

[UM] Unidentified Male.
[UI] Unintelligible.
[NFI] Not Further Identified.
[*Italics*] Translator's comments.

Sh = Shukri Abu Baker
Om = Omar Ahmad
Ha = Haitham Maghawri
Gh = Ghassan Elashi
Ss = Sheik Sharif
Ga = Gawad
Ab = Abdel Salam

Om: ...it is from 8-12, four hours.

Sh: You mean we could start early on?

Om: Yes.

Sh: The total is 14 hours.

Om: UI. How are you?

UM1: Good, by God.

Om: By the way, you had elections...

UM1: Yes, we're busy. We're busy. I came over here in the middle of the elections.

Om: Until when is the elections?

UM1: It is over.

Om: Is it over?

UM1: I believe [*it ended*] two days ago.

Om: I mean, were the results announced or what?

UM1: No, not yet. No, not yet.

Om: No, it is not possible. Not yet. I would have heard it on the news.

UM1: No, not yet. Maybe in two weeks. Yes, right, right. But, I mean, the Labor Party paid 2 million shekels to some parties which are, of course, affiliated with it and some other parties in order to coordinate together to stand against the Islamists in the city. But, thanks be to God, the brothers..., their position is strong.

Om: They're working.

UM1: Yes, their position is strong [*static*]. They're strong..., world media is giving us...

Om: Is giving us a large role..., is giving us a large role and I don't know if we measure up to it or not.

UM1: Yes, I mean, this story about...UI, this could be a blessing or it could be a catastrophe, you see? But, if we sought the help of God the Almighty and worked very hard, we could make a difference, God's willing.

Om: God's willing.

UM1: By God, I knew some people over there, some of them...UI. I was happy with the kind of people I see...UI. But then, praise be to God, there is a collapse of the other side from God while we, praised be God the Almighty, we calculate every step in a material way more than we ought to.

[*Ghassan Elashi walks into the room and greets the others*].

UM1: Peace, God's mercy and blessings.

UM2: Yesterday, the Christian fundamentalists were...UI.

UM1: They had a conference two days ago about the issue of "Hopes and fears about the issue of peace" in...

Om: Oh, yeah. I know about it. The conference which was broadcasted by the Protestants in San Diego.

Sh: Did you put your...UI, the room number?

Om: No, by God. No.

Sh: The room number? You didn't put it?

Om: No.

UM1: This professor, John Halaqa, was the one who was in charge of the interpretation, in the Catholic College, university of...UI.

Om: Yes.

UM1: A Greek priest attended. He said very good things, by God.

UM2: Yes, him. It is true. They invited us to attend...

Om: But we declined.

UM2: We declined

UM1: By God, my brother, while they were speaking, a Zionist person who seems to be from the Meir Kahane group told the Jewish professors who were present, told them: You are servants to America. You're agents of America, you don't serve Judaism.

Om: No!

UM2: Yes, by God. A guy who showed a slide film was in the Israeli army.

UM3: Was he speaking about Rabin?

UM2: No, he was talking about the lecturers who were there at the....

[A period of low-volume discussions ensues between the men in the room. The following statements were heard, though].

Gh: ...in this manner, you become bigger than the...

UM2: UNRWA?

Gh: UNRWA. The UNRWA is 1.5, 1.5 or 1.6...

Sh: A reputation, talk and a fuss...

Gh: Yeah, but they don't have 2 millions. They could raise 10 million.

Om: But, my brother, they establish connections to some organizations...

Gh: And then they pool their resources together.

Om: They establish connections so not everything will come through them. They make visits, for instance, to organizations affiliated with the Christians and stuff. They donate directly to them and not...

Gh: Oh. You mean that it [*donation*] would come directly from the church to a hospital without passing by them.

Om: A shame. A shame. Even some Palestinians thank it [*the organization*].

Sh: So, the financing is...UI. For education; 51,000 [*dollars*], 40,000 [*dollars*] for I don't know what... 15,000 [*dollars*] for something else...UI. Public information 86,000 [*dollars*] which means that they pay their expenses and their mail campaigns and stuff.

[*Another period of low-volume side-talks by the men*].

Om: Whoever wants to copy his paper and distribute them to the people can do so, those who didn't make copies. Those who will discuss their papers and want people to have a copy, the hotel permitted us to make copies. Around 30-70 copies, that is. Do you want to copy it?

Sh: I want to copy this.

UM2: How many are in attendance?

Om: What?

UM2: How many are attending?

Om: Er... 25. Make 25 [*copies*]. It is better to have one person go at a time.

[A short period of silence and sounds of men moving around the room].

UM2: ...UI there used to be dictatorship. But, now, dictatorship is gone and they will be gone as well.

Sh: Ok, well, what is the meaning of democracy. Democracy is more sugar the tea [Laughter], more sugar in the coffee, more sugar in the coffee, more sugar in the coffee. We have no..., we have democracy just like Israel.

Ha: [Laughs] He is someone who wants to make his speech sweeter and he is not a politician. He is someone who wants...UI in the coffee shops of Washington, of Cairo, in order to know what he is talking about.

Om: This Omar Issa is a...

UM2: One of the supporters of peace. He used to...

Om: Th Sudanese ambassador.

UM2: The former [ambassador].

UM1: What is this statement which was issued by Sudan in support to the [peaceful] resolution?

Ha: That's right.

UM1: What?

Ha: They supported it.

UM1: Yes, did they give reasons for that or just supported it?

Om: They supported it in the summit meeting for the Arab foreign ministers which was held in Cairo. A support.

UM1: The only member to reject it was Iraq, maybe.

Om: Iraq was the only country which rejected it. As for Sudan, the media is assaulting the [Oslo] agreement. So, the Sudanese government keeps trying to justify..., or is trying to take a stand..., not a stand, but that we support the choice of the Palestinian people. The Palestinian state can only be...UI. All just talk without any principles. Even what is called

the Office of Guidance went secretive [*about Oslo*].

UM1: What Guidance?

Om: The Office of Guidance.

UM2: Take it easy on [*The Office of*] Guidance, may God keep you.

UM1: But, what did the [*Office of*] Guidance say?

Om: They met with Arafat, with Chairman Arafat and...

UM1: Yes, they met with him. Yes.

Om: Yes, and the statement which was issued afterwards doesn't include a rejection or a support.

UM1: The statement which was issued after the visit?

Om: Yes.

UM2: They issued a statement following the visit.

Sh: There is no..., no reference to the issue of the agreement itself. There are general talk.

Om: Yes, general stuff.

Sh: Yes, just general talk. Yes, I'm with you. I'm against those who sell the land. He who sells the land is a traitor. We're with you 100% and affirm the national unity. They said..., and they said that Arafat stressed the national unity and the importance of this and that and, regardless of the religion and the creed, and they said: and this is what we stress. It is over. The issue is over.

Om: But, if you take the language of the address, there is positivity..., he met with Chairman Arafat to discuss the issues... There is positivity. It is true that, at the end, it says that the Muslim Brotherhood reaffirm their principles. Their principles are known.

Sh: It is a simple matter, Sheik. Our Cause is that of...

Om: Yes, but when you put all these factors together..., there is no hope, even the people who

have principles don't have them anymore. May God help us. May God help us.

Sh: Abou Mohamed, it is now 10 O'clock now.

Om: Yes, but...

Sh: I think we should begin with whoever is here.

Om: I will read for you... There is a guy who wrote an article about his issue. He is saying, "Let's raise another glass so that we can ignore the fact that everyone..., everything looks like the Chairman's...UI, a part Kufiyya, the Palestinian headdress, worn in a...UI manner and a matching scarf, but hiding behind all of this a big bald head. The president is now acting like a mayor who just got his sewage budget and his eyes are gleaming with great joy. Sewage first. There is something to it and maybe he knows something we don't know". And they said, "The man who every time he insists on speaking English on American television struck another eternal blow to the Palestinian image. the man who is in his state for the past years has managed to bring several pretty impressive disasters down upon the...UI". This is a Christian [*journalist*] who wrote that.

Ha: He is [*Laughs*].

Om: He is saying, he is saying "Arafat promises to his people for years turned out to be replaced at the last moment by the whore of Jericho who greeted the Israeli spies".

Sh: This analogy is reasonable.

UM1: Arafat's contribution is similar to that of Abdel Nasser in '67. It is a contribution of a collaborator. It is not a contribution of a collaborator, it is that of a pure Jew.

Gh: What did Abdel Nasser give?

UM1: What?

Gh: What did Abdel Nasser give?

UM1: The Jews conquered him...UI.

Gh: But his position was a little bit more honorable.

UM1: What?

Gh: His position was a little bit more honorable.

UM1: All, all are traitors. All of is treason...

UM2: But Arafat did...

UM1: But it was long ago. Arafat, you have the time factor, my brother. The time factor and not only that... I mean, if Abdel Nasser was alive in '93, he would have called for surrendering the entire Islamic nation to the Jews. What is important is that the contribution of these people is not a contribution of collaborators.

Sh: But, let me tell you something. If you want to talk about a person who is a traitor or whatever, I will tell you that the Palestinian people is...UI doesn't want anyone other than Arafat. He is a strong man. He is the strongest. This is the logical conclusion. He silenced the opposition and Hamas has 70 or 90 [people] in Gaza and 60 [people] in the [West] Bank who are placed there...UI and they couldn't stop Yasser Arafat's project. That means he is the strongest man on the arena, my brother. And they will bid with him and people will go with the strong. People don't go with the weak even if his logic is strong. The fact that he is being supported is a strong factor...

UM1: Shukri, do you think that this is a logic?

Sh: I'm telling you that this is not my logic. It is the logic of...UI. This is how people think.

UM1: Is this a logic? This is not a logic.

Sh: They tell you that the Palestinians cannot feed their children.

UM2: Ok, what strengthened Arafat other than their support for him. This is their way in strengthening this support, to provide him with financial strength. Without money and outside support, he wouldn't...

Sh: The fact that there was a support [for Arafat]... This is politics, that he was able to get money and support.

UM2: Ok, how many..., how many honest persons have made projects?

Sh: We were going along with him to th last minute. They got us implicated us with them and they saw that there was no way out, they brought an agreed-upon solution and...UI. They're accomplice in the crime as much as he [Arafat] is. This is nonsense.

UM2: It is over, they now go to the [*West*] Bank, the...UI.

Sh: It is over, isn't it?

UM2: ...UI in Washington and could go to the [*West*] Bank.

Sh: But now they tell you that, during Christmas, we will celebrate in...UI, God's willing.

UM1: [*Laughs*] Go ahead and celebrate over there. Become a Christian and go celebrate over there.

Sh: [*Laughs*] God's willing.

UM1: Mahmoud Abbas. Who?

UM2: ...UI.

Om: There is an article... Someone wrote about the facts of the agreement. An Israeli. Dr. Israel Shihab. you know him...UI. He wrote a 13-page article in which he analyzes the issue. I read it. He is saying that the current situation... the signed agreement is the worst thing to happen to the Palestinians. The Jews now will give Arafat what he wants since he has now become like King Hussein or...UI. They're not planning to hold elections. The whole thing is all lies, the elections thing. They don't want to have elections in the first place. They want Arafat to remain...UI. Then he is saying that the deportation was conducted by a joint operation between the Israeli intelligence and Arafat and the [*Palestinian Liberation*] Organization. There were intelligence meetings and the first aspect to have coordination between the Jews and Arafat was through the intelligence.

Sh: Really!

Om: It is an incredible article.

UM2: ...UI.

Om: No, before that. He is saying that this was before the deportation process. I mean, he is saying that the deportation was planned by both sides. Or, at least, it was approved by the two sides.

UM2: Oh, you mean the [*Palestinian Liberation*] Organization approved it.

Om: The [*Palestinian Liberation*] Organization approved it along with Israel. He calls this agreement...UI.

UM2: ...UI.

Om: Yes. This is similar to the...UI. Let's distribute those later. He who has a paper should distribute it later. This is better.

Sh: No, in order to...

Om: No, when he comes because he will waste time this way. He will distribute [*papers*] to everyone.

UM2: Let's start with the ready papers.

[*Sounds of papers and chairs being moved around in the room. UM3 walks into the room.*]

UM3: Peace be with you.

Om: Peace be with you. [*Pause*]. Praise be to God. Prayers and peace be to God's messenger, to his entire family and friends. God's willing, we shall begin with verses from the noble Quran by Sheik Sharif.

Ss: [*Recites Quran for few minutes*].

Om: May God reward you well. Brother Abou Ibrahim should have been with us, but may God heal him. He is at the hospital for those who don't know. He had a surgery yesterday. So, we ask God the Almighty to heal him. This meeting was called for by the Palestine Committee in order to have a seminar or a meeting to the brothers present here today in order to study the situation in light of the latest developments on the Palestinian arena, its effects and impact on our work here in America. We wanted this program to be a quick one so that we could implement what we get out from this meeting in our upcoming festivals and in our activities which will begin, or which have begun last week and which will continue until the end of the year. Also, we wanted to present some strategies for work in the future. So, we found some points which we asked all the brothers to look at some or all of them. They are: Political activism and public relations, popular activism, charity work, media work. ...UI some papers which I have and brought them. I think that our work at the Union [*Islamic Association for Palestine*] or what we did at the Union is a responsibility which falls on all of our shoulders and we wanted to distribute this responsibility on all the brothers who are here today to bear the burden of what is going

on. I say that it is our responsibility that these historic changes regarding our Cause and the cause of Islam in Palestine as many people look forward to a new leadership for Palestinian national activism, Islamic activism. They look forward to..., even the East and the West look forward to Islamic movements which lead the opposition and the masses after the collapse of the [*Palestinian*] Liberation Organization in the national sense. We wanted the brother to take part with us in this seminar in order to come up with some specific visions and strategies and in order to know how to proceed with the work, God's willing. I have a 3-page paper to be read in the beginning of the seminar in order to emerge with specific details. We will discuss it, God's willing. If we agree on it we will implement it and, if we didn't agree on it, we could modify it. Basically, the seminar is divided into four sessions; 3 sessions today and 1 session tomorrow, Sunday. Suggested time of the sessions are as follows: from 10-1, from 2-5, from 7-11 and, tomorrow, from 8-12. The first session will discuss the general political atmosphere and its impact on work in America. We have some papers. Those who wrote some papers could present them up in this session and...UI, could be presented at this time. We need to assign a moderator for this session. The second session will be about charity work and its future in light of the changes, it will be in the afternoon. There are papers to be presented and we will assign a moderator for this session. The third session is about political activism, media and popular activism and public relation in North America, the future and the challenges. It will be in the evening, God's willing, and we have papers to be presented...UI. Tomorrow, God's willing, the moderators of the three sessions today will be tomorrow's panel and will present... I mean, the session's moderator is responsible for taking the session's minutes, determine the papers and come up with a final paper for the session. This paper will be presented to us and approved by us and, after he present this paper to us tomorrow, we will have 3 papers, not 1 page but 3 pages. Each one will present it and then we take action plan from it on what to do, visions and modify it then we approve it, that this what we came up with in that meeting. I imagine that we could meet the entire two days and come up with nothing and we could also meet and, God's willing and God bless our time, come up with some visions. I see that..., this is a suggestion I present. If you approve it or if you have any modifications or anything regarding the points of discussion of the sessions, we would 10 minutes to the topic. This way, we would count papers in all aspects. The brothers who will submit papers should come here and will have a moderator with them and someone to take the minutes of the session and the points [*discussed*]. When discussion is over, he will present to us what he got out of the discussions. We approve it and then we end the first session and so forth. Tomorrow, God's willing, these three people will be in charge of the final session and they will the ones to present to us what we came up with. We would leave with work visions or action plan.

UM2: We could also have an introduction about the general...UI political atmosphere.

UM3: The general political situation we could...UI.

UM1: ...UI should have a discussion regarding America's position.

Om: Yes, right. In the first [session]. The first [session] is the general one and its impact on work in America.

UM1: I prepared a paper about the relationship of the charity work to...UI and the institutional work here.

Om: It will have an impact on it. It will be discussed in the second session. It could be the first paper to be discussed in the second session. Yes, the relationship of the charity work because it is relevant [to the discussion topic]. Are there any other suggestions?

UM1: ...UI.

Om: This is how the majority of it will be. For instance, the majority of it will be...UI. It will be up to the presenter of the paper. Who has...?

UM2: A part of the paper is...UI.

Om: Fine. And the second part is...

UM2: There is no sense in...UI.

Om: Fine. The majority of the paper. If the majority of is political, it will be a political [discussion] and it will be the same points discussed in the other topic.

UM2: That is everything. All the points. Someone will bring up all the points.

Om: But the majority of it, for instance, is... He who has a paper, where is the majority of it, of the paper, going to be?

UM2: It will a part of the seminar.

Sh: Discussion is open as well.

Om: There will be discussion.

Sh: It is not limited to the presenter of the paper.

Om: Yes, right. It doesn't have to be the person who presents the paper.

UM3: ...UI [*heavy static*].

Om: They will be in the first session, yes. Ok, do you agree on this point before we start? Is there any disagreement?

UM2: There is no disagreement.

Om: The first Philadelphia session, we have brother Abdel Salam and Sheik Sharif in the..., in the introduction. Could you...UI someone in the first session? Sheik Sharif and brother Abdel Salam. Who has papers for the first session. Brother..., in the first session? [*response inaudible*]. Who has papers for the second [*session*], charity work.

UM2: Is it about charity work exclusively?

Om: Yes. Charity work is by itself. No, those who have points and doesn't want to present a paper, we will take them as discussion [*points*].

UM1: I have a paper but I didn't distribute it.

Om: You don't have to distribute it. If there is a paper, that's it. You don't have to. Distribution is not a must now.

UM2: The points should be...UI.

Om: Discussion [*periods*]. If there is no written paper, he who wants to talk will be allowed to during discussion [*periods*]. Shukri, do you have a paper?

UM3: Yes, we have one.

Om: About charity work. Gawad, do you have one about charity work?

Ga: Yes, but later.

Om: It will be a point of discussion. Ok, we have [*papers*] with Osama, Mo'een and Shukri. Anybody else about charity work.

UM2: The donations door is open. [*Laughter*].

Om: The first point, my brother, says "The general atmosphere", the general political atmosphere. Do you have one [paper] relating to charity work? Should we take you off the second one?

UM2: ...UI.

Om: The third session, who has papers? Gawad. The third session, who has papers for it? [response inaudible]. From the beginning, the first session we have Sheik Sharif and brother Abdel Salam, brother Gawad and Aboul Hasan, Abdel Halim. Anyone else? Did you write them down? The second session... Guys, stay with me so that we could finish. The second session we have Osama, Mo'een and Shukri Abu Baker and it will be about charity work. Anyone else? The third session which will be about political, media and popular activism and PR, we have Ghassan, Saleh, Gawad and Abdel Rahman, Nihad and Akram. Anyone else? Who is going to be moderator of the 1st session?

UM1: How about Gawad?

Om: Gawad is presenting a paper and those who present papers cannot be moderators.

Sh: He who is presenting papers...

Om: He who has a paper should be taking notes. The one who moderates the session should be the one giving us the finalization of the points we agreed upon.

Gh: Regarding the 1st [session], Shukri should be [moderator].

Om: There is no objection. Is there is another vote with Shukri....UI. he who feels he can do it, let him do it. The 1st [session] will be headed by Shukri, are we agreed on it? The 2nd one..., about charity work. How about brother Akram?

Sh: ...UI.

Om: Dr. Isam...UI. Ok, the 2nd and the 3rd ones. The 2nd one is Dr. Isam and the 3rd one is Dr. Isam. How about the 4th?

UM: ...UI. [A long period of heavy static].

Om: Brother Abdel Salam, come over here.

Sh: Again, my brothers, the moderators of the session, they are three. Right?

Om: Didn't you write it down? You were talking. You were talking.

Sh: I wasn't..., I wasn't sitting here.

Om: O Shukri, they are Sheik Sharif, brother Abdel Salam, Gawad and Aboul Hasan, Brother Abdel Halim. Come over here.

Sh: Am I going to take notes as well?

Om: What? Oh, yes. You will take notes and then present them to us. Make a page and...UI.

Sh: Praised be God the Lord of the Two Worlds. Prayers and peace be on our master, Mohamed, on his family and friends. During the next half an hour, God's willing, we will have a presentation by two of our brothers who were in the homeland. A brother just came from Al Aqsa mosque and took a tour outside...[heavy static], Abdel Salam. We will give him ten minutes to speak...UI and the other ten minutes is for questions and answers. After that, we will meet with brother Gawad, God's willing.

Ab: In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. Honestly, I prepared some stuff, just some general remarks.

Om: Tell us about...UI. When did you come back?

Ab: I came back the day before yesterday. I was there for five weeks. I mean, I was there before and after the [peace] agreement. What you notice is that, before the agreement, one would walk in Gaza Sector and would feel that it is truly autonomous without a need for anything, to this agreement which took place. I mean, it didn't need the agreement as people there have self-rule. The [Israeli] army didn't dare to go inside the Gaza Sector. During daylight and during curfew..., most of the operations used to take place during curfews. They would take place during curfews. Why, in order to minimize injuries among the public. Some people used to work on certain things before the agreement - I mean certain people who are affiliated with those who signed the agreement - which was to take advantage of the needs of the people to serve the [peaceful] solution. In reality, Gaza Sector is very bad economically. I mean, there are none of the fundamentals of an economy there. There is nothing. I mean, services, the educational aspect, the health aspect, humanitarian aspect, municipal services, any..., unemployment. All of that exist in Gaza Sector in a very obvious manner. I mean, sewage, for example, sewage in Khan Younis is like a flood in the streets...

END OF RECORDING.