



FROM THE EDITOR

IF AMERICAN POLITICIANS, the mainstream media, and most of the supposed experts in think tanks inside the Beltway are to be believed, Iran represents a looming threat not only to its immediate vicinity (and especially Israel), but also to the national security and well-being of the United States itself. The ceaseless demonization of this middling Middle Eastern power is linked to its past involvement in terrorism and its current support for Hamas and Hizballah, but particularly to its presumed nuclear weapons program. Conveniently forgotten is that many of the same suspects now focused on Iran were pushing a similarly alarmist line regarding Iraq as a deadly threat to world peace in the lead-up to the 2003 war, in the wake of which it was discovered that the dire warnings of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction were baseless. In this issue, Edward S. Herman and David Peterson examine the shabby role of a broad range of actors involved in this anti-Iran propaganda campaign.

To mark the forty-fifth anniversary of the June 1967 war, the *Journal* is publishing an address delivered on 14 July 1967 to an emergency session of the UN General Assembly by Walid Khalidi, then serving as advisor to the Iraqi delegation. Khalidi was responding to Israel's annexation of Arab East Jerusalem just ten days earlier, as well as to Israeli foreign minister Abba Eban's defense of that action. Reading the Khalidi speech in 2012, when the annexation (in effect Israel's first formal step to absorb the remaining parts of Palestine following its military conquest) is so much a part of the political landscape as to be taken virtually for granted, reminds us of how shocking the measure was then. The outrage and near universal condemnation it provoked was such that even the United States could not vote against the UNGA resolution deploring the annexation, but could only abstain. The resolution passed unanimously the same day this speech was given.

Also in the historical vein, this issue offers Alex Winder's analysis of the lethal 1929 riots in Palestine, one of the first major outbreaks of communal violence between Arabs and Jews in the country. Winder shows how the erosion of long-standing communal boundaries under the impact of the growth of the Zionist movement and other changes in Palestine contributed to this first serious harbinger of many decades of strife to come.

Finally, we are pleased to be able to offer readers of this issue of the *Journal* lengthy excerpts of a 1996 interview with Mahmoud Darwish, published in English for the first time. Darwish, recognized as the national poet of Palestine, died four years ago. Conducted by a leading Israeli literary figure, Helit Yeshurun, whom Darwish knew well, the interview includes much that will be new even to those well familiar with his other interviews and extensive *oeuvre*. It reflects both closeness and ambivalence in the relationship between interviewer and interviewee, mirroring Darwish's complex relationship with the Hebrew language and with the literary scene in Israel, where he grew up and became a recognized literary figure. Because he was addressing an Israeli audience in the first instance, the interview is strikingly original, and remains fresh in its assessments even today, many years after it was conducted.

—*Rashid I. Khalidi*

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