

### 33. THE ISRAELI-ARAB CONFLICT

#### Background

The 1985 Accord between Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) raised some hopes that progress towards resolving the conflict between Israel and its neighbours might be possible. But by February 1986 the initiative, like the Reagan Plan in 1982 and the Fez Charter in 1983, had failed to produce constructive dialogue between Israel, the PLO and the surrounding Arab states.

The Accord reached between King Hussein of Jordan and PLO Chairman Yassir Arafat, on 11 February 1985, called for the establishment of an international framework for negotiations, including a joint Jordanian/Palestinian delegation, leading to Palestinian self-determination in the context of a confederation with Jordan. The Accord did not, however, mention UN Security Council Resolution 242 which, inter alia, recognizes the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Israel. One week later the PLO Executive Committee issued a communiqué rejecting Resolution 242, reiterating its demand for an independent Palestinian state and its claim to be the "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people".

When US Secretary of State Shultz visited the Middle East in May 1985, Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres indicated that his government was willing to meet with a joint Jordanian/Palestinian delegation that did not include members of the PLO. For its part the United States welcomed the Accord and announced its readiness to meet with a joint delegation if this led to direct negotiations with Israel.

When King Hussein visited Washington later in May 1985 to discuss the sale of US arms to Jordan, he announced a five-stage plan which included a meeting between the United States and a Jordanian/Palestinian delegation,