

[UM] Unidentified Male.
[UI] Unintelligible.
[NFI] Not Further Identified.
(LNU) Last name unknown.
[Italics] Translator's comments.
[...] Incomplete sentence.

Sh = Shukri Abu Baker
Om = Omar Ahmad Yehya
Gh = Ghassan Elashi
Gh2 = Ghassan Saleh
Ss = Sheik Sharif
Ga = Gawad (Abou Ayyoub, LNU)
Ab = Abdel Salam (LNU)
Ak = Akram (LNU)
Au = Abou Usama (NFI)
As = Abdel Halim Al Ashqar (Aboul Hasan)
Aa = Abou Ahmad (NFI)
Aj = Abdel Jabbar Hamdan
Ab2 = Abou Bassem (NFI)
Mu = Muin (LNU)
Ar = Abdel Rahman
Ni = Nihad (LNU)
Os = Osama (NFI)
Ay = Ayman Sharawi
Ha = Haitham Maghawri
Yo = Yousif (LNU)

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Sh: ...there is a difference in America, I'm talking about our work, there is a difference between when I say "A specific decision is not legitimate. I don't agree with it" and when I say "The leadership itself is not legitimate".

Om: Good point.

Sh: Wait. It does not benefit me to show to the American people that we are a people in conflict and stuff, and that I am against the accord because I hate Abou Ammar and hate the [*Palestinian Liberation*] Organization. But, it is very possible that you speak out of

objectivity, democracy and freedom of expression and say that this decision was made without this and that, show reasons but, without being forced to attack the Organization in a personal and direct manner. And I say that...UI.

UM: But, in the future, how are you going to...UI.

Gh2: That's it. We agreed on that before.

Sh: It is possible. It is possible for you to speak about a certain reason, about a certain decision...

UM: But, you want to prove it...

Sh: ...about a certain decision.

UM2: You're talking about an attack, a personal attack.

Sh: About a certain decision. For example, when they demand [*the implementation of*] resolution 242, are you going say, "By God, they don't...". They don't represent [*us*] to start with. Why are you marching behind him in the first place? You cannot...

Gh2: They claim that they represent me. So, I'm proving to them that they represent people other than me but not me.

Sh: Providing a specific reason.

UM: ...UI. It is a different inclination.

Sh: By God, I'm against this inclination.

[*Brief UI group talk*].

Sh: The Americans have no business in our own internal affairs. No business.

UM: How about all of your internal affairs. They're the ones who decide all of it.

[*Brief UI group talk*].

UM: Our brothers, let's just stay within the subject. Go ahead, Abou...

UM2: In my belief, when we spoke about bringing failure...

Sh: Ah...

UM2: ...bringing failure..., bringing failure, I believe that we are not going to make them fail here on the American front...UI. In my belief, bringing failure means bringing failure to the organization which adopted this project, causing the project itself to fail through the principle that it does not achieve the minimum we want for our people. In addition to playing a very important tune to the average American which is the issue of democracy, the issue of representation. When you tell an American individual that, "By God, this person is not elected. He is an oppressor. He is appointed. This is a dictatorial regime like any other regimes...UI". Bring up Saddam Hussein's name, for instance, and he will understand it. He will understand it easily. And, the stuff we're saying has credibility and the Americans know. The politicians know. The average person on the street might not know. But, I mean that our point has credibility. I mean, we're not talking about issues we invented, for instance, or about issues we heard about such as the secret accords and stuff like that. No, these are things we live through, that is that all of the Organization's institutions are not elected. All of them, even the parliament is appointed. Of course, they will not be happy that this and that happened, here are the reasons ...etc. But, they know that they are appointed. We know and they know why they were appointed and on what bases. We should be saying... If we want to defeat the accord, defeat its symbols, we must talk to them about the administrative corruption at their end as well, that these people are thieves and they should not be entrusted with the money which reach our people, that they have stolen them and will steal them. What is our gain from that? Not showing that we as Palestinians are in disaccord, no, but you're destroying these people who carry this project because, without them, the project will fail as they're the ones who carry it.

UM: Ok, anyone who wants to say something about causing the project to fail.

Ak: There are two points: the first one is that we are against this project. This is a good point as no democratic decision has been reached about it [*the project*] or anything. But, they might bring up another point to counter this point which is that elections are coming, they will take place in nine months. You will be able to elect your representatives and stuff. The main point is that this is a major turn in the history of Palestine and that the resolution was made without taking our opinion and anything that comes after this resolution, as far as we're concerned, is an application of that accord, whether it is elections in Palestine or... It is true, democracy will take place in the future but, you have already put us in a tight corner which we don't agree with. You placed the cause in a road the Palestinian people don't agree with. Henceforth, we want to bring everything back to the original accord which is a historical turn in the history of the Palestinian people. It

remains that the resolution was made without democracy and without a referendum. Even if the Organization later obtained a majority in the Palestinian street, this is not an objection as the resolution which was reached is null in the first place.

UM: I can repeat the text if that is going to solve the problem. We can say, "Attacking the..., the credibility of the representation of the Organization..., the Organization's right to sign an accord on behalf of the Palestinian people".

Ga: No, he didn't sign as "The Organization". He signed as "Abou Ammar". He didn't sign as the Organization.

UM: No, he signed "The Palestinian People". What's his name..., Abou Abbas, signed as "The Palestinian Delegation".

Ga: But, not even one major democratic Palestine organization until now has...

UM: This is the point. This is the point.

[Brief UI group talk].

Sh: This is what they understand, Abou..., Abou... This is what they understand; currently Abou Ammar is the chairman of the PLO. Our brothers, we cannot use the same poetic Arabic style when addressing the American mentality. Our brother, the Americans will not understand it... *[UI interruptions by others]*. Please allow me, they will tell you, "If he doesn't represent you, why the hell don't you get rid of him?". He will tell you, "If he doesn't represent you, who represents the Palestinian people?".

UM: We should drop the Arafat issue now. We're talking about the Organization.

Sh: These are very critical questions. We're replying to the question. It is very critical.

UM: ...UI if he is democratic.

Sh: I cannot say to him that I'm Hamas...UI

[UI brief group talk].

UM2: Just a second. Go ahead.

UM: I see that we disagree over more than one point because we are in agreement over each of

them separately.

Sh: Ah.

UM: They are three issues; the first issue is the injustice of the accord, the injustice of the accord itself to the Palestinian people. No one will disagree with you over that if you indicate to him why.

UM2: We're not in disagreement about this point. We are now talking about the issue of the representation of the Organization.

UM: The second point..., the second point is that the entire set-up is illegal.

Sh: Fine.

UM: And the weakest point is talking about the Organization, its institutions and their corruption.

UM2: It is not related. We can then attack the legality of the Organization's signing of the accord. Does it have the right to sign a paper that is...

Sh: About a specific issue.

UM2: Yes. That's it. It doesn't have the right.

Ga: If it were a representative for the Palestinian people, it would have had the right to...

UM: This is what is meant. But, I didn't want to delve into the representation issue. Had it represented the Palestinian people, it would have had the right to sign. But, does it represent it or not?

Om: They say, yes.

UM: We debate that and we say, no. That's it. That is what is meant.

Om: Then, we should be talking about the authenticity of representation.

UM: The authenticity of representation.

Om: But, I believe that we are afraid of something. I believe that the American people are the

most people who accept contradiction, opposition and the fact that there are some people who don't agree with others and others... Really. I mean, the Americans are the most people who accept these things because they have their own system and it is a system where opposition is clearly permissible.

Aa: I disagree with Shukri.

UM: What?

[UI brief group talk].

Ga: Listen to me a little bit. Now, there is..., and it is a serious inclination and Sheik Mohamed Siam told me that personally, it is not...UI. There are three options and everybody is talking about these options until now; An Islamic National Front, the same Organization or an alternative organization...UI. It doesn't matter what name it bears. And he claimed that he represents the Palestinian people and that he leads the Palestinian national resistance. Am I going to shy away from telling the American people that this guy doesn't represent me?

Sh: When the alternative person is available, I will...UI.

Ga: ...UI.

Sh: My brother, it will be available, Abou Ayyoub.

Ga: It doesn't matter. What I was saying..., I was talking about the administrative aspect...

[UI brief interruption].

Ga: I'm talking about the administrative aspect. I mean from the administrative aspect, this internal dispute between us and them, isn't it a dispute between us and the Organization? Abou Ammar allied with them against us...

Sh: The Jews...

Ga: ...UI. This is an old stuff. This is an old stuff. Stuff which we used to...UI but not now...UI. They're lazy people just like Sheik Riyad told us. Really. The example of Saddam Hussein must be brought up. Abou Ammar's airplanes are...UI exactly like Saddam Hussein does.

UM: Ok, we will say..., listen. We will add to it, "...while this matter is not to...". Gawad, people... We can add to the following to the text: "...while this matter is not to be presented to the American people in a way which makes them resent the Palestinian people". This way, we don't make the Palestinian people's reputation bad.

[UI brief group talk].

Om: That's not right.

[UI brief group talk].

Om: Meaning that..., meaning that I tie Arafat's image to Saddam's image and I leave the judgement to the Americans...

Ga: That's it.

Om: ...in a suitable way.

Gh2: Ok. Why do you bring another country such as Iraq in order to serve your cause.

[UI brief group talk].

UM: Ok. People, whoever sees that we should write this point in this manner: "attacking the credibility of the Organization as far as representation of the Palestinian people" should raise his hand.

Ga: And presenting it in a suitable manner to the American people?

UM: In a suitable manner. Yes.

Sh: ...UI this for the Americans?

UM: Right, in a suitable manner. Yes.

Om: Yes, in a suitable manner.

UM: That means that there is a majority.

Om: It is a unanimity.

Sh: This is a democracy [*laughter*].

Om: It looks like the minority is 1%.

[*UI brief group talk*].

Gh2: O doctor, I had my hand raised, my brother, as I object to the issue of...UI.

[*UI brief group talk and laughter*].

Gh2: I still believe that we should oppose and combat this accord using its humanitarian aspects, its aspect relating to the Palestinians' national rights and not by criticizing this person and that person. I mean, in order for us to be practical and logical in our address, we shouldn't keep saying that, "Ooh, by God, this is not a fair deal because this guy doesn't represent us and he is not the right person to do it", because we are...

Om: Good point.

Gh2: ...because, my brother, people look at you..., look at you as what? I'm the Association...

Sh: You are an American organization.

Gh2: I'm the Association, an American organization. I'm not sister Samah. This means that I..., I represent this Group, this Movement...

UM: You represent the Palestinian's public opinion...

Gh2: Which I'm not. Which I'm not. I don't represent the..., the... Movement officially in front of people. Neither do I try to impose...

UM: Let me answer him, my brothers...

Sh: I have more than one point... [*UI brief group interruption*]

UM: Let him..., let him... and I will reply to him. Go ahead, yes.

Sh: There is more than one point...UI.

Gh2: Therefore, the Association's address shouldn't be the address which criticizes the Organization or an address that..., I mean in the same style as Samah's. We..., we cannot

do it. As an American organization, we present an approach that this is a right..., I mean, it is a retrieval of national rights.

[*UI brief group interruption*].

Om: ...UI they wrote an article in Al-Zaytouna...

UM: Ah.

[*UI brief group talk and laughter*].

Sh: ...I would do it again and again. There is a difference between me writing an article in the newspaper or publish a caricature, and between an official position.

Gh2: It is possible that one...UI.

UM: People...

Sh: You can go meet a congressman in your name, in Omar Yehya's name, in the name of the Association's present and tell him, "...UI doesn't represent us. Mr. Ahmad Yasin represents us".

Gh2: You cannot say that...

[*UI brief group talk*].

UM: Our brothers..., not like that. Let's keep the session organized. There is no need for us to drift into a side discussion. O Sheik.

Gh2: I'm not finished yet.

UM: But, I want to...

Gh2: But, I'm not finished yet. If you want to open the door for...UI.

UM: Go ahead. Go ahead.

Gh2: This shouldn't happen. One is talking, I'm not finished yet and you don't understand what I'm saying. Ok, let me shut up.

UM: No, go ahead. Go ahead.

Sh: We're sorry.

Gh2: The point, my brother, is that we shouldn't see the Association as a representative of the Movement. This is what I want to say.

Ak: There is an agreement. Yes.

Gh2: I mean, when we go to meet Americans, what are you agreeing on as you will go in that direction...

Om: There is no disagreement.

Gh2: We make..., make the approach that this thing which happened is against the religion, that it is unjust and that it is..., I mean, that there are many Palestinians over there who were not consulted and their opinion was not taken. There are a lot of Palestinians who will not get their rights. All the rights they will get are in Gaza and Jericho.

Group: That's what we're saying.

Gh2: But, the method of the approach shouldn't be that this Organization is not our representative, that this Arafat guy is not our president as this is not our business, I believe.

Om: And he is not our president. Our president is Clinton, man.
[laughter].

UM: ...UI. You spoke before. Let's just stay on the subject. Brother Gawad, Gawad. Our brothers, by God, let's stay together so that we can finish. It's alright. Let's just explain this point. Now, they asked... You spoke about the rights of our..., the rights in Palestine in the manner you want to speak to them. Right, Ghassan?

Gh2: Yes.

UM: Ok. They will tell you that Arafat, for instance, has relinquished these rights. What is your position? What are you going to say to him? The Organization which represents you has relinquished these rights. What are you going to say?

Gh2: That's his problem. But, we as Palestinians living in America still have rights which

Arafat has relinquished. But, I shouldn't go Arafat and tear him up...

Om: No, we didn't say so.

Gh2: Maybe not a media attack but a political attack through debates and stuff.

UM: Political attacks are accepted by the American mind. I mean, only if it is purely political and not just an attack on his person or his manners.

[UI brief group talk].

UM2: See what they're saying about Clinton, what they're saying about his father and what they say about...

Sh: The point you presented which is..., which is withdrawing..., attacking his credibility as a representative and a leader of the Palestinian people. But, I tell you that we don't want the American front to become a front for direct conflict. These things will put us in direct conflict, not only with the Palestinians, even with the official government circles. What is our benefit, what is our interest? As Palestinian action organizations in America, what is our benefit in creating more enemies than necessary? What is the interest that... Are you going to win the Palestinian cause if this guy who works at McDonald's, the worker who works there for \$4.00/hour, understands whether Abou Ammar represents us or not? Or the congressman, if you explain this situation to him that he is...UI and doesn't represent the Palestinian people, is he going to tell you, "Yes, by God, you convinced me"? Despite that, everything goes as planned. The point is that we are not going to expose ourselves to another wave and be anti-establishment, anti-establishment. Ok? Because, for the American organizations, if you're against peace, you're a terrorist. When you start attacking Abou Ammar, his leadership, the people who signed and attended and arranged their affairs with..., such as a Saudi person who attacks the Saud family and say that he is not a ruler. My brother, let him...

UM: Ok. Amazing. But, brother, please finish.

[UI brief group talk].

Ga: There are organizations which work in America. They're legal and...UI.

Om: If you please, if you please, if you please...

[UI brief group talk].

UM: Brother Sharif and then...

Sh: You voted, my brother, we are just opening the door for discussion once more...UI

UM: Yes, yes. Brother Sharif, yes.

Ss: We..., I mean, I, as an American organization here don't want my government and my president to put his hand and sign a deal with the wrong people. Consequently, I speak up out of that reason which is being keen on my country, my president and its dignity with the people he claimed to represent.

Om: [Laughter] You...UI the American president and then comes Sheik Sharif to say...UI this is your president. "Oh, are you American?" [Laughter].

Sh: Because he wants him to face reality. He wants him to face reality [Laughter]. Don't they know that Asaad is hated by his people? Why don't they heed his example, my brother?

UM2: It is a different country, my brother.

UM: Ok. We mentioned..., we mentioned...UI Abou Ammar. We will add it in the suitable manner which doesn't bring harm to..., which doesn't bring harm to the Palestinian people's reputation. Ok, the second point which is opening a political office and public relations in Washington. Its goals are: One, presenting our point of view to the American political and media organizations and winning friends and supporters. Two, coordinating..., coordination in political alliances. You want someone who is active with these people as the Association is busy with many other tasks and stuff like that. Three, it represents... Yeah, we mentioned it. It should represent the point of view of...

Ss: It expresses the point of view...

UM: Yes, yes. It passes along our suitable point of view to this segment, just to give an example. I mean, this office is... If the AMC serves goals, it also achieves the goals. We want one like it, the same function, but one which achieves our goals.

UM2: Strengthens..., strengthens.

UM: Yes.

Gh: What is going to happen?

UM: We will present it to you and you will vote on it. I don't make decision and I'm not an executive side. We will recommend...

Sh: And Juhayna has the sure news [*Arab saying*]. Does this one require a resolution?

UM: Yes. We will recommend it and see...

Ak: But, it is going to be established under a different name or is it already...

UM: We will discuss the details now. We will discuss the details now. Let's just wait until...

UM2: A Palestinian Action Committee.

UM: We're now talking about... Brothers, we're now talking about our need for this office and its goals. If we're convinced that there is a need, we will send it to the executive body and it is the one which decides...

Sh: Right. That's better.

UM: We're not going to delve into these details. The fourth point is enlarging the circle of..., the circle of the addressed population by using available media outlets. Because, if you have an office, the media outlets will come to you continuously just like the point one of the brothers mentioned; that you will even be talking to the Islamic community in a better way. See? I mean, when you appear on CNN, the entire community in America will see you which is different from holding a conference in Philadelphia, for instance, or in New York. Who is going to see you and stuff like that. So, in reality, this serves our media and political goal, God the Almighty's willing, in a manner..., I mean, these goals we mentioned in that regards. So, the point is..., is are we in need for such an office and does it achieve the goals? We will present it for discussion.

Ga: There is one remark...

Om: It constitutes an opposition [*block*], that is [*Laughter*].

UM: Listen to the brother.

Ga: There should be two forms. They're one party. I will give them one name. I mean, two levels of work; an office at the executive level...UI. The higher authority will be called the Board of Trustees or call it whatever you want. This will be considering the suggestion to form a council for Arab and American Muslims and Palestinians...

UM: Hum.

Ga: ...made up of ten, fifteen or twenty [*people*] and it meets once every six months, one every year or...

Om: The Board of Trustees will...UI.

UM: When the office is formed, we will form a board for it and it meets...

Om: What kind..., what kind of board?

Ga: This..., this..., this council is to become the authority on the Palestinian issue for the Arab and the Islamic community as it is for the Americans.

UM: Yes, good, yes, yes, yes.

Ga: For the Americans. An office with authority and it has its..UI.

UM: Yes, yes, yes. For us, the authority is the [*Islamic*] Association [*for Palestine*].

Ga: No, the Association is doing more than one thing. Don't over-burden it. There is no way.

UM: But, the practical authority, the decision which forms the position and stuff like that. You guys form the position...

Ga: And this is because..., this is because of the problem you had a little while ago. But, when this council is established, it will be the one forming the position. It will assist the Association in its positions among Muslims, among the Palestinians...

UM: Yes, they will write the details in the bylaws and the constitution.

Om: Yes. who are those responsible, the Board of Directors.

UM: Yes. So that they would have a Board of Directors, Board of Trustees and they will be in the form you mentioned.

Sh: The same people, huh?

Ga: ...UI.

UM: Ok. So, this is approved, primarily. The other point is a suggestion which brother Yousef - may God reward him well - to hold a meeting for...UI, holding a meeting for the heads of the main Islamic centers in America to reach unified methods of explanation...

Sh: This was suggested by...

UM: By Aboul Muthana, yes, may God reward him well. ...for our cause and activating them to work with us on that issue. And I mentioned that..., I mean, even if... [UI group interruption].

Aa: These words are theorization.

UM: No, no, no. This is a practical suggestion.

Aa: My brother, by God, these words, "Activation", "credibility" and stuff like that are...

Sh: No, I didn't say "activation". But, the idea was...UI.

Aa: Not even "credibility" or anything like that [Laughter and UI group talk]. "Mobilization" instead of "Activation". "Mobilization".

UM: "Mobilization", yes.

Aa: "Mobilization"...UI.

UM: It is like Shukri told you, we were not keen on the exact meaning, that is.

Aa: Also, instead of "Credibility", it should be "Honesty", my brother.

Sh: "Honesty".

UM: Yes.

Aa: "Honesty".

UM: Yes. May God reward you well. So, what is your opinion? The idea is to implement this within a month because the matter requires speed in..., in implementation.

UM2: This is my opinion. Yes.

- Gh2: I suggest that the suggestion is...UI, that these people are invited to the conferences and the MAYA conference, in particular.
- Aa: It will be aborted. Their invitation will be aborted. There are previous experiences.
- UM: Calling them up.
- UM2: Meaning that the idea should be aborted.
- Sh: Calling them up.
- Aa: UI...the idea will be aborted. You must put together a conference you advertise for. But, to go to MAYA or to one of the ISNA's meetings or stuff like that, you won't accomplish anything.
- Sh: That's it. Are you going to ask them to attend the lectures?
- Aa: You have to send a special invitation and, from the financial aspect, we said that the centers should finance at least 70% or 60%.
- Om: We can call it, "The Islamic Conference to Support..., to make the Palestinian people victorious".
- Aa: You could give it any name [*such as*] "Examining the legality of this and that...". I mean..., you can give it a name that is religious [*laughter and UI group talk*].
- UM: Is there..., is there an approval to the idea? There is no opposition.
- Om: Just don't...UI. You can invite people from the Islamic centers. I mean, for instance, I believe that we are going to embark on a project. We need several brothers such as Aboul Muthana, Osama, those who are known in America, or ten people, for instance, to adopt the idea for the project and...
- UM2: A preparatory committee...
- Om: ...to prepare a letter and send it to all those we know - 50-100 people - in which they explain its goals in it and we call it, "The Islamic Conference to make the Palestinian people victorious", or "...for Solidarity with the Palestinian people", something like that...
- UM: Yes.

Om: And they meet at a certain place, we will determine the location. And I believe that some people can take care of the hotels and location expenses and each center would bear the travel expenses.

UM: Oh, yes.

Om: They can be shared. It is possible.

UM2: The problem is that the situation of the centers is in decline in regards to the financial situation.

Om: But, all of the expenses will be a \$100.00. I mean, this can be solved. We can think about it at a later session.

Gh: Let's do...

Om: Let's form a committee...

Gh: We can form it. We can form it.

UM: A preparatory committee, yes.

Om: A preparatory committee whose job is to...

Gh: From the Association..., the Association.

UM: Aboul Muthana, yes.

Gh: The Association should be in charge of it.

UM2: Is it an issue of a Sheik attending an Islamic conference or is it going to be initiating contacts with the imams of the mosques in order to build bridges and a relationship for the future with them in case you wanted to...

UM: No, no. It is an Islamic conference.

Aa: It is an invitation to... Holding a conference to study the new happenings from Sharia and jurisprudence point.

UM: There is another point that is coming. We mentioned it. Another conference but this one

will be..., will be on a larger scale. We mentioned it. But this one has to do with the American front. It has only to do with the American front.

Om: And imams and heads of centers.

UM: Imams and head of centers. So, what do you think? Should we form committee from the Association or what?

As: Forming a committee... I would really like for this idea to be implemented. As far as the implementation is concerned, a committee should be formed which begins preparations for the conference.

UM: Yes.

Sh: Put a deadline, as well.

As: Yes.

Om: Canadian as well.

UM: Canadian as well, yes.

[UI brief group talk].

UM: Ok, should we suggest three names for the committee?

UM2: No, no. Let's leave it to the Association's executive committee.

UM: Ok. Fine. And the executive committee is going to suggest the names.

Om: But, listen to me, my brother. It is fine. It is true that we can adopt it and work on it. But, in order to reach the Islamic centers, we must rely on the local people. For instance, in the areas of New York and New Jersey, we must have someone over there to make contacts because the personal contact is what brings people and not the letter.

UM2: Of course. There is no doubt.

Om: You will need a dedicated team.

Aa: In regards to..., in regards to the tri-states; Connecticut, New Jersey and New York, these

are on us.

UM: God's willing.

Aa: On Passaic Center. Fine? Elmezain, myself. We're available.

UM: So, you're taking care of the expenses?

Ak: But, this is not enough... We need people who contact the other sheiks.

Om: No, this will be done at a level...

UM: No. You form a committee.

UM2: Form a committee. I suggest that Aboul Muthana is in the committee and you can suggest two other people, from the sheiks, people who have a weight at America's level.

UM: Does America have 50 sheiks?

Om: About twenty. You have mosques and heads of centers.

[UI brief group talk].

Aa: If the issue is an issue of weight, you have Elmezain and you have Sheik Sharif [*laughter and UI group talk*].

Om: Also, our brother Hathout and...

UM: Ok, Sheik Muthana will be in the committee.

Sh: What did you call it?

UM: The preparatory committee...

Sh: No, no. Is it going to be a scholars' conference or what?

UM: No, no. It is for imams and heads of the Islamic centers.

[UI brief group talk].

UM: Ok, let's finish with it. Do you have a suggestion for the names?

UM2: ...UI.

Om: Fine. Let me say something. Let us have it this way; there will be a work preparatory committee which works..., which sends the letter and stuff, and there is a committee for communications and to give..., let's say the Sharia color, to it who are the sheiks. These are the ones who are going to contact the other sheiks and tell them, "Come over. We're going and stuff". So, we can do the work, send the letters, determine where the place is going to be, what kind of food, these logistics, while they take care of inviting people, contacting them and encouraging the idea as an idea.

UM: Yes.

Om: Also, determining the location and then, "Come over this or that man" and they are done. They don't interfere in the problems...

UM: The administrative..., the administrative.

Om: I mean, details such as the location, the food, where to sleep and stuff like that. We will take care of it.

UM: Right, right. I mean, the Sheik, Aboul Muthana, will be in charge in of the issue of communications, inviting the sheiks and the heads as well as the intellectual aspect of the..., the issue, and our brothers will take care of the administrative aspect such as means of communications and issues like that.

Aa: I hope that we agree on a action agenda for later on.

UM: Hum. Ok. Yes, yes. You and Mohamed sit down after this and organize it. But...UI.

Om: So, the committee should be made up of two.

Sh: We delegate... We delegate our authority to...

UM: Yes. Ok, so we will commission brother Omar and Aboul Muthana to take the necessary steps to determine this...

Aa: My brother, the Association should take care of the matter and that's it.

UM: Ok, that's it. If you two take care...

Aa: The Association, my brother. When we say "The Association"... That takes care of it.

UM: Ok, whatever you agree on. They have delegated it, yes.

As: Brother Abou Mohamed, I want to leave. So, there are two things and that's it.

UM: Go ahead.

As: First of all, it is true that all the topics were excellent, but I believe there is an aspect that was not discussed which is the women. It is women's action.

UM: Aha. *[Laughter]*.

Aa: ...UI like they say, "The beard and the women". I said that yesterday but you forgot *[Laughter]*.

As: Really, we should be opening the women's subject.

UM: The woman.

As: The community and its women. It is true that...UI. First of all, our women, our sisters...

Aa: May God have mercy on Dr. Bishtaqi's soul.

UM: Amen.

As: ...UI. The right thing to do is to give them political representation in a manner which gives the ability to..., to give something, that is. In addition to their role in organizing activities and attempting to highlight their role in the activities of the Association, charity work or anything else. The second thing I want to talk about is the issue of the *[Muslim Arab Youth]* Association. Of course, it was mentioned but I'm just wanted to draw the attention to an issue; we demand a lecture about Palestine or an activity about Palestine and the *[Muslim Arab Youth]* Association agrees sometimes. But, when you attend the activity, you find it pale and meaningless. Why? Because no one of our brothers is...UI. ...with all respect, which might not be suitable. Our goal is to look..., is to succeed when we have an activity in order to encourage others. It should look successful so that, the next time, the *[Muslim Arab Youth]* Association brings..., makes the activity successful. I mean, I remember...UI, he told me that this was a bankrupt conference. A lecture was

delivered by Ishak..., by Dr. Ishak al-Farhan about the Palestinian Intifada. I went to it and there weren't even 20 people attending it. When a man comes, we should invite a lot of people for him. He stood at the door and looked and there were some youths sitting. There was another lecture about Sudan and all the brothers were from Sudan. All the brothers from El Shamm countries and others were in the Sudan lecture. Honestly, we are not...UI but, we will make the activity successful so that our activity and so that, next time, when we say there is a lecture about Palestine at the [Muslim Arab Youth] Association or the ISNA... When brother Nihad made a presentation about the Palestinian cause, maybe all those who were in the hall... How many were there, Nihad, at the ISNA?

Ni: They were seventeen.

As: Seventeen people.

UM: They say there were seventy [laughter].

As: No, I even think that seventeen is an exaggeration

[Laughter and UI group talk].

As: The number of attendees, honestly, I went over there and people there were to be counted on one hand.

UM: ...UI [Laughter].

As: This is the second point of what I wanted to say. A last point is an announcement. I have a black Muslim brother who formed a society or a committee to recruit minorities for a school of law, school of law. I mean, they admit minorities and I believe we are minorities in the schools of law. He told me to bring him requests from Muslim brothers who want to study law in the Georgia School of Law at Georgia University, he can help him or manage to get him enrolled and an exemption from the installation in this thing. So, whom do you know among those present or those our brothers who wish to study law. Of course, law enrollment procedures are not easy. There are exams and stuff like that. But, it is geared towards minorities and they try to give them a special status. So, please make contacts. We're trying and God the Almighty is the one who grants...

UM: Success.

As: At the end, please forgive us

UM: No, may God bless you.

Sh: Good bye, Aboul Hasan.

Group: Good bye. May God reward you well.

Ar: By God, put me down, by God.

As: What?

Ar: Put me down in the school of law.

As: I don't hear you.

Ar: Put me down.

As: On this thing?

Ar: Yes. Your name is not a problem. But, I want...

Sh: Put Omar Yehya's name on the first name so that you leave to Georgia.

Ak: The Association is not agreeing to that.

Sh: Let's have Omar go to Georgia.

As: There is an idea which is why doesn't the [Islamic] Association [for Palestine] move to Washington?

Sh: Aboul Hasan, they will relieve us very much [Laughter]. We would be the only ones in Texas.

Aa: ...UI the women subject didn't last long. That's good. [laughter and UI group talk].

As: Ok, Abdel Rahman.

Group: May God reward you well. Good bye.

Sh: Good bye. May you be successful, Aboul Hasan.

UM: Ok. Let's finish. We have two points remaining. ...UI. There is that other suggestion...UI and I believe that this might be even presented to the Movement, Samah. It is constructive and I believe that it serves its goals. It is inviting a group of major Islamic scholars to meet at one of the American cities...UI, if possible...

Aa: It is doable.

UM: Maybe. This will be discussed. ...in order to adopt a Sharia and a political position from the accord while providing media coverage for the meeting. The Americans will be interested in an issue like that as a media and as a country, specially if you invite known names and the topic is known, you see? And those who adopt these positions are not shy, anyway. They come to America and stuff. So, if a good number of them come..., I mean, a big number, 5, 7 or 10 people, you see?

[UI brief group talk].

UM: What?

Ga: An international conference for solidarity with the Palestinian people will be held, an international Islamic conference, most probably in Malaysia.

UM: Over here is more important than Malaysia.

Ga: Here is more important. I know.

UM: Over here will serve them and serve us.

Ga: ...UI an international one. It won't be local...UI.

UM: I know. We're saying that. But, if they adopt it and contribute in sending the invitations out... I mean, if they adopt it...

Ga: The issue of sending the invitations out is not... It is an administrative issue.

UM: No, it is not an administrative issue, my brother. I mean, when you..., when you go to the Sheik and tell him, "So and so person is inviting you" is different from telling him that...

UM2: He will decline just to...UI.

Sh: Who is going to adopt it?

Gh: I admire the idea very much.

Sh: He is saying, "Samah should adopt it". We..., what is our relationship with Samah?

UM2: We are not going to tell the other people that is held in Samah's name.

Sh: Are you going to tell them that Samah is holding it? And invite the scholars in Samah's name.

[UI brief group talk].

UM: ...because this will serve them indirectly.

Gh: They're having an international conference, men.

Sh: Who is going to be the hosting agency in America?

UM2: Samah. Samah.

Sh: The invitations, then, are going out in Samah's name. They will say that they came to America in order to...

[UI brief group talk and laughter].

Sh: The idea is very nice. But, I'm worried they will get an idea that...

UM: Our brothers. Group. Our brothers. By God, let's stay in one discussion. Let brother Yousif explain the idea...UI. Go ahead.

Yo: Our brothers, one of the important things about this conference... If it is held in America and the media in particular was directed to it -this is very important- they will know that the issue..., that the issue is not in the hands of..., I mean...UI and Abou Ammar, separately. This is a point of view of that..., I mean, I don't think the American people ever heard it. The issue to them is Palestinians and Jews and stuff like that. But, if the issue had a bigger dimension than that, if it includes Muslim scholars at a high level, it will have a very enormous media dimension. The issue of how it is done? I have some ideas to have a push..., I mean, the [Islamic] Association [for Palestine] should send out invitations from here. But, there should be an agreement to have a push from sheiks or people we have over there in the Movement who convince these people with that issue because it is possible that they will go just like the sheik said and it is possible that they

won't agree. It is possible that each one of them finds an excuse like saying, "I have work. I have a college. I have this or I have that". But, if matters are explained and pushed through internally, ... I mean, even adopting the issue financially. It is possible that certain people over there are addressed in order to adopt this issue so that it is financed and its expenses are taken care of and stuff like that. It should be in a large, known city such as Washington, for instance, since all the pressure is on it, media and political presence is there, or in New York. It can be held in more than one place as long as they come. But, generally speaking, the cause will garner a very huge media dimension whose impact might not be felt now. But, in the future, when we will have another Organization other than the [*Palestinian*] Liberation Organization, people will understand this dimension. Why is there another organization? Because if Muslims as Muslims are not in agreement, the Palestinians might as well not agree.

UM: Now, how are we going to determine the scholars to attend?

Yo: They are to be chosen. Yousif al-Qaradawi, for instance, offered something...

UM: Oh, you mean from the Islamic world?

Yo: Yes, for the Islamic world, not from Palestine. I mean, they come from Jordan, from Egypt, from...UI.

Gh2: Leaders of Islamic work.

Yo: What?

Gh2: Leaders of Islamic work and thought.

Yo: Yes. I mean, they might be ten, for instance, nine, eight or seven.

UM: Their arrival could be further taken advantage of by holding the MAYA conference and holding the...

UM2: We said before that the [*Muslim Arab Youth*] Association's conference is..., not all of these people will come. I mean, the [*Muslim Arab Youth*] Association's conference is formed by a group of people. We don't know who is going to come. They might not be at that level.

Om: I believe that it is hard to implement that. I mean, a sheik like al-Qaradawi is hard to bring him. The [*Muslim Arab Youth*] Association itself has been inviting him and not the

Movement...all the people of Egypt and they determine who comes. He doesn't agree to come.

UM: He will come in a historical stand like that.

Om: He won't.

UM: Believe me. At least it is worth it.

Om: Fine. You don't know anything. I will tell you something. The Movement itself, why isn't... This conference Abou Ayyoub is talking about was supposed to have been held last year.

Sh: Yeah.

Om: And it was supposed to have been held the beginning of the year. I was supposed to have been held in the summer. Why is it being postponed until now? Because it is hard to implement. If the people here are unable to meet at a one place and all of them are...

[*UI brief group talk*].

Aa: Our brothers, I have a firm belief that you cannot get more than one or one and a half sheik [*Laughter and UI group talk*].

UM: Who is the half, Abou Mohamed?

[*UI group talk and laughter*].

Sh: Who is the half? Me?

UM: Ok, ok, yes. Let's just listen to brother Ghassan.

Sh: The sheiks' war you're fighting...

Gh2: My point was that there should be a session during the MAYA convention which is parallel to...

UM2: Let's leave the MAYA convention aside, brothers. We said that we should not...UI.

Gh: ...UI.

Gh2: I mean, there could be a session at the end of the conference. It can be agreed from now with the sheiks and with the MAYA...

Sh: People will leave by then.

Gh2: No. We don't want a public presence. We want sheiks only. It is not a public conference.

UM: In order to issue a Fatwa?

Gh2: Yes. It is not..., it is not a presence....

UM: It is a public conference and a Fatwa.

Gh2: No, no, no. You advertise for it..., you advertise for it and hold a press conference. But, it is possible..., it is possible that the sheiks are present during the press conference and issue a statement. But, as far as the attendance is concerned, you don't open the attendance to individuals. You let the leaders, the sheiks and the media attend.

UM2: The media.

Gh2: Yes.

Sb: Allow me. Allow me.

Ak: Why not -which is a lesser step than that- have them issue a Fatwa they all sign without coming over, I mean.

UM: There are many Fatwas out. They will get the media attention when they come.

Ak: No. A Fatwa to reject the accord. It hasn't been published. One by Sheik al-Qaradawi and all the sheiks.

UM: It won't have a media resonance like when you have a meeting, and people come and talk with them, face to face.

UM2: Is there someone working on the Fatwa?

UM: So, a Fatwa is possible. But, it won't have the media resonance and credibility.

Om: There is this conference which is scheduled to be held in the city of...

Ga: ...UI.

Sh: Our brothers.... I'm saying..., I'm saying that regardless of the obstacles which are..., which are in front of us, what is our target out of this meeting? If our target is the U.S. media..., for the U.S. media, they are nothing more than a bunch of fundamentalists who came out and stuff. We said that already. For them, Who is Qardawi, Who is Qardawi? For them, it nothing but a bunch of terrorists and fundamentalists who oppose the peace process. That is all. There is nothing...

UM: ...UI About Muthana..

Sh: They won't grant them legitimacy or....

[UI brief group interruption and talk].

Sh: Yes, Hajj, yes.

Om: Specially, if they wrote about you opposing Salman Rushdi after Arafat.

Sh: That's it. For instance. This is the thing. These are the Americans. If you want the Americans, I see that you're hurting the cause instead of helping it because the Americans..., they are people who don't really realize the dimension we're speaking about. If you want the Islamic community, the weight of the Islamic community is not in America but in the Orient. Therefore, if this conference was held in the Orient, its psychological and Islamic impact will much deeper than its impact at the community's level in America. This is what I see. If you want to go through the expenses the trouble anyway, do it in the Orient...

[UI group talk].

UM: A conference will be held in Malaysia. I believe that if the important part was played on video during the [Muslim Arab Youth] Association's conference, it will be... I mean, according to what you mentioned, 250 scholars from Pakistan, Malaysia and all over the world will attend.

Sh: But, I believe that the Americans are not going to be impressed. This is something about the Americans... UI in the Movement are more objective. But, the American people is not an objective people at all when it comes to...

UM2: Unless there are a number of rabbis in the picture. They reached accords, they made deals

and what is the result? I mean, you will come out with the same picture as what you have now. There is not going to be more than getting a group of sheiks together and this is the end of it. What's after that?

UM3: All of this should be handled by the Islamic community...

[UI brief group talk].

UM: Our brothers... Group, that is enough. Group, enough discussion now. He who thinks that the idea is reasonable and applicable should raise his hand.

Gh2: An Islamic conference abroad, right?

UM: Yes, abroad.

Gh2: And not Aboul Muthana's idea which is...

UM: No, no.

Gh2: The one you mentioned.

UM: No, no, no. A different one. He who sees that the idea is reasonable and can be implemented should raise his hand.

UM2: It can be applied at the community level.

Gh2: Specially in New Jersey.

UM: But, by God, the Malaysia conference is not like any other conference and should be covered by the media. Some of its portions should be taped or we should send a brother American reporter or a Muslim or so who goes to tape it and come back to us here.

UM2: What I understood, my brother, what I understood is that the media committee of Samih, Samah or whatever you call it, are very interested in that subject.

[UI brief group talk].

Gh: Ul... from the Washington Monitor. Take a photographer with you and...

UM2: Ok.

UM: Ok, our brothers. Let's move on to another point.

UM2: My brothers, this..., this trip will save a conference for you. By God.

[*UI brief group talk*].

UM: Ok, our brothers. There is another idea... Our brothers, there is... [*UI brief group talk and laughter*] Nihad, Nihad... There is an idea for a similar invitation for the preachers, scholars and thinkers in the U.S. continent, that is. The same idea for people who live in America to discuss the same idea and to provide media coverage...

[*UI brief group interruption*].

UM: This is to study the issue and not..., not relating to media and political action. This is an internal invitation for study and to find out how we work and what to do and stuff like that. But, this would have a media and a political goal.

Om: ...UI for the Americans.

UM For the Americans and the community.

Om: No, you should specify. The Americans are the community.

UM2: Both of them, man.

UM: What not?

Sh: There are several points... I heard that there is a council for scholars for America. Did they issue a statement?

UM: And they will talk to you about Palestine and stuff.

Sh: My brother, it didn't issue a statement?

UM2: I'm a member of it [*Group laughter and UI talk*].

Sh: He is saying he is a member of it. So, by God, ...UI.

[*UI brief group talk*].

- Aa: This council..., this council..., if it said that having bad faith of something is a sign of prudence [*laughter*]... I have some prudence, therefore, I have bad faith in it. This [*council*] was made to kill any meeting which might be fruitful or beneficial in the...UI.
- UM2: Ok. Who is behind it, Abou...
- Aa: And the one who took it over then was Ahmad Zaki.
- UM: May God have mercy on him.
- Aa: After Ahmad Zaki, they gave its presidency to Taha Jaber. Taha Jaber..., when you talk to him he tells you, "Yes. Good ideas. God's willing, we will begin and do this and do that" and nothing happens.
- UM2: So, he won't do anything.
- Sh: So, you have a council...
- UM2: It meets just once a year.
- Aa: But, the issue, my brother, is that it is possible to hold work sessions. It is possible that this council really play many roles. But, Taha didn't move and didn't move anything and it looks that everybody wants to have things that way; to have no one move as a scholars organization or something in the country.
- UM: So, they meet just to...
- Aa: And..., part of the bad faith is that Saudi Arabia...,
- UM: They meet for representation purposes, so that they are the legitimate representative for Muslims in America.
- Aa: ...Saudi Arabia is behind the curtain. This is a part of the bad faith. And some of the thoughts are sins while some are...
- Om: Don't they have elections once every three months or something...?
- Sh: Let's stay in the theory of..., the theory of bad faith just in order to establish a reason. [*UI group talk*].

7-4 11:11

END OF RECORDING.