinian Rights, are clear evidence that the staff of the UN Secretariat prepares official documents that are studded with legal errors and factual misrepresentations to advance a cause -- all in clear violation of its responsibilities under Article 100 of the UN Charter. To illustrate:

A. The CEIRPP Report (UN Doc. A/59/35)

- The CEIRPP states correctly that a solution of the question of Palestine must be based on the relevant United Nations Resolutions and makes mention of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. But it contends that these resolutions call for Israel's withdrawal from "*the* Palestinian territory" occupied since 1967, implying withdrawal from *all* occupied territory. As is well known, the word "the" does not appear in the controlling text in UNSC Res. 242, which speaks of withdrawal from "occupied territories" and the establishment of "secure" borders. The fact that the Security Council resolutions did not pre-determine the new border is recognized in the "road map," which calls for resolution of the border question in "final status talks". The CEIRPP thus prejudices a major issue in contention between the parties and, in doing so, misleads the public as to the content of the relevant UNSC resolution.

- While the CEIRPP concedes that suicide bombings and Qassam rocket attacks by Palestinian groups against civilians in Israel “also contributed to the cycle of violence,” it implies that there is nothing wrong with attacks on the Israeli military or on Israeli civilians in the occupied territories, and that actions taken by Israel to defend itself against attacks in the course of the “Al-Aqsa intifada” are a wrong committed against the Palestinians.
- Israel is condemned for its failure to meet its “road map” obligations. But not a word is said about the Palestinian Authority’s crucial failure to live up to the “road map” obligation that could indeed lead to peace: to begin “sustained, targeted, and effective operations aimed at confronting all those engaged in terror and dismantlement of terrorist capabilities and infrastructure.”
- The CEIRPP “expressed concern over Israel’s announcement of a so-called unilateral disengagement plan from the Gaza Strip, and parts of the West Bank.” Its position appears to reflect the views of the late Yasser Arafat, but perhaps not of the current Palestinian leadership, which seems more inclined to solve existing problems. This demonstrates how close the DPR has been to the Arafat view of the conflict.
- The CEIRPP mischaracterizes Israel’s security barrier as “the wall.” In its report, the CEIRPP alleges that as a result of the construction of the security barrier “875,000, 38% of the [Palestinian] population have been affected and ... 263,200 living in 81 localities have become isolated.” According to the authoritative, on-the-ground demographic analysis by the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, the total number of Palestinians who would be living west of the security barrier (that is, on the Israeli side) would be fewer than 10,000 or less than one-half of 1% of the Palestinian population of the West Bank. According to that analysis, no locality will be isolated.

B. The SCIIHRP Report (UN Doc. A/59/381)

According to the Report, “the Committee could easily be accused of bias,” (although SCIIHRP, as might be expected, rejects the accusation). However it is a fair inference from the Report’s statement of SCIIHRP’s objectives (a) to bring about changes in the perception of the Palestinian issue in the international community, (b) to attain “[m]uch broader and significant coverage of the appalling human rights situation of Palestinians ... is needed in the international and national media,” and (c) to urge that “[n]ational public opinion, concerned civil society groups and diplomatic, academic and research circles should take the lead in their respective countries to assemble and disseminate information about the mass violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law perpetrated daily in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.”

Much of the content of the SCIIHRP Report overlaps with assertions made in the CEIRPP Report, but it contains a number of additional allegations and a lengthy

harangue blaming Israel for the consequences of the armed conflict. The following illustrative points should suffice:

- There has been an “unprecedented level of destruction of agricultural land, fruit trees and other means of livelihood, houses and other infrastructure.” There have been “appalling and deteriorating living conditions resulting from the increasing military incursions and from the construction of the wall.” “Witnesses have even used the words ‘ethnic cleansing’ to describe the effect of the Israeli practices.”
- This report repeats the allegation in the CEIRPP report as to the number of Palestinians adversely affected by the construction of the “wall.” It adds that the wall will “reportedly lead to the annexation or destruction of 45 per cent of Palestinian built [sic] and agricultural lands.”

Conclusion

This analysis demonstrates that in dealing with Israel, the United Nations General Assembly and the Secretariat violate the lofty goals spelled out in Article 1 of the United Nations Charter: to “maintain international peace and security,” “develop friendly relations among nations,” “achieve international co-operation,” and “be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends.”

The work of the DPR and the two UNGA committees distracts UN attention and resources from many pressing problems in other regions, and undermines international efforts – including those of the United Nations itself – to promote peaceful resolution of disputes between Israel and the Palestinians. Meaningful reform of the United Nations must include an end to the UN’s in-house anti-Israel campaign, now run out of an office in the Secretariat.

AJIRI BOARD OF DIRECTORS: RICHARD SCHIFTER (CHAIR), NORMAN GELMAN (VICE CHAIR), MARJORIE H. SONNENFELDT (VICE CHAIR), WENDY MATHESON (SECRETARY), BENJAMIN SCHLESINGER (TREASURER), YONAH ALEXANDER, MICHAEL ALTER, IRWIN BASKIND, DOTTIE BENNETT, EDITH U. FIERST, ERIC GREENBERG, JOEL HOPPENSTEIN, MAX M. KAMPELMAN, LUIS LANDAU, JOSEPH MENDELS, RICHARD P. SCHIFTER, RALPH SONENSHINE, SAUL I. STERN, BEVERLY ZWEIBEN