

Arab-Israeli Conflict

For example, the Prime Minister of Tunisia acted as a go-between, between the PLO and the United States Government with regard to these overtures in the few months immediately prior to the Lebanese invasion. I will not go into the Lebanese invasion because we know what happened.

Again we have revelations coming from the same Israeli Cabinet Minister, that the invasion was not for military purposes, that its principal objective was to crush the PLO for the political reason that hope would no longer be held out by the inhabitants of the occupied West Bank that somehow they could get help from the PLO. It was to crush the hopes for the future of the Arabs living in the occupied West Bank that this operation was carried out.

Yesterday, in the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence of the House of Commons, the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. MacEachen) said the following with regard to Israeli settlement policy, "We are deeply concerned over Israeli settlement policy. We regard the establishment of settlements and other actions Israel is taking to extend its control over the occupied territories as contrary to international law and extremely unhelpful to the peace process. We would like to see an end to this activity."

What exactly is happening on the West Bank? In terms of international law, the operative covenant with which we are dealing is the Fourth Geneva Convention, 1949. Article 47 of that Convention forbids the annexation of any lands that are occupied as a result of military action. Article 49 forbids the settlement of any citizen of the occupying country on occupied land and it forbids the deportation of the existing population out of the occupied territory.

The Israeli Government has consistently violated all these provisions since 1967. The settlement of Israeli Jews, and of course Jews coming into Israel from other countries, on West Bank lands is very clearly part of the Government's plan for creating what it calls established facts on the West Bank so that within a period of five years it will be impossible for any authority, no matter how sympathetic it might be to the Palestinians, to disentangle the two populations.

Mr. Peterson: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I was wondering whether the Hon. Member would accept a question.

Mr. Watson: I would be delighted to do so at the end of my remarks.

Prime Minister Begin has gone on record several times—in an interview in the *Wall Street Journal* in April 1982, and in a speech to the Knesset in the first week in May 1982, he declared that the aim of the Israeli Government was to bring about the annexation of Judea and Samaria, that is to say the West Bank, along with the Gaza Strip within five years. He is on record as saying so. The Israeli Government has very clearly shown that it will not accept the interference of other Governments forcing it to stop settlement.

There are two current plans in operation for settlement on the West Bank. One is a long-range plan, which was originally accepted by the Labour Government. The second one, which is

currently in force, is a medium-range plan drawn up by an official of the World Zionist Organization named Matityahu Drobles in 1978 and implemented by the Government of Israel.

The plan is to create in that period 46 new settlements, bringing into those settlements about 16,000 new households. The cost is in the neighbourhood of \$2.5 billion. In addition, 38 existing settlements are to be enlarged. By the end of 1983, 27,000 new households are projected to be planted on the West Bank.

My time is running out. Unfortunately I cannot go into all the details concerning what is happening on the West Bank regarding the actions being taken. For example, Israel is now using a third of the water taken from wells on the West Bank. Arab citizens are seeing Israeli wells drilled around their springs. Their springs are drying up, their crops are perishing, and they are being forced to sell their land at firesale prices.

Finally, as I draw to the end of my remarks, I bring to the attention of the House the fact that we must take cognizance of what is taking place on the West Bank. How much land has been lost so far? It is extremely difficult to say. Like figures on terrorism, there are several conflicting ones. The main reason for this is that Israel is not keen on publishing statistics on how much land is being taken away from the Arab population on the West Bank and in Gaza.

The estimate which has been made on the basis of some Israeli statistics and on the basis of studies conducted by Palestinians is that a little more than 27 per cent of the total land surface of the West Bank has gone into Israeli hands, into the hands of Jewish settlers.

By April 1979 there were 91,000 Jewish settlers on the West Bank. The majority of those were of course in East Jerusalem, and that was only the beginning of their settlement in the countryside. The UN Special Commission on Palestine, along with Palestinian researchers, estimate that the amount of land which has been confiscated is somewhere between 33 per cent and 37 per cent, rather than 27 per cent. Taking the lower figure, the UN Special Commission estimates that 27 per cent of the total surface area represents almost three-quarters of the cultivated land area. We are seeing a *fait accompli* taking place, one that will be increasingly difficult to disentangle.

● (1720)

It seems to me that a country we could do ourselves justice by promoting the motion that is before the House in international forums. As well, we should be promoting Mr. Stanfield's suggestion, for example, that perhaps one good method of achieving an understanding who should represent the Palestinians on the West Bank would be to hold a referendum, follow a democratic course, and ask the Palestinians there whom they would like to have represent them in future negotiations. This is a proposal that our country should be promoting.

We should also be supporting the Franco-Egyptian proposal before the United Nations Security Council which urges mutual recognition by Israel and the PLO.