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# Pragmatism and Rhetoric in Libya's Policy Toward Israel

by *Jacob Abadi*

## INTRODUCTION

Libya belongs to a category of Arab states that have little to lose by encouraging hostility toward Israel. Its distance from the center of the Arab-Israeli conflict provides it with a large measure of security against possible Israeli reprisals. The hostility toward Israel, which had long been the main feature of Libya's foreign policy under Colonel Mu'amar al-Qaddafi, was lacking in the early years when King Idris was in power. Libya's connections to the West during the 1950s and 1960s had a moderating effect on its leadership. Although the Libyan monarchy had demonstrated sympathy to the plight of the Palestinian refugees, its anti-Israeli rhetoric remained restrained and it was not until King Idris was overthrown in September 1969 by a group of officers led by Qaddafi that Libya became a sworn enemy of the Jewish State. Seeking to dominate the Arab world, Qaddafi turned into an ardent supporter of the Palestinian people and an implacable enemy of the state of Israel. Qaddafi's vision of an Arab-dominated Middle East, free from exploitive imperialism and Western influence, left no room for a Jewish state, which according to Qaddafi was a mere tool in the hands of the Western powers.

The purpose of this article is to demonstrate that Libya's policy toward Israel was to a large extent determined by Qaddafi's rivalry with Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and to a lesser extent with Sadat's successor, Hosni Mubarak, for the domination of the Arab world. Events in the Middle East have demonstrated that interstate rivalry has a radicalizing effect on the states involved in competition for power over the region. For example, this tendency became evident during the events leading to the Six-Day War of 1967, when Egyptian President Gamal Abd el Nasser was compelled to respond to Syria's challenge by removing the UN Emergency Force, which separated Egypt and Israel. Similarly, Qaddafi regarded the Arab-Israeli conflict as an issue that could rally Arab public opinion behind him and provide him with the opportunity to challenge Egyptian leadership of the Arab world. Another argument raised in this article is that Qaddafi's official pronouncements did not always match his actions and his conduct was not always as erratic as one might be lead to believe. Qaddafi had proven that despite his hostile rhetoric, he was capable of dealing with Israel, when such a course of action was in Libya's interest. Despite the hostile declarations, which emanated from Tripoli, the Libyan regime showed a remarkable degree of flexibility. Although Qaddafi continued to champion the cause of the Palestinian people, he demonstrated his ability to readjust Libya's foreign policy to the needs of the time.

Qaddafi was far less skillful than most Middle Eastern leaders who quickly reassessed their country's foreign policy in light of the events that occurred by the end of 1980s. Yet he understood the profound changes that occurred following the demise of the Soviet Union, which left the US as the world's only great power. However, Qaddafi found it extremely difficult to admit that his revolutionary scheme for a metamorphosis of the Middle Eastern order was no longer valid. Nor could he renounce his claim to the

leadership of the Arab world. In the new world order that followed the demise of the Soviet Union, there was no room for the revolutionary ideas, which he had long been promoting. But for a long time Qaddafi refused to come to terms with the Jewish State, whose very existence stood in complete antithesis to the ideology that he promoted. Qaddafi sought to mend fences with the US and at the same time to maintain an image of a revolutionary leader. Convinced that the Israeli lobby and powerful Jewish pressure groups in the US were capable of helping him improve his image in Washington, Qaddafi found himself compelled to deal with Israel in a covert manner. At the same time, however, his anti-Israeli rhetoric continued, as if he was unaware of the profound changes that had occurred in the last decade. Consequently, his policy toward Israel remained characterized by inconsistency, which reinforced the impression that he was a mercurial leader incapable of consistent policy-making.

### **BILATERAL RELATIONS IN THE IDRIS ERA**

Prior to Qaddafi's rise to power, Libya maintained cordial relations with Western countries. The country was ruled by King Idris I, who declared Libya an independent state on 24 December 1951. Although Libya had a legislature, the king held most of the political power. His rule was autocratic while his foreign policy was conservative and pro-Western. Whenever the regions of Tripolitania, Cyrenaica and the Fezzan, which made up the Libyan state, challenged the central government the king disbanded all political parties. Yet the monarchy remained stable despite the domestic dissent. During the early 1950s, the King established closer ties with Great Britain and the US and allowed them to operate military bases in Libya in exchange for economic aid. Under the conservative regime of King Idris, Libya enjoyed cordial relations with other conservative governments throughout Asia and Africa. Throughout most of his reign, the King managed to maintain distance from the Arab-Israeli conflict and apart from occasional remarks regarding the tragedy that befell the Palestinian refugees, little was said or done regarding this matter.

The King's pro-Western orientation raised hope in Israel that Libya would continue to maintain a benign attitude toward the Arab-Israeli conflict. Established in 1948, Israel began its arduous quest for recognition and acceptance by its neighbors. The optimists among the Israeli diplomats believed that once it attained its independence, Libya would remain distant from the Arab-Israeli conflict and possibly maintain cordial relations with Israel. However, officials in the Israeli Foreign Ministry were more realistic and sought to prevent the possibility that Libya would turn into a hostile Arab state. Therefore, when the future of the Italian colonies in North Africa was debated in the UN in autumn 1949, the Israeli delegation rejected the proposal to establish a British trusteeship in Libya. Israel's Ambassador to the UN Abba Eban explained the position taken by Israel. He wrote:

Despite the hostility of the Arab world, Sharett and I thought that it would be incongruous for Israel to impose on other nations the precise form of colonial domination from which we had freed ourselves over a year before. We voted against the British trusteeship proposal, which was narrowly rejected. We had therefore taken a measure of

responsibility for expediting the independence of an Arab state. In terms of strict realpolitik, this sounded quixotic, but in the atmosphere of those times, there was a general expectation that Israel would apply some measure of vision to its international policies. The columnist I.F. Stone wrote rapturously about us on October 26. It was clear to him that Israel was making some investment in the prospect of peace.<sup>1</sup>

Eban admitted that Israel's decision was partially caused by anti-British sentiments. He added, however, that it would have looked ridiculous if Israel had chosen to recommend a trusteeship in Libya after fighting against British rule.<sup>2</sup>

The Israeli delegates did not delude themselves into thinking that this act of good will would help establish a durable friendship with Libya. An Israeli Foreign Ministry official commented on the Israeli vote saying, "When Israel's abstention helped frustrate the trusteeship plan, it did not expect to gain Libya's friendship but neither did it anticipate its rabid hostility."<sup>3</sup> Indeed, expressions of solidarity with the Arab states were common in Libya before its independence. Demonstrations occurred in the urban areas of the former Italian colony during the Palestinian rebellion of 1936. Such expressions of support for the Palestinian cause were heard with increasing frequency after the Second World War and reached their climax during Israel's War of Independence in 1948. Thereafter, Libyans were constantly reminded of the plight of their Palestinian brethren by the Arab media, and particularly by the Voice of Cairo radio broadcasts. When the Cyrenaican Assembly discussed the issue of boycotting Israel in 1951, Israel's opponents called for a strict embargo on the Jewish State, and thereby silenced the moderates who favored neutrality on that issue. The dispute ended in the suspension of that session by the prime minister.<sup>4</sup>

Libya made a far more obvious demonstration of pro-Arab solidarity in 1956, when Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal, and thereby alienated the Great Powers. King Idris attempted to maintain a moderate posture in Egypt's conflict with the Great Powers, but the pan-Arab pressures were too intense to ignore. Therefore, when Nasser became the target of attacks by the Western media, Libya's Prime Minister Mustafa Bin Halim was instructed to say that Nasser's decision to nationalize the Suez Canal was legal and justified.<sup>5</sup> Bin Halim found himself in a more serious dilemma when Great Britain required Israel and Egypt to withdraw from the Canal. He had to choose between loyalty to Great Britain whose armies liberated Libya from the Axis powers during World War II, and sympathy for the Arab states, which automatically associated British imperialism with Israel and Zionism.

Pan-Arab pressure compelled Libya to demonstrate solidarity with Arab states in their efforts to isolate and boycott Israel. Therefore, in 1957 Libya imposed a strict law prohibiting individuals and companies from trading with Israelis and Jews. Contravening the law involved a punishment of between three to ten years imprisonment. The Libyan regime insisted all along that foreign companies trading with its companies must not call at any Israeli ports.<sup>6</sup>

Apart from enforcing all possible sanctions against the Jewish State, the Libyan government felt compelled to demonstrate sympathy for the Palestinian cause. Its official position on the Palestinian question became clear in spring 1965, when Libya's Prime Minister Hussein Mazegh stated in a radio broadcast his government's conviction that the creation of Israel constituted a gross injustice and a flagrant violation of human rights. He added that the Palestinians were entitled to return to their land and decide their own destiny. Moreover, he insisted that any solution to the Palestinian problem must be based on resolutions made by the Arab states in their summit meeting, which was held during that year. In a demonstration of good will toward the Palestinian cause, King Idris made a personal contribution of £10,000 Sterling. The Crown Prince donated 5,000 and the prime minister 3,000.<sup>7</sup> However, despite this token of sympathy for the Palestinians, Libya's policy was not as hostile toward Israel as one might have expected. For example, when West Germany announced its decision to recognize Israel, the Arab states held a meeting in which they agreed to recall their ambassadors in Bonn; sever diplomatic ties with West Germany if it decided to establish diplomatic relations with Israel; consider effective means for an economic boycott of West Germany; and to reassess relations between the Arab countries and any country that decided to recognize Israel. When the participants were asked to vote on the resolution, Libya joined Morocco and Tunisia in expressing reservations about the first two points. Libya did not sever its ties with Bonn, nor did it recall its ambassador. This response triggered a wave of demonstrations and an attack on the West German embassy in Benghazi. Nevertheless, the Libyan government persisted in its moderate policy toward West Germany. Not only did it apologize for the incident, but also placed guards around the building and promised to find and punish the perpetrators.<sup>8</sup>

Israel's swift victory during the Six-Day War forced Libya to demonstrate greater sympathy for the Arab states and greater hostility toward Israel. Popular pressure on the Libyan government to contribute to the Arab effort in order to embark on another war with Israel increased considerably. Libya's trade unions and students hostile to the monarchy attacked Jews and destroyed their property. Compelled to demonstrate greater hostility toward Israel, Libya joined Egypt in demanding a complete Israeli withdrawal from all occupied territories, without even acknowledging the basic principle that all states in the region had the right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries.<sup>9</sup>

On 29 August 1967, a summit conference of the Arab leaders met in Khartoum. In addition to their decision not to recognize Israel, negotiate or conclude peace with it, they sought to raise funds for another war. While Saudi Arabia agreed to provide an annual contribution of £50 million and Kuwait £55 million, Libya consented to contribute £30 million.<sup>10</sup> Qaddafi, who was a young officer at that time, often told his comrades that he was deeply hurt by Arab humiliation in the Six-Day War. Ever since, he has continued to express his hostility toward Israel at every opportunity. He insisted that Libya's resources must be committed to fight with the Arabs, in order to avenge their defeat.<sup>11</sup> However, after assuming power Qaddafi's rhetoric became somewhat more moderate and he rarely spoke about his readiness to commit his forces to a war with Israel.

## QADDAFI'S COUP AND ITS IMPACT

The efforts to maintain cordial relations with Libya remained high on the agenda of the Israeli intelligence community during that time. Therefore, the overthrow of King Idris in September 1969 by a regime dedicated to a revolutionary cause was a source of great concern to the Israelis. For quite some time, the Israeli intelligence agencies, the Shin Bet and the Mossad, were working on a solution to the "demographic problem" in Israel. The fear that within a short time the higher birth-rate among the Arabs in Israel and in the occupied territories would result in Arab dominance over a Jewish minority led the Israeli intelligence community to conceive of a plan designed to pay any Arab willing to emigrate from Israel. A special Israeli unit was created in order to facilitate the operation. Phony corporations were established in Europe in order to purchase land for Arabs in such places as Brazil and Paraguay. These companies had also dealt with Libya for that purpose. Aware of the fact that a revolutionary leader was unlikely to cooperate in such a plan and anxious to increase the prospects of its implementation, the Israeli government endeavored to keep King Idris in power. According to Mossad chief Zvi Zamir, prior to the Libyan revolution Israeli intelligence had warned Idris and his friends in the US, Britain and Italy that a coup d'état in Libya was imminent. As it turned out, Qaddafi overthrew the monarchy and the resettlement plan was removed from the Mossad's agenda.<sup>12</sup>

Qaddafi's assumption of power resulted in a rapid deterioration in Israeli-Libyan relations. The new leader immediately became the champion of the Palestinian people and criticized Egypt for accepting UN Resolution 242, which demanded that Israel withdraw from the occupied territories but recognized its right to exist within secure boundaries.<sup>13</sup>

Nasser's death in 1970 ushered in a new period of escalating tension in Israeli-Libyan relations. Qaddafi sought to succeed Nasser as the uncontested leader of the Arab world.<sup>14</sup> By adopting a hostile attitude toward Israel, Qaddafi hoped to be regarded by the Arab masses as the only leader capable of avenging their degradation in the Six-Day War. Recognizing his inability to challenge Israel directly, the Libyan leader embarked on a campaign aimed at utilizing Libya's financial resources in an indirect campaign to sever Israel's ties with all its friends and allies. His main effort was directed toward small and poverty-stricken Third World states, which could benefit most from Libya's financial assistance. Thus, during the late sixties and seventies, Libya joined other Arab oil-producing countries in providing monetary aid to African countries willing to terminate their diplomatic relations and commercial dealings with Israel.<sup>15</sup> Qaddafi's plan seemed sinister to the Israelis, who invested in boundless efforts to gain the sympathy and support of the emerging African states. Indeed, Libyan aid was quite successful in dislodging Israeli influence in several African countries. For example, when Qaddafi established diplomatic relations with Chad on 23 December 1972, one of his conditions was that its diplomatic relations with Israel should be severed immediately. Consequently, Chad cut all links with Israel and expelled all its military advisors.<sup>16</sup> Israel's former President Chaim Herzog recalled how Qaddafi pressured Zaire's President Mobutu Sese Seko to stop cooperating with Israel by threatening to assassinate him, and

how Libyan-trained terrorists from the Republic of Vanuatu in the Pacific planned to attack his aircraft when he returned from the Far East.<sup>17</sup> Qaddafi continued his propaganda activities aimed at convincing other African states to follow Chad's example. He became overjoyed after the Yom Kippur War, when most African countries decided to sever their diplomatic relations with Israel.

## **THE JEWS AND THE STATE OF ISRAEL IN QADDAFI'S WORLD VIEW**

Qaddafi's vision of a new Middle Eastern order under his leadership left no room for a Jewish state, which emerged as cancer in the heart of the Arab nation. In his view Israel was established by the imperialist powers. By supporting the Zionist movement the imperialist powers sought to create a Jewish state whose purpose was to disinherit the Palestinian inhabitants and to exploit the Arab masses. As Qaddafi saw it, the only solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict was the total destruction of the state of Israel. In an interview given to Asa'd al Muqaddam of the magazine *Al Usba Al Arabi*, Qaddafi explained his reasons for wanting to liquidate Israel. He said that there was room for only one entity in the Middle East. The existence of two entities on the same territory was contradictory to the law of nature, which dictated that one must survive, while the other should be annihilated. According to Qaddafi, it was largely due to Arab complacency that the Zionists were capable of establishing a state in the region with the collaboration of the imperialist powers. In his view the destruction of Israel, which he regarded as an expression of US imperialism, could be achieved only through Arab unity.<sup>18</sup> He held the Arab leaders responsible for failing to maintain a sense of unity, which could have prevented the imperialists from inflicting injustice on the Arab inhabitants. Instead of concentrating on the need to liberate Palestine, the Arab leaders became involved in petty squabbles and useless arguments, which dissipated the energy of the Arab nation and weakened its ability to resist Zionism and imperialism. He repeatedly said that the Arabs should be vigilant and must guard against the rapacious Zionists and their supporters. He warned that "the Arabs must be cautious and must not give themselves up to peace and relaxation." Qaddafi sought to escape the blame cast by many Jews throughout the world, that he was influenced by anti-Semitic ideas by reminding his critics that throughout the centuries Arab and Jews lived in harmony in regions dominated by Islam. He was particularly fond of mentioning the Arab-Jewish coexistence in medieval Spain. The Arabs, he said repeatedly, had respect for the "People of the Book." Qaddafi was irritated by those who suggested that he would have liked to see the Jews destroyed. Asked whether he would like to exterminate the Jews, Qaddafi said that only the Oriental Jews, who already inhabited the country prior to 1947, should be allowed to remain in Palestine. As for the European Jews, Qaddafi believed that they have no right to that country because they are outsiders. "We, the Arabs," he said, "did not bring anybody from abroad."<sup>19</sup>

Qaddafi had strong objection to all efforts made by Israel and the Jewish communities throughout the world to encourage Jews to immigrate to Israel. His objection to the immigration of the Falashas to Israel intensified his hostility to Sudan's President Gaafar al Nimeiri, whose cooperation with Israel made the rescue operation possible. When news about the Israeli operation aimed at rescuing the Falasha Jews of Ethiopia leaked

out in the beginning of 1985, Libya requested a special meeting of the Arab League to discuss the issue. Likewise, Qaddafi became quite irritated by the Soviet Union's improved attitude toward Israel and severely criticized President Michael Gorbachev for allowing Jews to immigrate to Israel.<sup>20</sup> Rage toward Israel was always a major component in Qaddafi's worldview. However, what increased his hostility was not so much his concern for the plight of the Palestinians, but the fact that Israel's existence constituted an antidote to his pan-Arab scheme.

Libya's Middle Eastern policy was largely determined by Qaddafi's personality and was an outcome of his desire to create a new order in which Libya would become the center. A barrage of insults, which emanated from Cairo, intensified his desire to prove his ability to lead the Arab nation. Qaddafi believed that he and not Sadat was the rightful successor of Nasser. Qaddafi needed a culprit on which he could blame Arab misfortune. Therefore, he found it convenient to denounce Israel, which symbolized an unjust existing order that he sought to change. For Qaddafi, supporting the Palestinian cause was a natural way not only to end injustice, but also to enable him to be regarded as the leader of a revolutionary movement. Moreover, Egypt's continued tendency to deny him a central role in the Middle East and Sadat's willingness to accept the Camp David accords, reinforced Qaddafi's refusal to soften his position toward Israel. Since the struggle for hegemony in the Arab world centered on the Arab-Israeli conflict, Qaddafi could not hope to challenge Egyptian hegemony in the Arab world, unless he was willing to reverse the conciliatory trend adopted by Sadat. Hostility toward Israel provided justification for his unique role in the Middle East, and this became abundantly clear after the Camp David accords. Consequently, he welcomed Syria's President Hafez al Assad, who visited Libya in September 1979, in order to revive the "Steadfastness Front," established by the radical Arab states, which opposed Sadat's peace initiative. Later, according to Mubarak, Qaddafi offered him \$5 billion in return for a promise to cancel the Camp David Accords.<sup>21</sup>

## **QADDAFI AND THE PALESTINIANS**

Qaddafi had often said that he had identified with the Palestinian cause since early childhood, when he was listening to the distant broadcasts of Radio Cairo. He became obsessed with the plight of the Palestinian people, believing that a great injustice was done to them. As one writer observed, "These thoughts, the injustices with which the Palestinians had put up with without choice, their meager existence inside the misery and poverty of the tents, their degradation to the humiliating status of refugees in their own country raked and tortured the mind of mu'Ammar."<sup>22</sup> Therefore, he became convinced that Israel should be destroyed.<sup>23</sup>

Libya's concern for the Palestinians began to manifest itself not only in Qaddafi's rhetoric, but also in the form of financial contribution. A special committee was nominated by the regime shortly before Qaddafi's rise to power to raise funds for the Palestinian cause, and almost immediately it managed to collect 50,000 Libyan pounds.<sup>24</sup> Shortly afterwards, PLO leader Yasser Arafat came to Tripoli to express his gratitude for Libya's generosity. In one of his interviews in March 1970, Qaddafi stated that his



greatest ambition was to witness the liberation of Palestine.<sup>25</sup> This, he argued, could be achieved only by the destruction of Israel, since no coexistence between Israel and the Palestinians was possible.<sup>26</sup> After hearing about Jordan's King Hussein's campaign to crush the Palestinians Qaddafi said, "He is crazy. He's mad."<sup>27</sup>

Libya's support for the Palestinians did not remain limited to declarations. It included military training of Palestinian warriors as well as financial support for their operations, such as the attack on the Israeli athletes in Munich in September 1972, and the subsequent attack on OPEC oil ministers. Estimates of the total amount of Libya's contribution to terrorism vary from \$40 to \$250 million a year. An Israeli intelligence report stated that the sum was a \$1 billion. A document published by the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) in 1982, argued that at the Baghdad Arab conference of October 1978, Libya promised to provide the PLO with \$39.3 million a year and also offered support to Ahmed Jibril's organization, although Qaddafi delivered only a small part of the amount promised.<sup>28</sup> Palestinians interrogated following the 1985 hijacking of the cruiser ship Achille Lauro, revealed that Abul Abbas who masterminded the operation was paid handsomely by Libya.<sup>29</sup> An Israeli report claimed that in 1986, some 7,000 terrorists were being trained by foreign experts across Libya. According to Pentagon sources, Qaddafi maintained 34 bases used by terrorists. He paid Abu Nidal, the head of the PFLP-GC, between \$5 million and \$6 million for massacres carried out in Rome and Vienna, and an additional annual fee of \$5 million to his group.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, the Israelis regarded Assad, not Qaddafi, as the "mastermind" behind international terror.<sup>31</sup>

However, Qaddafi had his differences with Palestinians, particularly with the members of the Popular Front for the Liberation in Palestine, (PFLP-GC). They were unwilling to accept Arafat's leadership, and had often embarrassed Qaddafi in their operations in Europe and the Arab countries. Fearing that he might lose control over the activities of the group, the Libyan leader embarked on a campaign aimed at curtailing their activities. The first restrictive measure began in summer 1970, when the Libyan government decided to suspend the radio broadcasts of the PFLP-GC and all other Palestinian organizations. Moreover, it warned the group that if they continued their sabotage activities against the legitimate Arab regimes, their financial aid would be terminated.<sup>32</sup>

By March 1971, the conflict between Libya and the Palestinian groups culminated in the arrest and the deportation of more than a hundred Palestinian workers. This incident did little to seriously damage Qaddafi's enthusiasm for the Palestinian cause. However, Qaddafi found that support for the Palestinian cause was not as popular among the Libyans as he hoped. By summer 1971, several offices were opened in Libya, in order to recruit volunteers to fight for the Palestinian cause, but the number of the volunteers remained so low that the Libyan leader was compelled to state that it was the example, not the numbers that mattered.<sup>33</sup> His scapegoats were the members of the PFLP-GC, whom he blamed for frightening away many Libyans.<sup>34</sup>

Israeli efforts to hunt down Palestinian commandos led to further complications and embarrassments in the bilateral relations. Israeli intelligence agencies became actively involved in warning the Western countries of Qaddafi's aims. The pro-Western Arab

regimes were given advance warning regarding any terrorist activity or planned assassination attempts by agents supported by Libya. According to one source, Israel's Prime Minister Menachem Begin sent Egypt information provided to him by the Israeli intelligence regarding a Libyan plot to assassinate Sadat.<sup>35</sup> Mossad agents were actively monitoring Libyan airports and every aircraft suspected of carrying Palestinian terrorists was followed carefully. They also monitored Libyan ports in which many boats were loaded with weapons on their way to the PLO.<sup>36</sup> At one point, the Israelis spotted a ship owned by Abu Nidal who was at the top of Israel's wanted list. In summer 1985, the Mossad succeeded in destroying two ships loaded with ammunitions on their way to the PLO. The tension mounted further on 4 February 1986, when the Israelis forced a Libyan aircraft to land in Ramat David air force base, near Haifa. As it turned out, however, no Palestinians were on board. The apologetic announcements made by Prime Minister Shimon Peres and Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin did little to diffuse the tension. Qaddafi announced that he would order his air force to intercept any aircraft flying over the Mediterranean in search of "Israeli terrorists."<sup>37</sup> Yet despite his harsh rhetoric, Qaddafi refrained from a direct confrontation with Israel. When asked by a journalist whether or not he was ready to place Libya's military arsenal, including its Mirage aircraft at the disposal of the Arab states on the front line with Israel, the Libyan leader avoided commenting about his intentions.<sup>38</sup>

By the end of the 1980s, Qaddafi had become displeased with Arafat who moderated his stand toward Israel. In an interview to a journalist, Qaddafi said that it was about time that the PLO overthrows Arafat.<sup>39</sup> However, later Qaddafi seemed willing to reconcile with Arafat in order to bring unity in the Palestinian camp, and to neutralize the members of the PFLP-GC. Qaddafi's relations with the Palestinians were characterized by periods of instability followed by reconciliation. In 1995, the Libyan government expelled a large number of Palestinians. Qaddafi's decision was part of the protest against the Middle East Peace Process. Since no Arab country, including the Palestinian Authority, agreed to accept them, they remained in tents on the Libyan-Egyptian border and in boats in Cyprus harbor. Eventually, some were allowed to return to Libya and some found refuge in Syria. In the beginning of 1997, some Palestinians still remained in the border area.<sup>40</sup> Those who stayed used force to prevent Libyan officials from carrying out the government's plan to relocate them.<sup>41</sup>

## **INCREASING BILATERAL TENSION DURING THE 1970s AND 1980s**

Israeli-Libyan relations became particularly tense in 1973. On 21 February 1973, a Libyan Airlines plane en route to Cairo lost its bearings and headed toward the Sinai peninsula, where it was shot down by an Israeli aircraft, killing 108 Libyan passengers. There were media speculations that Israel was enraged by Libya's unqualified support for the members of the Black September who were involved in the massacre of the Israeli athletes in Munich the year before, and therefore became prone to retaliation.<sup>42</sup> It would be misleading, however, to argue that the Israelis had intentionally planned to harm innocent Libyan passengers. The spectacular retaliatory actions carried out by the Israelis throughout the years in distant areas had proven their ability to choose more appropriate targets. Despite Israel's explanation that the airliner was mistakenly shot down by pilots,

who believed it to be a military aircraft on its way to destroy Israel's nuclear reactor in Dimona, the incident had greatly antagonized Qaddafi who vowed to retaliate.<sup>43</sup>

Relations with the other Arab states were also problematic. Shortly after the Libyan airlines incident, Qaddafi sought Egyptian help for his plan to sink the Queen Elizabeth II, which carried a group of wealthy Jews who came to celebrate Israel's Independence Day. Sadat dismissed the plan as too flashy and too risky and did not comply with Qaddafi's request to collaborate in the proposed mission. His response had an adverse effect on Libya's relations with Egypt. Qaddafi was even more offended when Egypt and Syria began coordinating joint military activities in an effort to embark on a new war with Israel without consulting him. Infuriated by their decision to ignore Libya, he began criticizing pan-Arabism, saying that it was a complete farce.<sup>44</sup> His contempt toward the Arab states, which he regarded as cowards, manifested itself on numerous occasions.<sup>45</sup>

Enraged over the fact that he was not consulted by the Arabs prior to the Yom Kippur War, Qaddafi criticized the direction and the objectives of the war but still supported it.<sup>46</sup> Libyan forces were stationed in Egypt already before the Yom Kippur War began. However, despite the harsh anti-Israeli rhetoric emanating from Tripoli, Libya had little to offer. When the Egyptian Lieutenant-General Saad el Shazly visited Egypt, prior to the Yom Kippur War, he was not very impressed by what he saw. He recalled in his memoirs, "Gaddafi's own forces were so small that they had nothing of value to us except Mirage III fighter bombers, and we already had these."<sup>47</sup>

The limited results of the Yom Kippur War provided Qaddafi with an opportunity to criticize Syria and Egypt for their limited objectives and Jordan for not even daring to challenge Israel. Qaddafi described the war as no more than a cowardly attempt to alter the status quo. In his eyes it was a far cry from being the total war of liberation he hoped for. It was not so much the hatred for Israel that angered Qaddafi, but the fact that he was overshadowed by his rival Sadat. As Fouad Ajami explained in his celebrated book *The Arab Predicament*, "The October War might not have been the glorious achievement that Sadat made it out to be, but it was nonetheless an achievement. Egypt was once again a country with a leader, and thus Qaddafi's bid for unity could be put aside."<sup>48</sup> When the ceasefire negotiations began, Qaddafi was infuriated. In a message alluding to Sadat's ceasefire agreement with Israel, he said that what happened at Kilometer 101 was, "a terrible and peculiar nightmare" to him, and that the Arabs should have maintained their honor by continuing the struggle against the Zionist enemy at all costs.<sup>49</sup>

Responding to Qaddafi's rhetoric, the Israelis made firm statements, assuring him that his country was not immune from Israeli attacks. Particularly vocal were members of the Likud Party and their supporters on the fringes of the Israeli radical right-wing. For example, in one of his swashbuckling speeches, Sharon informed the Israelis that the IDF was capable of attacking any target in the Arab world, including Libya.<sup>50</sup> Other politicians of the Israeli extreme right-wing went to the extent of advocating military action against Libya. Some even planned to attack Libyan targets overseas. In one of his interviews Rabbi Meir Kahane, leader of the extremist Kach movement, admitted that he planned to attack Libyan targets.<sup>51</sup>

In an interview to Le Monde shortly after the war, Qaddafi exploited the opportunity to vent his anger against Sadat and Assad, who did not consult him before going to war. He dismissed their plan as worthless saying, "I can't take part in a war which I regard as a comedy." According to Qaddafi, the Arabs' main objective should not be to recover the territories conquered by Israel, but to liberate Palestine. He explained that participating in such a war was beneath his dignity and went on to say, "I will not participate in any war unless its objective is the expulsion of the usurpers and the return of the Jews of Europe to the countries whence they came . . ." <sup>52</sup>

From Israel's viewpoint Qaddafi's attitude did not constitute a serious threat. However, his aid to the Palestinian radicals enraged many Israelis and sometimes caused friction between Israel and its Western allies. Thus for example, in autumn 1973, Arab commandos were reported to have had a scheme to launch a surface-to-air missile at an EL AL jet, which was about to take off from Leonardo Da Vinci airport in Rome. When the Italian authorities released the suspects and flew them to Tripoli on the grounds that there was no sufficient evidence to convict them, Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir said that Italy needed a warning not to collaborate with Qaddafi. <sup>53</sup> Also, when the Lebanese civil war erupted in 1975, Libya sent a force under the command of Major Hassan Kassar of the Libyan army. It also supplied shells to the Druze under Walid Jumbalatt's command. These shipments passed across the Syrian border to the Chaouf mountains. The PFLP-GC was also known to have received guns and ammunitions sent by Libya on the freighter Spyros. <sup>54</sup>

However, what concerned the Mossad more than anything else at that time was the fact that Qaddafi was reported to have been striving to acquire atomic weapons. According to one report, he offered financial assistance to Pakistan, on condition that it would provide him with an atomic bomb. This is precisely what led Israel to explore the possibility of cooperating with India in order to destroy the Pakistani reactor. <sup>55</sup>

The tension in the bilateral relations increased further in summer 1976, when Israel carried out its spectacular raid on Entebbe's Airport in Uganda, in an attempt to free the Israeli passengers held hostage by Palestinian commandos. This event had greatly outraged Qaddafi. He regarded the raid as a conspiracy concocted by Israel and the US and in retaliation he planned to hit American targets. Both the Republican and Democratic conventions of that year were on his hit list; however, the recruited commandos refused to collaborate and the plan was abandoned. <sup>56</sup> At the same time, Libya's campaign in the UN was quite acrimonious. Its representative joined Benin and Tanzania in sponsoring a resolution demanding that Israel compensate Uganda for all losses that occurred during the raid. The debate that ensued became ugly as well as comical. Israel's Ambassador to the UN, Chaim Herzog, recalled in his memoirs:

As the debate continued I called the United Nations to break away from the grip of despots and assume its rightful role in behalf of humanity and international peace. Following those remarks the Libyan representative made a hysterical attack on me . . . Refuting the allegation that I hated Libya, I added laconically, 'Indeed, some of my best friends are Libyans.' The Security Council dissolved in laughter. <sup>57</sup>

While Tunisia and Morocco responded to the raid in a moderate fashion, Qaddafi lashed out at the US and threatened to cut off all oil exports unless it stopped supporting Israel.

Libya's policy toward Israel continued the same pattern of hostility during the 1980s. On 1 September 1980, Qaddafi proposed a union with Syria and threatened to enlist as a fedayee in Palestine if his proposal was rejected. The Syrian government agreed and both sides decided to establish a democratic union against Zionism, imperialism and reaction. However, the plan never got off the ground. As it turned out, Israel lost ground when the past hostility between Libya and Egypt tapered off somewhat following Sadat's assassination on 6 October 1981 and Qaddafi seemed less hostile to Mubarak. Nevertheless, Qaddafi was carried away by the anti-Egyptian and anti-Israeli propaganda campaign, which he had been advocating for years. On 13 July 1982, Tripoli announced that it had discovered a joint Egyptian-Israeli plot to attack Libya.<sup>58</sup> Moreover, Qaddafi blamed Israel for terrorizing the Arabs with its nuclear program, calling the Israeli nuclear plan "real terrorism."<sup>59</sup>

Qaddafi continued to lash out at Egypt on every opportunity, particularly when he referred to Israel, always suggesting that the two countries were collaborating against Libya. In a speech commemorating Syria's 21st anniversary of the revolution, he blamed Egypt for signing the Camp David peace accord with Israel, saying that Egypt allowed the Israeli Chief of Staff to inspect the Libyan border. He asked his audience, "Who can guarantee that the Israeli forces would not be capable of passing through Egypt and thus threaten Libya?" He added, that Egypt was full of Israeli spies, whose aim was to draw a plan to dominate the Nile Valley. Israel, he said, was determined to divert the waters of the Nile into the Negev desert. Qaddafi added that Egypt adhered to the Camp David accord because it feared Israel and not because it benefited from the accord.<sup>60</sup>

Qaddafi had a great distaste not only for Egypt, but also for the rest of the moderate regimes in the Middle East, whose attitude toward Israel was less radical than his own. Not only did he want to assassinate Jordan's King Hussein, but he also encouraged the Palestinians to eliminate US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger.<sup>61</sup> In spring 1985, Qaddafi called upon the Arabs to conduct acts of suicide aimed at overthrowing the moderate regimes in the Middle East.<sup>62</sup>

The Israelis tried to make the most out of the hostility that other nations in the regions harbored toward Qaddafi. By the mid 1980s, Qaddafi began meddling in Sudanese affairs and thus alienated Israel, which sought to reach an agreement with Nimeiri in an effort to rescue the Falashas.<sup>63</sup> In his memoirs Sharon disclosed how the common hostility shared by Israel and Sudan brought him and Nimeiri together.<sup>64</sup> Israel was also fully aware of the Libyan-Egyptian conflict and sought to capitalize on it. When Egypt's Defense Minister Abu Gazallah told Sharon that he was contemplating moving the Third Army from the Suez Canal Zone to the border with Libya, Sharon said, "I can assure you that we will not move one soldier from his position."<sup>65</sup>

On 1 October 1985 the Israelis struck the PLO headquarters outside Tunis. The Israeli aircraft passed through the Libyan coast without being detected. This incident had

demonstrated to Qaddafi how vulnerable Libya was to an Israeli assault. In early 1986, Israel intercepted a Libyan executive jet and was thus able to learn about a gathering of Palestinian leaders scheduled to take place in Libya on 4 February 1986. Among those planning to attend the meeting were George Habash, Nayif Hawatmeh, Ahmed Jibril and Abu Nidal who sought to obtain Qaddafi's support in order to plot against Arafat's moderate attitude toward Israel.<sup>66</sup> What increased the tension even further were the reports that Israel had provided full support to the US during its bombing of Libya on 17 April 1986.<sup>67</sup> The Israelis responded to Qaddafi's accusation that Israel assisted the US during the raid by saying that Qaddafi could be contained only with force. On 27 April 1986, Israel's Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir met Norway's Deputy Foreign Minister who informed him that his government had increased its security measures against terrorism; Shamir responded by saying, "Security measures are not enough." And when his guest asked how was it possible to convince countries such as Syria and Libya to desist from supporting terrorism, Shamir said, "Israel believes that the only way is a military strike similar to the one carried out by the Americans in Libya."<sup>68</sup>

## **THE IMPACT OF NEW WORLD ORDER**

Although Qaddafi was often depicted as a hardheaded radical, he could be remarkably pragmatic. Despite his hostility, Qaddafi has been secretly selling oil to Israel. An American engineer who had knowledge of this deal revealed that many Israeli products and canned foods were openly sold in Libyan supermarkets. He told George Tremlett, "Colonel Gaddafi is always pragmatic. He never lets politics interfere with trade."<sup>69</sup> But while Qaddafi was secretly trading with Israel, the anti-Israeli declarations continued in the Libyan media. The newspaper Al-Jamahiriya published articles critical of Israel on a regular basis. Thus, for example, on 19 February 1993 it called upon the Arabs to unite in order to prevent Israel from stealing the region's water resources. Yet Qaddafi's desire to avoid isolation and to maintain some measure of normalcy in his relations with the US convinced him that better relations with Israel could serve as a way to win Washington's favor. He had watched how Assad managed to improve his image in Washington's eyes by using the Israeli card. But as New York Times correspondent Judith Miller astutely observed, "Libya was not Syria, and Qaddafi was neither as shrewd nor as patient as Syria's Assad. And Assad was depressingly sane." And when Libyan pilgrims sent by Qaddafi came to Israel in 1993 and took the opportunity to denounce their hosts, the Israelis became disillusioned and the bilateral relations resumed their normal hostile course. Officials in the Israeli Foreign Ministry began to doubt Qaddafi's sincerity. Peres rightfully argued that "The Libyans came to us to make a good impression on America."<sup>70</sup> While stating that the religious shrines were open to all faiths, Peres took the opportunity to denounce Libya for sponsoring terrorism and declared that Israel supported all measures aimed at curbing Libya's activities.<sup>71</sup>

At a mass rally in al-Aziziyah on 12 December 1993, Qaddafi sent an invitation to Abu Nidal, Ahmad Jibril, Abul Abbas, Abu Musa, Khalid al-Amlah and other Palestinian leaders to come and meet him. He argued that the Palestinians were evicted from their land while other immigrants, such as Russian Jews and Falashas from Ethiopia, were allowed to enter Palestine. Qaddafi added that he could not understand why it should be

forbidden to him to meet the leaders of the Palestinian resistance, while European and American leaders had the right to meet with Salman Rushdie, the author of the infamous Satanic Verses.<sup>72</sup> Nevertheless, by summer 1993 the Israelis sought to capitalize on Qaddafi's pragmatism and intensified their efforts to improve the ties with Libya. When news regarding Israel's efforts to mend fences with Libya triggered an angry response from US officials, Israel denied the veracity of these reports.<sup>73</sup>

Libya's official position remained uncompromising and the press condemned the peace process calling it "high treason." On 10 September 1993, Al Jamahiriya published an editorial in which the author stated that this step was a "new Arab catastrophe that the PLO leaders had kept hidden under their keffiyehs." He added that the PLO leaders had "pretended to fight for the liberation of Palestine while they waited for an opportunity to carry out their plots by secret negotiations at the North Pole in Norway, Paris, and Washington." The author predicted that "the fate of this accord will be no better than that of the previous accords," and that "Palestine will endanger in future generations those who will tear up this accord and will spit in the face of the signatories, if they are still alive."<sup>74</sup> Despite this criticism, however, there were reports that Qaddafi was ready to announce his decision to establish diplomatic relations with Israel. These remarks were made by Adnan al-Khashoggi, a Saudi businessman close to Qaddafi, in an interview with the Israeli newspaper Davar.<sup>75</sup> Several days later Israel's Police Minister hinted that Israel was conducting secret negotiations with Libya.<sup>76</sup> There were even reports in early summer 1993 that Qaddafi was planning to visit Israel as a head of a Saudi-Libyan delegation.<sup>77</sup> These reports were soon denied by Libyan sources in Cairo.<sup>78</sup>

Nevertheless, events during that summer of that year seemed promising for the future of the bilateral relations. Qaddafi invited Libyan Jews to visit his country. Israel's Chief Rabbi, Yisrael Lau, was personally invited to attend an international conference of spiritual leaders in Tripoli. Even more surprising was Qaddafi's statement allowing Jews of Libyan extraction to claim compensation for their confiscated property.<sup>79</sup> Accustomed to regarding Qaddafi as their nemesis, the Israelis began wondering what were the real motives behind his friendly overtures. The Israelis agreed with Peres' assertion that Libya's motive in sending the pilgrims to Israel was part of Qaddafi's tactic aimed at utilizing the Israeli card in order to improve his ties with the US, which turned sour on 21 December 1988, when two Libyans were accused of planting a bomb on Pan American flight 103 that exploded over Lockerbie, Scotland.

As it turned out, however, none of Qaddafi's good will gestures helped lead to a diplomatic breakthrough between the two countries. When asked by a journalist what would be his government's position in the coming negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, Libya's Foreign Minister Hamid Haydar said that his government supported whatever the Palestinians were going to agree to.<sup>80</sup> The optimism that prevailed in Israel soon dissipated after the visit by the Libyan pilgrims ended with a sour note. The pilgrims called for a jihad to liberate Jerusalem from Zionist occupation and the Israeli government was debating whether or not to deport the delegation. The newspaper Al-Jamahiriya criticized what it called the "scramble" to recognize Israel and lamented the

fact that the Arab Boycott against Israel, which had been so far an effective means to pressure Israel, could no longer be used.<sup>81</sup>

Nevertheless, subsequent remarks made by Qaddafi did show a change of attitude. Qaddafi began expressing his willingness to accept the peace process. At a Middle East economic conference held in Casablanca in early November 1994, he asked Turkey's Prime Minister Tansu Ciller to visit Libya on her way back to Turkey. At that meeting Qaddafi asked her to convey to Washington his willingness to accept the peace process and to turn over the two Libyans accused of planting the bomb on the Pan American jet. In return, Qaddafi asked that the US lift its economic sanctions on Libya, and allow the two suspects to be tried in a neutral country.<sup>82</sup>

It was obvious that this change was more a result of desperation than a genuine change of heart, however Qaddafi had proven on more than one occasion that he is a pragmatic leader. It became increasingly obvious to him that his revisionist plan for a Middle East dominated by Libya could not materialize. In addition, the peace process had isolated Libya from the Arab world. Qaddafi's vision of a new order in the Middle East was in desperate need of a metamorphosis. Qaddafi, who bitterly opposed the Camp David accord, came to realize that Egypt was his only bridge to the West, and he made attempts to settle his differences with Mubarak. Moreover, there were reports that Qaddafi asked Ciller to deliver a letter to the Israelis. The latter denied the veracity of these reports and JANA's political reporter in Tripoli said that Libya was confident that Ciller would never make such a statement "because she knew the stance of the leader of the revolution against the Israeli enemy and about Palestine and its people and also his stance against imperialism."<sup>83</sup> It remained to be seen whether these events would eventually lead to a milder Libyan attitude toward Israel.

The end of the Cold War and the onset of the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue have created a new reality, which even Qaddafi was forced to recognize. The decision made by Morocco and Tunisia to normalize relations with Israel had irritated Qaddafi greatly. The Libyan leader was particularly critical of the mediation efforts by Morocco's King Hassan II. When a Moroccan economic delegation visited Israel in autumn 1993, Tripoli criticized the visit, saying that it constituted a violation of the Arab League's embargo on the Zionist enemy.<sup>84</sup> A careful reading of the statements made by Libyan officials reveal how pragmatic the Libyan government was. For example, in an interview with an Egyptian weekly, Libya's Secretary of Information and Culture stated unequivocally that Libya would never recognize the "racist" state of Israel, because unlike the Palestinians, it has nothing to gain from such recognition.<sup>85</sup> Given Israel's unusual technical ability and its contacts with Washington, one can question the veracity of the statement made by the minister. Whether or not this statement was genuine, it reflected a clear pragmatic trend, which had become a pronounced feature in Libya's recent foreign policy orientation.

By early 1995, there were signs that some of the Arab states were willing to relax the boycott regulations. The Libyan government reprimanded the Arab states involved, and criticized what it described as a "ridiculous" rush to normalize ties with Israel, a country



whose possession of weapons of mass destruction constituted a serious threat to Arab security.<sup>86</sup>

Although the official announcements from Israel regarding Libya lacked the hostility that characterized the ones made by the Libyan government, the message was that Qaddafi could not be trusted. When the issue of allowing Libya to become a member of the UN Security Council was debated by its members, the Israelis expressed serious concern.<sup>87</sup>

The verbal tension between the two countries continued into the late 1990s. Libya's Interior Minister Mohammad al-Hijazi accused Israel and the US of "spreading rumors and lies" regarding reports that claimed clashes between Libyan security forces and fundamentalist groups had occurred in eastern Libya. Al-Hijazi argued that all was quiet in Libya.<sup>88</sup> A major source of concern for the Israelis were the reports regarding Iran's intention to assist Libya in developing a ballistic missile with a range of 1,250 miles. The Israelis learned from foreign sources that a memorandum of understanding was signed after a meeting between the defense ministries of both countries. The Israelis were also informed that Iran agreed to help Libya construct a plant for fuel and other missile components, and that Iranian instructors were sent to train the Libyans on all aspects of missile construction.<sup>89</sup> In addition, China was reported to have agreed to assist Libya in building an improved version of the Nodong missile, while Libya embarked on developing a medium-range warhead and began purchasing missiles from North Korea.<sup>90</sup> According to new intelligence reports, China did not stop providing Libya with missile technology despite pressure from Israel and the US.<sup>91</sup>

Despite his hostile rhetoric, Qaddafi continued to trade with Israel and did not prevent some of his closest associates from establishing commercial ties with Israeli firms. In autumn 1998, the Israeli daily Ha'aretz reported that Roger Tamraz, an oil tycoon close to Qaddafi, had conducted negotiations with the Israeli company Granit HaCarmel, the owner of most of Sonol Oil Company's shares, in order to take control of Sonol. Tamraz offered Granit HaCarmel \$210 million in return for 56 percent of that company's shares in Sonol. Tamraz's connections to Qaddafi attracted the attention of both Arab and Israeli intelligence agencies.<sup>92</sup> Discouraged by investigative reports that revealed Tamraz was involved in corruption, the Israeli company rejected the deal. Qaddafi knew all along about these dealings, and did not dissuade Tamraz from conducting his financial negotiations. Qaddafi has not only been trading with Israel covertly, he also has expressed his willingness to accept the peace process. However, given his previous image as a rabid enemy of the Jewish state, he found it quite impossible to tone down his rhetoric and continued to maintain a low profile in his connection with Israel.

## **CONCLUSION**

This article has provided an analysis of Israeli-Libyan relations. Its main argument is that Libya's pro-Western orientation during the Idris era kept its foreign policy in line with that of moderate states such as Morocco and Tunisia. However, Qaddafi's rise to power ushered in an era of intense hostility toward Israel. Qaddafi used the Israeli card in order to promote his position as a revolutionary leader in the Arab world, and as a champion of

the Palestinian people. Moreover, by adopting a hostile policy toward Israel, Qaddafi sought to win his competition with Sadat for leadership in the Arab world. The article has also demonstrated that despite his harsh rhetoric, Qaddafi was capable of being pragmatic when necessary. He did not fail to realize that the changing world order in which the Soviet Union had collapsed and the US remained the only global power, made it necessary for him to reassess his policy toward Israel. Yet he found it difficult to remain Israel's staunch enemy and at the same time mend fences with the US. Moreover, the onset of the Middle East peace process and the fact that the Palestinians themselves decided to negotiate with Israel reduced the intensity of his anti-Israeli statements.

It remains to be seen whether Israeli-Libyan relations will undergo significant improvement. Some have argued that throughout the entire duration of the Arab-Israeli conflict Qaddafi had cooperated closely with Zionist and pro-Israeli groups. Responding to US President Ronald Reagan's call in January 1986 to boycott Libya, one observer noted that Zionist individuals and corporations had long been cooperating with Libya on major enterprises involving the exploration and the marketing of oil. He writes:

These magnates of illegal narcotics and Libyan oil are pillars of the Zionist lobby. Edgar Bronfman is president of the World Jewish Congress and the former member of the National Commission of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith. Charles Bronfman is governor of the Jewish Agency in Israel. Both have been active in Max Fisher's Project Independence, while Edgar Bronfman traveled to Moscow, playing the second fiddle to Armand Hammer in the revived 'Trust' operation to arrange an Israeli-Soviet rapprochement. Let us not kid ourselves. When President Reagan called for a boycott of the Libyan economy, this will have to mean a boycott of these powerful Zionist lobby figures.<sup>93</sup>

If these details regarding the Libyan-Zionist connection are only partially true, then perhaps there is a brighter future for Israeli-Libyan relations than one might expect. Notwithstanding the existence of such dealings, Qaddafi is not likely to upgrade his country's formal relations with Israel, as long as the Palestinian issue remains unresolved. Qaddafi would be likely to maintain normal relations with Israel without giving them official recognition. From Qaddafi's viewpoint providing legitimacy to the existence of the Jewish state is tantamount to renouncing one of the main tenets of the Libyan revolution which he has labored so hard to promote.

### **Endnotes**

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3. Gideon Rafael, *Destination Peace: Three Decades of Israeli Foreign Policy* (New York: Stein and Day, 1981), p. 22.

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5. *Tarabulus al-Gharb* (Tripoli), 29 July 1956.
6. *New York Post*, 4 March 1975.
7. *Tarabulus al-Gharb*, 30 April 1965; 15 June 1965.
8. *The Maghreb Digest* III, no. 5 (May 1965), pp. 38, 40.
9. *Personal Witness*, pp. 453-54.
10. Moshe Dayan, *Story of My Life* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Edanim, 1976), p. 512.
11. George Tremlett, *Gadaffi: The Desert Mystic* (New York: Carroll & Graf, 1993), p. 172.
12. Dan Raviv and Yossi Melman, *Every Spy is a Prince: The Complete History of Israel's Intelligence Community* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1990), pp. 174-75.
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15. Aaron S. Kleiman, *Israel and the World After 40 Years* (New York: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1990), p. 26.
16. Qaddafi became involved in a civil war in Chad, where he supported the anti-government rebels. Following the massacre of the Palestinians in the Lebanese refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila, Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon had planned a military operation against Qaddafi in Chad. Sharon cooperated with General Tamir in that project. Secret negotiations between Tamir and a Chadian minister took place. Tamir made his way to N'Djamena in Chad to meet President Hissen Habre. Both sides agreed that Israel would send military experts to Chad to help its army in both the civil war and in the battle against Libya. Sharon, who visited Zaire, went to meet Habre. In that meeting they agreed on the need to cooperate against Libya's subversion. Sharon provided Habre with a cargo of light weapons and later an Israeli delegation of 15 military advisors arrived in N'Djamena. Sharon's dealings with Habre angered Mossad's chief Nahum Admoni, who regarded Chad as his organization's turf and not the Defense Ministry's. Besides, he added that there was a danger that the rebels would win the war and that the Israeli

advisors might fall into Libyan hands. Both Sharon and Tamir tried to convince Begin that supporting moderate African and Arab regimes was a good way to defeat Qaddafi. However, Begin took Admoni's advice and the Israeli experts were ordered to return. Raviv and Melman, *Every Spy is a Prince*, pp. 273-75.

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18. Rene Lemarchand, ed., *The Green and the Black: Qadhafi's Policies in Africa* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1988), p. 20.

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20. Martin Sicker, *The Making of a Pariah State: The Adventurist Politics of Muammar Qaddafi* (New York: Praeger, 1987), p. 109.

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29. Samuel Segev, *Crossing the Jordan: Israel's Hard Road to Peace* (New York: St. Martin's, 1998), p. 117.

30. *Newsweek*, 7 April 1986.

31. Geoff Simons, *Libya: The Struggle for Survival* (New York: St. Martin's, 1993), p. 264.

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33. Al Hadaf (Beirut), 6 March 1971; Al Haqiqa (Tripoli), 15 July 1971.
34. Guardian Weekly (London), 11 December 1971.
35. Time, 6 August 1978.
36. That Israel was capable of monitoring Libyan facilities was due to its cooperation with the US, which allowed it access to intelligence data gathered by the sophisticated high altitude SR-71 aircraft stationed in Cyprus. Yossi Melman and Dan Raviv, *Friends in Deed: Inside the US-Israel Alliance* (New York: Hyperion, 1994), p. 169.
37. Victor Ostrovsky and Claire Hoy, *By Way of Deception: The Making and Unmaking of a Mossad Officer* (New York: St. Martin's, 1990), pp. 170, 302-09.
38. Qaddafi's Interview with Der Spiegel, 31 January 1972.
39. Al-Safir (Beirut), 1 January 1988.
40. Samih K. Farsoun and Christina E. Zacharia, *Palestine and the Palestinians* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1997), pp. 160, 313.
41. Africa Research Bulletin: Political, Social and Cultural Issues 34, no. 1 (1-31 January, 1997), p. 12554.
42. The Times (London), 23 February 1973.
43. In his diary, Israel's Ambassador to the US Yitzhak Rabin explained that this incident happened exactly when Prime Minister Golda Meir was on her way to Washington to ask for arms. He advised the government to apologize saying, "The aircraft disaster cannot be explained, the only thing left to do is to apologize." Rabin was fully aware of the damage that the incident could cause, since he was told by US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger that as a result of the incident, Washington might turn down Israel's request for arms. As it turned out, President Richard Nixon was confident that the incident was a tragic accident, which Israel did not intend. He concluded by saying, "I have no doubt that you have not done this on purpose. You are too clever to do such thing . . . the decision to denounce you in the International Aviation Organization was made without my knowledge . . . had I known I would not have allowed it." Yitzhak Rabin and Dov Goldstein, *Service Diary* [Hebrew], (Tel Aviv: Ma'ariv, 1979), pp. 382, 386, 390.
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56. Sicker, *Making of a Pariah State*, p. 114.56.
57. Herzog, *Living History*, p. 216.
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70. *Al Ahali* (Cairo), 3 June 1993.
71. Miller, *God Has Ninety-Nine Names*, p. 240.
72. Tripoli Television in Arabic, FBIS-NES-93-237, 13 December 1993.
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