and Israeli officials. This objective is closely tied to the first, namely to abort the intifada politically after the Israeli failure to quell it by military means. Thus, the PLO would be marginalized and the Palestinian people's unity and national identity dissipated.

Concerning the US insistence that the PLO adopt a «pragmatic» approach in order to be acceptable to Israel as a negotiating partner, this is actually a call for the PLO to commit political suicide. It is part of the blackmail designed to pressure the PLO into making more and more concessions, notably to stop its military struggle from across the borders against the Zionist occupation. Such legitimate Palestinian resistance is considered «terrorism» by the US. Meanwhile, nearly 1,000 Palestinians have been killed by the Israeli occupation forces during the intifada, and many thousands more injured, but the US administration has not seriously tried to pressure Israel to cease its constant, systematic violence and violation of Palestinian human rights.

In the end, the US administration suspended the dialogue on the pretext that the PLO continues to engage in «terrorism,» but the real question is the US's double standard when it comes to the legitimate rights of a people to resist occupation. In fact, what the US opposes is not terrorism, but progressive nationalist movements whose aims are genuine independence and utilizing the resources of their country to the benefit of their own people, rather than to the benefit of private American capital. This maxim is also one of the bases of US-Israeli strategic cooperation.

The US-Israeli relationship

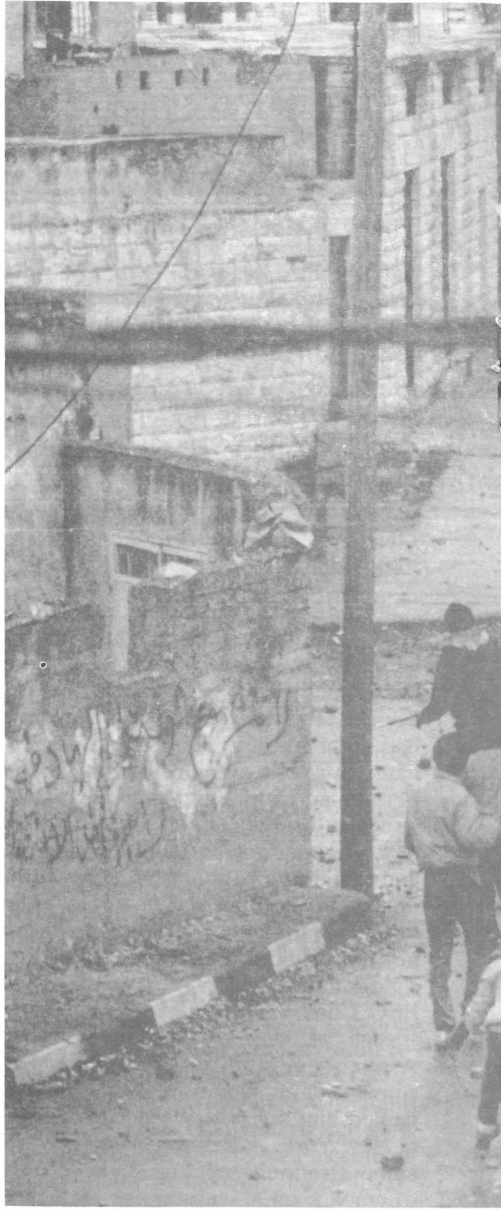
Upon the formation of the «Greater Israel» government, the US did express its displeasure at some of this government's policy. This occurred after the failure of the Baker plan, which was adamantly rejected by the new government even though it aimed to bolster Shamir's own plan and coincided with basic US-Israeli policy.

However, US displeasure lasted only a few days, after which the Bush Administration rewarded Israel for its aggression and repression of the Palestinian people with suspension of the dialogue. Instead of taking a balanced position, the US has blatantly confirmed just how biased and unjust its policy in the Middle East is. Once again, it elected to punish the oppressed and reward the oppressor who continues to block peace with impunity. Though US officials often claim to be impartial and desirous of a just peace, the fact is that the US has seven times vetoed resolutions in the Security Council condemning Israeli brutality in the occupied territories. In reality, it is the special US-Israeli relationship which determines these policies, expressing the organic relationship between US imperialism and Zionist colonialism.

The US needs Israel for protecting its interests in the area, primarily its oil interest, as most recently exhibited by the identity of the two states' positions on the current Gulf crisis and their coordination aimed against Iraq. It is this function of Israel that has earned it the status of strategic asset for US imperialism. Israel, for its part, needs US political, financial and military support to maintain its occupation and pursue its aggressive, expansionist policy.

Regarding the suspension of the US-PLO dialogue, Israel stood virtually alone among the states of the world in welcoming the US decision, and urged the US to terminate these talks permanently. Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Arens expressed Israel's elation when he said: «We see that actually the values and the principles that guide our policy are identical with the values and principles guiding the American policy: you don't negotiate with terrorists» (Associated Press, June 22nd).

The pro-Israeli line of the US government is further bolstered by the Zionist lobby's persistent efforts to shape a positive attitude towards Israel in the US. This lobby, most notably the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), exerts crucial



The US refused to discuss the demands of the masses of t