Dear ACMUN Delegates,

The study guides that follow are written by the chairs of the Security Council in order to help you in your preparation for the conference. Remember that your own research on the topic area and your country’s policy is essential. The main purpose of this document is, as its name suggests, to simply guide you in your personal research.

Each delegate should come to the conference with a working paper for each topic area. In brief, a working paper is a one-page list of proposals addressing the different aspects of the problem, in accordance with the position of the delegate’s country on the issue. For more information on preparation and the rules and procedures of the conference, please consult the online Delegate Preparation Guide. Also, keep in mind that the directors are more than willing to answer any questions you may have, which you can send to the email addresses provided.

I hope that you will benefit from reading these well prepared and thorough study guides.

Sincerely,

Argyris Tsiaras
Secretary-General

Line B. Kristensen
President of the General Assembly

Bürge Abiral
Deputy Secretary-General

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Dear Delegates,

I heartily welcome you to the 2nd Anatolia Model United Nations and, especially, to the Security Council of this session! My name is Dimitris Liolis and I am honored to be and work with you as the President of our forum. Although an alumus, I enjoy pretty much the whole MUN procedure, since this is my eleventh participation in an MUN session. I am Greek, and I come from the best northern city of Greece, Thessaloniki. I study law in the local university and, unfortunately, I have to read more books than you guys have…Dura lex, sed lex. In my spare time, I choose surfing on the Internet, chess, going out with friends, listening to music and eating chocolate (preferably every kind).

But enough about me! It’s your turn now. The Middle East needs you in order to save its regions from the deadly consequences of nuclear and other Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)! Below, I hope and pray that you will find all the necessary information, namely all the aspects of this difficult problem! Apart from reading, the fun of the MUN experience begins from now on…

Dimitris Liolis
President
dimitrisliolis@yahoo.gr

Dear Delegates of the Security Council,

My name is Liliana Aslanidou and I’m a junior in the IB program of Anatolia College, Thessaloniki. As an attentive member of the Model United Nations club for three years, I have found myself profoundly immersed into the world of international politics. Throughout my years of membership, I have participated in four conferences at regional (TMUN) and international level (Ireland MUN, Harvard MUN). In the summer of 2005 I took part in an international camp in New York, where I had the opportunity to meet two girls from Palestine and two from Israel. Our fascinating discussions about our everyday reality enabled me to view the question of Palestine from two different aspects. After my first contact with the issue and people who were directly influenced by the course of events in the Middle East, I became increasingly drawn to the question of Palestine, and engaged in international forums on this extremely vexing issue. It is my noblest aspiration to see one day both peoples live in peace with each other.

The question of Palestine is incontrovertibly complex and multi-faceted, due to its long history and the great number of protagonists and facts that have determined it. It is, therefore, practically unfeasible that this study guide encompasses all of the issues pertaining to the question. However, it is a fairly informative piece of work that, at least, draws the directive lines for all of you to move along. I have consciously laid particular stress on the historical background of the question, as it is my true belief that the solution lies in history. I would also like to underline that the study guide is not slanted in favor of either party; on the contrary, it constitutes the outcome of my endeavor to present the issue as neutrally as possible.
Throughout our session, our committee will attempt to achieve what the international community has failed to do: to take a realistic approach to the problem and eventually provide a pragmatic solution to it. As your director, I ask you to act on your own as politicians-to-be. Always bear in mind your countries’ official policies, but be ready to take a step forward, take initiatives within the committee, improvise wisely according to the circumstances. Prepare for a complex investigation of the question. Think first about political theory and then examine to what extent it is applicable to reality. We will delve into deeper concepts, such as that of nation, state, nationalism, self-determination and political terrorism and we will explore the role of international participants in the conflict.

I will be there to direct the discussions, provide material and answer all questions that might exist, my goal and that of my colleagues always being a fruitful dialogue within the committee that will bring about memorable results.

I’m looking forward to meeting all of you at ACMUN. If you have any questions before then, or simply wish to discuss various aspects of the guide, don’t hesitate to contact me.

Liliana Aslanidou  
Deputy President  
liliana.aslanidou@gmail.com

Dimitris Liolis  
President

Liliana Aslanidou  
Deputy President

Christos Kyriakopoulos  
Deputy President

Dear Delegates or, should I say, honorable members of the Security Council,

I would like in turn to welcome you to the 2nd ACMUN conference where I will also participate as the Deputy President of the Security Council. My name is Christos Kiriakopoulos. I am 19 years old and I am studying Law at the Democretus University in Komotini. I have to confess that after 9 conferences, 6 as a delegate, 2 as a chair and 1 as a member of the press, one of my greatest desires was to become one of the Directors of the Security Council in an MUN. No more silly info about me, just a message for you: apart from the experience an MUN conference has to offer, apart from the way it will teach you to speak and think, apart from the ideas it will allow you to form about the modern international political scene and, finally, apart from the vision you will have about the globe after the conference, you have to enjoy it. That’s what it’s all about: to enjoy trying to save the world, destroy it or make your country richer. For any further info…. you have my e-mail; feel free to ask anything.

Christos Kyriakopoulos  
Deputy President  
deviner36@in.gr
# Security Council

## Topic Area A
The Establishment Of A Nuclear-Free Zone In The Middle East

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## Topic Area B
The Establishment of an Independent Palestinian State

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**TOPIC AREA A**

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Possessing and trading nuclear weapons is the alpha and the omega of the problem the Middle East faced during so many years in the past, and continues to do so today. Everybody acknowledges the fact that nuclear weapons directly threaten mankind and, therefore, the existence of the peoples that inhabit the Middle East and their civilizations. There is an ultimate need to clear this area of the nuclear threat, so that everyone will cease to be threatened and threatening. The plea for the establishment of a Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (NFWZ) sounds like a utopian dream, since the two poles, Israel and the Arabs, especially Iran under the guidance of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, strive to gain the most destructive nuclear technology, boosting in this way the polemic situation between themselves.

The implementation of a nuclear weapon-free zone (NWFZ) in the Middle East will help to strengthen international and regional security, controlling the trade and trafficking of arms, and prevent the outbreak of nuclear war in the region. The sensitive tensions in the area, including the formal and informal conflicts between the Arab states and Israel, the general political instability, the religious fundamentalism (particularly “jihad”) and the hostile attitude of the Arab nations towards the small yet powerful and determined nation of Israel, could prove fatal if combined with nuclear capabilities. Moreover, historical and cultural claims and national interests in the area add to the setting for conflict between groups, as confrontation between them is a reality. Thus, the addition of nuclear weapons into this arrangement could prove to have disastrous and deadly international implications.

During its thirtieth session on December 11, 1975, the General Assembly stated, “Nuclear weapon free zones constitute one of the most effective means for preventing the proliferation, both horizontal and vertical, of nuclear weapons and for contributing to the elimination of the danger of a nuclear holocaust”. With the present instability in the Middle East, a NWFZ seems to be the only acceptable and viable means of establishing a new era of peace and cooperation between the nations of the Middle East; a NWFZ could also protect the peoples of these nations from getting rid of a great financial burden in the process of a nuclear arms race.

Eventually in the Middle East, conflicts have shown the importance of finding and implementing as soon as possible a solid and dynamic resolution, which

**HISTORY OF THE PROBLEM**

**THE REGION**

The regional rivalry between the Arabs and Israelis is globally known. The Middle East has suffered for many decades from ethno-national and religious conflicts undertaken using conventional arms races that preceded non-conventional arms. This situation points out the difficulty of creating a NWFZ in the region, an agreement that would include the 22 member states of the Arab League, plus Israel and Iran, and would include the area from Algeria to Iran and the Persian Gulf.

The superpowers of the past, the U.S.A and the U.S.S.R., exported a great amount of the existing nuclear technology to the ambivalent states (e.g. Israel and Iraq) for energy purposes at the beginning of the 1950’s. The majority of the nuclear power and technology sent to the Middle East from the developed nations was to produce power plants and to be used for peaceful purposes. However, the client nations did not follow this line. Superpowers were not capable of controlling what was going on with the nuclear technology that was sold for these peaceful purposes. The client states observed the development of nuclear weapons; therefore, they were lured by the nuclear weapons’ massive power. The Arab-Israeli conventional arms race began in the mid-1950s, eventually leading to Israeli nuclear and missile development programs. Egypt followed with chemical and missile programs. The expansion of conventional power sharply rose in 1970 and led to the 1973 war, which caused external interference due to oil. Then, the Israelis cooperated with South Africa in creating nuclear weapons; and the start of the Iraqi nuclear program was a reality. This continued into the 1980s and, in the spring of 1990, Saddam Hussein, the former dictator of Iraq, invaded Kuwait, whereas Iran began getting interested in having its own nuclear weapons. Iraq, Libya, and Egypt all followed along with the development of nuclear technologies in order to cultivate and produce their own nuclear weapons.
ISRAEL

In an era of ultimate need for nuclear non-proliferation, Israel’s unspoken possession of a nuclear arsenal - euphemistically known as an outcome of its policy of ‘strategic ambiguity’ - is coming under increased criticism. Israel has the oldest and largest nuclear weapons programme in the Middle East, started in the 1950's. Analysts estimate that it has built between 75 and 200 nuclear weapons. Israel has not signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and refuses UN inspections of its nuclear facilities. Its official position is ambiguous: it claims it "will not be the first to introduce nuclear weapons into the region.” The position of Israel on the NPT has remained unchanged through the years. It refuses to become a party to the treaty, either as a signatory state or a ratifying member. Israel’s reasoning behind its non-signatory status is that the treaty does not provide adequate security guarantees. Israel is believed to have missiles with a range of at least 3,500km, and the only anti-ballistic missile system in the world. Its delivery systems include three submarines that can be armed with nuclear tipped cruise missiles.

The Israel nuclear programme began around 1957, in the aftermath of the Suez war of 1956. In that war Israel, unlike the US, collaborated with France and UK for the control of the Suez Canal endangered by the nationalization program of Nasser. Having common enemies in the Middle East region and a common interest to develop autonomous nuclear weapons, Israel and France began collaboration on a nuclear programme. With French assistance Israel initiated the secret construction of a nuclear reactor and a reprocessing plant at Dimona (a heavy water reactor, a chemical reprocessing plant and a few other buildings have been located there). The reactor was put on line in 1963-64 and modernized in the seventies. The reprocessing plant was completed on 1960. Some information on these developments was filtered to the US by the U2 flights and other intelligence sources and was a source of embarrassment to the US.

As a matter of fact the United States was officially tied to a non-proliferation policy, but was reluctant to put its precious Middle East ally into great danger. Moreover, the weight of the Jewish community was and is considerable in USA especially during elections. In March 1968 one of the Mossad’s agents in West Germany purchased uranium for $4 million, officially on behalf of an Italian chemical company in Milan, but this precious material was transferred to an Israeli fighter, so that the uranium never reached its official destination. By 1973, when the Yom Kippur war began, the Israel’s nuclear stock comprised around 25 bombs. After that war the nuclear effort continued. In 1984 the construction of a new power plant, with 250 Megawatts power, was officially announced. On the basis of all the data gathered, Israel has assembled around 100 warheads. Israel signed the Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT) on 8 August 1963, just three days after the signing of UK, the USA and the USSR. In spite of this, it was a reality that on September 22, 1979 Israel performed a nuclear test in the atmosphere in collaboration with South-Africa (which completed its first nuclear weapon shortly after the alleged test). Nuclear cooperation between Israel and South Africa had begun after the 1967 Six Day war. The aftermath of the war saw a cooling of the French-Israel nuclear relations. Israel was trading its nuclear expertise for South African uranium ore.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and Israel did not have the best of relationships. In Israel, the Nahal Soreq reactor is the only one that is under IAEA safeguards. In addition, when Israel attacked a safeguarded (by IAEA) Iraqi nuclear facility, it downgraded even more its cooperation with IAEA, as the attack was condemned as an attack against Iraq and the IAEA, the NPT, and internationally established principles. Israel responded by stating that it was a move against Iraq’s determination to produce nuclear weapons and that the safeguards were insufficient and ineffective.
OTHER STATES

In the long term, Israeli nuclear weapons favour instability in the Middle East. The case of Iraq is from this point of view illuminating. In 1991 the IAEA made known that for the first time a State, party to the Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) had violated the Treaty. According to IAEA, the Iraqi nuclear programme was huge, with a total budget of several billion dollars and a staff of more than 10,000 people including a great number of highly qualified technicians. For more than a decade this programme remained unknown not only to the IAEA, but also to the western intelligence agencies, which cast some doubts on the validity of the nuclear safeguards of the IAEA and the capacity of the international community to monitor effectively the development of nuclear military programmes. In the years 1991 and 1992, after the Gulf War, a team of inspectors of the IAEA, acting on the basis of resolutions of the Security Council of the United Nations, was able to investigate the whole Iraqi nuclear infrastructure and, subsequently, to dismantle it completely. In spite of the resistance offered by Iraq to international controls, the overall structure of the Iraqi nuclear programme was reconstructed successfully. The problem encountered by Iraq was basically twofold: first, the procurement of the nuclear fissile material (Highly Enriched Uranium: HEU or weapon-grade Plutonium); second, the construction of a nuclear warhead. As to the first problem, at the very beginning Iraq chose the plutonium option; however this first attempt was blocked by the destruction by the Israeli Air Force of the nuclear reactor Tammuz I at Osiraq, near Baghdad. After the destruction of the Osiraq reactor, Iraq followed a few different strategies, most notably the technique of electromagnetic isotope separation based on devices called calutrons, and the approach based on the gaseous centrifuges.

Tripoli joined the IAEA in 1963. Some time ago, some observers classified Libya among the most dangerous countries to have acquired weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. Over the years, Libya’s nuclear program’s progress has suffered from mismanagement, lack of spare parts, and the reluctance of foreign suppliers to provide assistance, particularly since the UN embargo went into effect in 1992. However, Qadhafi had not abandoned his goal of acquiring a nuclear weapon and continued trying to develop a Libyan nuclear weapons infrastructure. A 25-year effort had succeeded in providing some training to a number of students and technicians and the establishment of a nuclear research centre, which includes a small nuclear research reactor under IAEA safeguards. This facility, located at Tajura, southeast of Tripoli, was provided by the former Soviet Union. In 1975, Libya had ratified the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty signed by the Idris regime in 1969. In 1980, an agreement was reached with the International Atomic Energy Agency placing all of Libya’s nuclear installations under international inspection. Despite these steps, in the mid- and late 1970s, Qadhafi repeatedly proclaimed his country’s determination to acquire nuclear weapons, primarily because he was convinced that his rival and worst enemy, Israel, had achieved such a military capability. As of 2002 the assessment of the US Government was that, since the suspension of UN sanctions against Libya in 1999, Libya had been able to increase its access to dual-use nuclear technologies. But in recent years, concerns about Libyan nuclear ambitions have faded. Libya is in no position to obtain access to nuclear weapons in the foreseeable future, given the extremely limited domestic technical base of the country. Although Libya would need significant foreign assistance to acquire a nuclear weapon, Tripoli’s nuclear infrastructure enhancement remains almost inactive.

At the center of Egypt’s nuclear program is the Inshas Nuclear Research Center in Cairo. Inshas hosts a Soviet-supplied research reactor that started in 1961. According to Egypt’s Atomic Energy Agency, the reactor should serve Egypt’s research needs for the next ten years, by which time Egypt hopes to have completed a larger research reactor to replace it. Egypt also runs a number of other research facilities at Inshas; a small French-supplied hot cell complex and a pilot nuclear fuel factory, completed in 1987, used to process natural uranium mined in Egypt. Egypt’s expanded nuclear activity has raised fears in Israel. In 1990, the Israeli press reported that Egypt was cooperating with Pakistan, Iraq and Argentina to build a plutonium-producing reactor for nuclear weapons. Argentina later revealed that it was preparing to supply a research reactor to Egypt under international inspection, though Argentina faced competition from other bidders, including the Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd., and France’s nuclear giant, Framatome. In 1995, Egypt’s Minister of Electricity and Energy, Mahim Abazah, confirmed that a shipment of supplies was en route from Argentina in April, and that the reactor would be completed in 1997. Egypt still hopes to import power reactors. Egyptian officials have talked since the early 1980s about building up to eight 1,000-MWe reactors to supply up to 40 percent of Egypt’s electricity needs. By mid-1985, three international supplier groups took the responsibility of building the first two reactors; one group led by Germany’s Kraftwerk Union, a second Franco-Italian
group led by Framatome, and a third headed by Westinghouse of the United States. The reactors would be sited at El-Dabaa, outside Alexandria, and would be owned and operated by Egypt’s Nuclear Power Plants Authority. In 1988, during the fifteenth special session of the United Nations, Egypt proposed a substantive approach consisting of three main points. The proposal called for all states within the Middle East and all nuclear weapon states to refrain from proliferating nuclear weapons into the Middle East; it authorized the Secretary General to appoint a group of experts that would work with the Middle East in creating a treaty in order to establish the NFZ; and finally, the proposal invited the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to submit verification recommendations regarding the NFZ in the Middle East.

**PAST NWFZ TREATIES**

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<td>2. Treaty of Tlatelolco (1967): Latin America and the Caribbean;</td>
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<td>3. Rarotonga Treaty (1985): South Pacific (Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu);</td>
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**CURRENT SITUATION**

**IRAN**

Iran once fought for a denuclearised Middle East.

On August 14, 2002, the existence of two Iranian unknown nuclear sites was revealed: a uranium enrichment facility in Natanz (part of which is underground), and a heavy water facility in Arak. It is claimed that Iran concealed its uranium enrichment programme from the IAEA in violation of the NPT until the facility at Natanz was revealed in 2002; however, Iran was not obliged to inform the IAEA about the facility at the time. Despite this possibility, Iran allowed inspections of the facilities by the IAEA, pursuant to the Additional Protocol, and the IAEA concluded that the facilities were not related to any secret nuclear weapons programme. On November 14, 2004, Iran’s chief nuclear negotiator announced a voluntary and temporary suspension of its uranium enrichment programme (enrichment is not a violation of the NPT) after pressure from the United Kingdom, France, and Germany acting on behalf of the European Union (known in this context as the EU-3). The measure was said at the time to be a confidence-building measure, to continue for some reasonable period of time. On November 24, Iran tried to change the terms of its agreement with the EU to exclude some of the equipment from this deal for research work. This request was dropped four days later. On August 8 and August 10, 2005, the Iranian government resumed its conversion of uranium at the Isfahahan facility, coming only five days after the election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, seemingly with continued suspension of enrichment activities. This led to (on September 19 2005) the European Union pressing the IAEA to bring Iran’s nuclear programme before the United Nations Security Council. On February 4, 2006, the 35 member Board of Governors of the IAEA voted 27-3 (with five abstentions: Algeria, Belarus, Indonesia, Libya and South Africa) to report Iran to the UN Security Council. The measure was sponsored by the United Kingdom, France and Germany, and it was backed by the United States. Two permanent council members, Russia and China, agreed to referral only on condition that the council take no action before March. The three members who voted against referral were Venezuela, Syria and Cuba. On April 11, 2006, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad announced that Iran had successfully enriched uranium. President Ahmadinejad made the announcement in a televised address from the northeastern city of Mashhad, where he said "I am officially announcing that Iran joined the group of those countries which have nuclear technology." The uranium was enriched to 3.5% using over a hundred centrifuges. At this level, it could be used in a nuclear reactor if enough of it was made; uranium for a nuclear bomb would require around
90% enrichment and many thousands of centrifuges to be built and operated. On April 13, 2006, After US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said (on Wednesday, April 12 2006) the Security Council must consider "strong steps" to induce Tehran to change course in its nuclear ambition; President Ahmadinejad stated that Iran won’t stop uranium enrichment and that the world must treat Iran as a nuclear power, saying "Our answer to those who are angry about Iran achieving the full nuclear fuel cycle is just one phrase. We say: Be angry at us and die of this anger," because "We won’t hold talks with anyone about the right of the Iranian nation to enrich uranium." Iran responded to the demand to stop enrichment of uranium August 24, 2006, offering to return to the negotiation table but refusing to completely abandon enrichment. According to the semi-official Iranian Students News Agency: "Iran opened the door to negotiations for Europe and hopes that the answer which was given to the nuclear package would bring them to the table.

TERRORISM
Since the conflicts started in the region of Middle East, there has been a suspicion that terrorist regimes, or groups that act as sub-national unions, will have the opportunity to gain illegally small or powerful nuclear weapons, or even other kinds of WMD, such as chemical, biological and radiological arms (including “dirty” bombs and extremely violent explosive weapons. These unions consider themselves as powerful political and military parties, namely very important factors of the region. In fact, these sub-national groups, in particular Al Qaeda and Hezbollah (which is strengthening its influence particularly in Lebanon), try to gain the support of certain Arab governments, such as Syria and Iran, so that they will acquire nuclear weapons, upsetting the nuclear balance in the region of the Middle East. It is disturbing that these groups have access to black markets, or even to Internet, where they can easily purchase almost any kind of WMD, posing a great threat to peace and stability in the region in general.

IRAQ
In 1990 Iraq invaded Kuwait resulting in the Gulf War and United Nations imposed economic sanctions at the urging of the U.S. The economic sanctions were designed to deter the former dictator of the Republic of Iraq, Saddam Hussein, to dispose of weapons of mass destruction. In 1991, in a UN action against Iraq, the Security Council called for terms for a cease-fire that included the “destruction, removal, or rendering harmless, under international supervision, of all chemical and biological weapons, all ballistic missiles […] and associated materials and facilities.” The UN also formed a special committee that would supervise the whole procedure, since they were sure that Iraq possessed nuclear weapons. Although at first there was Iraqi cooperation, this ceased in 1998. In 2002, Iraq invited UN inspectors to return under certain conditions, yet President Bush’s government stated that Iraq only agreed to this move because they felt that the international community did not support them at all and that they were worried about this. Iraq was invaded in March 2003 by a United States-organized coalition with the stated reasons that Iraq had not abandoned its nuclear and chemical weapons development program according to United Nations resolutions. The justifications given for invasion included purported Iraqi government links to Al Qaeda,
claims that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction, the opportunity to remove an oppressive dictator from power, and the bringing of democracy to Iraq.

**ISRAEL**

The Israeli government refuses to officially confirm or deny that it has a nuclear weapon program, and has an unofficial policy of deliberate ambiguity, saying only that it would not be the first to "introduce nuclear weapons in the Middle East". Israel is widely believed to be one of the nuclear-armed nation-states not within the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the other three being India, Pakistan and North Korea. Till today, the Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert refuses to confirm or deny Israel’s nuclear weapon status.

If one were looking for a gaping example of US nuclear non-proliferation policy double standards, it is obvious that the US supports the nuclear programme and assesses the interests and the diplomacy of Israel; this has let Israel continue to modernize its nuclear arsenal without even a word of criticism. US unofficial will is to keep Israel, the only true and grateful ally they have in Middle East, sovereign and powerful, since Israel is surrounded by "enemy" states. Most of the states in the region, however, possess the means to threaten Israel whether by conventional or non-conventional arms, such WMD. The monopoly in strategic power by Israel because of its nuclear capabilities and influence on the US could strengthen stability in the region and help with territorial concessions and settlement with the Arabs. This is Israel’s point of view, of course. But, it is widely accepted that these tactics, including the continuous and silent support provided the USA, is not going to lead to a nuclear-free, stable and peaceful Middle East. On the other hand, the Arab nations strongly believe that a NWFZ in Middle East should be established immediately taking into consideration, though, that nations have the right to use their nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. The Arab nations also demand that Israel sign the Non Proliferation Treaty, since the Jewish nation has refused to do so until now, and this is a main reason of suspicion and mistrust between the nations of the Middle East.

**CONCLUSION**

Security and stability in the Middle East is essential for not only the well being of the region; but for the well being of the entire international community. The Middle East – the land once known for its great civilizations, religions, and contributions to human history is today, unfortunately, only synonymous with political conflict and instability. A Nuclear Free Zone (NFZ), which is a sector in which it is illegal to posses, test, deploy or use nuclear weapons of any form, can play a significant role in the process of establishing security, stability and peace in the Middle East. In debating this topic within the framework of the Security Council, it is imperative to make a note of efforts of the international community towards developing NFZ’s, to understand the implications an NFZ has for the Middle East, and the challenges that exist in pursuing such a zone in this region. The spirit of cooperation, trust, mutual understanding, concession and strong political will to change this parody of peace is the key for fruitful debate. The establishment of a NFZ in the Middle East sounds more urgent and welcomed by the peoples than ever.

In addressing this topic within the demands and parameters of the Security Council, delegates should first address each of the obstacles that exist in establishing a NFZ and propose solutions as to how to resolve each concern so that the ultimate goal of regional stability and security may be achieved. Delegates should also analyze current events regarding Iran and the Nuclear Stand off and the role this plays in establishing a Middle Eastern NFZ. Delegates should keep the following questions in mind:

What is your country’s policy regarding the NPT and Nuclear Free Zones? Does your country have a Nuclear Weapons program? If not, what sort of relations does your country share with Nuclear Weapons States? What about your State’s relations with the Middle East? Specifically, with Iran, Iraq and Israel? Finally, based on other regional NFWZ treaties, past and recent developments on this topic, and related UN resolutions, what proposals can your country offer in developing a NFWZ in the Middle East?

**QUESTIONS A RESOLUTION MUST ANSWER**

For the sake of an urgent and viable solution to this crisis, some proposals must be addressed, in order for the delegates to construct a solid, widely accepted, positive and unquestionable resolution, which will clearly state the establishment of the NWFZ, including the conditions under which the Middle East will be depleted from nuclear weapons.

1. How are we sure that every state in Middle East will abandon its nuclear war technology, since there is also the possibility of using nuclear technology solely...
for peaceful purposes? Is this going to guarantee a nuclear weapon-free zone in Middle East?

2. What about the current nuclear facilities? Under which conditions are they going to continue working? Is a special committee by the UN or IAEA needed, so as to check whether the states use the facilities properly or not?

3. What about Israel? Is a resolution that grants sovereignty and nuclear independence to Israel accepted by all the other states? Shouldn’t we acknowledge the fact that Israel is surrounded by hostile states? Do we have to defend Israel’s interests in the area?

4. On the other hand, how are going to deal with Iran? Do we recognize its right to advanced nuclear technology? What about the instability that this brings to the Middle East? Shouldn’t we defend all the Arab nations’ right against Israel (since Israel is far more powerful and has the support of the USA)?

5. How should we deal with the possibility that a state in the region fails to comply with the resolution’s suggestions? Which sanctions should be imposed, in the name of a NWFZ in the Middle East? How are we going to convince Israel to join the NPT and abandon its nuclear war programme?

6. How can we secure that the nuclear weapons that exist in the Middle East and are being traded (arms trafficking) will not reach “dangerous hands”, for example, terrorist/sub-national groups?

7. How can we stop the flow of nuclear weapons and nuclear technology from nuclear superpowers to the nations of the Middle East, so as to prevent a serious nuclear conflict between them?

**BLOC POSITIONS**

This part focuses on the alliances between the states which act positively, or negatively, towards the establishment of a NWFZ in Middle East. The alliances are named “blocs”, and have different opinions concerning the future of Middle East.

**“IN FAVOUR OF NWFZ” STATES**

This bloc includes the Arab states and Iran (although President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has recently stated that his dream is Iran becoming an independent state in terms of energy by developing nuclear technology for peaceful reasons, namely to use the nuclear energy), which have agreed upon the NPT. Their ultimate goal is to establish a NWFZ in Middle East, believing that a NWFZ will bring peace and will change the balance between the war capabilities of the nations in the Middle East. They do not have any problem under which conditions the negotiations will take place. They all share a common political line: that, through denuclearisation of the Middle East, peace and stability are going to be a reality. Of course, through these steps, they seek to get rid of the nuclear capabilities of their enemy, Israel, since they dislike the fact that the Jewish state is the only serious nuclear power in the region. This is the main reason that the USA is opposed to this bloc of countries.

**“AGAINST NWFZ” STATES**

The heart of this bloc is Israel and the USA who, although they do not oppose officially the establishment of a NWFZ, always pose diplomatic obstacles, (such as a dramatic description of the problem Israel faces or the loss of interests concerning economic development and investigations in the region of Israel or the instability that will follow after the denuclearization of Israel etc.) during the relevant discussions and negotiations. Sometimes, other nuclear superpowers, such as United Kingdom or even France, offer their support to this bloc, when it comes to the sovereignty of Israel. Namely, they acknowledge the fact that Israeli nuclear weapons deter the Arab states from invading Israel. Unfortunately, they remain solid in their position, refusing to abandon their nuclear war programme due to important interests in the area (and, of course, their unquestionable power). In addition, the fact that their proposals are considered to be fluid, lures nations that abstain from this problem to join their club, turning them against a NWFZ by pointing out dilemmas and problems that emerge from the establishment of a NWFZ in the Middle East.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

Internet Sites:

- www.siyassa.org/esiyassa
- www.arabnews.com
- www.ahram.org.eg/acpss/eng
- www.transnational.org/Area_Index_MiddleEast
- www.ingentaconnect.com
- www.masspeaceaction.org
- www.middle-east-online.com
- www.peacemagazine.org/archive
- www.cia.gov
- www.un.org/
  a) A/RES/52/34
  b) News/Press/Docs/2006/gadis3333
  c) A/56/187
  d) A/55/388
  e) A/RES/50/66
  f) A/RES/51/41
  g) A/RES/35/147
Books:
Middle East Security Issues: In The Shadow Of Weapons, by Barry R. Schneider

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Internet Sites:
www.washingtonpost.com
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www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org
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National Geographic, August 2005 (Greek Edition)
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Written by Dimitris Liolis, Director
TOPIC AREA B

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The question of Palestine is full of complexities and subtle nuances. It involves the conflicting claims of two peoples, the Israeli and the Arab, to the same land, Palestine. The Arab Palestinians believe that the creation of a distinct state for the Jewish minority at the expense of the Arab majority, the infringement on their right to self-determination and the inability of Palestinian refugees to return to their homeland constitute a great injustice.

On the other hand, the Israelis justify their claim to the land of Palestine.

HISTORY OF THE PROBLEM

Palestine from the Pre-historic Era to the Ottoman Period

Palestine, a territory in southwest Asia lying between the River Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea, has always constituted the object of dispute between nations. Known as the Land of Canaan, it was the place of residence of early Asian tribes until the 12th century BC, when a sweeping wave of Jewish immigrants fleeing Egypt settled in the territory and established the Kingdom of Israel. This piece of land was conquered later on in history by the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Greeks (under Alexander the Great), the Romans, the Byzantines, the Arabs (636 A.D.), the Crusaders, the Mongols and the Egyptians, and it was eventually annexed by the Ottoman Empire in 1516. Under the Ottoman occupation, when it became known as Filastin or al-Ard-al-Muqaddasa (Holy Land), it sustained its diversity, the result of the continuous passage and assimilation of different ethnic groups into the already existing community, though it never lost its predominant Arab character. At that time, virtually all Christians and Muslims had been born in Palestine, while only 1/3 of the Jews residing there constituted a long-standing, but culturally and linguistically assimilated, group, who had never left the “Promised Land”. The two ethnic communities coexisted peacefully for centuries, and they were both largely tolerated and respected by the Ottoman rulers as pursuers of monotheist beliefs.

Palestine During the Mandate Period

At the end of the First World War the Palestinian issue evolved into one of major international concern. After the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, Palestine in 1918 was placed under the administration of Great Britain (1923) as a mandate under the auspices of the League of Nations. The British government had as a primary objective the implementation of the “Balfour Declaration” of 1917 that called for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine with the qualification, though, that “nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine”. The declaration gave great impetus to the Jewish organization Hovevei Tsion (“Lovers of Zion”), whose goal was to promote and finance Jewish emigration from Europe to Palestine.

In the ensuing years, a large-scale aliyah (wave of Jewish immigrants), composed of Eastern European and Russian Jews, occurred, as a result of the widespread pogroms of Jewish populations. The numbers of Jews finding a refuge in Palestine swelled during the 1930s after the rise of Hitler to power in Germany (1933), the passage of the discriminatory Nuremberg law (1935) and Germany’s annexation of Austria and Czechoslovakia (1938). Whereas from 1919 to 1924 an estimated 35,000 Jews settled in Palestine, from
1924 to 1935 approximately 16,000 Jews immigrated each year with a bulk arriving between 1931 and 1935 (approx. 60,000 Jews). The Jewish immigrants, who were committed to the Jewish communal living on cooperative agricultural settlements, bought much of the arable land belonging to absentee Arab landowners, and refused to utilize the Palestinian working force for its cultivation, in their effort to enforce economic activities within their ethnic communities. In addition, the Jewish settlers from Germany had brought with them wealth to invest in industries in their new homeland, as well as to establish Jewish organizations to provide financial aid to the less affluent Jews. The most prominent and efficient among them were:

- the Jewish National Fund (1901), responsible for the purchase and development of land in the name of the Jewish people, which was never to be resold to non-Jews
- the Jewish Agency (1929) that undertook the governance of the Jewish community in Palestine, encouraged immigration and raised funds for settlements and
- the United Jewish Appeal (1939) that raised funds in the US on behalf of the Jews in Palestine.

However, the Zionist policy of exclusive Hebrew labor in Jewish land, in conjunction with Histadrut’s (= Jewish socialist society) engagement in militant anti-Palestinian labor activities and the massive sale of Arab land to the Jews, led to the impoverishment of a part of the indigenous population. The Palestinians soon proceeded with petitions to the British administration for independence from its control and for the termination of the Jewish immigration to Palestine. When the British responded that the Palestinian requests could not be taken in consideration as long as the Palestinians lacked a legitimate government to formally express their grievances, the petitioners launched a general strike to confront British authoritarianism and the Zionists. The friction eventually triggered the first Arab Revolt in 1936, which lasted until 1939 and was accompanied by non-payment of taxes and other forms of civil disobedience. In actuality, the Arab Revolt was the first protest of Palestinians against the Jewish national aspirations in Palestine prior to Israel’s establishment as a state.

After the British suppressed the rebellions, the Palestinians found themselves with no leadership to pressure for self-determination. Most of the Palestinian leaders had either been exiled or imprisoned, while the two most dominant political families in Palestine, the Husseinis and the Nashashibis, were in dispute with each other. As a result of the lack of a unified political organization and of financial resources, the Palestinians were at a disadvantage in supporting their case in the international community. The Zionists were also politically and ideologically divided, but they had financial resources, contacts with the European and the American governments and experience in handling the Western political system.

**British Formulas for Ceasefire**

In the meantime, Great Britain was trying to implement various formulas to bring independence to a land ravaged by constant turmoil and to satisfy both parties (Palestinians and Jews). In 1922 Britain introduced the Churchill White Paper, in which it made known it had no intention of establishing an exclusively Jewish state in Palestine. It also maintained that “this [Jewish] immigration cannot be so great in volume as to exceed whatever may be the economic capacity of the country at the time to absorb new arrivals” and reiterated “the immigrants should not be a burden upon the people of Palestine as a whole, and […] they should not deprive any section of the present population of their employment”. The document, finally, proposed the enactment of a Palestinian constitution and the formation of a legislative council comprised of 8 Muslim Palestinians, 2 Christians, 2 Jews and 11 British. The Paper was soon rejected by the Palestinians, because of their fear that the British majority of deputies would allow for policies hostile to Palestinian interests.

In the 1930s a number of other documents were issued with the purpose of clarifying the British role in Palestine.

- In 1929 the Shaw and Hope-Simpson reports condemned the Jewish policy of keeping out Palestinian labor in Jewish lands.
- In 1930 the Passfield White Paper proposed the cessation of the Jewish immigration and the imposition of restrictions on massive land sales to Jews.
- Contrary to the Churchill White Paper, the Peel Commission reported in 1936 that it would “foster the Jewish immigration in the hope that it might ultimately lead to the creation of a Jewish majority and the establishment of a Jewish state with the consent […] of the Arabs”. The commission proposed, moreover, the partition of Palestine into a Jewish state and a Palestinian area to be merged with Jordan. It was this recommendation that actually instigated the second stage of the Arab Revolt in 1937.
In May 1942 the World Zionist Congress took place in New York City. During the session, the American, European and Palestinian delegates present presented a resolution that called for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, with a flag and an army of its own. For this purpose all restrictions on the number of Jewish immigrants would be lifted.

In 1946, Britain attempted to organize a conference in London, in order to address the issue of Palestinian sovereignty. However, only Arab delegates attended it, since the Jewish Agency (organization for the governance of the Jewish community in Palestine) refused to participate. After this obvious failure to act as a mediator in the discussions between the Palestinians and the Jews, the UK turned its responsibility over to the UN.

The Partition of Palestine and the End of the British Mandate

By 1947 a majority of the member states of the UN had become very sympathetic to the Jews because of the genocide committed against them in Nazi Germany. As a result, it eventually proposed in its Resolution 181 in 1947 the creation of two states, a Jewish and an Arab, within a partitioned Palestine. The British mandate over the area was to end on 15 May, 1948 and the two states were to have been established by 1 July, 1948. According to the resolution, 57% of Palestine was to be allotted to the Jewish state, although the Jews represented at that time less than 33% of the population, and possessed only 7% of the estates. Therefore, the Arabs in Palestine and the neighboring Arab states did not accept the resolution. Despite their objections, the Palestinian Jews declared the establishment of the Jewish State of Israel on 14 May, 1948. Subsequent to this, six Arab nations – Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Iraq – launched a coordinated attack against Israel. When the latter emerged as the victor from this war, the Palestinian Arabs were left without a state of their own, as they had rejected the UN Partition Plan.

Zionist Jews were not satisfied with the amount of land apportioned to the Jewish state, and utilized their well-equipped military forces to systematically extend their control beyond the areas designated in UN Resolution 181. These additional parts of Palestine that were now being annexed by Israel were deemed essential to the security of the Jewish State and to its economic success. Eventually, Israel assumed the controlled of 77% of the whole Palestinian region, including significant portions not originally allocated to it. Of the remaining lands that the UN allotted to the Palestinians, the Gaza Strip came under Egyptian administration, while the West Bank was incorporated into the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The treatment of the Arab Palestinians that were now subjects of different states varied:

- In Israel, the Arabs gained citizenship, but did not enjoy the same rights as the Jews. They lived under strict military administration until 1966 and were thus subject to arbitrary imprisonment or even expulsion for political reasons. The 1950 Israeli Law for The Acquisition of Absentee Property exacerbated their plight, since the property of numerous Arabs that fled abroad, even temporarily, was placed under the control of the Israeli Custodian of Absentee Property. Similarly, the Minister of Agriculture was allowed, in accordance with the Emergency Articles for the Exploitation of Uncultivated Areas, to take over any land not cultivated for the previous three years. The only legal avenue for the Palestinians’ political expression was the non-Zionist, though Israeli, Communist Party.

- In the Gaza Strip, the Egyptian military government maintained tight control over the Palestinian refugees.

- Palestinians residing in Syria were regarded with more respect and were granted education and access to jobs.

- The Lebanese authorities were very restrictive, since they denied the Palestinians the right to study in public schools or to obtain permanent employment.

- On the West Bank, Palestinians enjoyed more freedom, as they were allowed to stay in their original houses and to develop relatively large-scale economic activities. However, the Arab residents of this territory were confronted with other kinds of economic adversities, as they could not conduct trade with the Mediterranean countries, whose ports were blocked.
Regardless of the hardships the Arab Palestinians were subject to as refugees in the aforementioned bordering Arab states, the idea of pan-Arabism seemed most appealing to their majority. Nevertheless, this vision fell apart in 1967, when Israel launched a new war against the Arab forces. During this attack, it occupied the West Bank and the Gaza Strip—until then under Jordanian and Egyptian administration respectively—and the part of Jerusalem initially allotted to the Palestinian Arabs. The resumption of hostilities forced the Palestinians into a second exodus, which aggravated the already enormous Palestinian refugee problem. However, the Security Council in its Resolution 242 accorded Israel the right to live in security behind its borders prior to the 1967 war. However, Israel only returned the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt after the signature of the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty, whereas it officially extended its legal jurisdiction to East Jerusalem in 1980.

The right of return for the Palestinian refugees is a very disputable aspect of the question. There are currently more than 3.7 million Palestinians registered with the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian refugees. On the other hand, Israel obstinately keeps turning down every plea for the acceptance of the return of these refugees, arguing that a new wave of immigrants would overwhelm Israel, changing its demography and the exclusively Jewish character of the country.

The Israeli Settlement Policy

The Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War signed in 1949 provides that a belligerent occupying power is not allowed to alter the laws, the institutions or the government of the occupied territory, nor place civilian settlements in it. Israel callously disregarded, though, the provisions of this internationally ratified convention, and sowed all around Palestine Israeli settlements. Therefore, the international community soon condemned this aggressive policy of Israel’s.

The ultimate purpose of the Israelis was to achieve a maximum territorial increase for their state by incorporating the West Bank and the Gaza Strip into Israel. The Palestinians were gradually forced into ever-smaller territories, and in many cases their living conditions were such that their well-being was jeopardized. At the same time, the Israeli government provided the settlers over the age of 16 with weapons and ammunition and assigned them the task of completing their service in their home settlements. The intense independent actions of Israeli paramilitary extended defense units against local Palestinians without any legal jurisdiction aggravated further the conflict between the two parties.

The signature of the Camp David Accords resulted in the evacuation of thirteen Israeli settlements constructed in Northern Sinai. After their dismantling, Israel initiated a new settlement campaign within the Gaza Strip and by 1985 twelve settlements had been built.

Nevertheless, the settlement policy was not very favorable for the Israeli settlers either. Settlements required a full range of essential services: water supply, electricity, oil and other necessary commodities. As a consequence, their existence increased the per capita costs and strained further the Israeli economy, which was already dependent on the contributions of the US and various NGOs.
The Evolution of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)

The Arab governments attempted to channel their discontent with the Israeli policies by collectively forming the Palestine Liberation Organization in 1964. The PLO was created to serve as an autonomous institution that would express the Palestinian national identity and would strive to achieve Palestinian self-determination. In the year of its foundation, the PLO adopted the Palestinian National Charter, which called for the return to the status quo before 1948 and provided for the structure of:

- the Palestine National Council (PNC), a parliament in exile,
- the PLO Executive Committee,
- the National Fund and
- the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA).

Its most fundamental principle was that Israel does not have the right to exist as a state, because Judaism is “a religion […] not an independent nationality”. The PLO Charter also called upon all Arab Palestinians to “be prepared for the armed struggle and ready to sacrifice [their] wealth and life in order to win back [their] homeland and bring about its liberation". In the event of the creation of an Arab Palestinian state, it was willing, though, to allow the Jews to remain as citizens, as long as they were disposed to live in a pluralist and non-sectarian society. In 1969 the guerrilla groups ousted the old politicians and selected the leader of Fatah, Yasir Arafat to chair the PLO Executive Committee, since Fatah was the most active guerrilla organization. In 1974, the Arab League acknowledged the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, thus giving it credibility in the international arena. Even though the organization was deemed illegal according to Israeli law, it was recognized as the ultimate principal expression of Palestinian nationalism and was accepted by the UN as the only group with the right to speak officially on behalf of the Palestinian people (GA Resolution 3210). In 1974 the UN General Assembly invited the PLO to participate in a debate on the Question of Palestine. Yasir Arafat delivered a 2-hour speech there, which ended with the famous phrase “Today I have come bearing an olive branch and a freedom fighter’s gun. Do not let the olive branch fall from my hand”. Arafat’s participation in the conference proved to be fairly successful, since two weeks later, the UN granted the PLO observer status.

Generally the PLO:
- adhered to the UN Resolutions 242 and 338,
- was willing to negotiate with Israel, only if the latter recognized the Palestinians’ national right to self-determination,
- rejected terrorism as a means of returning to statehood, and
- believed that future relationships between the states of Palestine and Jordan should be on a federal basis.

In recent years, the secular PLO has had to compete for the support of the Palestinian population with the Islamic Resistance Movement of Hamas, which is very influential in Gaza and Hebron, and the Islamic Jihad. Their principle difference is that the PLO has purely nationalist perspectives, in contrast with the other two that are comprised of Islamic fundamentalists. In actuality, Hamas and Jihad represent Palestinian nationalism, whereas the PLO constitutes the external, public symbol and internationally recognized voice of the Palestinian people. Hence, the internal division within the Palestinian authorities has never posed a serious threat to the cohesion of the Palestinian national movement.

Political Terrorism

According to George Lopez and Michael Stohl’s definition (The State as Terrorist) political terrorism is the purposeful act or threat of violence to create fear. The key issues for the identification of a terrorist act are substantially the motivation and the audience. Political terrorism is a form of intimidation or coercion used deliberately and consciously and is characterized by its politically-oriented motivation and its extremely violent nature. It is not random violence, but violence with a specific purpose that transcends the harm or threat of harm done to the individual or group against which it is most immediately directed. It may involve
physical or psychological harassment and damage or destruction of property.

Opinions vary greatly, when it comes to the question whether terrorism is justifiable under certain circumstances or it should always be condemned. The two most dominant are the following:

a) Terrorism is unacceptable no matter what the circumstances are, because it is a sample of completely uncivilized behavior.
b) Terrorist tactics are the only means of a group lacking legitimate power to promote its cause. Therefore, it may be justifiable depending on the circumstances.

In order to avoid, though, a possible misinterpretation of the aforementioned definition, we should present some examples of political terrorism in the history of Palestine:

- **1948**: Extreme Zionist and Palestinian tactics during the British Mandate over Palestine,
- **April, 1948**: The massacre of 2/3 of the population in a Palestinian village by Israeli extremists, despite the non-belligerence agreement the village had signed.
- **1970**: The hijacking of four airplanes carrying Israelis.
- **Oct, 1985**: Israel’s bombardment of the PLO headquarters.
- **Oct, 1985**: The assassination of Alex Odeh, a US citizen of Palestinian descent, West Coast director of the American-Arab Anti-discrimination Committee.
- **Febr, 1994**: The massacre of 29 Palestinians praying at the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron by Israeli soldiers.
- **Apr, 1994**: Car bomb attacks in Afula and Hadera by Hamas that resulted in the death of more than 12 Israeli civilians, including children.

Another aspect of political terrorism that makes the issue additionally complex is the question whether the terrorist actions accomplished in the name of a group were authorized or endorsed by it. In other words, it is impossible to know under some circumstances whether a particular group or party should legitimately be held responsible for a specific terrorist act. There have been cases where individuals acted utterly on their own in the attempt to either spread awareness over their cause or be praised by the group in whose name they performed the deed.

What cannot be considered political terrorism under the given definition:

- **27 Nov, 1987**: A Palestinian on a hang glider landed in northern Israel and killed six Israeli soldiers before being killed himself. A) That was a military action directed against a military target. B) It was neither an act of intimidation nor a warning by example. It was an attack launched by an individual (or group) against its adversary.
- **June, 1967**: Israel’s offensive against Egypt without warning in the June 1967 War was a surprise attack against its current opponent.

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**Palestine, Jordan and the Palestinian Terrorism**

In the 1970s the PLO, whose primary base was in Jordan, started to challenge the autocracy of King Hussein and to call for his deposition. Its militant and provocative requests triggered much turbulence within Jordan, since the Jordanian armed forces urged the King to quell the Palestinian movement. In September 1970 King Hussein defeated the PLO, seized control over the refugee camps and forced the guerrilla groups to flee to Lebanon (July 1971). The war in Jordan proved to be detrimental for the PLO, as it deprived it of its sole secure base from which it could strike Israel.

The Palestinian people, in its attempt to further its political action, started to launch terrorism by **Black September** commandos (name drawn from the date Jordan attacked the PLO). Some of their operations resulted in the assassination of the Jordanian prime minister in Cairo (November 1971) and the abduction and murder of 11 Israeli athletes at the Olympic Games in Munich (September 1972). The fierce raids of Black September brought about the opposite result from what was expected; it demoralized the Palestinians, as the latter feared their requests for an independent Palestinian state would now be less likely to be taken into consideration by the international community.
A few years later, in spite of Yasir Arafat’s success in upgrading the political status of Palestine, the Palestine National Council became increasingly displeased with his eagerness to gradually concede to King Hussein of Jordan the right to negotiate on behalf of the PLO. After the occurrence of hostilities between the Palestinians and the Jordanians, Arafat signed in 1985 an Accord with King Hussein that established the basis for a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation. Subsequent to this agreement, the Jordanian King declared on 31 July, 1988 that Jordan was disengaging legally and administratively from the West Bank.

The 1973 War

In 1973 Israel received again an attack from the armed forces of Egypt and Syria, and it was caught unaware, it suffered casualties. The UN passed then the Security Council Resolution 338 (22 October, 1973), which called for an immediate ceasefire in the region and the implementation of the Resolution 242. At the same time the UN Emergency Force was deployed to the region to supervise the Arab-Israeli negotiations, as well as the relocation of refugees, when the Sinai Peninsula passed again to the jurisdiction of Egypt, in accordance with the Sinai Agreements.

In the Golan Heights, a previously Syrian territory, now occupied by Israel, tensions between Israel and Syria were extremely high until March 1974, when an Agreement of Disengagement was reached between the two parties. Subsequent to the agreement, the UN set up the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) and established zones of limited armaments and forces in a separation area between the Syria and Israel. The UNDOF is renewed every year, due to the tenuous relations of the two countries (Syria has never signed a peace agreement with Israel).

After the 1973 war, the Palestinians hoped that multilateral negotiations under the auspices of the UN would culminate in an agreement favorable for themselves, too, which would facilitate their effort to achieve statehood. However, they never saw a direct impact of those negotiations on their people.

The Intifada

The uprising of the Palestinians began in 1987, as a result of their internal cohesion and their feeling of increasing external isolation. The eruption of the Palestinian people happened spontaneously; but soon the sudden uprising evolved into a coordinated rebellion. Great impetus was given to it in December 1987, when four Palestinian workers were "accidentally" killed by Israeli soldiers, while waiting at a checkpoint. This incident triggered peaceful demonstrations that were quelled by the Israeli troops, and led to the intifada—a war of resistance or liberation against Israel’s military occupation of the West Bank. The original goal of the intifada was the amelioration of the conditions of occupation, but it shifted to call for the end of the Israeli occupation and the creation of an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel.
Ariel Sharon’s reply to it was the restriction of the freedoms of the Palestinians: he terminated the supply of the Palestinian settlements with water and electricity, imposed collective punishments against entire villages, closed Palestinian institutions of higher education, expelled prominent leaders and promoted the use of violence against demonstrators. The Palestinians tried to counter these actions by boycotting Israeli commodities, refusing to pay any taxes to the Israeli state and developing their local industries. It was in 1992, when Sharon comprehended the dire need for compromise, and therefore lifted the closure orders for all Palestinian universities.

The Gulf War

When some members of the Israeli government suggested the massive expulsion of the Arab population from Israel in 1990, the desperate Palestinians turned to the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, for support. The latter insinuated he was ready to attack Israel with chemical weapons, if it launched an offensive against Jordan or deported Palestinians from the West Bank. After Iraq’s defeat in the war over Kuwait, the Palestinians were isolated. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait stopped financing the PLO (accusing the Palestinians of collaborating with Iraq during the war) and Syria continued her disarmament policies against the Palestinians. Many of the latter residing in Kuwait fled to Jordan, which was already confronted with the adversities caused by the Gulf crisis – mainly unemployment. Palestinians now felt extremely threatened, since they were exposed from every side. As a result, they resumed aggressions, this time more fiercely than ever before: militants attacked Israeli soldiers and settlers, targeted civilians and executed all Palestinians accused of having collaborated with the Israelis. During the summer of 1992, a Hamas-led Islamist movement attacked Fatah supporters in the Gaza Strip, on the grounds of (Fatah’s) betrayal of its people by agreeing to negotiate with Israel. The latter tolerated Hamas’s assaults, but denounced them, as soon as they started to extend into violence against Israelis.

The Madrid Conference

After the Gulf War, the Bush administration proposed the organization of an international peace conference for a solution to be achieved. A historic meeting did indeed take place in Madrid on October 30, 1991, which was sponsored by the US and the Soviet Union. The participants were from Israel, the Palestinian community and the Arab states that had not recognized Israel’s right to exist, yet. Within the framework of this conference some Palestinians who were yielded the floor spoke in moderate tones about their living conditions in the occupied territories and the stalemate of the PLO.

In the meantime, however, Israel continued with its program of settlement construction in the occupied territories. This policy was deemed extremely provocative by the Bush administration and was thought to be the primary obstruction to a successful outcome of the peace process initiated in the Madrid Conference. As a result of Israel’s refusal to freeze the settlements, the US announced in February 1992 its decision not to approve a $10 billion loan guarantee to it. Israel’s Prime Minister Shamir fervently persisted with his country’s initial policy and declined any proposals for compromise. Nevertheless, the US loan guarantee was indispensable for the Israeli state, since it was to be channelled for house construction and the fulfillment of other prerequisites prior to the settlement of more Jewish immigrants from the Soviet Union.

In the Israeli elections of June 1992 Shamir competed against the former Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. The latter expressed in his campaign a conciliatory position on the occupied territories and pledged to restore Israel’s relations with the US. The election of Rabin had, in fact, a second more profound meaning: it constituted the popular mandate to negotiate a potential resolution of the problems in recognition of the internecine character of the Palestinian-Israeli strife. Immediately after Rabin formed a government, he declared a partial freeze on settlement construction. Although this political action showed only Rabin’s good will, it was applauded by the US, which encouraged it further by authorizing the $10 billion loan guarantee to the Israeli state.
The Oslo Accords

I. Declaration of Principles on Palestinian Self-Rule and Oslo I

In 1993 the Norwegian government, in its attempt to channel all discussions related to the question, volunteered to facilitate negotiations conducted between the two parties in adversity. The reasons why both Israel and the PLO decided to “deviate” from their strict original party policy and were eager to move toward a conciliatory solution remain unknown. However, historical analysts have speculated that their compromise was the outcome of Palestine’s recent history.

Subsequent to the Gulf War of 1991, the PLO found itself confronted with the economic deterioration of the party, decreasing popular support and the aloofness of the US administration, which maintained a pro-Israeli policy. The PLO leaders were left with no other choice than to abandon their rigid and uncompromising policy and participate in the Norway meetings to salvage something from their long-lasting efforts.

On the other hand, Israel was devastated by the incessant violence occurring within its state. The intifada was a real scourge for the government, while the growing strength of Hamas along with other Islamic opposition groups posed a potential threat to Israel and raised a major concern among the Israeli leaders.

In the eleventh round of the Madrid peace talks that took place in Washington, Israel and the PLO presented to the international community a double agreement that they had surreptitiously reached and whose contents appeared stunning. The agreements provided for mutual recognition between the two parties and established the foundations for Palestinian autonomy in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Although Israel would retain overall sovereignty throughout the term of the agreement, Palestine was to gradually gain more administrative responsibility to the Palestinians.

The biggest controversy concerning this agreement was that it only implicitly mentioned the creation of a Palestinian state. In other words, Israel might have recognized the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and agreed to negotiate with it, but it never revealed a willingness to consent to the establishment of an Arab Palestinian state. In contrast, the PLO had fully acknowledged Israel’s right to exist. On September 13, 1993 Israeli and PLO leaders assembled at the White House, where the signature of the autonomy agreement took place. There PLO Chairman Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Rabin exchanged a handshake of reconciliation. This cordial gesture generated hope that the Norway discussions would eventually culminate in success.

II. Oslo II

In 1994 Yasir Arafat moved to Gaza, where he started to organize the administrative and security structure of the self-governing Palestinian authority, in accordance with Oslo I. In 1995 the PLO and Israel signed Oslo II, a document that set the stage for power to be gradually transferred to the Palestinian civil authority. According to this voluminous document, 3% of the West Bank was to fall under Palestinian jurisdiction, 24% was to be shared with Israel and the remaining 74% would be placed under the Israeli government.

Oslo II was, in fact, the ultimate proof that the negotiations between the PLO and Israel that had preceded the signing of the document were doomed to failure; the PLO did not manage to achieve its people’s aspirations, while Israel emerged as the omnipotent victor.

Discontent Caused by the Oslo Agreements

I. The Palestinians

Oslo I and Oslo II indisputably brought about much turbulence within Palestinian society and the Israeli state. The Israeli military occupation and expropriation of Palestinian land were now justified under the agreements. Thus, between 1993 and 1995 approximately 20,000 acres of Palestinian estates on the West Bank were confiscated by Israel.

The authoritarianism of the Palestinian Authority (PA) exacerbated the hardships the Arab Palestinians were suffering. After Yasir Arafat’s arrival and settlement in Gaza, the PA started to intensely monopolize all the decision-making. In the elections of a Palestinian Council in 1996, Arafat’s supporters won the majority, while Arafat himself was elected president. From his position he now proceeded with arbitrary arrests of his opponents, implementing brutal interrogation methods and censoring the press concerning the coverage of the prisoners’ treatment. A very disconcerting part of Arafat’s methods was his embezzlement of foreign financial aid donated to the PA, to actually sustain his military forces and bureaucracy. Soon the Palestinians comprehended that the PA had evolved into an organ with policies as oppressive as those of the Israeli forces.
Widespread discontent was growing among the Palestinian people, which enabled Hamas to assume greater opposition action. This was substantially in the form of suicide bombings that targeted Israeli civilians in large cities with the purpose of undermining the peace negotiations. Arafat’s inability to thwart all these violent outbursts revealed his inadequacy as a partner in the peace process and turned a major portion of the Palestinians against his administration.

II. The Israelis

The unending Hamas suicide bombings, in conjunction with the prospect of establishment of an independent Palestinian state intimidated the Israelis, who saw them as a major threat to their own state’s security. In addition, many profoundly religious Jews, who thought the West Bank to be the sacred land, appeared reluctant to accept any Israeli withdrawal even within the framework of the Oslo compromise. They considered such an action, in fact, a violation of God’s covenant and of a divine opportunity for Jews’ return to the Promised Land.

As a result of this prevalent dissatisfaction and turmoil, the Israeli Prime Minister Rabin was assassinated on November 4, 1995 by an Israeli student, because of his decision to concede some land to the Palestinians. Throughout the peace process in the 1990s, it becomes overall evident that much mutual distrust exists between the two peoples: the Palestinians were suspicious of the Israelis as expansionists, whereas the Israelis saw the Palestinians as terrorists.

The Election of Sharon and the Second Intifada

A second intifada soon broke out in the aftermath of the following:

- Palestinians’ dissatisfaction with the failure of the Oslo Accords to halt Israeli efforts to establish settlements on the whole West Bank and the Gaza Strip
- The proliferation of Israeli military checkpoints
- The increasing confiscation of Palestinian land by Israel
- The visit of Ariel Sharon (former general in the Israeli military and former Defense Minister), accompanied by a security force, to the most disputed city, Harem al-Sharif or Temple Mount in East Jerusalem. This was justified based on every Jew’s right to visit the Jewish holy site. This contentious statement led to an escalation in violence; the Palestinians protested in a series of aggressive demonstrations against the Israeli occupation and the Israeli forces responded with a fierce quelling of the strikes.

Subsequent to the events of September 28, 2000, Ziad Abu-Zayyad, a minister in the PA, stated referring to Ariel Sharon, “He is a man of war. He is a man of expansion. He is a man of occupation.” Prior to his election as Prime Minister, Sharon, who had declared “I believe in peace, but I believe in a peace that might provide Israel with real security for its existence”, withdrew all peace offers provided by the former Prime Minister to the Palestinians.

In February 2001 Ariel Sharon was elected as prime minister of Israel. The Palestinians’ response to this came promptly: youths armed with light weaponry and stones attacked Israeli military vehicles. Israel on its side, used live ammunition, Apache helicopters and F-16 fighter jets against this rebelling civilian population. In 2002 the Israeli forces reoccupied all of the West Bank territory, while the Israeli government imposed an internal closure on it, thus prohibiting Palestinian from fleeing abroad.
CURRENT SITUATION

2002 – 2006: The Stalemate

In the years that have ensued the two parties in adversity, as well as the whole international community have attempted to address the question through multiple documents and resolutions. However, none of them culminated in success, mainly due to the erratic performance of the Palestinian and Israeli leaders. The events that took place during the period from 2002 to 2006 could be summarized as follows:

- **March 12, 2002**: the UN Security Council passes Resolution 1397 that "affirms a vision of a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders".

- **March 28, 2002**: the Arab Summit adopts a new peace plan which provides restoration of the relations between all Arab nations and Israel, in exchange for the Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories, the creation of an independent Palestinian state and the return of the Palestinian refugees, based on UNSC Resolution 194.

- **May 2003**: The US, the EU, Russia and the UN release the *Performance-Based Roadmap To A Permanent Two-State Solution To The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*. This document basically provides for a permanent solution to have been adopted by 2005 that will safeguard the creation of two separate states existing side- by- side.

- **April 2003**: Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) is confirmed as the first Prime Minister of the Palestinian Authority. His selection for this position officially terminates Yasir Arafat's participation in international negotiations and generates hopes for the cessation of terrorist activities in Palestine.

- **November 2004**: Yasir Arafat dies

- **January 2005**: Mahmoud Abbas is elected as the new Palestinian leader. His election signals a new era in Palestinian politics, since Sharon accepts the resumption of negotiations with the PA. Abbas, on his side, seems willing to remove all officials from the government, whose names have been associated with depravity or organizations like Hamas, and to curb the actions of Hamas and the other militant extremist Palestinian groups.

- **Sharon promises to remove 8,500 Jewish settlers from the Gaza Strip and the Northern West Bank. The Israeli Housing Ministry decided to provide the settlers with $200,000 – 400,000 to relocate.**

- **January 4, 2006**: Prime Minister Ariel Sharon suffers a stroke and is placed in a medically induced coma.

- **Hamas wins a majority of seats in the Palestinian Parliament.** Israel, the US and the EU label Hamas as a terrorist organization and refuse to negotiate with it until it "recognize[s] Israel, disarm[s], reject[s] terrorism and work[s] for a lasting peace". Until these requirements are met, Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert refuse to cooperate with it.
Will the World Ever See the Termination of the Conflict?

The conflict will most probably not be resolved within the next decades. The relationships between the two parties in adversity are extremely tenuous at the moment. These were further exacerbated by the election of Hamas, the largest militant Islamist organization formed during the first Intifada, in 2006. The group’s primary objective is to drive the Israeli forces back to the territories designated as Israeli before the 1967 war, while its long-term goal is to establish a purely Islamic state in the historical borders of Palestine. This election has jeopardized the already delicate peace procedure. Both Israel and the US announced their refusal to proceed with negotiations with Hamas, as long as the Palestinian government is comprised of members of an armed terror organization calling for Israel’s destruction. However, Mahmoud Zahhar, the founder of Hamas, refused to renounce violence stating “We are not playing terrorism or violence. We are under occupation”.

The most contentious point is that while Hamas has declared its willingness to work towards a political solution to the conflict, many are still not convinced about the authenticity of the aforementioned claim. The situation will remain unstable as long as Israel does not have a true leader –Ariel Sharon is in a medically induced coma- and Palestine rests on a government who refuses to negotiate with the Israeli state. It is now the responsibility of the international community to bring both parties back to the peace table, and make good use of the accomplishments made my the former leaders of Israel and Palestine.

In October 2006, Israel expanded its settlement policy in the West Bank, contrary to its promises to the US to halt settlement construction, with many of these settlements being constructed on private Palestinian property.

In view of these recent events, the peace process is at a stalemate. A proposed solution that could potentially lead to the resolution of the conflict is the Road Map for Peace introduced by the US, Russia, the EU and the UN. According to it, the two parties need to declare their belief in the national rights of the two people. Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories is also provided by the plan, as well as the cessation of all hostile terrorist acts attempted by the Palestinian side. Nevertheless, the plan was declared null and void by many analysts, after the fierce resumption of hostilities. Perhaps the UN should further promote the aforementioned conflict resolution plan, since it has been deemed by many as the most conciliatory and pragmatic approach ever made.

BLOC POSITIONS

I. The United Nations

Since its establishment in 1945, the UN:

- Has voted to partition Palestine and create a Jewish state in part of the territory
- Has created the UN Relief and Works Agency to take responsibility for the Palestinian refugees
- Has maintained armed forces and military observer groups in the Lebanon since 1948
- Has sent mediators to the regions (Bernadotte, Bunche, Jarring)
- Has affirmed the right of “the people of Palestine to self determination” (1969)
- Has declared that Zionism is a form of racism (1975)
- Has passed GA and SC Resolution calling for cease-fires, condemning aggressions and suggesting approaches for conflict resolution

UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

Article 2: Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, religion, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Article 9: No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10: Everyone is entitled to full equality to a fair public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 11-1: Everyone charged with a penal offense has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defense...
**Article 13-1**: Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.

**Article 13-2**: Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

**Article 20**: Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

*Article 2*: "[...]

In general, the policy of the United Nations has not always been consistent throughout the years of its existence. Its stance toward the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has been greatly affected by the policies of the countries who held the majority of seats. In the beginning, the US and Britain were extremely influential in the organization and were both obviously inclined towards support for the establishment of an Israeli state, often to promote their own political objectives. However, fifty years after the founding of the UN, the dominance of the US and its allies has declined, and the Arab, African and Asian States now hold the majority of the seats in the GA. Some of the African and Asian states were not even independent when Israel was created, and thus their perception of the Jewish state has been influenced by their own colonial past. These states "viewed Israel more as a manifestation of European imperialism than as an expression of nationalism similar to their own aspirations for autonomous identity. The image of Israel among African states in particular was damaged by the Israeli occupation of Egyptian territory as a result of the war. [...] This shift in the balance of power in the United Nations from the American and European countries to the Afro-Asian bloc in part explains why UN resolution on the Arab-Israeli and Israeli-Palestinian conflicts became increasingly critical of Israel and supportive of the Palestinians in the 1970s and 1980s." (One Land, Two Peoples, Deborah J.Gerner).

**II. The European Union**

European countries have recently been critical of Israel's policies and supportive of the Palestinians.

- In 1977 European leaders called for the recognition of the "legitimate right of the Palestinian people to its national identity"
- In 1980 the European states announced the Venice Declaration, which supported the right of Israel to exist within secure, recognized and guaranteed borders, reaffirmed the national rights of the Palestinian people and reiterated their belief in the PLO. Moreover, the declaration condemned the Israeli occupation of the Golan Heights, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and underlined that the Israeli settlements in these regions were illegal under international law.
- In 1986 the whole European community agreed to assure preferential access to Palestinian industrial and agricultural products, thus indirectly boycotting Israeli commodities.
- In 1988 the European community showed its support for the declaration of the State of Palestine, though did not formally recognize its legitimacy.
- The European states of Malta, Cyprus and Yugoslavia diplomatically recognized Palestine formally.

In general, you need to keep in mind that the European states have not presented a unified and consistent policy towards the Palestinian issue, though politically and economically consolidated. Each of them has been pursuing its own policy preferences, which have been rather independent of US policy.

**III. The Arab League**

The Arab League supports the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and urges all Islamic states to uphold this stand, as well. It generally adheres to resolutions 242, 338 and 194 and recognizes the PLO leadership as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, which moves only in the direction of realizing the declaration of establishment of a Palestinian state. Furthermore, it condemns the
Israeli infringement on the rights of the Palestinians – especially in the framework of the harsh settlement policy- and urges all states to boost the efforts made by the 4th Geneva Convention to protect the status of the Arab population. As far as its political stance towards the US policy on the Israeli- Palestinian conflict is concerned, it proposes that it prioritizes the question of the Middle East in its agenda and pays special attention to the Palestinian people’s right to the determination of their destiny without any foreign intervention to ensure the security and stability of the region. Last, it urges the E.U. and Russia to assume a greater role in the peace process and sustain their efforts aimed at preventing Israel’s attempts to obstruct the establishment of a peace process.

IV. Egypt

Egypt abides by Article II of the 1979 Egyptian – Israeli Peace Treaty: “The permanent boundary between Egypt and Israel is the recognized international boundary between Egypt and the former mandated territory of Palestine... without prejudice to the issue of the status of the Gaza Strip. The Parties recognize this boundary as inviolable. Each will respect the territorial integrity of the other, including their territorial waters and airspace.”

V. Iran

Kamal Kharrazi, Iran’s Foreign Minister, stated that Iran does not recognize Israel as a government and reiterated his conviction that “eventually Palestinian refugees have to return to their homeland”. In addition, the Iranian President, Mr Ahmedinajad, has denied multiple times that the Holocaust of the Jews has occurred in actuality.1

VI. Iraq

Ayad Allawi, the Iraqi Prime Minister, has stated that “Future relations with Israel are determined by two issues: international resolutions and a just and comprehensive peace that has been adopted by Arab leaderships, including the Palestinian leadership. Iraq will no take any unilateral action on a settlement with Israel outside those two frameworks”.

VII. Jordan

Article II of the 1994 Israeli – Jordanian Peace Treaty:

“They recognize and will respect each other’s sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence:

They recognize and will respect each other’s right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries;

They will develop good neighborly relations of cooperation between them to ensure lasting security, will refrain from the threat or use of force against each other and will settle all disputes between them by peaceful means.”

VIII. Lebanon

“It has become certain to everyone, except to the arrogant in Israel, that there can be no security without a political solution, and no partial, peaceful, political solution without the comprehensive peace that embodies the spirit of the Madrid Conference integrated Arab peace initiative of the Arab Summit in Beirut.

Such a solution is based on the relevant international resolutions [...] allow the Palestinian refugees to exercise their legal, humanitarian, and moral right to return to their homeland. Such a process should ensure the establishment of a sovereign, independent, stable, and viable Palestinian state with al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital.”

IX. Saudi Arabia

Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz, the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, stated in the 2002 Arab League summit in Beirut:

“I propose that the Arab summit put forward a clear and unanimous initiative addressed to the UNSC based on two basic issues: normal relations and security for Israel in exchange for full withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories, recognition of an independent Palestinian state with all East Jerusalem as its capital, and the return of refugees”

1 See: http://www.holocaustdenial.org/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=2
X. Syria

Farouk al-Shara, the Syrian Foreign Minister, stated in a 2000 opening ceremony of the Syrian-Israeli peace talks:

“"It goes without saying that peace for Syria means the return of all its occupied land. Those who reject the occupied territories to their original owners in the framework of international legitimacy send a message to the Arabs that the conflict between Israel and Arabs is a conflict of existence in which bloodshed can never stop, and not a conflict about borders, which can be ended as soon as parties get their rights. We are approaching the moment of truth as you have said, and there is no doubt that everyone realizes that a peace agreement between Syria and Israel, and between Lebanon and Israel, would indeed mean for our region the end of a history of wars and conflicts, and may well usher in a dialogue of civilization and an honourable competition in various domains – the political, cultural, scientific and economic”

The same politician stated in a 2000 convention of the Arab writers Association:

“The Ba’ath party, to which I have the honor of being a member, understands that restoring Palestine in its entirety is a long term strategic goal, that cannot be achieved in one stage. I am talking about the party’s position, not about the negotiations. Even our party’s ideology for more than thirty years now gets stages for the liberation of Palestine. The first stage is the stage of restoring the occupied lands of 1967 and of guaranteeing the national inalienable right of the Palestinian Arab people.”

You should definitely bear in mind that Syria remains Israel’s only Arab neighbour that has never signed a peace agreement with the country. Diplomatic tensions still exist between the two and are sporadically exacerbated by unfortunate diplomatic incidents. The conflict between the two parties is aggravated by the fact that Israel has in its possession part of the Golan Heights, a formerly Syrian region that Syria is still trying to bring under its jurisdiction. For further details look at the section of the historic background of the conflict referring among others to the Golan Heights.

XI. The USA

The USA has always been very supportive of Israel’s policies, and it has frequently been accused in the past of giving its blind support. The Israeli-Jewish lobbies in the States are quite powerful – politically and financially – and played a major role in the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948. The US governments have been providing Israel with financial aid to increase the absorptive capacity of Palestine in order to be able to accept more Jewish immigrants. In 1991 the Bush administration made a threat against Israel that the US would not grant it a loan guarantee, unless it stopped its militant settlement policy, but the tension between the two countries was soon overcome. It has also provided the PA, though, with a package of $30 million to rebuild infrastructure destroyed by the Israeli incursions.

Press Coverage

Extracts From The British Magazine “The Economist”

December 2nd - 8th, 2006

Israel, Palestine and America
Where Mr Bush chose not to go

Jerusalem
Can the ceasefire survive?

“[..] Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian president, has failed in months of attempts to broker a unity government for the Palestinian Authority (PA) between the ousted Fatah party and the ruling Hamas. […] By next he [Mr Abbas] hopes for a deal to extend the ceasefire to the West Bank, and also to halt the arms-smuggling through tunnels under Gaza’s border with Egypt. […] Mr Olmert got his share of the attention this week with an impassioned speech offering the Palestinians peace talks, prisoner releases, big territorial concessions and statehood. […] He still insists that the soldier in Gaza be released first, and that any PA government meet Quartet conditions. But the speech did underline the fact that unilateralism, the policy that Mr Olmert’s predecessor, Ariel Sharon, pioneered with last year’s Gaza withdrawal, is no longer an option. If Israel leaves the West Bank, it will be through negotiations. […] there can be no peace talks before the two sides agree to exchange the Israeli soldier for several hundred Palestinian prisoners, and the Palestinians agree on a unity
government. [...] polls show that most Palestinians still blame outsiders, especially America, more than Hamas for their woes, and that the party has not lost much, if any, popularity to Fatah."

December 23rd, 2006 – January 5th, 2007-01-19

The Palestinians

How not to win a state

The rejectionists of Hamas have brought Palestinians to the edge of civil war

"[...] the decision of Palestinian voters to put the Islamists of Hamas in charge of the legislature of the Palestinian Authority was bad news. [...] Their elected president, Mahmoud Abbas of the chiefly secular Fatah movement, has called early presidential and legislative elections. Ismail Haniyeh, the (Hamas) prime minister, says that Mr Abbas has no constitutional right to do so. Indeed, Hamas accuses Fatah of trying to assassinate Mr Haniyeh and stage a coup. [...] Hamas has spent its year in government clinging stubbornly to a rejectionist mantra that closes off almost any chance of peace with Israel. Mr Haniyeh has just returned from a visit to Tehran, where he said again that Hamas would never recognize Israel, would not honor any of the existing agreements between Israel and the Palestinians and would continue the jihad until Jerusalem is liberated. [...] America, Russia and the European Union have clamped a punishing diplomatic and economic embargo on the Palestinian government in an effort to force Hamas to soften its stance. Israel, having evacuated all its settlers and soldiers from the Gaza Strip last August, sent its army back after incessant rocket fire from Gaza and an audacious cross-border Hamas raid in which an Israeli soldier was abducted. [...] Hopes for foreign investment and state-building disappeared with the pointless rocket fire at Israel. [...] Far better than a premature election would be for Hamas and Fatah to agree to share power in a government that did not dedicate itself to perpetual jihad. [...] there can be no serious progress towards broader peace until Hamas, like Fatah before it, gives up the self-defeating idea that in order for the Palestinians to have a state the Jewish one has to disappear."

Same issue

Palestine

The Spectre of civil War

Ramallah

The Palestinian president’s call for early elections may spark a bloody showdown

"[...] Mahmoud Abbas, the president, frustrated by months of failure to broker a unity government for the Palestinian Authority (PA) between his own secular Fatah party and the ruling Islamists of Hamas, called for new presidential and parliamentary elections. [...] Hamas, which won control of parliament only in January, calls this a coup d’etat. [...] The Basic Law, a rough sort of constitution, says Mr Abbas can appoint or dismiss a prime minister but says nothing about dissolving parliament or calling new elections. [...] Fatah’s parliamentary leader, claims Mr Abbas can do anything the Basic Law does not expressly forbid, and, since it says he cannot dissolve parliament during a state of emergency, he can therefore do it at other times [...] Fatah is now trying to impose the same relatively strong discipline on its fractious militias as Hamas has over its own [...] Fatah, for its part, is counting on being able to make voters stay away from the parliamentary election. [...] Both sides still say they want a unity government: they differ on the programme. For Mr Abbas, it should accept the foreign donors’ three conditions for ending their boycott of the PA — recognition of Israel, renunciation of violence and adherence to previously signed agreements. Hamas spokesmen say that merely achieving a unity government, perhaps with a watered-down form of
the conditions, will be enough to make some donor countries (particularly some conscience-stricken Europeans) break the embargo.”

January 20th-26th, 2007

The Palestinians

It’s the little things that make an occupation

Jerusalem and Ramallah

Those seemingly minor inconveniences that make life hellish

“[…] What rarely get into the media but make up the staple of Palestinian daily conversation are the countless little restrictions that slow down most people’s lives, strangle the economy and provide constant fuel for extremists. Arbitrariness is one of the most crippling features of these rules. No one can predict how a trip will go. Many of the main West Bank roads, for the sake of the security of Israeli settlers in the West Bank, are off-limits to Palestinian vehicles […] If they can travel, how long they spend waiting at check points, from minutes to hours, depends on the time of day and the humour of the soldiers. […] These checkpoints move and shift every day, and army jeeps add to the unpredictability and annoyance by stopping and creating ad hoc mobile checkpoints at various spots. […] When Ehud Olmert, the Israeli prime minister, agreed last month to ease restrictions at a few of these check points as a concession to Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian president, human rights people reported that not only did many of the checkpoints go on working as before; near the ones that had eased up, mobile ones were now operating instead, causing worse disruption and pain. […] Because of the internal travel restrictions, people who want to move from one Palestinian city to another for work or study must register a change of address to make sure they can stay there. But they cannot. Israel’s population registry, which issues Palestinian identity cards as well as Israeli ones, has issued almost no new Palestinian cards since the start of the second intifada in 2000. And that means no address changes either. This also makes it virtually impossible for Palestinians from abroad to get residency in the occupied territories, which are supposed to be their future state, never mind in Israel. […] Israel has stopped renewing permits since Hamas, the Islamist movement, took control of the Palestinian Authority a year ago (Israel says it is because a the PA isn’t handing over the requests.)[…] Like Israelis, Palestinians who commit a traffic offence on the West bank’s high ways have to pay the fine at an Israeli post office or a police station. But in the West Bank the only post offices and police stateions are on Israeli settlements that most West Bank Palestinians cannot visit without an entry permit. If they do not pay, however, they lose their driving licences the next time the police stop them. They also get a criminal record—which then makes an Israeli entry permit quite impossible. […] Some of the regulations stray into the realm of the absurd. […]”

January 13th-19th, 2007

Diaspora blues

Jews around the world should join the debate about Israel, not just defend whatever it does

“What is a Jewish state for, and what should it be like? Jews have been debating that for 200 years. Even today, with Israel already 58 years old and taken for granted by most of the rest of the world, they still cannot agree. The early settlers came for a variety of reasons. Some wanted to escape the stifling constraints of religious dogma and east European village communities; others thought it would hasten the coming of the Messiah. As European anti-Semitism grew, the idea took hold that Jews needed their own land as a safe haven. After the Holocaust, saving Jewish lives became the fledgling state’s first priority. Soon, it acquired another role: being a potential Israeli citizen became one of the anchor points of what it meant to be a Jew. […]” 2

Second thoughts about the Promised Land

Jerusalem, London and New York

Jews all around the world are gradually ceasing to regard Israel as a focal point. As a result, many are re-examining what it means to be Jewish

“The choice for our people, Mr President, is between statehood and termination.” Thus wrote Chaim Wizmann, head of the World Zionist Organization, to Harry Truman, president of America, on April 9th 1948. Five weeks later Weizmann was elected

2 Look for the rest of the article: www.economist.com
president of the newly declared Jewish state. Truman granted recognition within hours. [...]3

QUESTIONS TO CONTEMPLATE

1. What are the attributes of a nation?
2. Is the division of the world into nations-states the best form of social and political organization?
3. Should every nation have a separate state?
4. Is ethnicity an important factor for the formation of a nation?
5. Could people of different religions and cultural backgrounds be part of a single nation?
6. Are people who share a religious belief but little else part of the same nation?
7. Does nationalism derive from possession of territory or shared history or common religion or self-identification?
8. Was Judaism a religion?
9. Do Jews constitute a distinct national group?
10. Is national self-determination a right of all national peoples? What are the challenges involved in realizing this objective?
11. What reasons might an international protagonist have for deliberately initiating a crisis?
12. What role should a concern about human rights violations play in determining the foreign policy relations of a country?
13. Is terrorism ever justified?
14. What are the various types of violence in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? What factors may lead to an escalation of the violence? What factors may decrease violence?
15. What state or non-state actors need to be involved in the resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict? What mechanisms can best allow all the significant voices to be heard?
16. What would you suggest UN policy toward the conflict should be?
17. What are the international dimensions of the question? How did the Israeli – Palestinian issue affect other countries?
18. Strategic location in determining the political significance of a country.
19. Role of religion in international politics.
20. Relative impotence of international law and organizations (UN).
21. How and why particular state policies are developed? Who affects them? Structures of government changes in public opinions? Vocal interest groups and specific political leaders? Particularly in Israel; role of religious groups in the formation of government
22. What have been the efforts of international organizations to act as mediators in the peace negotiations?
23. What should the specific, agreed upon boundaries for Israel and for the Arab states in the region be?
24. What should the status of Jerusalem be?
25. What should the political, civil and national status of Jewish Israelis currently living within the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip be?
26. Should compensation for Palestinians and Israelis who were forced to leave their homes and property as a result of the Israeli-Palestinian war be granted?
27. How could the UN assure mutual security for all states and peoples in the region?
28. What should the role of the international community and specifically of the UN in supervising a negotiated settlement be?

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