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**Ministry of Foreign Affairs Information Department, 'Some  
Aspects of Israel's Foreign Policy and the GDR's Position  
Toward Israel''**

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**Summary:**

A detailed analysis of Israel's founding and the history of East German foreign policy toward Israel and the Arab states. Vehemently attacking Israel, and emphasizing the close relations between West Germany and Israel, was considered essential to capture the interest of Arab audiences, steering them towards closer relations with the GDR.

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MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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Some aspects of Israel's foreign policy and the GDR's position toward Israel

(Assessment of the 3<sup>rd</sup> AEA from 3.2.1966)

I. The human rights position of the State of Israel and the politics of its ruling circles

The State of Israel was established against the will of the Arab people of Palestine and the Arab states. In terms of international law, this creation of a new state is sanctioned by the UN Resolution of 29.11.1947 on the division of Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab state. Despite the non-recognition of the establishment and existence of Israel by the Arab states, the state of Israel, which has been a member of the United Nations since 1949 and has diplomatic relations with over 80 countries, is fully subject to international law. This subjectivity to international law is not reduced by the characteristics of its historical creation nor the role it plays in the Arab space. To be sure, Israel is exploited by foreign imperialist powers politically as a base of support for reactionary efforts in the Near East, but nevertheless it is politically and by rights a sovereign state, whose existence must be counted upon in international relations.

The foreign policy line of the Israeli government since the establishment of the state of Israel has had an increasingly pro-imperialist character. This is as much a result of the class position of the Zionist bourgeoisie as the profound economic, military, and political dependence of Israel on the USA and the other imperialist superpowers. The amalgamation of interests of Israel's ruling circles and of the imperialist superpowers led Israel to become a base of support for imperialism and neocolonialism in the Near East.

The pro-imperialist foreign policy of Israel's ruling circles is primarily directed against the national liberation movement in the countries surrounding Israel, since the further continuation of this movement contributes to the strengthening of the anti-imperialist front, the further development of new forces supporting the non-capitalist way, and at the same time, to the consolidation of unity among the Arab countries. A change of domestic political relations in Israel in a democratic direction is the primary prerequisite needed in order to alter the pro-imperialist anti-Arab policy of Israel's ruling circles. This process can be facilitated by the cooperation of the Arab states in the anti-imperialist struggle.

Israel's reactionary forces accommodate the imperialist powers with their active support for attempts to smother the national liberation movement (the Suez Aggression in 1956, support for the intervention in Jordan in 1957 and in Lebanon in 1958, the battle against the people's uprising in 1958 in Iraq).

They are interested in constantly maintaining tensions in the Arab space.

This has been expressed by the following:

-In the failure to observe the determinations of UN Resolution 181/11 from 29.11.1947, which requires Israel's policy to be based on the following principles:

1. Resolution of international conflicts by peaceful means and in such a way that international peace and security are not threatened.

2. Acceptance of the responsibility of states to refrain from threats or use of violence in their international relations that are directed against the territorial integrity or political independence of another state or in any way not in accord with the goals of the United Nations. (See attached further details on the UN Resolution of 29.11.1947).

As a result of the failure to observe the UN Resolution of 29.11.1947 the Arab people of Palestine have been robbed its right to self-determination.

-In the refusal of the Israeli government to compensate or repatriate the Arabs driven out of Palestine in accordance with the UN Resolution of 12.12.1948,

-In the threats of preemptive war against the Arab states and ceaseless border skirmishes, which are constantly threatening the peace in the Near East.

In this policy Israel's ruling circles are supported by the imperialist powers and encouraged to new adventurism, particularly the USA, Great Britain, France, and West Germany. With the policy of maintaining tensions in the Near East, the Israeli government is moreover pursuing the goal of generating an impression that its existence is threatened as a ruse to move the great powers to declare their support for its current borders, which violate the UN Resolution of 29.11.1947. This interest in securing Israel's current borders forces the Israeli government in other cases to also support the recognition of existing international borders (Recognition of the Oder-Neisse border between the GDR and the People's Republic of Poland).

On the other hand the government's attempts to secure Israel's borders and recognition of its existence by the Arab states may be one of the causes of the fact that despite their efforts to maintain tensions in the Arab space, they are currently not interested in a war with their neighbor. Furthermore, a war between Israel and the Arab states would only be possible with the support of the imperialist powers. At the present time, however, these powers are also not interested in the outbreak of war in the region of the Near East.

Israel's ruling circles possess an important means of consolidating the country's international position in their relations with the global organization of Zionists. This organization has close connections to influential personalities, particularly in the USA and Western European countries, and to the political parties of the international Social Democratic movement. The organization is closely allied with monopolistic capitalist circles in the USA and through them exercises considerable influence on the USA's and other imperialist countries' foreign policy decisions. For example, Jewish publishers have far-reaching power over New York and Paris newspapers and press. Even other non-Zionist, primarily intellectual Jewish circles in the USA and Western Europe, who are actively engaged in the world peace movement and the fight against fascism, are in close contact with Israel. Through these circles, which occasionally fall for nationalist Jewish propaganda, the Israeli government also attempts to strengthen its international position. The Israeli government primarily attempts to cloak its pro-imperialistic, anti-Arab policy under the slogan that Israel is generally the state of the Jews of the world, and to defame the anti-imperialist struggle of Arab or other countries against the policies of Israel's ruling circles as an anti-Jewish movement.

The Israeli government uses the same tactical line against, for instance, the GDR. The unambiguous position of the GDR in the interest of the Arab peoples' struggles for national liberation and the preservation of peace in the Near East on the Palestine question is interpreted by the Israeli government as antisemitism and a deviation from the principles of a policy of peaceful co-existence and even defamed as a continuation of the antisemitism of Hitler's fascism. This attempt to make it more difficult for the GDR to further consolidate its international position and weaken its standing in democratic global organizations (the peace movement, the youth movement, etc.) demonstrates that the Israeli government is an ally of West German imperialism.

The primary prerequisite for the normalization of the relationship between Israel and the Arab states is for Israel's ruling circles to give up its pro-imperialist, anti-Arab policies and for the Israeli government to be prepared to resolve the Palestine question in accordance with the relevant UN Resolutions. This however first requires a change in the class power relationship in favor of progressive forces in Israel. It must however be assumed that the policy of the Israeli government toward the Arab states will not encounter any resistance from the majority of the Israeli working class because of the government's nationalist demagoguery.

Israel's Communist Party, which denounces the pro-imperialist, anti-Arab policy of Israel's ruling circles and calls for a policy of understanding and peaceful co-existence with the Arab states, has no concrete conception of a resolution for the Palestine question. The development of such a conception is further complicated by the splintering of Israel's Communist Party. In the context of the Israeli Communist Party's conflicts, however, in one wing of the party a Marxist assessment of anti-imperialist development in the Arab states and in the policy of Israel's ruling circles is beginning to develop, whose thought could contribute to the resolution of the Palestine question with further development and concretization. The basic thought of this assessment can be expressed by the slogan:

"With the Arab states against imperialism and not with imperialism against the Arab states."

Israel has diplomatic relations with the majority of the Socialist countries of Europe. Although the Socialist countries support the Arab countries' anti-imperialist liberation struggle and are against the efforts of the imperialist powers to increase tensions in the region of the Near East, they are forced for various reasons to consider relations with Israel. They are driven to these considerations by the following:

-the pre-existence of diplomatic relations;

-some of the Socialist countries voted in 1947 in the UN for the division of Palestine into an Arab and a Jewish state;

-domestic political reasons (large Jewish portions of the population, e.g. the People's Republic of Poland) partially force the maintenance of acceptable relations toward Israel.

## II. The Position of the GDR toward the State of Israel

In determining the position of the GDR toward the state of Israel and the related question of the Arab states' struggle against the policies of reactionary forces in Israel, attention must be given to the following aspects:

### A. With relation to Israel:

1. The position of the GDR is determined by the principles of peaceful co-existence, self-determination of nations, and support for the anti-imperialist liberation struggles of the Arab nations.

2. The state of Israel exists and has equal rights under international law. Israel's right to national self-determination must be fully respected.

3. In determining the position of the GDR toward Israel it must be noted that the GDR has good relations with a number of Arab states. An important reason for these relations is the related support for the anti-imperialist struggle of the Arab states against the use and strengthening of Israel as an imperialist base of support by the Western powers, particularly by West Germany. The support for the anti-imperialist struggle of the Arab states as well as the exposure and combatting of cooperation between West Germany and Israel by the GDR are important components of its struggle to breach the Hallstein Doctrine.

4. The Israeli government supports West German imperialism with its attempts to make it more difficult for the GDR to further consolidate its international position. The main accusation made by the Israeli government against the GDR is because of the GDR's government's refusal to pay a so-called reparation. The position of the GDR's government on "reparations payments" was presented to Israel in a memo from 28.12.1955 and in a note from 9.7.1956, whose main content consists of the following:

- a) The GDR has fulfilled the conditions of the Potsdam Accord;
- b) In the GDR the roots of fascism and the war have been eliminated. In doing so a guarantee is made that the horror of the past will not be repeated;
- c) The government of the GDR has taken comprehensive measures to support the victims of fascism who live within the GDR's territory;
- d) The GDR has fulfilled the reparations requirements determined by the Allies to compensate for the harm caused in the territory of other countries.

5. Israel maintains diplomatic relations with the majority of Socialist countries. Israel has good relations with a number of Afro-Asiatic countries, where especially a number of African countries like Ghana, Mali, Guinea, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Tanzania must be emphasized. Certain efforts by the Arabs on the Palestine question that are somewhat influenced by nationalist and anti-Israeli tendencies do not have support in these countries.

6. Israel possesses a strong instrument for consolidating its international position in the Jewish bourgeois circles of the USA and Western Europe. The influence of these circles on public opinion and the governments of these countries is significant and should be accounted for in the relevant foreign policy actions of the GDR.

7. The GDR has set the framework for the assessment of Israel with its characterization of Israel as the spearhead of anti-imperialism in official human rights documents (joint declaration of the GDR-UAR of 1.3.1965). Formulations that go any further should not be applied, since this would contradict the foreign policy principles of the GDR. (The relevant passages from the USSR-UAR communique from May 25, 1965, the People's Republic of Bulgaria-UAR communique of 20.11.1965, and the People's Republic of Poland-UAR communique of 29.11.1965 are cited in the attachment).

#### B. With relation to the Arab states

1. The Arab-Israel conflict is determined by the main conflict between the national liberation movement and imperialism. The Arab states are combatting the policies of the imperialist powers, which are directed against the consolidation of their national independence. These powers are exploiting Israel's ruling circles as tools.

The leading power in this struggle is the UAR. In consideration of international power relations and the necessity of stabilizing the domestic political development in the UAR and in other Arab states, as well as the real existence of Israel, a more realistic way of considering the ways to resolve the Palestine question is beginning to form. As this occurs the UAR's progressive forces are clearly guided by the following thoughts:

-Attempts to resolve the Palestine question by military means hold the danger of a conflict that would not remain limited to the Arab space. Such a conflict would serve neither the interests of world peace nor those of the Arab peoples.

-A military conflict can be led by the Arab states only with the support of the Soviet Union and the other Socialist countries. In the interest of preserving world peace the Soviet Union and the other

Socialist states will not support a conflict of this sort. Even the imperialist powers are presently not interested in larger military conflicts in this region.

-The UAR, as the country that would bear the greatest burden in such a conflict, is presently neither interested in foreign political or military complications nor capable of winning such a "war of liberation." (Mil. Engagements in Yemen, economic difficulties, and more).

In light of these issues the progressive forces, particularly those in the UAR and the Communist parties of Arab countries, appear to be more and more likely to consider the Palestine question and its solution as a component of the overall revolutionary development process in the Arab countries. Their emphasis in this process is on the breakthrough of a national democratic revolution and the consolidation of revolutionary achievements against domestic and foreign reactionaries in a number of Arab countries. A change of socio-economic relations in countries still under feudal or half-feudal leadership could allow a closed progressive front of Arab states to be formed. This front would be the advance base for isolating the pro-imperialist leading circles in Israel and their policies. Hand in hand with this long-term notion, the UAR is taking the necessary steps to strengthen itself militarily, in order to be armed against a possible Israeli attack. Despite this notion, progressive in its own way, it must be noted that the fight of the Arab states against Israel is not free from nationalist chauvinist tendencies. This finds expression in the thought (even if it is only directed outward for propagandistic purposes for the masses or in consideration of the position held for years on the Palestine question) of eliminating Israel as a state.

These tendencies, which have their influence on relations between the Arab states and Israel, nevertheless play a secondary role in the main conflict between the national liberation movement and imperialism, which is characterized by the Arab-Israel relationship. The further development of the UAR in non-capitalist ways, the consolidation of relations with the Socialist countries and their further political rapprochement, will contribute to the continual loss of influence and significance of nationalist chauvinist tendencies. Currently they must, however, be seen as fertile soil for possible provocations of a nationalist nature.

2. The Arab states reject the recognition of the UN Resolution of 29.11.1947 as an injury to the rights of national people groups to self-determination, particularly those of the Arab people of Palestine, up until today. They consider the existence of the state of Israel illegal and unjust.

Until now in every relationship, the Arab states and especially the UAR were interested in preventing the strengthening of Israel. The measures taken against Israel by the Arab states reach from diplomatic actions, political and economic boycott measures, and military actions to constant and widely distributed propaganda. On the other hand, it is a fact that continually becomes more important for the Arab states to consider that despite the Arab measures, the state of Israel exists.

There can only be a solution to the Palestine question if it is based on the application of the principles of peaceful co-existence between Israel and the Arab states. This requires the Israeli government to give up its anti-Arab policies and be prepared to resolve the Palestine question in accordance with the relevant UN Resolutions. In the future, the Arab states will need to recognize that the existence of the state of Israel cannot be undone, and the only way out lies in the necessity of peaceful cohabitation between them and the state of Israel.

An exact position in accordance with the foreign policy principles and goals of the GDR toward the Arab challenges makes it necessary to discuss some concrete aspects of the Palestine question.

a) The right of the Arab people from Palestine to self-determination.

The Arab people from Palestine fully possesses the right to self-determination, but is currently prevented from fully exercising this right by the policies of Israel's ruling circles.

The region foreseen according to the UN Resolution from 29.11.1947 for the establishment of the

Arab Palestinian state is currently 80% under Israeli occupation, and 20% is in the hands of the UAR (the Gaza Strip) and Jordan.

Since the Israeli government is not prepared to give this unjustly occupied region back to the Arab population of Palestine, it would only be possible to bring the Palestinian Arabs into a state to be established with the use of violence. From this it follows that the implementation of the Arab people of Palestine's right to self-determination in the form of developing a state on this land occupied by Israel is not possible under the given circumstances by peaceful means. Based on the political facts in the Near East the rights of the Arab people from Palestine under the current circumstances can only be comprised of the following points:

aa) Recognition and respect of the right to self-determination of the Palestinian Arabs living in Israel by the Israeli government;

ab) The demand to uphold the UN Resolution from December 11, 1948 on the repatriation and material compensation of the expelled Palestinian Arabs by the Israel government;

ac) The right to the creation of a separate state on the land due to them according to the UN Resolution from 29.11.1947.

The fact that the peaceful implementation of this right is not at the time possible on the land occupied by Israel (in the GAZA strip and in the Palestinian land absorbed by Jordan the Palestinian Liberation Organization, recognized by all Arab states as the organization of the Palestinian refugees, has renounced the establishment of a state for the time being), does not preclude the possibility that the Palestinian Arabs and possibly the "Palestinian Liberation Organization" will take up the fight for the enforcement or restoration of these rights. This fight cannot generally be conducted under the slogan of the "right to the liberation of Palestine." For this reason, the national charter of the Liberation Organization states e.g. that "Palestine... (is) considered (as) an Arab country like the other Arab countries (Art. 1), which "represents an indivisible whole" (Art. 2) and whose "rightful possessor ... is the Arab people" (Art. 3). "All Palestinians form a front, which is working with all its power for the liberation of their country of which they have been unjustly robbed." (Art. 9). "After the liberation of Palestine its people can select the political, social, and economic order it pleases" (Art. 10).

This goal is an expression of the desire for an Arab state in all of Palestine and the refusal to recognize Israel's existence as a result of a final solution to the Palestine question.<sup>[1]</sup> It is incompatible with the duty under international law of the Arab states to observe the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state of Israel and violates the determinations that are binding for the Arab states in the UN Resolution of 29.11.1947. A solution to the Palestine question is only possible with respect for the existence of the state of Israel's existence. From the standpoint of the GDR's foreign policy principles, which require the recognition of the right to self-determination, the relevant formulation in the "Joint Declaration on the Friendship Visit of the Chairman of the GDR Council of State, Walter Ulbricht, to the UAR" of March 1, 1965 holds particular significance.

The declaration says that "the German Democratic Republic... recognizes all rights of the Arab people not in but from Palestine, including its inalienable right to self-determination." The result of this formulation is that that this right will only be recognized insofar as it actually exists, thus not in Palestine per se, but with respect for the existence of the state of Israel.

b) The Jordan River Question

At the 1<sup>st</sup> Arab Summit Conference it was resolved to divert the Jordan River through the Arab states as a countermeasure against Israel's unilateral steps in contravention of international law to draw from this source of water. The diversion of the Jordan River through Israel represents a unilateral implementation of the imperialist Johnston Plan, which ultimately is intended to place key authority over this important source of water into the hands of the USA. The Arab states have

rejected this plan, because it favors Israel and does not sufficiently consider Arab interests. The resolution of these questions is only possible through negotiations that take consideration of the interests of all engaged parties.

Despite the fact that the Arab measures were meant to secure their interests in the Jordan River as a source of water, one must note that the diversion of the source of the Jordan is also an action that represents a contravention of international law. To be sure, under the given circumstances, where both sides are not prepared to resolve this conflict through negotiations, the Arab states as much as Israel have a right to the unilateral exercise of their due right of use, but may not take measures in the exercise of this right that impair such exercise by the other side, or make it impossible. Such measures must be rejected from a standpoint of the principles of equal rights and mutual respect for the sovereignty of states.

For the position of the GDR toward the state of Israel, the following key conclusions can be made:

1. The GDR condemns the pro-imperialist, anti-Arab policy of Israel's ruling circles, which cultivated this country as base of support of the imperialist powers in the fight against the national liberation movement in the Arab countries.
2. The GDR is against all attempts of the imperialist powers, including Israel, to exploit the Palestine question for the intensification of the situation in the Near and Middle East.
3. The GDR is against the cooperation of the West German imperialists and Israel's ruling circles, which contributes to the economic, military, and political strengthening of this imperialist base of support and thereby threatens the peace in the Near and Middle East.
4. In the support of anti-imperialist issues in the position of the Arab states with relation to Israel as well as in the framing of their relationship to the state of Israel the GDR must allow itself to be guided by the principle of the effective consolidation of its international position.
5. The condemnation of the peace-threatening policies of pro-imperialist forces in Israel has nothing to do with the position of the GDR toward the peace-loving people in Israel or any other country.

The contacts that exist between parties and mass organizations of the GDR and anti-fascist parties and organizations in Israel should be further cultivated, since they are in no way directed against the interests of the Arab states and people, but are conducive to the exposure of the dark history of the revanchist and militaristic forces of West German imperialist and the preservation of peace.

6. The condemnation of the policies of Israel's reactionary ruling circles as well as the support of the anti-imperialist movement in the Arab countries must proceed in a form in which the recognition of Israel's existence as a state is not placed into question by the GDR (without publicly emphasizing this), but which at the same time does not endanger the position of the GDR in the Arab states.
7. Because of the tense relationship between Israel and the Arab states, provocations are absolutely out of the question. Therefore it is necessary to differentiate in the Palestine question between nationalist chauvinist ideas and matters pertaining to the Arab states' fight against the reactionary pro-imperialist policies of Israel's ruling circles, which serve to strengthen the national liberation movement and frustrate imperialist attacks on this movement. The support of the GDR must be in accordance with our foreign policy principles and must not lead to a restriction of its foreign policy maneuverability.
8. With the goal of further consolidating the position of the GDR in the Arab states the following is recommending:



- a) The establishment of state relations with Israel as well as initiatives to further non-state contacts are not foreseen in the present situation for tactical reasons.
- b) All non-state contacts with Israeli social and public institutions (not including the parties and organizations mentioned in Point 5) are to be restricted as much as possible for the time being.
- c) The participation of Israeli citizens in events in the GDR and GDR citizens in events in Israel related to science, culture, and sport must be decided on a case-by-case basis.

Distribute to:

Gen. Ulbricht, Matern, Stoph, Honecker, Prof. Hager, Prof. Norden, Axen, Lamberz, Members of the APK, P. Scholz

College, Prof. Kröger

Embassies and Representations

Political Departments

Dr. Wandel

MAI

[\[1\]](#) Translator's note: this unfortunate turn of phrase is in the original text: "endgültige Lösung der Palästinafrage"; it does differ slightly from the phrase common used by Hitler of an "Endlösung der Judenfrage."