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Camp David 2 and President Clinton's Bridging Proposals – the Palestinian Version

Uri Horowitz

This article will show that the Second Camp David Conference (December, 2000) and the bridging proposals offered by US President Bill Clinton (July, 2000) engendered radically different reactions among Israelis and Palestinians. While both were seen in Israel as a process bringing it on the verge of an historic resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a close examination of the Palestinian press, and comments made by PA leadership, show that the Palestinian reaction was different indeed.

What has been perceived by Israel and the US as an unprecedented step closer to Palestinian demands was regarded by the Palestinians as not only inadequate, but even as a plot to continue the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories by other means. This sense was aptly summarized by a Palestinian pundit, who in January, 2001 described President Clinton's proposals as a program by which the Israeli occupation 'leaves by the door, only to reenter through the window'.

To the Palestinians, their key political achievement in recent months has been their firm stand in the face of Israeli and American pressure to accept their proposals, while simultaneously making these suggestions a point of departure for future negotiations on a permanent status agreement. They believe that the principal means permitting them to withstand the pressure on them to make unsustainable compromises is the situation of chronic violence they have managed to sustain in the territories since the end of September 2000.

This article sums up the public statements made by senior Palestinian figures who participated in Camp David II and in the discussions of President Clinton's bridging proposals. They include comments made by Abu Mazen, Abu Ala, Nabil Sha'ath, Sa'eb Erakat, Yassir Abed Rabbo and Akram Haniya on Palestinian, Israeli and US positions in the talks.

It is important to note that the above-named sources have reiterated

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Palestinians. Kam recommends maintaining a presence there for an extended period of time, until it is proven that conditions permit Israeli withdrawal.

Anat Kurtz examines the Fatah's role in the Al-Aqsa *intifada* and the motivating factors behind this function and the organization's activities. In this framework, she surveys the evolution of the Fatah's standing over the past decade and the process of its institutionalization, against the backdrop of the internal and external challenges placed before the organization.

Maj. Gen. (res.) Gideon Sheffer, who served as Head of the Human Resources Division on the IDF (Israel Defense Forces) General Staff and as Deputy Head of the National Security Council, presents his concepts regarding conscription into the IDF. The article – written against the backdrop of the recommendations of the commission headed by retired Supreme Court Justice Zvi Tal, which investigated issues about the national draft – comprehensively and methodically presents the dilemma which arises from the need to balance the manpower demands of the army against the exigencies of existing conscription policy. In this light, Sheffer recommends the institution of universal national service. In his opinion, the government should lead in taking the initiative for making the necessary changes, thereby avoiding a situation where it is forced to make such changes because of mounting public pressure or discontent.

time and again that PA Chairman Yassir Arafat and the Palestinian leadership had opposed the holding of the Camp David II conference on the date proposed by the US and Israel. Prior to the conference, the Palestinians had felt that there was insufficient time to prepare. It would be better, they felt, to delay the conference by several weeks, given the fact that the basic issues – the refugees and Jerusalem – had not been meaningfully discussed by the sides before the conference, in light of Israel's eagerness to put an end to the conflict. Moreover, following the talks in Stockholm between Israeli Foreign Minister Shlomo Ben-Ami and Abu Ala, and further trilateral contacts between Arafat, Ben-Ami and Barak's personal envoy Yossi Ginossar, it had become clear to the Palestinians that bridging the gaps between the sides' positions without lengthy prior preparation would be impossible.

To that end, the Palestinians claimed that they had on more than one occasion cautioned the US and Israel that the conference was bound to fail unless meticulous prior preparations were made, but that these warnings had been greeted by distrust and ridicule from Israel and the US. The Palestinians decided to attend the conference anyway, as they did not wish to lose President Clinton's good will or risk being accused of torpedoing the political process. Their expectations were low in any event, particularly where the Jerusalem and refugee issues were concerned. This is possibly indicated by the fact that the conference was not attended by Feisal al-Husseini, who holds the Jerusalem portfolio in the PA; also absent was Assad Abd al-

Rahman, until January 2001 holder of the refugee portfolio in the PLO Executive Committee.

Palestinian reservations over the structure of the negotiations were another factor related to the PA's demand for advanced and detailed preparation prior to the negotiations, linking the Palestinians' reactions to the Camp David conference to their reactions on Clinton's bridging proposals. The structure of the talks was based on reaching a framework agreement which, once achieved, would require further talks to complete the details. From the Camp David conference to this day, Palestinian figures have consistently reiterated their apprehension that Israel would exploit these subsequent negotiations on details to avoid fulfilling its obligations. An unmistakable example, they claimed, was manifested in the negotiations with Israel on the opening of Hebron's Shuhada Street, which went on for over a year (1997-98). In the wake of the conference, they voiced similar complaints on the vagueness of Israel's stands and the fact that it had not provided them with the full version of its Camp David presentation until *after* the conference had ended (more on this will follow, below). In January, 2001 they complained of the generalized nature and extreme lack of clarity of President Clinton's bridging proposals.

These, then, are the principal points of the Israeli and Palestinian stands at the Camp David conference, according to the statements made by the above-mentioned Palestinian officials. They pertain to the operative sections in President Clinton's bridging proposals (as published in

the international media). In this connection it should be recalled that all of the above-mentioned officials took pains to explain that the sides had failed to reach agreement or understanding on even a single issue at Camp David.

The Security Issue

A. Israel's Position

1. Israel to retain control over parts of the Jordan valley, including the settlements and military bases there, for a period not exceeding 12 years. According to clarifications submitted to the Palestinians by Israel shortly after the conference, the area in question was some 8% of the Jordan valley for a period of 12 - 15 years, and permanent control (once the Palestinian state possessed formal sovereignty) over 15%-20% of the strip of territory overlooking the Jordan river and the Dead Sea. In additional post-conference clarifications, Israel informed the Palestinians of its demand to annex a strip of land along 15% of the Jordan river and along 15% of the Dead Sea; some Palestinian statements also mentioned Israel's demand for military patrols along the border with Jordan.

2. A demand to maintain a number of Israeli military bases in the West Bank (Palestinian figures mention a maximum number of six bases, including staging areas for forces to be deployed in the West Bank in emergency situations). Israel's post-conference clarifications noted its demand to control five regions in the West Bank and three access roads to these regions in order to deploy its forces in an emergency.

3. A demand to maintain three early warning and intelligence stations in

the West Bank. In a post-conference clarification, Israel stipulated that these stations would be manned by its own personnel, with a Palestinian liaison officer at each station.

4. An Israeli presence at international crossings, to monitor persons entering and leaving the Palestinian state and the entry of goods.

5. The Palestinian state will have sovereignty over its airspace, but Israel will control all flights in and over said airspace. Israel will furthermore

Israel would maintain three early warning stations in the West Bank, with a Palestinian liaison presence. The stations will be subject to review after ten years, with a change in their status to be mutually

control the Palestinian electromagnetic bandwidth.

6. The Palestinian state will be demilitarized.

B. The Palestinian Position

1. Opposition to an Israeli military-security presence inside the Palestinian state and along its borders (which will consist of the lines of 4 June 1967 with minor modifications described below in the Palestinian attitude on the border issue) in the Jordan valley and at international crossings.

2. The agreed presence of an international force along the borders of the Palestinian state.

3. Opposition to the arms restrictions

Israel wished to impose on the army of the Palestinian state in the context of its demilitarization.

C. President Clinton's Bridging Proposals

1. International presence in the territories, that would only be withdrawn by mutual consent. This presence would also monitor the implementation of the agreement by both sides.

2. The Israeli withdrawal should be phased over 36 months, while the international force is gradually introduced into the area. At the end of this period a small Israeli presence would remain in specified military locations in the Jordan valley, under the authority of the international force, for another 36 months. This period could be reduced in the event of favorable regional developments that would diminish the threat against Israel.

3. Israel would maintain three early warning stations in the West Bank, with a Palestinian liaison presence. The stations will be subject to review after ten years, with a change in their status to be mutually agreed upon.

4. Areas will be available in the West Bank for the emergency deployment of Israeli forces. President Clinton understands emergency to mean an imminent and demonstrable threat to Israel's national security of a military nature that requires the activation of a national state of emergency. The international force would need to be notified of any such determination.

5. The State of Palestine would have sovereignty over its airspace, but the two sides would make special arrangements for Israeli operational and training needs.

6. A compromise suggested between Israel's position — which would define the Palestinian state as "demilitarized" — and the position of the Palestinians, that this state should be defined as one of "limited arms", it is proposed that Palestine be termed a "non-militarized state".
7. There will be a strong Palestinian security force, and the Palestinians will possess an international force for border security and deterrence.

The Border Issue

A. The Israeli Position

1. Permanent control, as noted above, of 15%-20% of the strip of land overlooking the Jordan River and the Dead Sea.
2. Annexation of 9%–13.5% of the West Bank, including three settlement blocs in its northern, central and southern parts (some Palestinian officials claim that Israel made changes, at the conference, to the extent of the territories it wished to annex.) Post-conference Israeli clarifications include its demand to annex of 10.5% of the West Bank.
3. A number of Palestinian figures claim that, at some point in the conference, Israel expressed itself ready to exchange territories. In this respect Israel agreed to add land from within the June 4, 1967 lines to the Gaza Strip, totaling 10% of the land to be annexed to Israel from the West Bank (described below in the Palestinian position on land exchanges). Israel subsequently retracted its readiness for such exchanges in its post-conference clarifications.
4. Relinquishing all Israeli-held territory in the Gaza Strip.

B. The Palestinian Position

1. Negation of any manner of Israeli control over border areas along the Jordan River and Dead Sea.
2. Agreement to mutual, minor and equivalent border modifications provided that these will not exceed 2% of the "territories" of the 4 June 1967 borders. In effect, the Palestinians proposed the annexation of land inside the Green Line to the Gaza Strip, in return for an equivalent area to be transferred to Israel from the West Bank, including land in the vicinity of Jerusalem. Israel replied with the above-mentioned proposal.

C. President Clinton's Bridging Proposals

1. 94%-96% of West Bank territory would be designated for the Palestinian state.
2. The land annexed by Israel should be compensated by a land-swap of 1%-3%, in addition to territorial arrangements, e.g. permanent safe passage between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The sides should also consider the swap of leased lands to meet their respective needs.
3. The parties should develop a map consistent with the following criteria: 80% of the settlers in blocs of settlement, contiguity, minimum annexation of territory to Israel, minimum number of Palestinians to be affected by the annexation.

The Refugee Issue

A. The Israeli Position

1. Israel perceives the refugee problem as a humanitarian issue, and is willing to express its regret at the fate of the Palestinian refugees.
2. It recognizes the refugees' right to return to the Palestinian state to be

established in the territories.

3. It is prepared to admit several hundred refugees to Israel annually under a family reunification program over a period of ten years, thereby admitting a total of several thousand refugees to Israel. In clarifications submitted to the Palestinians shortly after the conference, Israel stated that no right of return to Israeli territory would prevail, but it would be possible to admit refugees to Israel in a family reunification context to a maximum number of ten thousand over a 15-year period.
4. An international fund to be set up to allocate compensation pay to the refugees. The fund will also compensate Jews from Arab countries who moved to Israel following the War of Independence.

B. The Palestinian Position

1. Israel bears moral and legal responsibility for the refugee problem. In this respect, various senior Palestinian figures emphasized that in the course of the conference, they had availed themselves of the works of Israeli 'new historians' to prove this responsibility. They further noted that an argument with Israel had arisen during the talks, regarding the number of refugees and the question of "who is a refugee".
2. Guaranteeing the right of return to anyone desiring it, as noted in UN General Assembly Resolution 194 (i.e., return to Israel proper, according to the Palestinian reading). This return should begin with the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon in light of their difficult situation.
3. Awarding compensation to all returnees for the use made of their property and assets. Those not

wishing to return will be compensated for their property and assets, and for their suffering.

4. The Custodian of Absentee Property, an official Israeli body formed in 1949 to manage the assets of the Palestinian refugees, would be responsible for payment of such compensation.

5. Compensation must also be made for Palestinian public property, such as schools, hospitals, mosques, etc.

6. Compensation must also be made to 'host' countries where the refugees settled to offset the financial burden imposed upon them during the last half-century.

7. Establishing an international fund to cover a part of the compensation.

8. Negating any link between the Palestinian refugee problem and Jewish émigrés from Arab countries. Although a certain connection exists between the two, it constitutes a bilateral problem between Israel and each of the relevant Arab countries.

C. President Clinton's Bridging Proposals

1. Israel is prepared to acknowledge the moral and material suffering caused to the Palestinian people as the result of the 1948 war, and recognizes the need to assist the international community's efforts in addressing the problem.

2. An international commission will implement all aspects that flow from the agreement: compensation, resettlement, rehabilitation, etc. The US is prepared to lead the international effort to help the refugees.

3. The parties need to adopt a formulation on the right of return (ROR) that will make clear that there

is no right of return to Israel itself, but that does not negate the aspirations of the Palestinian people to return to the area. In light of that, the President suggests the following two alternatives:

a) Both sides recognize the Palestinian refugees' right to return to historic Palestine;

b) Both sides recognize the Palestinian refugees' right to return to their homeland.

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4. The agreement would define the implementation of this general right in a way that is consistent with the two-state solution. It will list the five possible final homes for the refugees:

a) The State of Palestine;

b) Areas of Israel being transferred to the Palestinian State under the land-swap;

c) Rehabilitation in host countries (i.e. Arab countries presently inhabited by the refugees);

d) Resettlement in third countries (any country in the world prepared to accept Palestinian refugees leaving their Arab host countries); and

e) Admission into Israel.

5. The agreement would make clear that return to the West Bank and Gaza,

or the areas acquired through the land-swap, would be a right for all Palestinian refugees, while the other options (rehabilitation in host countries, resettlement in third countries, or absorption into Israel) would depend upon the policies of the relevant countries. Israel could indicate in the agreement that it intended to establish a policy so that some of the refugees would be absorbed into Israel, consistent with its sovereign decision.

6. Israel can, in this agreement, make clear its intention to adopt a policy to absorb a part of the refugees in Israel, in accordance with its sovereign decision.

7. Priority will be granted to resolving the problem of the refugees in Lebanon.

8. The parties would agree that implementation of the above constitutes the implementation of UN General Assembly Resolution 194.

The Jerusalem Issue

A. The Israeli Position

1. The various Palestinian sources describe the Israeli position on this issue as unprecedented in its bizarre complexity. Some even consider it ridiculous, and accuse the US of having cooperated with Israel in forming these stands and ultimately having adopted them. Reference is to the various ideas raised by Israel and the US on the subject of sovereignty and rule on the Temple Mount (*Haram al-Sharif*). The Palestinians, moreover, stress that they warned Israel and the US in the Camp David talks that these positions and ideas would lead to an outbreak of religious violence between Israel and the Muslim world.

2. Israel demands sovereignty over

the Temple Mount, and the Jews' right to pray there, and has agreed that the Palestinians will be entitled to manage the site. The Palestinians will moreover be accorded safe passage to the Temple Mount from territories outside Jerusalem. Once the relevant negotiations make progress, Israel has agreed to the US bridging proposal that *sovereignty* over the Temple Mount should remain in Israeli hands. However, an international authority, composed of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and Morocco (as head of the Jerusalem Committee of the Organization of the Islamic Conference), will accord the Palestinians custodianship of the Mount. At a further point in the negotiations Israel raised additional ideas (claimed by certain senior Palestinians to have been concocted jointly with US legal experts). These included granting the Palestinians sovereignty over everything situated above-ground on the Temple Mount site, and granting Israel sovereignty over everything located below-ground in order to protect the remnants of the Temple. Senior Palestinians have contended that there is in fact no proof of the Temple's existence, and have taken to calling it 'the alleged ('*maz'oum*') Temple'. Additional Israeli ideas included according 'trustee' status over the Temple Mount to the Palestinians, and leaving the 'residual' sovereignty over the Mount in Israeli hands. After the conference Israel made a further proposal to the Palestinians: sovereignty over the Temple Mount will remain 'divine', with neither side demanding it. In this framework, an Islamic country would erect a building on the Mount, part of which will be used as a synagogue.

3. Sovereignty over the Old (walled) City to go to Israel, which will be responsible for the municipal administration of the Jewish and Armenian quarters; the Muslim and Christian quarters will come under the municipal administration of the Palestinians, and will be governed by a sovereign Palestinian presidium. The Palestinian-governed areas would be linked by safe passage with sovereign Palestinian territory outside the Old City.

4. Housing quarters abutting on the Old City outside the walls, such as Sheikh Jarrah, Sawana, Silwan and A-Tor, will come under Israeli sovereignty and Palestinian municipal administration. Neighborhoods more remote from the Old City, such as Al-Issawiyah, Kalandiah, Beit Hanina, Umm Tuba, Kfar Aqab, and Arab el-Suwahra, will come under Palestinian sovereignty. Jewish neighborhoods in this area will come under Israeli sovereignty and will be linked by safe passage.

B. The Palestinian Position

1. The whole of East Jerusalem will come under Palestinian sovereignty.
2. The Jewish quarter and the Western Wall will be under Israeli control, but under Palestinian sovereignty.
3. Jerusalem will be an open city, and there will be cooperation with Israel in the provision of municipal services.
4. Regarding the other Jewish neighborhoods built around Jerusalem after 1967, the Palestinian position is as stated above regarding territorial exchanges (i.e., these neighborhoods are to be included in land exchanges between Israel and the Palestinian state).

C. President Clinton's Bridging Proposals

1. What is Arab should be Palestinian, and what is Jewish should be Israeli. This would apply to the Old City as well. The parties would work on maps that would ensure maximum territorial continuity for both sides.
2. Two formulations are suggested to formalize the Palestinian *de facto* control over the *Haram al-Sharif* while respecting the convictions of the Jewish people. With regard to either one, international monitoring, to provide for mutual confidence between the sides, is suggested:
 - a) Palestinian sovereignty over the *Haram al-Sharif*, and Israeli sovereignty over the Western Wall —
 - i. in the space sacred to Jews, of which it is a part; or
 - ii. and the Holy of Holies, of which it is a part;
 - b) Palestinian sovereignty over the *Haram al-Sharif* and Israeli sovereignty over the Western Wall, plus shared functional sovereignty over the issue of excavation under the *Haram* or behind the Wall. That way, mutual consent would be required before any archaeological excavation took place.

Ending the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict

A. The Israeli Position

Israel maintained, both at Camp David and in its clarifications submitted to the Palestinians immediately after the conference, that a framework agreement must include a declaration on the end of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

B. The Palestinian Position

It is clear from the Palestinian statements that Israel's positions as

submitted at the conference would not permit the Palestinian side to declare an end to the conflict. They did not meet the Palestinian demands on the two issues directly linked to ending the conflict — Jerusalem and the refugees.

C. President Clinton's Bridging Proposals

The agreement will clearly mark the end of the conflict, and its implementation will put an end to all claims. This could be manifested through a UN Security Council Resolution that noted that Resolutions 242 and 338 have been implemented, and through the release of the Palestinian prisoners.

The Water Issue

Senior Palestinians note, in passing, that the Palestinian side requested a cessation of talks on the water issue, begun in Vermont concurrently with the Camp David talks, as they felt that no progress on this issue could be made until the remaining problems were resolved in a lasting status agreement.

Summary

The numerous Palestinian comments on the manner of the negotiations, and on the stands taken by Israel and the US during the period between Camp David II and the submission of President Clinton's bridging proposals are uniform and continuous, with no substantive changes in their positions since the Camp David conference. This emerges from Arafat's reply to President Clinton's proposals, and from Yassir Abed Rabbo's comments on these proposals (both covered

extensively by the Palestinian press during the first half of January 2001). They accord particular prominence to the following points:

A. Regarding the substance of the positions — the Palestinians have determined that ultimately both Israeli and American proposals (which, as has been stated, are perceived by the Palestinians to have been coordinated in advance) fail to comply with even

The Palestinians have severe reservations regarding an approach in which agreement is first reached on a framework agreement, and is then followed by comprehensive negotiations.

minimum Palestinian requirements, and attempt to subvert the authority of UN Resolutions 194, 242 and 338. Beyond differences of opinion on 'technical' matters (duration of interim security measures, etc.), this is emphatically the case for the three key issues on which a Palestinian end-of-conflict declaration hinges: the right of return; Jerusalem and the Temple Mount; Israeli withdrawal and the settlements.

Regarding the **Right of Return**, the Palestinians perceive Clinton's proposals as demanding that they forgo the right of return.

Regarding **Jerusalem and the Temple Mount**, the Palestinians claim that

there is an Israeli-American agreement regarding Israeli sovereignty, at least within the confines of the Temple Mount. However, the Palestinians rule out any recognition of the sanctity the Mount holds for the Jews (unlike the Western Wall). With regard to rule, administration, and the division of sovereignty in the Old City and East Jerusalem, the Palestinians believe that a joint Israeli-US position existed at the time of the Camp David talks. This position, they felt, sought to create a non-viable day-to-day reality that would ultimately preserve the *status quo* in the city.

Finally, regarding **Israel's withdrawal and the settlements**, the Palestinians rule out the existing asymmetric basis of territorial exchanges. They demand total symmetry regarding both the extent and quality of territorial exchanges; in any event the extent of the land to be transferred to Israel according to the Clinton proposals is overlarge. Palestinian officials also contend that it is unclear whether the Jewish neighborhoods in East Jerusalem are included in the proposals, and that this will split the future Palestinian state. They also emphatically reject the principle of settlement blocs, noting their significance in legitimizing the settlements.

B. With regard to the structure of the negotiations — the Palestinians, in a lesson learned over the long years of negotiations since Oslo, have severe reservations regarding an approach in which agreement is first reached on a framework agreement, and is then followed by comprehensive negotiations to settle the details. They

perceive this as an trick that will enable Israel to drag out the negotiations over a lengthy period, allowing them in the meantime to perpetuate the *status quo*, or even alter it to its own benefit. These reservations are presumably what prompted the Palestinian demand to break down Clinton's bridging proposals into a full and detailed agreement that will ultimately be imposed on Israel in the wake of Palestinian amendments. The reservations also serve as background for the Palestinian determination that they will not give up their 'end of conflict' card before full agreement is realized.

C. Palestinian ambivalence regarding American involvement in the peace process — The Palestinian ambivalence *vis-à-vis* the Americans, accompanied by the realization that the political process cannot be furthered without them, is contributing to the Palestinians' growing resistance to the American monopoly over the peace process as a whole. This derives mainly from their belief that Israel and the Clinton Administration were cooperating to impose an agreement on the PA, and has given rise to reiterated Palestinian demands for significant international participation in the political process. The Palestinians may attempt to shatter the US monopoly in this area once the new Administration takes up the reins of the negotiations.

D. Palestinians and the Arab world — The Palestinians have concluded that they need support of the Arab states, in order to balance Israel's advantage

in conjunction with its close coordination with the US. It should be noted that the Palestinians in general are disappointed with the Arab world in this respect.

E. Centrality of violence against Israel — Violence is perceived by the Palestinians as a legitimate strategic tool, enabling them to confront Israel from a position of inferiority and helping them to achieve political objectives such as an imposed international involvement in the region.

F. The domestic front's increasing importance in the considerations of the Palestinian leadership — The growing preoccupations with the refugee and Jerusalem issues are strengthening the impact of domestic considerations on Arafat and his leadership circle. Arafat told Clinton during the Camp David conference that should he decide to accept his proposals on Jerusalem, Clinton would soon be attending his funeral. Members of the Palestinian delegation to Camp David explained to their American interlocutors that they headed a movement that had sprung from the refugee camps. Were they to agree to an unjust resolution of the refugee problem without including the right of return, a new revolutionary movement would emerge in the camps and reject them (these statements were quoted in the Palestinian press). The strong influence wielded by the domestic front increased following the wave of violence in the territories at the end of last September, and in light of the

numerous Palestinian victims, rampant agitation in the refugee camps, and marked extremism manifesting itself in the Fatah movement — the Palestinian Authority's chief base of support.

G. The Palestinians list four principal achievements attained in their confrontation with the United States and Israel since the Camp David conference: the outbreak of the *intifada* and their ability to maintain it; considerable US and Israeli movement towards the Palestinian position since Camp David, and that a resumption of the negotiations will be based this movement; that the two sides are better acquainted with the stands and problems of their counterparts — a fact that is bound to benefit them in any future negotiations.

In conclusion, it is important to emphasize that any Palestinian negotiation in effect rests on the shoulders of one man: Arafat. As the political negotiations gain momentum and the fateful decision draws near, the more marked is his loneliness at the top. His lieutenants, young and old alike, either cannot or will not take responsibility for these decisions. In the events portrayed here, Arafat has demonstrated his ideological adherence to his basic principles, such as the right of return. He has also not hesitated to use violence or engage in contests of brinkmanship, disregarding incidental considerations such as the imminent elections in Israel and a new administration in the United States.