

SEYASAT

Studies

Palestinian Refugees in Iraq
"1948–2009"

After the Sixth Conference: Fatah
Priorities and its New Political
Discourse

Legal Reading of the Report of
Amnesty International on Israeli
Control of Palestinian Waters

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The Iranian Nuclear Challenge
and the Most Likely Scenario
Diplomatic Efforts to Launch the
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The political process: nature of the
crisis, and obstacles to any
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Public Policies

The Jordan Valley
Obstacles facing the development
of Palestinian farmers and
incentives granted to settlers

International Policies

A Comparative Study between the
policies of George H. Bush and Bill
Clinton



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معهد السياسات العامة
Institute for Public Policies

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Summary of the Eleventh Edition of Seyasat Magazine (January 2010)

The year 2009 ended at an important juncture in the political landscape of the Middle East, with the declaration of President Mahmoud Abbas protesting against the negotiation methods adopted by the superpowers, especially the United States. Abu Mazen declared that he does not intend to run for a second term as Palestinian President, unless there is a general change of the situation, with negotiations leading to the establishment of a Palestinian state and the realization of Palestinians' national rights, in addition to the conclusion of the issue of reconciliation. Abu Mazen raised a major point: negotiations that do not lead to the realization of national demands are futile. Therefore, Abu Mazen like the man who had the courage to sign the Oslo Accords possessed the courage to establish the eight conditions necessary for the resumption of negotiations, the main precondition of which is a total halt of settlement-building, the prime enemy of peace. Thus, President Abu Mazen's move has forced everyone to recognize their responsibilities.

In the Studies Section, researcher Nahed Zaqqot, from the National Center for Studies and Research, reviews the conditions of Palestinian refugees in Iraq. The study entitled "Dispossession and Oppression: The Palestinian Refugees in Iraq – 1948-2009" may be the first study of its kind and presents a comprehensive examination of Palestinian refugees' living conditions in Iraq after the ousting of Saddam Hussein. In the beginning, Zaqqot presents a historical review of the Palestinian presence in Iraq which started during the Palestinian Nakba, when a group of Palestinians – mainly from Karmel Triangle in Haifa – came to Iraq. The research shows that the Iraqi army that was stationed in the Jenin region at the time had good relations with the revolutionary fighters in those areas, and particularly facilitated the travel of Palestinians who had been evicted to Iraq, to protect them from attacks by armed Zionist organizations.

Palestinian refugees lived in Iraq for more than half a century and contributed to the building of modern Iraq. They enjoyed full rights, yet were not granted Iraqi citizenship due to the hope of returning to Palestine. Following the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime, Palestinian refugees suffered a wide range of mistreatments: death

threats, abduction, arbitrary arrests and oppression. These acts of aggression pushed hundreds of Palestinian refugees out of Iraq to seek safety and security in neighboring countries, particularly in Syria, where they now live in camps under miserable conditions. Thus, the Palestinians of Iraq faced a crisis both inside and outside Iraq.

Historically, the roots of Palestinian refugees in Iraq result from three waves of immigration: First, the refugees from the 1948 Territories. They were granted identity cards by the Iraqi government giving them permanent residency rights. Above that, they were provided with travel documents renewable every five years. Secondly, the displaced Palestinians after 1967 who today mostly carry Syrian, Lebanese and Egyptian travel documents, in addition to Jordanian passports. Finally, there are the Palestinians who came to Iraq after the Second Gulf War in 1991, in particular Palestinians from Kuwait. These Palestinians usually carry Syrian, Lebanese and Egyptian travel documents, in addition to their Jordanian passports, too.

Despite these legal and administrative classifications, there were no differences as to the rights of Palestinians in Iraq. Iraqi governments (prior to the US occupation) treated all Palestinians as Iraqis in terms of rights and duties, with the exception of access to Iraqi citizenship. However, there is a fundamental problem related to the status of Palestinian refugees in Iraq when it comes to the services provided by the UNRWA. Zaqqout believes that the problem did not really become manifest until the occupation of Iraq. In the past, Palestinian refugees in Iraq were covered by the services of the UNRWA but the international organization only operated in Iraq for a few months. Following a 1958 agreement between the government of Iraq “Nouri al-Saeed” and the UNRWA, Palestinian refugees in Iraq were excluded from UNRWA’s areas of operation by request of the Iraqi government. The agreement stipulated that the Iraqi government would care for the affairs of Palestinian refugees in Iraq in return for Iraq’s exemption from any financial commitments or donations to UNRWA.

The article examines in detail the life of Palestinian refugees in Iraq before and after the fall of Saddam Hussein’s regime, in terms of housing, work, education, health and political organizations. The author then discusses the measures against Palestinians in Iraq after the fall of the regime, especially when the Iraqi government canceled the

permanent residency status of Palestinian refugees and replaced it with continuous and regular revision of their status, denial of their identity cards and a refusal to renew their travel documents. This forced many of them to leave Iraq to seek security elsewhere. The situation became very dangerous in Iraq for Palestinian refugees as their dialect identified them, making them targets for detention and abduction. The author details the torture methods used by various parties against Palestinian refugees.

The tragic conditions Palestinian refugees in Iraq face forced many to make individual attempts to flee to European and Asian countries despite the risks and dangers involved. Hence, Palestinian refugees have established new camps in India, Greece and Turkey living in extremely difficult humanitarian conditions.

The Palestinian National Authority has made extensive efforts to solve this crisis of Palestinian refugees from Iraq, who are stranded in desert camps or still live within Iraq. However, the PNA has met impenetrable opposition from Arab countries who will not accept the refugees into their territories, and from the Israelis who refuse to allow them entry into the PNA territories.

Human Rights Watch has called for their resettlement. It has also demanded that the international community shares the financial burden by providing financial assistance to countries willing to host Palestinian refugees from Iraq. Additionally, cases of particular hardship should be examined considering resettlement for humanitarian reasons. International organizations, mainly the UNHCR, extended appeals to several European countries, asking them to accommodate Palestinian refugees stranded in desert camps who had failed to find refuge in Arab countries. Many European countries responded to the appeal and some refugees were accepted.

The article stresses the unknown future awaiting the highly vulnerable Palestinian refugees stranded on the Arab borders and denied the basic principles of human dignity.

This study is the first of its kind in terms of its comprehensive and detailed nature and therefore an extremely valuable contribution. It is based on testimonies from Palestinian refugees in Iraq. They were gathered from various international, regional

and local sources, in particular from statements submitted by international organizations, such as Human Rights Watch and Palestinian Refugees Associations in Iraq. Furthermore, the researcher has conducted a series of personal interviews with Palestinian refugees from Iraq who returned to Gaza.

The second study, by Dr. Abdullah Musa Abu Eid, former Associate Professor of International Law and Human Rights at al-Najah and Birzeit University, is entitled, “A Legal Reading of the Amnesty International Report on Israeli Control of Palestinian Waters”. The report which was issued at the end of October 2009 made strong criticisms of Israeli water policies, describing them as overt discrimination against the Palestinian people in the occupied territories and biased towards settlement populations. The report viewed Israeli policies as blatant violations of international humanitarian law.

The author argues that the legal opinion raised in the report should be used in the battle against Israeli violations of Palestinian rights. He warns against attempts to marginalize its legal findings in the same way as happened to the advisory opinion expressed by the International Court of Justice on the issue of the Separation Wall issued on July 9, 2004.

The report goes into detail about Israeli measures to seize control over Palestinian water to prevent farmers and villagers from having access to water resources, as well as the use of force to prevent utilization of local water resources, such as artesian water wells found in many homes to gather rainwater. Israeli actions also include the destruction of some springs and the denial of access to surface water, mainly the Jordan River. Israel is using water prevention measures as a systematic method of expelling Palestinians from their villages.

In the Gaza Strip, the sole source of water is the southern part of the coastal basin but the reserves there do not meet the humanitarian needs of the citizens isolated in the Gaza Strip – let alone their agricultural needs. Besides, between 90 and 95% of the basin waters are polluted, since overuse has led to the flow of seawater and sewage into the basin, rendering it unsuitable for human consumption. Apart from the environmental hazards, this has led to an increase in water-related diseases in Gaza

Strip aggravating the health situation. However, the author criticizes the Amnesty report because it fails to mention how Israeli settlements in Gaza Strip, prior to the withdrawal and redeployment of Israeli troops around the Strip in September 2005, played a major role in the consumption of coastal basin waters, causing both a serious shortage and pollution of the Gaza Strip's water. The report talks about the water crisis in Gaza Strip and the fact that the Israeli authorities refused to allow the transfer of water from the West Bank to Gaza Strip, despite the fact that the Oslo Accords stipulate this, recognizing both regions are one geographical unit. The report then talks about the water situation in Gaza Strip, especially after the Israeli aggression of December 2008.

Importantly, the report identifies and discusses the specific methods adopted by the Israeli occupation in preventing and depriving Palestinians of water usage and consumption:

- 1- Direct control over the land and its water resources.
- 2- Restricting the freedom of movement of citizens, goods and means of transport to the point where accessing water resources has become an arduous task.
- 3- Forcing Palestinian citizens to obtain special licenses from the army and other Israeli authorities to implement any project dealing with water, public health and the environment to such an extent, that the process of implementing such projects becomes an impossible task, thereby preventing Palestinians from conducting maintenance and development of the water networks.

Moreover, there are specific reasons and circumstances which impede the process of improving and developing water resources:

- 1- The Palestinian Water Authority is almost totally dependent on international donors.
- 2- The priorities of the donors do not take into consideration the conditions and needs of the Palestinian population under Israeli occupation.
- 3- Poor coordination between the donors and the relevant Palestinian parties.
- 4- Internal differences inside the PNA and the Palestinian Water Authority which has a weak and incoherent administrative structure.
- 5- Lack of technical expertise and political will.

6- Accusations related to poor management and corruption.

7- Obstruction and delay of Palestinian projects in the context of the Joint Water Committee and the isolation of 25 wells behind the Wall.

The report tackles the partial responsibility of international donors in not improving water conditions in various areas. While donors offer financial support to reform and develop the water sector and the sewage system and support reconstruction projects to replace the health, water and environmental facilities Israel destroys, the report states that international donors offer no criticism of Israel's violation of human rights and the principles of international law and justice. The donors believe that Israel would increase obstacles to donor assistance if they were to raise their voice in protest. The author argues that the donors need to reconsider this policy as they have several means through which they can exert pressure to force Israel to respect the principles of international law and international humanitarian law.

Abu Eid criticizes the report's statement that the principles of international law pertaining to international joint waters are based on a legal framework governing the relations between sovereign countries only. In our case, however, one of the parties, Israel, is an independent state with sovereignty which occupies the other side controlling all its water resources. Thus, the PA has no grounds on which to make use of international arbitration or implementation mechanisms as stipulated in the international laws.

Despite this, the report concludes that the basic rules and international norms that are applied between countries can be viewed as guiding principle rules to be implemented between Israel and the Palestinians as well. One of the internationally applied principles is Equitable Utilization, and this principle is guaranteed in the "UN Convention on the Law on Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses". This principle takes into consideration all elements and conditions when reporting on what is considered as equitable and reasonable use of an international watercourse.

Nonetheless, Abu Eid believes that the report does not address the Helsinki Rules governing disputes between countries when using international joint waters. These rules are applied in the case of surface waters, but some international experts point to the possibility of their application in joint aquifer water disputes. The rules stipulate

several norms: fair and just use and the principle of non-damage, the principle of limited regional sovereignty and the principle of vital human needs. The report does not mention some of the UN General Assembly resolutions and international conferences pertaining to joint waters. The most important General Assembly resolution is the decision issued in 1962 pertaining to the "right of countries and peoples to sovereignty over their natural resources", and the UN Conference held in Marla Plata, and other relevant conferences and declarations.

The author believes that the most important aspect of the report are the large-scale and comprehensive recommendations, which regard the conduct of Israel as a government and of settlers in this matter as serious violations of the principles of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. He states that in accordance with the norms and the international humanitarian law convention, Israel is considered to be the foremost basic party responsible for the security and welfare of civilian citizens under military occupation. The Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 describes people under military occupation as "protected persons" placing responsibility for securing their work, health, water and environment and their basic rights on Israel. Moreover, the Oslo Accords do not prejudice any of those responsibilities and commitments, and this is evident in Article 47 of the Convention:

"Protected persons who are in occupied territory shall not be deprived, in any case or in any manner whatsoever, of the benefits of the present Convention by any change introduced, as the result of the occupation of a territory, into the institutions or government of the said territory, nor by any agreement concluded between the authorities of the occupied territories and the Occupying Power, nor by any annexation by the latter of the whole or part of the occupied territory."

In the Studies Section, Mohammad Abu Daqa presents a study of the documents that the Fatah Movement adopted in its Sixth General Conference and compares what was agreed in the documents to practice on the ground five months after the conference. The article is entitled "The Aftermath of the Fatah Sixth Conference: Fatah Priorities and its New Political Discourse".

A preliminary reading of the documents highlights the scope of Fatah's historical review of the entire Palestinian national struggle. The historical introduction reflects the movement's intention to learn from the mistakes and lessons accumulated over the years of struggle. This type of review was needed to clarify several concepts and relations linking the Fatah Movement and the Palestinian political system and the entire Palestinian national struggle. It also analyses the current situation and the potential actions and available political options open to Fatah as a national liberation movement seeking to end the occupation and achieve the aspirations of the Palestinian people for freedom and independence.

In reviewing the documents, the researcher analyses the movement's priorities of defeating occupation and establishing the Palestinian state, Fatah's concept of the right to self determination and the nature of the aspiring Palestinian state, separating the process of political decision making inside the movement from the process of implementing the decision and the impact of this on the movement and the entire Palestinian political system. He then moves on to an analysis of the determinants of the media discourse on the movement in light of the decisions and programs of the conference.

The conference documents stress the legal nature of the Palestinian territories as occupied territories. Fatah's strategic goal is to establish an independent Palestinian state, but in the short term, there are basic tasks that Fatah must undertake, including confronting settlements, the Judaization of Jerusalem and the siege and occupation. Fatah regards the priority of defeating occupation on a parallel with working to establish an independent Palestinian state.

The importance of setting the priority to defeating occupation as well as to establishing an independent Palestinian state is a strategic decision of the movement and reflects a realistic legal reading of the status of the Palestinian territories in the interim period. In the past, priority was given to state-building over the task of resisting the occupation. Now, 14 years into the interim phase, Fatah has reorganized its strategy pursuing both objectives at the same time.

This decision and the adoption of peaceful means, such as pressing for an international boycott movement against Israel are considered a substantial strategic change. It underlines Fatah's re-affirmation of itself as a national liberation movement with its first and foremost task to defeat the occupation. It also shows that Fatah wants to adapt the appropriate means of struggle using the potential of the Palestinian people and international forces to support the end of occupation and achieve the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, by making use of the international law and in line with the public opinion.

Fatah also affirmed that the peace process and any future negotiations must guarantee the Palestinian people their right to self determination within an independent Palestinian state, and in the short term, a halt to settlements and the Judaization of Jerusalem. This was emphasized in the historical speech of President Mahmoud Abbas when he announced the eight points of the Palestinian position in relation to the resumption of negotiations with Israel, stressing very clearly the terms of reference for the peace process.

The adoption of this decision, following its historical review and diagnosis of the current situation of the Palestinian territories as occupied territories, requires Fatah to rebuild its tools of national struggle to defeat the occupation. The fact that Fatah made such an assessment of bilateral negotiations with Israel, and established clear conditions for resuming negotiations means that the Fatah leadership has to have flexibility in dealing with the existing political entity of "The PA". Its' prospects for reaching just solutions and guaranteeing the transformation of this "entity" into the government of an independent Palestinian state will be determined by the Palestinian people's opportunity to exercise their right to self determination and through solving the cause of the problems.

In the second part of his study, Abu Eid divides the development of the Palestinian media discourse, as drafted by Fatah, into several intertwined and important phases:

Phase 1: A media discourse based on the right of self determination and the right of the Palestinian people to resist and defeat the occupation enabling the Palestinian

people to achieve national independence. This discourse began with the launch of the Fatah Movement up until 1974.

Phase 2: A media discourse dependent on the call to build a Palestinian state; this phase started during the Palestinian Independence Declaration with the PLO adopting the ten-point program leading to the Palestinian National Council term in 1988.

Phase 3: A media discourse based on "making peace" and on "state-building ". The peace making discourse was adopted with the start of the Madrid Conference and the Oslo Accords aimed at establishing peace. The state-building discourse accompanied the peace making discourse and covered the adoption of the Road Map which set out the main goal of establishing the Palestinian state.

The author maintains that the content and shape of the new Fatah media discourse must be able to distinguish it as a national liberation movement while, at the same time, reflecting its vision and discourse based on the political line and decisions adopted at the Sixth Conference. The basic components of a new discourse must harmonize with and provide cohesion between the discourse on the internal front among the Palestinian people and the external discourse directed at "international influential forces".

Fatah must formulate an effective media discourse on political, developmental and social fronts to answer the questions posed by the Palestinian opposition. At this critical time in the history of the Palestinian people, Fatah has succeeded in reformulating its media discourse in line with the clear vision of its political program. The author cites as an example of this success, how Fatah clearly conveyed its position on the Goldstone Report which was different from the PNA position, the result of which gave them a high rating in public opinion polls.

Abu Eid advises that any media discourse be based mainly on international law and human rights principles along with values of justice, equality and freedom, in order to expose the ugly, racist face of Israel with its slow process of ethnic cleansing and system of apartheid. Such a discourse will help to reinforce the chances of bringing Israeli war criminals to justice for their war crimes committed in Gaza Strip and for other Israeli violations such as murder, assassinations and settlements punishable under international law.

This edition includes three opinion pieces. The first article written by Yahya Rabah is entitled "Moving Towards Reconciliation or Escaping Towards Confusion". Rabah warns that the continuation of the internal split harms the vital interests of the Palestinian people, deepening the distance between the two geographical regions that make up the geographical area of the emerging Palestinian entity. The internal split contributes to the process of detaching Gaza Strip from its Palestinian national context. The author notes that no one is paying attention to the ramifications of the split, the siege, the war and destruction and the other pressures which permeate all aspects of life in the Gaza Strip.

The split and the continuing siege, combined with the destruction and havoc created by the recent war has caused immeasurable damage, some of which is not always obvious. An increased level of awareness is vital to address and reduce the intensity of destructive consequences caused by the experiences in Gaza Strip, such as the general state of poverty, and the high rates of dependency on emergency relief programs; all of which has a major impact on the social, psychological and behavioral fabric of Gazan society and its population. Another consequence has been the impact on educational and health sectors which were deeply affected when thousands of experienced teachers and public health personnel withdrew from those sectors.

The continued internal split amid the overshadowing threat of more Israeli attacks has led to a failure to provide for the most basic needs of its population. This, combined with the collapse of many social sectors to be replaced by more violent adaptations exacerbates the state of frustration and despair and will eventually lead to implosion and complete chaos.

Therefore, reconciliation should not be viewed only as a political, national and ethical preference, but as vital to salvaging the hopes for a Palestinian future.

In the second article entitled, "Diplomatic Efforts to Launch the Negotiations: Dilemmas and Opportunities", Mohammed Hawash addresses ways of escaping the current impasse; he discusses the scenarios and possibilities for re-launching the peace process. The author affirms that President Abu Mazen succeeded in raising

settlements as a fundamental issue facing the peace process and the ball is now firmly in the Israeli court. Thus, any new efforts to revive the peace process must seek to bring about serious, meaningful negotiations with clear goals and terms of reference in order to achieve the two state vision.

The Americans are talking about a project to launch intensive negotiations for a period of nine months to finally resolve the issue of borders and providing two letters of assurances to the Palestinians and Israelis. The letters are supposed to confirm that the basis for negotiations is the June 4, 1967 borders, along with negotiations over the changes on the ground. The proposed plans talk about the form negotiations would take a time limit of no more than two years and letters of assurances to the parties in order to encourage them to engage in negotiations to address their demands.

Israel's Isolation: the international community has shown themselves more disposed towards understanding the demands of the Palestinians and their conditions because they are based on international legitimacy.

War as an Outlet: the right wing government of Israel might resort to the option of attacking Gaza Strip as a way to stack the cards and divert attention towards efforts calling for the ending of the war and its ramifications. What matters in this regard are the changes in political and regional developments and the priorities of the American, international and regional efforts.

The Internal Split: other dangers relate to the possibility that at the start of negotiations with Israel questions will be asked about security arrangements and international relations in Gaza Strip in response to every Palestinian demand on the negotiating table. The risk involved for the PNA in this scenario is that they cannot offer any answers on Gaza because of the current internal split hence, weakening the Palestinian case and increasing Israelis opportunities to obstruct any negotiations.

The author adds another scenario that might arise: President Abu Mazen remains steadfast on the conditions needed to relaunch the negotiations, while Israel succeeds in convincing the international community that it wants negotiations and that the Palestinians are rejecting the opportunity to negotiate and are the ones at fault.

Hawwash advises that for the political initiative to stay in Palestinian hands, it will require more detailed initiatives on the demand to halt settlement activities so that it does not become a burden on Palestinian politics. This means that the demand to halt settlement activities can be rephrased to make it look like a commitment to the political process and not a condition. Within this context, the Palestinians can accept guarantees alongside the call to cancel the territorial classifications (A B and C) of the Occupied Palestinian Territories and transfer of their legal and civil status to the PNA, even if Israel shows temporary claims to security rights in some territories.

Hawwash believes that if we succeed now in convincing the world that any negotiations under the shadow of settlements are meaningless, then we can turn the tables making the settlements meaningless by demanding that Israel dismantle all settlement outposts erected in the West Bank after 2000 with the immediate start of the negotiations. In addition, Israel could be pressured not to add another brick to any settlement outside the separation wall or in East Jerusalem with the promise of reaching an agreement on the borders and settlement freeze within nine months.

If these demands are presented to the proposal for the launch of negotiations, the PNA will not be seen as the obstructive party to international efforts to establish negotiations with clear goals, terms of reference and a binding timetable. There is a balance to be struck between the opportunities and risks, so that the Palestinians are not held responsible for wasting the opportunity or the impression created that Palestinians wasted and frustrated chances to establish their own state.

Political researcher M'moun Swedan writes on "The Iranian Nuclear Challenge and the Most Likely Scenario". Swedan reviews the development of the Iranian nuclear issue since the nineteen sixties until the current crisis, in an attempt to understand the positions of the parties concerned and the next phase scenarios. Swedan says that Iran's use of time has been an important factor in its management of nuclear issues. Iran invested in the collapse of the Soviet Union by making use of its scientists and signed several agreements with Russia. Iran has also been assisted by the world's preoccupation with the crisis caused by Iraq's occupation of Kuwait in 1990. The ramifications of that occupation and subsequent boycott imposed by the UN against Iraq until the US Administration fell into the trap of the wars against Iraq and

Afghanistan, dented the United States status within the international arena, weakened its former alliances and saw the deterioration of its economy to unprecedented levels. Israel was also preoccupied with its military confrontation with Hezbollah and the Palestinian Intifada for almost a decade.

It is clear that the Iranian nuclear issue has reached a defining moment. Despite the statements announced by the parties concerned mainly the United States and Israel, the most likely scenario remains the enforcement of stringent sanctions against Iran, ruling out the possibility of military force. The author concludes that America and Israel want to find an appropriate formula to coexist peacefully with Iran as a nuclear state because the use of military force by any of the parties can only lead to major dangers and risks for international security and stability, and threaten the interests of both countries beyond tolerable limits.

Sweidan concludes his article with a question "What is the cost of any friendly formula for coexistence with Iran's nuclear capacity? What will be the Arab contribution to this formula?"

As part of its ongoing study of the Palestinian political system and the current crisis, *Seyasat* Magazine reports on its roundtable discussion with Saleh Ra'fat, PLO Executive Committee member and Secretary General of the Palestinian Democratic Party "Fida", Dr. Nabil Shaath, Fatah Central Committee member, Qais Abu Laila, DFLP Politburo member and PLC member, and Dr. Omar Abdul Razeq, Deputy PM in the tenth government.

In the General Politics Section, *Seyasat* presents two studies: In "Revenues of Local Authorities in Palestine and the Means to Develop them", local government affairs researcher, Saéd Zaid talks about the resources of the local authorities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the reasons for their limited development. He proposes methods to strengthen and empower local authorities, improve the services they provide and reinforce their independence. Zeidan explains that the revenues of local authorities are divided into direct revenues which are the funds legally collected by the local authorities themselves, and indirect revenues collected by the central authority which takes part of those funds and transfers the remainder to the local

authority in accordance with specific principles. The author then examines the weaknesses of the local authorities resulting from political, economic and social conditions. The researcher shows that there are several reasons for why collection efforts are poor, including the capacities within the local authorities, the nature of the taxation system and overlap of authorities, the failure to enforce judicial decisions, the weak performance of some municipal councils, the government failure to commit to the transfer of revenues due to the local authorities, and the lack of local productiveness in some authorities. The author proposes a number of recommendations to develop local authority capacity and collection resources:

- 1- To reinforce and reform the collection system by upgrading the financial and collection apparatus of local authorities by rehabilitating and training teams.
- 2- To reform the taxation system through unification of recurrent taxes and fees and their re-evaluation. To impose taxes that strengthen the finances of the local authorities and transfer the authority for collecting property tax to the local authorities once they have improved their collection capacities.
- 3- No transfer of funds from government to the local authorities until there is agreement on projects because collection efforts may be harmed in cases where citizens believe that the funds offered to local authorities are meant as assistance grants to them or to cover their individual debts due to the local authorities.
- 4- To expedite efforts to hold elections in all local authorities, strengthen community participation in defining needs and priorities and organize awareness campaigns on the importance of paying local authority taxes and fees.

The second study, entitled "The Jordan Valley: Impediments Facing Development of Palestinian Farmers and Production Incentives to Settlers", is contributed by Abd Alsattar Shryede, an expert on the settlements in northern West Bank. He presents details on the situation in the Jordan Valley and the settlement activities in that region, especially those related to agriculture and land use. The researcher explains that in light of the intensive settlement activities in the Jordan Valley and all the methods used to force the Palestinian farmers off their lands or to exploit them as laborers, Palestinian villages are unsupported and agricultural land is diminishing. Meanwhile, the settlers produce and package their agricultural products and label them "Made in Palestine" forging the certificate of origin in order to evade European boycott campaigns.

In some cases, settlers offer capital to Palestinian marketing companies by entering into false partnerships with Arab labor agents working in the Israeli settlements in order to establish packaging factories in the PA territories with Palestinian names. The capital and the employer are from an Israeli settlement but the ploy is to market settlement agricultural products with a Palestinian certificate of origin.

The author proposes the following recommendations:

- 1- For the PNA and its official institutions to take appropriate action with regard to Israel's targeting of that region.
- 2- To establish a comprehensive national plan to return self confidence to Palestinian farmers.
- 3- To support Palestinian farmers in the Jordan Valley and assist those affected by attacks from settlers and occupation soldiers.
- 4- To contact local, Arab and international media so that international human rights organizations are getting a complete picture of Israeli violations, because the issue of sovereignty of the Jordan Valley region is as important as the status of Jerusalem. There is also the issue of refugees since this region has the longest border of the Palestinian territories with Jordan.

The study is based on personal interviews with laborers who work in settlements in the Jordan Valley, with contractors and local government employees and Palestinian village councils in the Jordan Valley. The interviews reveal many of the settlers' methods previously unknown to the media; they also highlight the extent of the crisis facing farmers in the Jordan Valley.

In the International Politics Section, Seyasat Magazine presents an article by Major General William Nassar, lecturer at Birzeit University, entitled, "The National Interest between Liberalism and Realism, (A comparative study between the foreign policy of George H. Bush and Bill Clinton)". Major General Nassar provides a reading of the foreign policy approaches of US President Obama by comparing the foreign policies of former Democratic President Clinton and former Republican President George Bush (Senior). After reviewing the major landmarks in the policies of both presidents, especially their positions on the new world order and the methods

of crisis resolution and the way they dealt with international organizations, Nassar concludes that there are two basic trends controlling US foreign policy- the realistic trend and the liberal trend. Generally, the Republican Party uses the realistic approach and focuses on the need to resort to use of force to protect United States interests even when the threat is very minor and can be solved by other means. The foreign policy of the Democratic Party is known to be liberal, attempting to deal with international conditions from a broader perspective using international law and cooperation with other international parties to solve conflicts in a peaceful manner and viewing the military option as a last resort to protect world peace and stability.

Analyzing US foreign policy always requires examining the phase in which the decision was taken. Despite the presence of constants in US policy, in many cases intellectual and theoretical trends play a key role in changing positions and in whether there is to be a policy of openness or reticence, towards cooperation or use of force. The decisive factor in US policy is basically the intellectual background of each president, which is formed principally by his community affiliation and his later political influences. The higher constants are one body but not all matters in US policies deal with those constants. Thus, policies can change between one president and another; the change might not come abruptly, it may happen gradually and may not at first be noticeable. Sometimes, changes are not noted because of the fast pace of international changes which prevent the president from achieving his objectives, or because there is a change in the US Administration after elections. However, if the president is granted ample time in which to implement his policies, we will notice the changes, especially when the policies are related to national security issues, yet these same matters might be of secondary or marginal status in the policies of another president.

In this edition, Seyasat Magazine reviews the publication by the Association of Palestinian Developmental Women Studies in Gaza, "Obstacles Facing Women's Participation in Socio-Political Decision Making". This edition also includes reviews of a number of newly published Palestinian and Arab books.