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BULLETIN

April-May 1992

Whatever your religious affiliation, you will be dismayed when you read the Statement by the Clergy of Ramallah on the back of this page. Then return to the front, please.

Can you imagine American soldiers doing such things? Worse yet, imagine such acts as US government policy!

Hanan Ashrawi, member of the Palestinian delegation to the current peace talks spoke in Washington recently of the two sides of such conduct by the Israeli army. She cited the dehumanizing effect on the young Israeli soldiers who are taught and then led in shootings, beatings, and property destruction.

Matti Peled, Israeli professor, retired army general, and advocate of land for peace, also spoke in Washington recently. He said there is in Israel strong sentiment toward land for peace, but government leaders and columnists place peace second to security. That, according to Peled, ignores informed military judgements that continued occupation of Arab land is not necessary for security.

Peled believes the June election in Israel will have little impact on prospects for peace. He said only international pressure will resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Citing history, Peled said a US demand for adherence to UN resolutions would of course yield protests from Israel, but also compliance. The US has a strong lever in the $3-5 billion it gives unconditionally to Israel each year.

Why doesn't the US go beyond the current peace talks? Are we really an honest broker when we keep the Israeli economy afloat at US taxpayers expense? Does politics (the power dynamic of government) get in the way of human rights? Is not the purpose of every government (at least democratic governments) to promote the welfare (human rights) of ALL who are governed? The 'democratic' government that does otherwise is either a failed democracy or not a democracy at all.

Polls show that most Israelis want to trade land for peace. The Palestinians, often said by the Israelis to have missed chances for peace, are now willing to accept the applicable UN resolutions. Will the current Israeli government take advantage of that, and allow peace in the Middle East to happen?