

Liberation

Volume 56 No3 July

World Refugee Day Issue

£1.50



**Also Inside – Iran + Israel + Kenya
Philippines + Turkey
Manouchehr Sabatien Obituary**

JOURNAL OF LIBERATION, FORMERLY THE MOVEMENT FOR COLONIAL FREEDOM

Volume 56 No 3 July 2013

ISSN 0024 1873

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Other than the editorial, the opinions in the articles inside are not necessarily those of Liberation.



Children under Israeli military detention

The Final Statement of the 11th Palestinians in Europe Conference – Brussels.

The 11th Palestinians in Europe Conference ended in Brussels, on Saturday, 18th May 2013. The conference was convened under the title, *“Signs of Return is blossoming”*. Thousands of Palestinians participated in the annual event, which was attended by delegations from various European countries.

A number of Palestinian politicians, community leaders and public figures participated in

the event. They came from locations either in the occupied Palestinian territories or the Diaspora. European MPs, activists, journalists and representatives of various NGOs also took part in this year’s event.

The conference was organized by the General Secretariat of the Palestinians in Europe Conference, the Palestinian Return Centre (PRC), and the Palestinian Assembly in Germany.

The conference reaffirmed declarations from the previous years: London 2003, Berlin

2004, Vienna 2005, Malmo 2006, Rotterdam 2007, Copenhagen 2008, Milan 2009, Berlin 2010, Wuppertal 2011 and Copenhagen 2012, and added new ones. After a day of engaging discussion, workshops, lectures and debates, the conference concluded the following:

1-We reaffirm our adherence to the Right of Return for Palestinian Refugees. This right is inalienable and non-negotiable. It can’t be vetoed, circumvented, supplanted or altered.

The Right of Return is a collective and individual right that is irrevocable. Our people will continue their struggle until it is achieved:

2-We are proud of the struggle and resilience of the Palestinian people who continue to make great sacrifices, 65 years after the Nakba, against occupation and oppression for their dignity freedom and self-determination:

3-We express our deep concern over the Israeli aggressions on Jerusalem and its indigenous Palestinian residents, especially in the light of growing deportation. We warn against the systematic discrimination against Jerusalemites which sees them besieging in their residential areas by settlements and the apartheid wall. We also warn against the assault on historical Muslim and Christian sites in Jerusalem:

4-We are proud of the sacrifice and determination shown by Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails, especially their bravery against unjust Israeli policies. The issue of Palestinian prisoners is one of our main priorities and we ask the international community to demand an end to their mistreatment:

5- The conference affirmed the need to intensify efforts to face the systematic expulsion of Palestinians in the West Bank and occupied Palestine in 1948 territories. The policy of

apartheid, segregation, annexation of land through the illegal wall and settlements should come to an end so people can live freely:

6- The conference salutes the steadfastness of the people of Gaza. Despite Israeli aggression and a long siege they remain strong. We vow to continue exposing Israel and its crimes against the people of Gaza:

7-We condemn the call for land swap between the state of Palestine and the Israeli regime. We warn that such a step will jeopardize Palestinian rights and legitimize Israeli occupation. It also endangers the rights of Palestinians inside occupied lands of 1948. We totally reject such plans and reaffirm our inalienable and legitimate rights:

8-We declare our solidarity with the Syrian people in their plight. We are extremely fearful of their future and very concerned over the growing humanitarian crisis where thousands have died and millions have been displaced.

We also call on all sides in Syria to refrain from dragging the Palestinian refugee into their internal differences. The camps should always remain neutral. Humanitarian aid should be offered to Palestinian and Syrian refugees freely without any restriction:

9-In light of the dreadful conditions that Palestinian refugees experience in Arab countries, including those fleeing Iraq and Syria; we call on all Arab countries to treat Palestinian refugees justly and fairly. We invite the Arab League to investigate the extent of Arab countries’ commitment to the Casablanca Protocols of 1965 concerning the treatment of Palestinian refugees. This should be in accordance with their right of return to occupied Palestine:

10-We stress the importance of achieving National Palestinian Unity Agreement between all Palestinian parties.



Manouchehr Sabetian

Obituary of MANOUCHEHR SABETIAN

Dr. Manouchehr Sabetian, a left-wing Iranian and a member of Liberation since its early days, died on 11th May, 2013. Born in Tehran on 8th January, 1928, of a distinguished family which had embraced the Baha'i faith, in 1946 he won one of twenty-one scholarships to study abroad and qualified in medicine at Durham University.

After initially practising at the Connaught Hospital, Walthamstow, he became a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons both of England and Edinburgh and achieved prominence as a consultant in the National Health Service, in which he eventually spent the whole of his working life.

Manouchehr Sabetian first came into contact with left-

wing ideas as a student in Iran. Subsequently, in Britain, he played a key role in the formation of the Confederation of Iranian Students in 1960, became its secretary, and joined the Tudeh Party (the Communist Party of Iran). The Confederation campaigned against the tyrannical rule of Mohammad Reza Shah, who had been restored to absolute power by a US CIA-inspired coup against the Iranian Prime Minister, Mohammad Mossadegh, on 19th August, 1953.

On 10th April, 1965, a member of the Shah's Imperial Guard at the Marble Palace attempted, unsuccessfully, to assassinate the Shah and was killed in the exchange of fire.

Six students were arrested and charged with complicity, including Parviz Nikhar, former chairman of the London-based Students' Association.

Manouchehr Sabetian and another Iranian, Razavi, were reported to have been involved in the plot and the Iranian Government asked for Sabetian to be extradited to Iran.

This request was not acceded to, but Dr. Sabetian, who continued to campaign against the Shah's regime, never dared visit his native land as long as the Shah remained in power.

Liberation and representatives of the British Labour Movement consistently supported denunciations of abus-

es of human rights by the Iranian authorities.

In 1979 the Shah was overthrown and left the country. However, instead of a democratic left-wing government being installed, the fundamentalist Moslem regime of the Ayatollah Khomeini took power. Manouchehr Sabetian was deeply disappointed and left the Tudeh Party when it continued to give support to the new government, despite its gross violations of democratic and human rights.

He now raised his voice against the mullahs who had taken over as vehemently as he had condemned the Shah. Although the Tudeh Party changed its line when it came under attack from the regime, Dr. Sabetian remained aloof.

He continued his contacts with opponents of the regime and wrote articles to denounce it. He served as a president of the Iranian PEN in Exile organisation from 1996 to 1998 and remained an implacable critic of the Iranian theocracy to the end of his life. Because of his stand, he could no more visit Iran under the Ayatollahs than under the Shah.

Aside from his political and medical interests, he loved tennis and sailing. He is survived by his wife, Anne Marie le Sollic, his three sons, Dominic, Oliver and Julian, and two granddaughters'

Stan Newens



Israeli troops arrest children

ultimately help to protect our national rights. Such measures will unite the Palestinian people and enable them to face Israeli occupation. Additionally, we call for democratic representation of the Palestinians in Europe. The conference also calls on Palestinian parties to enforce the civil NGO work whenever the Palestinian people exist.

In this regard, we call on Europe and the International community to respect the democratic choices made by the Palestinian people:

11-The conference stresses historical responsibility of Europe for the Palestinian Nakba and displacement of 1948. Generations of Palestinian people are still paying the price of Europe's mistake and still Europe continues to assist in the expansion of the state of Israel and its illegal policies.

We announce our full support for the International Campaign demanding an apology

from Britain for the Balfour declaration which marks the beginning of Palestinian suffering:

12-We commend all efforts by everyone helping the Palestinians in challenging and confronting Israeli wars, siege and illegal practices. We urge everyone to remain steadfast and develop these efforts that support the Palestinian people for their fight against occupation and injustice towards freedom, justice, human rights and a democratic Palestine.

The Palestinian Return Centre (PRC)

MAU MAU settlement

Dan Thea on the £20 million achieved so far



Celebrating the settlement

The Mau Mau War took place from 1952 to 1963, when it ended the oppressive British colonial rule declared in 1895, and replaced it with the sovereign Republic of Kenya, almost 50 years ago. This was the first decolonisation war in modern Africa, later to be followed by Algeria, Guinea Bissau, Zimbabwe, Angola, Mozambique, Western Sahara, Namibia and of course South Africa.

Being the first gives a sort of distinction, but it has its disadvantages, such as not having lessons from others. This was the misfortune of the Mau Mau, who were not only marginalised, stitched up and legally banned in the new dispensation concocted by the departing British and Kenya's new rulers. Kenya's liberation movement was only unbanned on 29 October 2003 by newly elected President Mwai Kibaki, i.e. after 46 years of Kenya's independence!

The veterans at once formed the **Mau Mau War Veterans Association** to enlist, organise, mobilise and fight for their interests. The organisation launched the now famous court case against the British Government at the High Court in London, with two women and three men selected for the role.

Over the past four years at the Royal Courts of Justice in central London they have won three stunning victories in a

row against obdurate resistance by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). Even then, in October 2012, the stubborn government went to the Court of Appeal, dismissing the veterans' offer for a negotiated settlement. On behalf of the London-based **Mau Mau Justice Network**, my last words on 5 October 2012 in our support of the veterans' demarche were: **"WE CALL FOR A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT."**

It was only after seven wasted months, just as the Appeal Court case was due to start on May 13 2013 that the Government agreed to negotiate. The negotiations that Britain so much feared took place in Nairobi, and in less than one month a settlement was reached.

On Thursday, June 6, William Haig, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, announced the details at the House of Commons, while the British High Commissioner to Kenya addressed the assembled veterans in Nairobi. Naturally the Mau Mau Justice Network was in attendance at the House.

As the terms of the settlement were announced, I ticked off or crossed the list of our campaign demands. Haig met our very first demand, which was to publicly acknowledge the killings, torture and other crimes against humanity committed by Britain.

However, Haig obstinately avoided the words "apology" and "sorry"; choosing instead "regret". We could live with that.

Item number 3 in the campaign's demands reads: *"Erection of a Wall of Honour at Uhuru Gardens on which the names of all killed and detained will be inscribed."* We welcomed the UK's agreement to fund this memorial.

While the above deals were sentimentally very important, the really fundamental issue was that of compensation. The Government agreed to pay a sum of £19.9 million. The amount consisted of two parts: the costs of the marvellous Leigh Day & Co lawyers (who had previously distinguished themselves by representing the British prisoners-of-war by the Japanese during the Second World War in South East Asia) and the actual veterans' compensation. The latter amounted to about £13.5 million.

Since there were only three veterans left in the court case after the death of the other two in the course of the court proceedings, this £13.5 million looks a pretty handsome amount. It is not.

The veterans in the court case were in fact representatives of all of the 5,228 Leigh Day clients; and this money was to be shared among them all. On a simple average basis, each would receive a paltry £2,582! Nevertheless, I ticked off this item. My sentiments about this were strengthened when I later learned that at an earlier veterans briefing on the settlement no one had objected to the deal.

Following on the footsteps of Leigh Day, other legal firms have since the court case started recruited their own veteran clients; and they are quite likely to lodge their own claims. So, it would seem that we are

far from seeing the end of the claims, in spite of Haig's assertion that the payment was *"in full and final settlement"*. Indeed it is rumoured that the widow of Dedan Kimathi has decided to lodge her own case for compensation.

Surely that would be an irresistible case. When the British finally caught up with the Mau Mau leader, they were ecstatic, his photograph was on every newspaper, and the news were repeated ad nauseam on the radio.

Then they 'disappeared' him. To this day they have refused to reveal what they did to him, or where his remains are. How can his widow be denied "full and proper" compensation? How can Kenya and Britain heel the historical wounds and develop sound relations that the Foreign Secretary claims the government wishes, without providing this essential information on Kenya's national hero?

The Government statement made no mention of the other demands by the campaign. Apart from those listed above, these included: *"The truth about General Kimathi's burial and/or remains"*.

As in the cases of all past leaders of our people's armed resistance against the British occupation, our national hero Dedan Kimathi was killed and 'disappeared' when his turn came. Dedan Kimathi should be the first in the now agreed heroes memorial.

In the interests of the estimated 40,000 surviving Mau Mau War veterans as reflected in the membership of their organisation, the campaign had demanded: *"A Medical Fund to cater for the needs of the veterans."* This was not agreed, which is particularly disappointing in view of the fact that these are elderly people, with the associated medical needs.

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Back issues of our journal are now available to download for free on our website.

At present, the digital archives contain the last ten years of our bi-monthly publication, going back to March 2003. Visitors are invited to check the website regularly, as we are planning to introduce more features, such as the option to browse our journal by countries and topics. Please visit

<http://liberationorg.co.uk/>

Their tortures, maiming, beatings, hard labour, and other mistreatment meted out to them by the British; the neglect by the Kenyan Government since independence; and poverty mean that they are generally in poor health. That is what made the demand so relevant, and also makes its rejection so unjust.

In the interests of historical record and as a sound foundation for discussion and proper understanding of the Mau Mau War, the campaign had demanded: *“Britain to fund a comprehensive study by international and Kenyan experts of the Mau Mau War, and to compile an accurate and comprehensive report of all the victims: those who were killed; those who were detained; those who were confined in ‘Emergency Villages’; the Mau Mau fighters; those, mainly women, who took food and other supplies to the fighters; etc.”*

Even after 50/60 years, there is still far too little understanding of the Mau Mau War itself,

its background or its consequences. That is why this demand was very important; and that is why it is extremely regrettable that it was not conceded.

The most fundamental national demand was: *“Britain to agree and to assist and support the Government of Kenya in resolving the historical injustices on land.”* It was not even mentioned in the settlement. Yet this issue has been the basic and most difficult problem in Kenya since colonisation; arising from the confiscation of our people’s best land at the point of a gun or bayonet by the British in the process of establishing the infamous “Kenya White High Lands.”

Admittedly it does not only concern the veterans, (and this would appear to have been the basis on which it was not agreed) but it is nevertheless the creation of the British.

The British created it; immensely benefitted from it; and they should undertake to be fully involved in resolving it. The demand was just. The British escaped their responsibility simply because they were negotiating from a position of strength, reflecting today’s notorious ‘international community’s rule of the jungle in the world.

William Haig’s statement was followed by six MPs, with Douglas Alexander, his Shadow counterpart kicking off. His was a poor performance: thanking Haig for prior information, announcing cross-bench agreement, regretting “the suffering on all sides” during the war, urging the government to build “even stronger ties” with Kenya, and other platitudes. The four other contributions were forgettable. But not that of Jeremy Corbyn. He challenged Haig on the Government’s hypocrisy to “continue to deny liability” while proceeding to pay compensation. Jeremy proceeded to educate the Foreign Secre-



tary of the fact that Liberation’s own veterans “*Fenner Brockway, Barbara Caste, Leslie Hale, Tony Benn, and many other MPs raised the issue in Parliament during the 1950s.*” He reminded the House of “*the use of concentration camps, torture, castration*” and so on. He informed his colleagues that he met the Mau Mau veterans here last year; and Dan Thea even appeared in the Hansard. Foggy

–minded Haig could only concede Jeremy’s “extensive knowledge” of the issues.

The Mau Mau’s was a stunning victory in the global context. Attempts at impunity failed; the sixty years delay was overcome; and the bonfires of incriminating files in Kenya together with secret archives in Britain succumbed to truth and justice.

Dan Thea is President of the Mau Mau Justice Network.



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The Long Crisis: Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and Philippine Underdevelopment.
By Ken Fuller.
Flipside Publishing.
Rinaldo Francesca Reviews.

Ken Fuller, resident in the Philippines since 2003, has been following the political scene in his country of adoption with the thorough and methodical research typical of the best investigative journalism; an expert on the ins and outs of the Philippines' political landscape and intrigues, he has penned three volumes on the history of Philippines' left-wing grass-roots movements and activism, and currently writes a column on the Daily Tribune. Regular *Liberation* readers might remember Ken Fuller's column sometimes appearing on this publication in the past. One of such pieces, *A Long Six Years in the Philippines* (*Liberation*, Volume 53 No5 - November 2010, soon to be made available on our online digital archive), was published during the Philippines' 2010 presidential elections.

It was a realistic and down-to-earth op-ed, cautioning readers against high expectations at the electoral victory of president Benigno Simeon "Noyonoy" Aquino III, and showing that there was little ground for hope of a break from the previous nine and a half years of graft, corruption and theft which had characterised the administration of Gloria

Macapagal Arroyo.

Now, with his new book, *The Long Crisis*, he takes a closer inspection at those infamous nine and a half years of Arroyo's presidency.

Against the backdrop of a "sequence of presidents [all more or less acting out their roles] as directed by Washington [...] and faithfully supporting US foreign policy", Fuller begins his narrative by tracing the mark left on Filipino history by Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's ancestors: a dynasty which makes regular appearances in the country's political scene through the decades, from a Mariano Pidal Arroyo, governor of Iloilo in the 1930s (found to be the recipient of illegal gambling payoffs in order to "cover anticipated election expenses") to Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's own father, Washington-supported Diosdado Macapagal in the 1961 elections – and responsible for "scuppering the country's modest attempts at industrialization" by entering "into the Philippines' first agreement with the International Monetary Fund".

None of this, the reader will guess from the start, foretells any good news for the Philippines' economic and social development throughout succeeding decades.

The reader is briefly reminded of the presidency of Estrada, possibly the only true exception in a long string of US-endorsed neo-liberal presidents and a true people's servant who, despite his flaws, is remembered for implementing policies which benefited the country's poor and attracted the anger of the US masters (parallels with Hugo Chávez are not entirely out of place). Estrada's downfall, we learn from *The Long Crisis*, was eventually brought about by an alliance to get him out of office, formed by the country's business elite and the church, as well as by a number of not entirely baseless allegations of corruption and insider trading, and in a



Gloria Arroyo and friend

climactic so-called "popular revolt" which was nothing short of a "coloured revolution", complete with a pseudo-opposition coalition designed in Washington.

The clues pointing to the fact that Estrada's ousting was in fact the result of a plan hatched by globalists in the superpower across the Pacific lies in a self-fulfilling prophecy in a report published by US intelligence firm Stratfor (which alluded to a possible impeachment of the president, even before the appearance of the first hint of a formal charge) and in the colour revolution-like engineered marches of protest (including one organised by "gays and lesbians [...] in Baguio City, somewhat bizarrely blaming the economic crisis on Estrada's womanizing culture") and finally a series of made-up threats of a possible military *coup d'état*.

Next, the book really sinks its teeth into the intricate web of corruption around Mrs Arroyo, her close associates and her family members, such as First Gentleman Jose Miguel "Big Mike" Arroyo, accused in 2003 of money laundering through

secret bank accounts, opened under fictitious names. The reader is thus presented with an overwhelming succession of cases of graft, nepotism, embezzlement and bribery, in an environment where no sector of society is immune from corruption, from Congress to the armed forces (where a General Carlos Garcia seems to win the first prize), the police and prison service and, needless to say, top members of the church.

This, Fuller informs us, prompted the German-based Transparency International to deem the Philippines the eleventh most corrupt nation of the 102 in its survey, and the Hong Kong-based Political and Economic Risk Consultancy to publish a survey in March 2007, where it turned out that 1,476 expatriate businessmen regarded the Philippines as the most corrupt of the thirteen Asian countries included in the survey.

The book also offers a description of the ruthless 2004 presidential campaign of Mrs Arroyo herself who, after briefly pretending to renounce to run as a candidate in the elections.

But was apparently talked back into the game by US-based chairmen and CEOs of companies with Philippine interests, who informed her that greater investment would be available with the political stability brought about by her candidacy.

Some of the dirtiest tricks imaginable employed by the Arroyo campaign team are presented to the reader – including forging the birth certificate of opponent Fernando Poe, in order to cast doubts on his Filipino nationality, and issuing voting cards to non-existent citizens in areas traditionally populated by Arroyo's supporters. Amidst strong suspicions of rigged elections and voters' disenfranchisement – some of which claims dragged on for years into her presidency – Gloria Macapagal Arroyo took office in June 2004.

Seeing every ploy in the book of political scheming deployed by the Arroyo administration to keep her in power in the succeeding years makes for a disturbingly fascinating read: impeachment efforts cleverly deflected, temporary alliances, abuse of emergency powers (such as declaring a state of emergency and issuing Executive Order 464, which forbade government officials from testifying without her express permission) are but a few tricks punctuating much of Arroyo's presidency from 2005 to 2007 – a whole string of abuses which Fuller implacably lays down for the reader to marvel at.

Even the state of emergency – proclaimed in response to a plot of left-wing military officials to depose Arroyo – is presented as an opportunity for plunder, through the exploitation of an article in the Constitution reading: “the State may, during the emergency and under reasonable terms prescribed by it, temporarily take over or direct the operation of any privately owned public utility or business affected with public interest”!

As for the Constitution itself, and the efforts to amend it or revise it during Arroyo's presidency, Fuller quickly points out how even these endeavours, involving the removal of constitutional restrictions on foreign ownership and investment, were manipulated by “those who fought on the economic front, armed with ideological weapons manufactured in Washington and Brussels”.

Further down – unsurprisingly at this point – we learn that “the administration had been seeking funding from a foreign power (the USA) for the proposed constitutional reform exercise, and that an agreement had been signed with lobbyists Venable LLP by, unaccountably, national security adviser Norberto Gonzales, for a retainer said to be \$75,000 per month”.

The reader will have realised at this point that the broader picture we are offered of a glimpse of in Fuller's book, far from being an exercises in pointing the finger at yet another corrupt country in the developing world, is in fact a sad look at the inevitable consequences of colonialism – old and new – where a sovereign nation and its people are subordinate to the interests of a dominating superpower.

In fact, given the Philippines' history of foreign domination and exploitation by the US empire, the logical conclusion one can see underlying *The Long Crisis* is that, in a country where economic affairs are directed by foreign interests, such levels of corruption tend to inevitably become the natural order of things “like typhoons or landslides”, in Fuller's words, ultimately blocking the political leadership from even considering a nationalist stance aimed at putting the interests of the Filipino people before all else.

Ken Fuller is a former Unite trade union official from London. He has been resident in the Philippines since 2003, having first visited the country in



1989. His *Radical Aristocrats*, a labour history of London bus workers, was published in London by Lawrence & Wishart in 1985. In 2007, the University of the Philippines Press published his *Forcing the Pace: the Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas, from Foundation to Armed Struggle*, a finalist for the National Book Award the following year. This was followed by *A Movement Divided: Philippine Communism, 1957-1986* (UP Press, 2011). The third volume is forthcoming. Aside from

writing a weekly column for the *Daily Tribune (Manila)* he also publishes occasional features for progressive publications in London, including *Liberation*.

The Long Crisis is also available as an e-book from the usual outlets (Amazon, iTunes, etc), and from the publisher Flipreads (<http://flipreads.com/long-crisis>), for which format it is not necessary to own an e-book reader, as free reading devices can be downloaded for use of desktop computers.



Israel: US liability and threat to its neighbours

Professor Avi Shlaim talks to Rinaldo Francesca



Professor Avi Shlaim

Professor Avi Shlaim is an Israeli-born academic. He is a lecturer of International Relations at Oxford University and has written the book *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World*.

He talked to Liberation on 30 May 2013.

The occupation is illegal.

All Israeli settlements that are built on occupied land - without a single exception - are illegal and so is the annexation of Jerusalem; Palestinians are engaged in a struggle for national liberation: it's probably the last anti-colonial struggle of the post-war world. Israel is an ethnocentric state in a cosmopolitan world society, a reactionary *status quo* power opposing change.

This is perpetuated through American support for Israel. In America, Israel is not foreign policy issue, it's a domestic policy issue. Because of the power of the Israel lobby in America, Israel has tremendous influence over the broad spectrum of America's policy towards the Middle East: because of America's one-sidedness and

partiality towards Israel, and because America has a veto at the UN Security Council, the international community has not been able to discipline or to sanction Israel. That's how Israel gets away with its latter-day colonialism.

Since 1978, America has used the veto on the Security Council 42 times on behalf of Israel. Here is one extreme example of how Israel *de facto* wields the veto at the Security Council. In September 2011 there was a draft resolution before the Security Council condemning Israel's settlement expansion on the West Bank: not condemning the *existing* settlements, only settlement *expansion*, and asking Israel to stop it.

Fourteen members of the Security Council voted in favour and America defeated the resolution by exercising the veto. Now, since 1967, the American official position on the settlements is that they are illegal and an obstacle to peace, and yet they voted against this resolution. America used the veto to defeat its own policy.

During the Cold War, Israel was commonly described as a strategic asset for America; I never accepted this description. I always thought that Israel was a liability for America, but since the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, it's become pretty clear that Israel is no longer an asset for America: you cannot rationally argue that Israel's occupation of the West Bank serves America's interests: it doesn't. Even General Petraeus, when he was head of Central Command, told the Senate that the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories is a major source of hostility toward America worldwide, adding that Israel's occupation of the West Bank puts lives of

American soldiers in Iraq and in Afghanistan in jeopardy. This is not me saying this, it's a senior American general who says that Israel is a strategic liability for America. In broader, political terms, because of its blind support for Israel - including the occupation of the West Bank - America alienates the Arab world and antagonises the Muslim world. So I totally reject the notion that Israel is a strategic asset for America: it's a liability and an embarrassment.

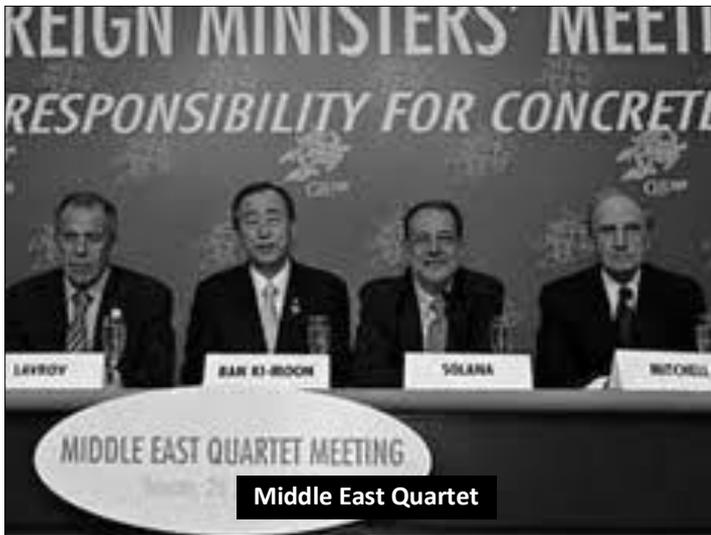
Israel is an aggressive and belligerent country that resorts to force too readily, and is therefore a destabilising force in the entire region. In my book, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World* - which I am

now updating for a new edition - I put forth a very simple theme: ever since its creation, Israel has been very ready to resort to military force and remarkably reluctant to engage in meaningful diplomacy to resolve its conflict with the Palestinians. So, my summary of Israeli foreign policy since the beginning is: too much brute military force and too little diplomacy. That also goes for Israel's position in relation to Iran: ever since the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979, Israel has been engaged in demonizing Iran and spreading misinformation about Iran and exaggerating the extent and scope of the Iranian nuclear program. Netanyahu's real objective was to induce America to launch a military strike against Iran. Fortunately he has not succeeded in unleashing America against Iran, but he continued to beat the war drums, and to threaten an Israeli military strike against Iran. However, all the intelligence and security chiefs are opposed to such an action: it would be far too risky and it could have disastrous consequences for the entire region and for America as well.

So, despite his best efforts, Netanyahu has failed to provoke America to take military action against Iran and he doesn't have the support of anyone, any of the leaders of the defence establishment in Israel for taking military action. He has been stymied, luckily.



Israeli rules by force



But the important point to note is Israel's behaviour towards Iran. The Iranian nuclear program is not an Israeli issue: it's an issue which involves the entire international community, because it raises the threat of nuclear proliferation; the international community has dealt very effectively with it. Iran has been cooperative, willing to deal with all the issues and put them on the table and have negotiations, including the nuclear issue.

It was America, under the Bush administration, who rejected dialogue in favour of threats against Iran. So, here is one more example of an inter-

national issue which Israel appropriates, trying to stop negotiations which might resolve this issue peacefully and keeps threatening military action: it is one more example of Israel as a destabilising force in the region and a prime example of Israeli double standards, considering it has nuclear weapons and yet makes such a fuss about a civilian nuclear Iran. Now, one reason why Iran wants to have nuclear weapons, or rather the capability to use nuclear weapons, is because it is under constant threat from Israel, therefore it needs a deterrent. Worse still, it is an example of western hypocrisy and American double standards: the US has pushed for sanctions against Iran, it threatens Iran over its civilian nuclear program, but does not say a thing about Israel's nuclear weapons.

This kind of American double standards provokes distrust and hostility, not only in the Arab world, but throughout the Muslim world. The main issue for Muslims everywhere is not Iran's nuclear program: it's the Israeli occupation of Palestine, Israel's oppression of the Palestinians and America's blind support for Israel's oppression of the Palestinians.

So what we have in today's world – at least in the Middle East – is not a liberal international order, but Israeli military domination underwritten by America: a colonial situation

with Israel as a colonial power in occupation of Palestinian territory and exercising military domination of the entire region, intimidating its neighbours, near neighbours and far neighbours like Iran and all of it with the full support of the sole surviving superpower.

As for Britain, it has tended to follow America on all major issues, including the Middle East, the war in Iraq and Israel and Palestine. Britain has not behaved like an independent or impartial power, but has always followed the American lead. Ever since 1967, the Americans have arrogated to themselves a monopoly over the diplomacy surrounding the Arab-Israeli conflict.

They excluded the Soviet Union during the Cold War and they have excluded the European Union and they continue to exclude Russia and the UN. They arrogated to themselves a role that by rights belong to the United Nations: they have had a monopoly over diplomacy and the so-called peace process, but they have not delivered a settlement, they have not delivered peace.

Since 1991, at the aftermath of the first Gulf war, we have had over two decades of the American-sponsored peace process: a lot of process and no peace. Now, the American-led peace process is not just a charade: it's worse than that, because it gives Israel just the cover it needs to pursue its

aggressive colonial agenda on the West Bank. It can do whatever it likes, and the fact that there are peace talks going on – although the peace talks are an exercise in futility – gives Israel some kind of thin veneer of legitimacy for its colonial expansion on the West Bank.

There is one other organisation that is relevant here, and that is the Quartet.

The Quartet consists of America, Russia, the EU and the UN. In other words, the UN – which should be the supreme world body regulating the Israeli-Palestinian conflict – is relegated to being one member in group of four actors.

It's a wrong hierarchy: the UN should be dealing with this dispute, not the Quartet: the Quartet has in fact no basis in international legality: it's an American invention. America invented the Quartet in 2002, and it hasn't achieved anything. I regard it as a clever American device for wasting time because, again, there is a pretence of doing something about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, when in fact nothing is being done. In 2003, the Quartet came up with a very good plan, the Road Map, which envisaged a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza by 2005 and, because of Israel's obstruction, it fell by the wayside.

Rinaldo Francesca interviewed Professor Shlaim for Liberation.

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Erdogan regresses from Prime Minister to Sultan

George Anthony searches the internet



Erdogan, democrat to despot

Broken heads, tear gas, water-cannon: it must be Cairo, Tripoli or some other capital of a brutal dictatorship. Yet this is not Tahrir but Taksim Square, in Istanbul, Europe's biggest city and the business capital of democratic Turkey. The protests are a sign of rising dissatisfaction with Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Turkey's most important leader since Atatürk. The rioting spread like wildfire across the country. Over 4,000 people have been hurt and over 900 were arrested; three have died.

The spark of protest was a plan to redevelop Gezi Park, one of the last green spots in central Istanbul. Resentment has been smouldering over the government's big construction projects, ranging from a third bridge over the Bosphorus to a crazy canal from the Black Sea.

But only after this first protest was met by horribly heavy-handed policing did the blaze spread, via Twitter and other social media. A local dispute turned national because its elements—brutal police behav-

our and mega-projects rammed through with a dismissive lack of consultation—serve as an extreme example of the authoritarian way Mr Erdoğan now runs his country. For some observers, Turkey's upheaval provides new evidence that Islam and democracy cannot coexist. But Mr Erdoğan's religiosity is beside the point. The real lesson of these events is about authoritarianism: Turkey will not put up with a middle-class democrat behaving like an Ottoman sultan.

Alighting from the democratic train

In some ways, Mr Erdoğan has done well. GDP growth has averaged over 5% a year since his Justice and Development (AK) party took office in late 2002. The government also pushed through enough reforms to earn the start of membership talks with the European Union in 2005, a prize that had eluded Turkey for 40 years.

Mr Erdoğan has done more than any of his predecessors to

settle matters with his country's 15m repressed and restless Kurds. Turkey has come to be seen as a model for nations emerging from the Arab spring.

This record explains why AK has won three commanding electoral victories, the most recent in June 2011. Mr Erdoğan remains popular, especially among small-business owners and the conservative Anatolian peasantry who make up most of the millions of recent migrants to the cities. Against a useless opposition, AK may well win again.

Yet there have long been worries about Mr Erdoğan. He once called democracy a train from which you get off once you reach the station. He is disdainful of the cosmopolitan bourgeoisie of Istanbul and Izmir.

His party's religious roots led many to fear the Islamisation of Atatürk's proudly secular state: a new law restricting alcohol sales lent credence to those worries.

Some fret that, far from being a model of Islamist democracy, AK might expose the concept as an oxymoron. Yet there are many in Mr Erdoğan's party who, like its co-founder, Turkey's president, Abdullah Gül,

disapprove of the prime minister's authoritarianism and find his interpretation of democracy too narrow; and there are many non-Muslim leaders, such as Russia's Vladimir Putin and Hungary's Viktor Orbán who behave high-handedly. The problem is not Islam but Mr Erdoğan.

He has a majoritarian notion of politics: if he wins an election, he believes he is entitled to do what he likes until the next one. Sometimes, as in defanging the coup-prone army, he has used power well.

But over time the checks on him have fallen away. AK nominees fill the judiciary and AK people run the provinces; their friends win the big contracts. Mr Erdoğan has intimidated the media into self-censorship: as the protesters choked on tear gas, the television networks carried programmes about cooking and penguins.

More journalists are in jail in Turkey than in China. Mr Erdoğan has locked up whole staff-colleges of generals. Within his own party, people are afraid to stand up to him. His self-belief long ago swelled into rank intolerance. His social conservatism has warped into social engineering.



Police versus the people

The risk is that he will now hold onto power even more tightly. Under AK party rules that limit deputies to three terms in the parliament, he must stand down as prime minister at the next election in 2015. He may be tempted to change the constitution so that he can become a powerful executive president, or run his party from the presidential palace, or simply change the rules so that he can stay on.

Ottomans are to be sat on, nowadays

For two reasons Mr Erdogan must abandon these ideas and prepare to pass leadership of AK, and executive power, to the more statesmanlike Mr Gul

at the next election. One is that many Turks are tiring of him—just as poll-tax riots in 1990 signalled that Britons had tired of Margaret Thatcher, or the French rejected Charles de Gaulle after 1968. If Mr Erdogan stays, he may find his country increasingly ungovernable.

He also needs to preserve his achievements, which are already fragile and are at risk of unravelling. The economy has slowed sharply, partly because of recession in the euro zone, Turkey's biggest market. Talks with the EU have ground to a halt and Mr Erdogan seems to have lost interest. Negotiations with the Kurds, particularly



Fiery demonstrations



Demonstrating in Taksim Square

with Abdullah Ocalan, the jailed leader of the Kurdistan Workers' Party, are on a knife-edge.

Mr Erdogan could use the promise of an orderly succession to set Turkey on the right course. The country needs a new constitution to replace the 1982 one drafted by the army; but it should be done by consensus among all parties and it should devolve rather than centralise power.

Were Mr Erdogan to devote his remaining time to constitutional reform, to finding a settlement with the Kurds and

to using revived EU talks to keep democracy and the economy on track, his place in Turkish history would be secure.

This week's protests have not been all tear gas and streaming eyes. Ordinary people in ordinary districts have been banging pots and pans and hanging out flags to make their voices heard.

Many Turks have found a new sense of unity that in time could foster genuine, pluralistic democracy—if only the sultan would listen. Much is riding on how he treats the protesters in Taksim Square.



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