

[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  
Gh = Ghassan Elashi  
Gh2 = Ghassan Saleh  
Ss = Sheik Sharif  
Ga = Gawad (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  
Ab2 = Abou Bassem (NFI)  
Mu = Muin (LNU)  
Ar = Abdel Rahman  
Ni = Nihad (LNU)  
Os = Osama (NFI)  
Ay = Ayman Sharawi  
Ha = Haitham Maghawri

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Sh: ...He told me to apologize on his behalf to the brothers in case anyone misunderstood his sermon yesterday. Some of the brothers got upset and thought that the Sheik meant them with his talk. He did not mean anyone among you. He was just giving a sermon and no more. He is apologizing in advance. May God have mercy on a time when one has to apologize for his sermon. Now, our brothers, the purpose of this session...

UM: ...One of the speakers....UI [*Laughter*] We need..., we need an objective side who takes down the notes so that we can..., we can make corrections and modifications and stuff like that. Would you like to be the one taking down the...

UM2: No. One from the...UI.

Mu: I'll do it if you like.

Sh: Yes, by God. You are an honest writer... [Laughter].

UM: O' brother Muin [laughter].

Sh: Our brothers, let us be very, very clear regarding the goals of this session in order not to get off course. This session is not necessarily the summary of what was said in the previous sessions, meaning that it is not the summary of the meeting notes, but rather it is a summary of what was mentioned in these sessions in service to the main purpose for which we met, i.e. guiding the organizational work in America in light of the latest developments and, henceforth, trying to conclude to draw strategies or - at least - general guidelines, guidelines for these organizations in their inputs, addresses to the people and their methods of work. This is the goal. Based on that, the brothers who presented papers and mentioned many points in them..., not every point mentioned will be brought up here. There are points which will not be brought up at all. As much as possible, we tried to mention the issues on which there is a near unanimous agreement, while the issues which have not been discussed yet and which were still being debated will be brought up in the form of a question or an inquiry in order to vote on them and reach recommendations. We then expect from this session that there will be a discussion of some of the issues which have not been scheduled yet. But, we don't want a debate on every issue. This is very important. We start, God's willing, with the conclusions of the first session. What title did the first session have, Ghassan? Please allow me to moderate the session in a manner which keeps people awake with me. Ghassan Saleh, what was the title of the first session, my brother?

Gh2: Er..., analysis of the political..., the political reality...

Sh: ...and its ramifications...

Gh2: On the reality in America.

Sh: Ok, the points which were mentioned, our brothers, are as follows. The summary of the issues is... What is needed is points, bullets, all of it.  
- It is needed to work towards bringing the goals of the agreement to failure. This will be done by focusing on the principle that forming the infrastructure of the [Palestinian National] Authority is refused as this will move the conflict circle from its true core, or brings the conflict out of the true core which is the traditional one. Therefore, goals of the project are the one we should work to bring to failure. This is one point. Another point is that the credibility of those overseeing the project must be attacked. Three, avoiding any kind of conflict on the

American arena as this arena is not an arena for direct conflict.

-The [Islamic] Association [for Palestine] is not an opposition party, but rather an organization which works in America and expresses its point of view and that of its public.

- Internal conflict is inevitable and we must prepare ourselves for that, for that.

- The conflict hasn't been formatted yet and we have to work diligently in order to formulate its final shape or form.

- Goals of work must be re-examined..., in the form of questions...: Should most of the effort be focused on firmly establishing the organizations in America and focusing on the U.S. front or should the focus be mainly on the domestic front with a 50/50 ratio, or 75% and so forth?

- In the coming period, the organizations must work to fulfil basic needs of the Movement in the areas of specializations such as journalism, law, politics, media, education and investment.

- Our strategy in combating the peace project must be based on the utmost the project can accomplish so that we are not surprised with developments and are unprepared.

- The Islamists must be highlighted as the alternatives, the alternative option.

- Thinking about opening new specialized organizations which are capable of dealing with any new reality, or with the new reality.

- Working to elevate people's morales by forming a human bridge from and to Palestine, meaning through visits and delegations.

- The issue of Jerusalem must remain fundamental through the the old creedal and Sharia address .

- Work must be done to make America a support for the inside by organizing relationships between the organizations. America and the inside.

- Building a community first and big focus on non-Muslims is a waste of time.

UM2: Excuse me, excuse me... what was the last phrase, by God?

UM3: We didn't agree on that one.

Sh: Not an agreement. This was one of the issues... One of them was building the community first. I believe it is a part of the issue of whether the focus should be on America or not America. It is a secondary item. Building a community first and large focus on non-Muslims in a waste of time. I don't say that we have agreed on this one. We will vote in a little bit.

UM2: Yes, we will vote.

Sh: Er... There are three options which were presented as far as the organizations are concerned; one, the first option is serving the Movement on the inside. Two, building the strength of the community, focusing on work in America. Three, marrying the two while keeping the departments separate and specialized. America represents five axes for work; to be a safe place for the Movement, utilizing the capabilities of the community for work on the inside, not only on the American front, using the front as a pressure element on the inside front, securing the human services we mentioned before, five; leading the Palestinian political current in America. Our Islamic action organizations should be the ones which lead the action and they are the ones which cast credibility on themselves and make themselves the credible authority in regards to the Islamic point of view of the cause of Palestine. These are almost all the issues which were mentioned. There might be some issues which were mentioned by the brothers in a different format but this is the core of the first session. Er..., now, would you like to say a point and then vote on it, Abou Mohamed, or should we proceed? Or is there another point of view and we should open the door for discussing them. Most of the issues mentioned had near unanimity. I will give you an example. What is needed is to work to bring the goals of the agreement to failure on the basis that beginning to form the infrastructure for the Authority is rejected as a principle and that the agreement takes the conflict out of its true core. Is everybody agreeing to this understanding?

UM: I see that it is not clear. I see that there are words which are...

Sh: Fine. Its practical application, my brother, will be done through the work of the organizations, through the political and the media address. It will come later. But, as an idea, there is an inclination that the project should not pass without us trying as much as possible to bring it and its goals to failure and highlight the issues which were mentioned..., mentioned as examples. We don't need to detail them, but issues such as focusing on human rights, focusing on refugees rights, camps and stuff like that, that these are issues...

UM: ...which render the agreement weak.

Sh: ...the right to resist the occupation, all of these issues will be dropped by the agreement. It takes the cause out of its traditional essence, the essence we are accustomed to.

As: I see that there is a contradiction in the order of the sentence, between work and the result. You speak about bringing failure and then the result you speak about..., [*there is contradiction*] between the result and the method. The result is the failure but the method we are talking about is the principle of building the infrastructure. There is a contradiction; if you're ...UI about bringing failure, we tried to avoid the word "bringing failure" during our talk yesterday because we don't work on that basis. Thus, we can think

of another word to be in harmony with meaning of this sentence. For example it could be "hindering or opposing or..." or something of the sort.

Sh: Fine. Our brothers, the wording..., these wordings are... Let us stay within the general spirit. As for these wordings..., this issue is not... We are not writing bylaws right now.

UM2: The words "bringing failure" are serious words to say.

Sh: Fine, fine. I agree with you. There was a discussion around the expression "bringing failure" and some of the brothers said that we cannot bring failure, but that the issue is that we should try to cast doubt on the credibility of the project.

UM: In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful. Regarding the issue, please just let me say something small.

Sh: Fine.

UM: The issue of opposing it, no doubt that it will be through our public. I mean, it is not going to be with... because the agreement...er, because endorsement took place. I mean, for us to tell them to void the endorsement or...UI is not... But, the issue will be that our public will reject it and, consequently, they will not be able to claim democracy and stuff like that. This, at least, is my understanding. I mean, this will happen more with our public or our people who won't grant them confidence and, consequently, they won't be able to accomplish anything and their efforts will go in vain. I believe that yesterday's presentation..., one of the ideas which were discussed, was the issue of addressing it, not based on the fact that we won't approve it as long as there is no plan there is no..., but from its Sharia aspect of it which is the...UI. I mean, this is not lawful from the Sharia point of view. Therefore, there must be a stress on this meaning with our public in order to really be able to withdraw the carpet 100% from under their feet leading to their failure.

Sh: There is..., there is..., our brothers, there is a reference to the creedal and the Sharia aspects to the issue. It is there.

UM: The issue of Jerusalem, if you want to specify it...

Sh: If we are going to delve into the final wording we won't..., we won't... We are talking about the spirit of the understanding, that is. When I say "Jerusalem address", it is not reasonable that...

UM: But, I..., I'm talking about the original aspect in its way...

Sh: Ok, fine.

UM: I mean, when I address my public..., I mean that now I am a Palestinian, a refugee who believe in the principle and stuff like that, I might be deceived if the money started to come in tomorrow and go along with them as they wish. But, if I know that the Sharia aspect originally forbids me to reconcile with them, it will make me more..., I mean I won't make me more agreeable if I see the money.

Sh: Our brothers, in the media paper there...

UM2: The political address.

Sh: The political address. Our brothers, remember..., remember the title of the first session. I'm summarizing the first session for those who were not here. The ramifications on the...

UM2: The ramifications on the U.S. front.

Sh: The summary of the discussion. So, they are all..., they are all big cliches, that is. As for the practical applications in media and press..., in charity work, I believe that you will find more elaborate talk. But, we are talking about the essence. Yes.

UM3: If we continue in this manner, my brother,... it is not right...UI. For instance, we can say "Working to bring this project to failure". This is the headline. You then explain its contents and that's it. There is no need to go into details at the same time.

Sh: Fine. Im explaining one thing to the brother. Anyway, let's proceed in this manner because, really,... Brothers, let's bear each other and let's not speak about wording. Let's talk about the essence of the cause. I didn't even try to proof-read the grammar or the linguistic rules or anything. Only the essence of it. Fine. This..., this is just in order to show you that there was a unanimity on the issue. No one objected to the idca as an idea.

UM2: Abou Mohamed, you are talking about the ramifications. But, you started talking about actions and stuff like that. The wording indicate...UI. It is as if you're criticizing the point they're talking about. Each time a brother interjects you tell him that this will come in the next point. We're at the ramifications, the impact. Let's stay on that. I mean, you're talk is about the ramifications and not actions.

Sh: Fine, fine. But..., but, still bear me. I feel that we're talking about the format now. All the talk, if you remember the talk in the first session, the brothers objected and said "Man, all you talk about is the situation. You didn't talk about the U.S. front and what we can...". So, all of this talk, by the way, is pertaining to the U.S. front. So, you interpret it the way

you want. When we say "Avoiding any kind of direct confrontation on the U.S. front", this is our understanding of the ramifications of the situation. When we had a discussion, we understood that if we escalate the situation on the U.S. front, there will be big problems which are not in our favor. So, anyway you look at it, we will understand that within a certain frame at the end. As far as the practical applications, each organization will program this talk. Ok. Fine. This means that we record this [remark], right? I will record it and we will...UI at the final meeting minutes. Ok, there was another inclination, our brothers, which is that we must attack or..., that it is recommended to attack the credibility of those overseeing the project...UI in their personal credibility, their loyalty to Islam, their loyalty to the homeland or others. There was an inclination for that, an inclination.

UM: ...UI to the brothers that it should not be written, but if there is going to be any sort of attack it should not be by...UI talk. I mean, the issue of the secret agreements which are being published are...

UM2: This is related to the political address.

Sh: No, keep this..., keep this for later.

UM: It is an example the brothers want to publicize and publish but, who is sure of its authenticity? I mean, the word came of the Popular Front and the Democratic who said that the Russian delegation team in Russia had...UI. But, who is sure of its authenticity while we're publishing it. This will lessen our credibility as we keep publishing stuff that no one is sure of. Tomorrow, they will tell you that all of your talk is of that kind.

Sh: Clear. Our brothers..., our brothers... Clear.

UM: You want to attack the credibility, you shouldn't make up stuff and shouldn't say that his wife bought this and did that.

Sh: The best of talk is what is short and informative. Clear. Because we are not opening the discussion door once again. This is generally speaking, generally speaking. Is there an acceptance from our brothers that the media apparatus take charge of..., or start exposing the vices of those people using documents, evidences and proofs?

UM: Please allow me.

Sh: Yes.

UM: if the media apparatus focused on Sharia issues in nullifying the project, its lack of

credibility or the objection to accepting it, and focused on the other side which is the illegality of representation of the Palestinian people without mentioning names, it will be better. I mean, keep these two points a basis without mentioning names as it is not Islamic mannerism to mention names.

UM2: We have two good points.

Sh: Let's vote on them because this is clear.

UM2: There is just a small remark...

Sh: Ah, Ah, Ah.

Ga: We started a new stage of cooperation between the different...UI we would know the reason for the cooperation. If things are to be given their proper names, you are making people ignorant, practically. You're contributing to a campaign to make people ignorant. Now, you should be giving something its proper name and not a different name unless this naming creates a political problem. I don't think we will be less courageous than the children of Fatah themselves who cuss Abou Ammar and calling him bad names. It is not reasonable. We don't cuss and call bad names. We provide criticism to names and positions and stuff like that and do that directly. The chairman, the Arafat clan and the non-Arafat clan, the things which are known.

UM: I didn't mean this stuff when I spoke. I mean that you can tear Arafat apart from the Sharia aspect and tear him apart from the aspect of his representation of the Palestinian people. But, if I say, "By God, his wife is this or his wife is that. This guy is drunk and this one is alcoholic...", these things are not fit..., are not fit for an Islamic media to say.

Sh: Ok, fine, fine. I mean, let's stay on our talk, our brothers, please. Let's assume that there is a minimum..., that there is a minimum understanding with our working brothers, and that there is a minimum line of Sharia understanding. In every point let's not keep stressing the alphabets of issues which people have agreed on. Ok? What we say, let's repeat the wording, attacking the credibility of those overseeing the project if we avoid what the Sharia prohibits us from and other things.

UM: Yes.

Sh: Is there a discussion in that point? Ok. A sensitive point; shielding the U.S. front any forms of confrontation...

UM: direct...

Sh: ...direct confrontation with the other groups. Confrontation, of course, some people will say what is the meaning of confrontation? What is the meaning of confrontation? Is it clear?

UM: Clear.

Sh: We attach it to another point which is that the [Islamic] Association [for Palestine] as a political and a media organization is not an opposition party in America, but it is an organization which works in America as an American organization and expresses the point of view of its public. But, it should not be a political opposition party. Is there an agreement on that? Stay with me...

[Brief UI group talk].

UM: An important point; Nabil Shaath is coming..., coming to deliver lectures in New Jersey and stuff. Attending the lectures..., in order for him to feel that there are people who are opposed to him..., definitely some of the people who attend will be...UI. So, attending a lecture of a guy like that, he must get the notion that some of the attendees are opposed to his words, to the agreement. So, this is the confrontation, this is considered a confrontation.

UM2: It is not a strong confrontation.

UM1: What do you mean "strong confrontation"?

UM2: ...UI.

Sh: No. We know. It is clear. We live in a democratic atmosphere, don't we? We express our point of view. But, if..., if..., if this group...UI from Texas came up and, instead of expressing his point of view, carried a chair or carried a table and hit Nabil Shaath with it, this is not acceptable. So, there are..., there are...

UM2: ...UI but it is not acceptable [Group laughter].

Sh: It is good, it is good but not acceptable. That is what is meant, my brother. But, if... I believe the talk is clear; internal conflict is inevitable, this is a difficult talk to format but, anyway, conflict in this concept is understandable. Internal conflict is inevitable and we must prepare ourselves for that. Some said that it is a matter of time and..., in other words, we must not delay the conflict.

UM: ...UI.

Om: There is no place for that.

Sh: There is no place for that. We just say that it is a certain conviction.

UM: It serves one purpose which is that we should prepare ourselves on the media front as the conflict is coming. That's it.

Sh: Ok. The same issue; the conflict hasn't been formulated yet and we must work diligently to contribute to the final formation..., all of these are general understandings. Ok. Goals of work must be re-examined but this is a point with no debate. Should most of the effort be focused on stabilizing the organizations in America and focusing on the U.S. front or should focus be on the domestic front? This refers to the talk that we just mentioned; should the organizations exist to serve the Movement inside or they should be - in the first place - exist for building a strong community, a politically active one, one which we use and establish our roots in America, or should we marry the two aspects to maintain balance between this and that in a manner which does not threaten the strength of the...UI organizations and, at the same time, does not take away from the inside Movement's right to benefit.

Om: The third solution is the...

Gh: Combining...

Sh: Huh?

Om: The third solution is the easiest one. Everyone will pick it. Combining both which means that you will remain in the middle. You won't be here or there.

UM: But, there is no contradiction between your work here and your work over there.

Om: Yes, there is a contradiction.

UM2: You adopt their causes over there to defend them and to prove the credibility of your work in America.

Sh: One suggested a point saying; "...keeping in mind that they maintain different departments", and this will solve the contradiction issue. For instance, I have a community department, Americans department. This brother has no relationship at all with the person who works at the community department, for instance, this brother..., and it can be kept that way. And this is just in order to solve the problem.

UM: Allow me... I believe that, with respect to the point of view, you are somewhat limited. If you are going to be present on the U.S. front, you are not going to be present at the community's level only. Expect yourself to be present at the community's level, at the American people's level, at the official organizations' level...

Sh: This is what I'm saying.

UM: Yes, that is it.

Sh: We were just giving an example that you are serving the American reality you're in and, at the same time, the needs of our brothers in the inside. The U.S. reality with all its circumstances. Some people even suggested that when the reality gets bigger we should be establishing specialized organizations.

UM: This is a...

Sh: Yeah, this was mentioned. So, the brother said [*form*] specialized departments and even specialized organizations.  
...UI [*Laughter*]. So, our brothers, should we give ten more minutes to discuss the issue or is it clear?

Om: Let's see who is for and who is against and then we do...UI.

UM: And then we fight, right?

Sh: Who is for..., let me say it in the way it was presented. Who is for, let's say, having the organizations in America focus the majority of its attention, 75% of it, to supply the needs of our the inside? 75% of our efforts at the expense of the growth of the organizations in America, its contacts and expansion among the American communities and others and the Islamic ones. This was the question, one of the options presented, that the basis for our work is to serve the inside. We don't have a relationship with the American public and neither are we working to settle the Dawa, settle the Association or the Fund.

UM2: But, I don't understand the question. What do you mean?

Sh: I'm summarizing the words which were said. Do you want me to repeat all that was said before?

UM2: No, when you say "75% to serve the inside...".

Sh: This is what was mentioned, my brother.

UM2: If you're supporting like you say..., if you're supporting the inside directly. I mean, the fact that you collect money and give it to them, this is the only direct thing you do. Everything else will be indirectly.

Sh: I will give you an example. Abou Mohamed, in your belief, how do you describe the way the Association is going now? Yesterday, our brothers,... Even the brother who submitted a request of 50/50 and 75, how do you divide work? Do I now..., just so that the brothers are aware and we have a measurement..., a tool of measurement. What are the percentages of work for the cause in regards to the Association?

Om: I believe that we are a service organization for the inside. All of our work is for Palestine. All of the work for Palestine is 75-25, 75% for the inside...

Sh: 75% service for the inside. Yes.

Om: Directly and indirectly. But, what is important is our plan or our path we're following, the line we're taking is that we are influenced with the inside. We're influenced by it directly, secondly, we react with its events everyday. Consequently, we don't have time to make events in America and react with them.

Sh: Ok. Our brother, Abou Ahmad.

Aa: Our brothers, I don't know how we are going to separate between serving the community and serving the inside. When we established these organizations, we wanted to mobilize the community to serve the inside. So, when we follow up the news of the homeland everyday, the goal is to make the community follow up news of the homeland every day in order for it to be engaged with it in regards to the media, political and financial aspect, the donations. So, I don't know that there is a separation between the two issues. We exist to serve the inside. How do we serve the inside? We connect people to the inside through news, through an event, through what is going on. There is no separation between us. I mean, the inside cannot be served without us living with the community. Where do we get the money? Whom are we going to work with?

Om: The point I wanted to say is that the community here doesn't want to just serve the inside. It has problems. It has some inclinations. Are you going to serve it or you're going to tell them, "I just want you to serve the inside. I bring you news, donate money to me. I bring you this, you send your son to visit".

Aa: I don't think that the community expects the Holy Land Fund will open a school for it.

Om: Not the Fund.

Aa: The Association, for instance. I don't believe...

Sh: ...UL

Aa: Let me finish... I mean, for any aspect or any project, I expect that the community will ask that from the Islamic centers which exist around them to serve them in their needs. But, for you to expect that the community... And this is already there, that the community never said that the Association wants a donation or that the Fund wants a donation and never gave us anything because they know..., that is it..., they know..., they are..., that this Association or these organizations working for Palestine are organizations from them to Palestine. They are not going to serve them on the land of America. He expects the Islamic center or the mosque to serve them in this field.

Sh: Ok. Could we try to get out of this deadlock by saying that..., that in order not to add more to this and in order to be practical that..., to keep the balance while..., let's add a point to it, while forming specialized departments if needed. I mean, either in the form of future specialized organizations or in the form of specialized departments.

UM: Allow me.

Sh: I'm just marking this in order to...

Om: I believe that the idea is not clear now.

UM2: Yes, I was going to say the same thing.

UM: Give it some time. It is not clear.

Sh: You need more time?

UM2: I expect that brother Abou Mohamed explain to us what are the things which we are expected to cover in the community because the vision represented by brother Abou Ahmad is correct. The Association was originally formed to support Palestinian work on the inside and to connect the community with the inside. So, we will look at anything which helps the community in this direction because it achieves our long-term goal. So, you give us examples you're talking about and, in light of that, we determine the things we will do.

Om: Yes. I will give you...

UM2: Give us examples on what we need.

Om: Ok, an example, I will give you one example. An example from the current situations and the previous situations, should we have an organization, or should it be among our services to make available to the community an attorney, two or three in case there is something on you..., if you get into a problem in your house here, you can call us to send you the attorney to defend you. If, for example, there is a problem with a Palestinian group in X city and the media keeps attacking them, are we going to defend them, or the Muslims, that is. Of course, it will be in the form of Muslims while the majority of them could be Palestinians. Is it our job to go defend them and to direct them how to defend themselves against the media? Or is all we do is to come to you, hold a festival, collect the money and leave and you let the Islamic center handle this kind of work. So, I will give you an example, the ADC serves the Arab community in America. How? They tell you that anyone is harassed or discriminated against, racial discrimination or anything of the sort, call us and we will defend you. A person who has a problem with the immigration can call them and he goes to them and they solve the problem for him. A person against whom there is a certain case, they interfere and take care of it for him. Two, they inform him of his rights and duties in this country and they tell him, "You're a citizen here. You have this and that right. This and that is charged against you. Beware of this person and that person". We don't do that now. This is what I mean, are we supposed to develop and do things like that so that the community feels that we're defending them, that the Association is an extension to the community and say that it serves the community in addition to over there, or are going to remain as we are, for instance, and expect the Islamic centers to perform these services or the Arabic organizations now. We now need them and we're only..., we only do the activities..., like they say we are the platform to support Palestine through. I mean, if someone wanted to support Palestine, all he needs to do is to contact the Fund to send the money to it or purchase our newspaper and, consequently, read our news and Palestine's news. We are a liaison between them and Palestine. This is what I suppose.

UM: You're saying that the ADC is...UI.

UM2: It is true that there is a contradiction between the first point you spoke about, the issue about working to abort the agreement and this point about working for the inside. What is right is that we should be working for the inside with very high intensity but change our understanding of working for the inside. What is supposed to happen is that the orphans, the charitable organizations, this and that..., the ones which are..., become a burden on the shoulders of those who wish to govern over there. Our direction in the inside ought to be very specific. It should be an economic direction which creates work opportunities for the Islamists on the inside and an economic might on the inside. We should not be spending money on orphans and this and that and assist the self-rule to succeed.

Sh: But, you're straying away for the subject.

UM2: No, no. You're talking about work on the inside in the assistance issue.

UM: No, no. We're talking about political action, media action.

Sh: We're talking about your effort in America and how you should distribute it.

Om: And most of it is done through the Association and not as a charity organization, not as an organization which raises money for Palestine... [*Brief UI group talk*].

Sh: There is a point which came up relating to the issue of being a synonymous to...

Aa: As long as we have organizations, my brother, the organizations..., the organizations has their bylaws and regulations which determine their goals and means. So, that's it. We go along with the bylaws, goals and means and that's it. Now, for example, I have the Fund, it is clear what is the goal of the Fund. Good? If I want to give more emphasis on serving the Occupied Territories over another issue, this is something that is up to the bylaws and those overseeing the Fund. But, for me to...

Om: The Fund is an example and not a... The Association is a better example.

Aa: I referred to it... The Association or...

Sh: No, there is a talk, there is a talk that the Fund might start serving the Islamic communities. There is a talk going on.

Aa: My brother, I must say that, generally speaking and regardless of what these organizations are, I say that these matters must be controlled by the bylaws and the laws because even others when they hold you accountable, they will hold you accountable through them.

UM: We can change the laws and the bylaws.

Aa: What?

UM: We can change them.

Aa: If you want to change them, I want then to say something. In truth, we must pay attention to..., I mean, we have a priority to work for the inside here in America. This priority is very important in order for us to dart and move forward in regards to any beneficial thing relating to the outside, to stabilize work on the inside...

UM: By "the inside", you mean...

Aa: In America, my brother, yes.

UM: America or inside Palestine?

Aa: No, America. That means we must have a prestige and a strength at America's level. Through this strength and this prestige we can take action in any situation and in any movement we present to the people outside America. But, I still see that these matters need to be made official.

Om: But, how about the idea itself as an idea...

Aa: What is important for me in the organizations is for them to be strong on the inside.

Om: Say "in America" and not "the inside" because we take "the inside" to mean Palestine.

Aa: In America, that is, in America. Also, also, we must see the communities residing here as a priority.

Om: Meaning that our priority should be the community and not the...UI.

Aa: Yes.

Aa: There are two reasons for that...

UM: Why don't you say 50/50?

Aa: It is possible...

Om: It is a compromise...

UM: We work here because we live in this country and, if we lose this community, people will not trust us.

Sh: Ok, our brothers, just in order..., just so that we give every brother his turn... There are people who have their hands raised. Ghassan, let's hear your voice.

Gh: I believe that we must have strong organizations; the Association will not be able to pay its expenses at the end of the month or pay for Al Zaytouna...

Sh: ...UI.

Gh: It won't support the inside but you still don't want it to turn into a specialized organization like the ADC. The ADC is already existing and its name is the Anti-Discrimination Committee and stuff like that...

Om: ...UI

Gh: Yes. So, this is their goal; the cases and stuff like that. The Association should not turn into... So, you want strong organizations in America and the Association must be a strong organization and its strength will come from its connection with the Arab, Muslim and Palestinian community in America and the strength of the relationship with it and stuff like that. But, I believe that the main goal is to serve the Palestinian cause over there. But, how are you going to serve it if there isn't a strong organization. I don't see a contradiction or... We can phrase it this way: "We must strengthen our organizations as much as possible in order to serve the Palestinian cause and the people inside as much as possible".

Om: If the issue is a financial issue, there is another way out. Why would you work in America? Go to the Gulf, get donations, for instance, or find millions and keep working and keep serving the outside without you changing your direction. This is a direction. Change your direction without changing... If the issue is the financial strength of the organization. This like what ISNA and the [*Muslim Arab Youth*] Association used to do. Go now and see what happened when the money stopped.

Sh: Our brothers, is it possible..., few minutes so that we can finish this point. Allow me to rephrase the question so that we understand this point. It looks like there is a misunderstanding in the phrasing.

UM: Abou Mohamed, Shukri. The issue is not phrasing. In truth, excuse me, as an organization here, we have several Islamic organizations as synonyms for this organization. So, in my belief, these organizations ought to play different role. For instance, you don't go to the Kashmiri Fund and ask it to work on a harassment case in America, but you come to the AIPAC which is in New Jersey to work on a case of harassment of Muslims and others. So, in my belief, the issue is specialization for these organizations. It is a very important issue and, based on it, we now have..., the work of the Group now encompasses six or seven organizations because each organization has a purpose to fulfil. So, really, if we have a direction..., it doesn't mean we're against serving the community in this country. But, I don't believe we were formed for this purpose in the first place. And, the purpose you're fulfilling to serve the Palestinian cause..., if you don't do it, no other person will do it. I mean, there are no other organizations among the existing ones will carry the banner of the Palestinian cause and adopt it. So, if you really deviate from your line and your goal for which this organization was formed, I expect that

you won't find a person who has the same way of thinking and who will serve your cause based on his program which is there to serve the Arabic community, for instance, such as the MAYA, or the Islamic community such as the ISNA.

Sh: Ok, quickly, my brother, so that we can finish.

Gh2: Yes. From the history of the Association in the past period of time it was very clear that anything happened in the inside was reflected on the reaction of the people and the community with the Association. Even before the Intifada, the Association was near dead. There was no hot issue to mobilize people for. The Intifada came and people reacted. We used to wait for any operation or any hot event to happen in the inside to issue statements, mobilize people and take advantage of it. But, I believe that the Association cannot continue to live like that. Let's suppose, God forbid, the state started, things quieted down...

Group: God forbid.

Gh2: ...and self-rule started...

Sh: Ghassan..., Ghassan. Brothers, pay attention and make your point as we need to finish this point.

Gh2: And I'm making my point that if things quieted down and the community's morale is down or calmed down. People won't react to the Association.

Gh: You will find work. Don't worry.

Gh2: The point is..., this is the point we want to..., should the Association go towards organizational work to serve the community in America because people check with you just in order to get news of the inside. They don't check with you for anything else, only when they want information about Palestine, only if they want to find out what happened inside, or what is your analysis for what happened. That's it. But, if nothing happens, nobody will look at you and nobody will call you. This is a reality we felt lately, during the Intifada. when the Intifada rises, we work, and when it calms down, we don't work much. These days, this is what has been going on with us. So, I imagine the point is that, yes, our work reflects on the inside and we must serve our people in the inside, but, for the Association's work to settle down in America, it must engage in organizational work to serve the community in America like the point Omar mentioned in regards to their rights, serving the community in regards to their children, serving the community in regards to their education. There are a lot of issues the Association must look at in order for people to see it as an organization which serves them. Otherwise, we won't be able to

receive support from them. We would have to continue to live on donations...

UM2: ...UI duplication of assignments.

Sh: Our brothers...

Gh2: I..., I..., my suggestion..., my suggestion is to increase the work ratio in America more than work which is a reflection of what happens inside.

Sh: Ok, Ok, Ok, fine, my brother. Stay with me. It looks like with the current phrasing we will have to stay here until the morning because there are a lot of issues which are not resolved. Let me ask you a question; how many of the brothers here see that the Association must now undergo a change, a major re-direction of its work mission. Our brother explained the nature of the current work. Who sees now a necessity for the Association to change the course of its work in a major way? Change its work, change the method of work and now we need to change the way the Association is working as the Association is not convincing to us. The Association must change its work method, its work axis in a fundamental way.

[UI group talk].

Sh: Brothers, how many? Is it satisfactory or not?

UM: Brother Shukri, just a point, by God, if you please.

Sh: Yes.

UM: My dear brother, in reality the issue is the work method and the direction..., the direction in itself. This is one point. The second point is the issue of strength and also the issue of direction based on the speeches we listened to. So, if the issue is the method and strength, this does not affect the direction.

UM2: Yes.

Sh: Ok. The Association's direction now, who sees that there is a need for change, that it must change the direction?

[UI group talk].

Sh: Our brothers...

UM: Just a second..., is discussion of the Association's issue independent from the Holy Land Fund in the...UI.

Sh: I will..., I will ask the same question...

UM: Please hear me out. Or does it mean Palestinian activism in America.

UM3: I think it is a good point.

UM: Right. Yes, yes.

Aa: You guys work independently. You're a one of the countries working for Palestine, no more.

Sh: Fine, fine. But, figuratively speaking...

Aa: You're like Saudi Arabia, like Kuwait, like the Emirates...

Sh: ...UI. What is Palestinian activism? Let's say..., our brothers, speaking figuratively and metaphorically is good...UI. I will ask the same question; who thinks that the Occupied Land Fund and Jerusalem need to have a very major change in its interests..., what is the word you said?

UM: Direction.

Sh: Direction. Later on, let every executive committee manage its business separately...

UM2: I can modify your suggestion to a gradual change to respond to the emergency needs of the community...UI.

Sh: Fine, fine.

UM2: No. There is a major difference between changing the direction and...

UM: Why? Because there are practical things such as tackling the community's problems due to a security or a political situation or respond to them through one of the Association's departments without changing the Association's fundamental nature, or through another organization like what our brother Ghassan suggested, an organization which is affiliated with the Association or synonymous to the Association like we said, this one will handle the political aspect while the other one handles the legal aspect. You see? People will know that it has a relationship with the Association but it is not directly from the

Association. The same thing...

UM2: The ADC is there.

UM: What?

UM2: The ADC is there.

UM: This is for example. This is subject to debate but it does not..., it does not..., it does not change the nature of the Association's approved goals...UI.

[UI brief group talk].

Om: I will cite another example.

UM: Yes, I'm saying there are a lot of examples.

Om: The media, for instance. At Al Zaytouna, do we write about the community in Chicago, its situation, what does it do and its work and the business it does? This is not our work. Our work is to report Gaza's news only and we knew about this guy in Chicago and we are not interested in his problems. His problems are...UI. This is one direction.

UM: This will bring us to the point our brother mentioned...UI.

Om: This is another example...

UM: No, no. We shouldn't approach the issue as a ratio for this and a ratio for that. This is wrong because you won't even be able to reach an accurate percentage. Work is the one which imposes itself and determines the percentage. Sometimes, there might be a need to give 75% to the community at some point in the future, give it 75%. But, the goal is to serve people over there because that is why the Association was formed. Just like our brother said, if you don't do it, no one else will.

Om: But, this is not ..., it is not a reason.

UM: It is not a reason. That's why I'm telling you we should have flexibility in regards to the ratios. Right now, the practical ratio might not exceed 25%, 30 or 40. But, your plan should include supplying the needs of the community to serve the fundamental goal you're working for. What do you... Why do all of us work for the community, the issue of the community and the issues they bring? Why is that? Because we want to unify this community over an issue, provide awareness to it and mobilize to serve the cause over

there. Otherwise, what do we want from the community in the first place?

UM2: And what do you want from over here, my brother?

Sh: By God, our brothers, I think that the issue is purely argumentative and that all this talk is meaningless. The Association is Ok...UI. Anyone of you would mind if the Association opens a section for the community tomorrow? Nobody. Anybody objected yesterday that the Association is initiating political and diplomatic relationships with the ADC, with the Americans, with the Congress and with the churches? Nobody did, our brothers. ...UI. Fine, there isn't an inclination with us for the Association does a swift change in its policies. That's what is important, our brothers.

Om: It should be done according to need.

Sh: That's it.

[UI brief group talk].

Sh: I knocked a little bit too hard so that the door...UI.

Gh: My brother, he is saying "That's wrong". Ok, what is his point of view? I don't understand.

Sh: Our brothers, we will not ever finish this way.

[UI brief group talk].

Sh: Whoever has convictions..., whoever has convictions, they should be outside the frame of this discussion. That's what I mean.

UM2: What..., what is the result of that, my brother?

Sh: The result is that this is the direction of the Association..., this is the direction of the Association and there is no need for it now to make any dramatic change in its philosophy or directions as a result or a reaction to the latest circumstances. That's what we're discussing.

UM: Good.

Sh: There is no need...

UM: This is the reaction...

Sh: Allow me to tell you something... *[phone ringing]*. The self-rule period..., when talk about self-rule started, we made a decision at the Fund that we must change our name. That was a dramatic change to change our name as a result as there was talk....

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END OF RECORDING.