

Name _____

Chronology and Decisions of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Instructions:

- 1] Read and complete the questions on the Balfour Declaration and the United Nations for background information.
- 2] Read each of the EVENTS in order and complete the question box for each of the events. You may discuss your options with another student before you make your decision.

Historical Context: The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict from 1947-2010

A Brief History

Following WWI, the British are unable to continue their mandate over Palestine, and in 1947 it is handed over to the United Nations. The UN General Assembly recommends partitioning Palestine into Arab and Jewish states, with Jerusalem as an internationalized city (UN resolution 181). The Arabs are outraged at the resolution and they reject the partition plans. There are numerous acts of violence committed in the next several months: the Arabs create riots in Jerusalem, blockading the city; there are also frequent ambushes, bombings and massacres organized by both Arabs and Israelis; grotesque massacres of Jews in Haifa and Palestinians in Deir Yassin occur.

A major political episode occurs on May 14, 1948 when the State of Israel is declared. Immediately afterwards, British troops leave Palestine and Israel is attacked by neighboring Arab nations. Israel maintains control of a major portion of the territory, with only West bank and the Gaza Strip being controlled by Jordan and Egypt respectively. The Palestinians don't fare well: over 750,000 flee or are expelled to Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank and Gaza Strip. The UN on December 11, 1948 states that Palestinians may return to their homes (UN resolution 194).

In another landmark move, The Arab League of Arab States founds the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1964. 1967 brings with it the Six Day War. The collective forces of Egypt, Syria and Jordan invade Israel; however, Israel is able to occupy the West bank, Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem, Golan Heights and Sinai Peninsula and it creates Jewish settlements in these occupied territories. In response to the growing number of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories (West Bank and Gaza Strip), the Palestinian "intifada," or uprising, begins, and Israel is unable to suppress it. The following years are marked by political turbulence.

2000 - Camp David II

Immediately after Camp David II, the second Palestinian intifada begins. With the Palestinian side resorting to suicide attacks and the Israelis performing air strikes, the region delves deeper into turmoil as no final status agreement is reached.

Israelis continue to build settlements on lands that are supposed to be Palestinian. The Palestinians have fewer and fewer options in where they can work and/or live.

CHAPTER
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Section 4

PRIMARY SOURCE The Balfour Declaration

Sir Arthur James Balfour, the British foreign secretary, wrote the following letter to Lord Lionel Rothschild, a Zionist leader, on November 2, 1917. Lord Rothschild replied, "I can assure you that the gratitude of ten millions of people will be yours, for the British government has opened up, by their message, a prospect of safety and comfort to large masses of people who are in need of it." What do you think were the pros and cons of the Balfour Declaration?

Foreign Office,
November 2nd, 1917

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet

His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country"

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

Y. in
Arthur Balfour

The Granger Collection, New York.

Discussion Questions

Analyzing Issues

1. How did the British government respond to the Zionist goal of establishing a Jewish homeland in Palestine?
2. What conditions did the British expect Zionists to meet?

3. **Making Inferences** Zionists such as Lord Rothschild were pleased by the letter from Balfour. How do you think Muslim residents of Palestine might have responded to Balfour's letter?

Introduction to the United Nations

The United Nations is an international organization composed of representatives from nearly every nation in the world. Created at the end of World War II in an effort to avoid further wars, the organization provides a place for governments to come together to find peaceful resolutions to conflicts. As such, the United Nations provides a forum for solving international economic, cultural, social, and humanitarian problems.

The main body of the United Nations is called the General Assembly. The General Assembly discusses all issues before the United Nations, votes on resolutions to implement United Nations programs, and forms United Nations policies regarding world events. Each United Nations member nation occupies one seat in the General Assembly and has one vote. A two-thirds vote is needed to pass any resolution.

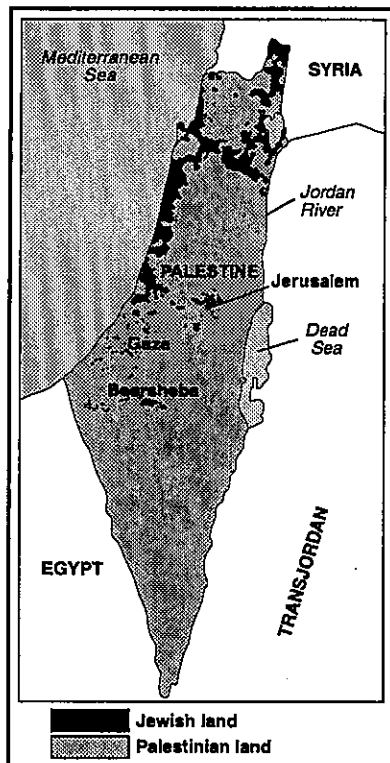
The Security Council is a special body within the United Nations charged with carrying out the primary objective of the organization: maintaining international peace and security. It has five permanent members—Britain, China, France, Russia, and the United States—and ten nonpermanent members, who are chosen on a rotating basis. Through the Security Council, the five permanent members are able to exert great influence over the General Assembly, because any permanent member can veto a United Nations Security Council resolution. Beyond the primary goal of world peace, the United Nations is also dedicated to the development of friendly relations among nations, based on the principle of equal rights and self-determination (choosing one's own form of government.)

Several factors limit the power of the United Nations. First, global rivalries in which countries have tried to use the United Nations to further their own interests—as in the case of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union—have weakened the organization's nonpartisan role. In addition, the United Nations lacks the means to enforce many of its resolutions, especially if one of the permanent Security Council members does not support a specific measure. Finally, the United Nations is hurt by the high cost of implementing worldwide programs, especially international peacekeeping forces.

When was the United Nations created?

What is the primary purpose of the United Nations?

Event A: The United Nations Plan for Palestine



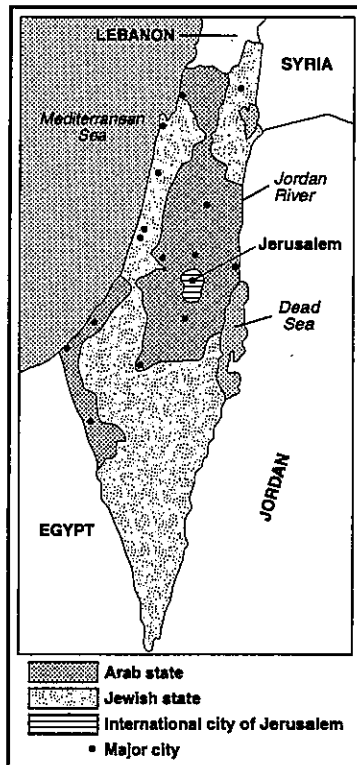
Pre-1948 map of Palestine

When the Ottoman Empire fell after World War I, the region known as Palestine became a mandate (similar to a colony) of Britain. Jewish nationalists, called Zionists, planned to settle in Palestine and to eventually create a Jewish state there. In 1917, the British issued the Balfour Declaration, which supported the creation of a homeland for Jews in Palestine. Palestinian Arabs, who constituted over 90 percent of the population in 1916, strongly opposed the plan. As Jewish immigration increased, Palestinian Arabs feared Jews were an extension of European colonialism and came to rule Palestine with British support. In 1939, after three years of intense fighting among Arabs, Jews, and British soldiers, the British withdrew support of a Jewish homeland in Palestine and planned to make further Jewish immigration subject to approval by the Arab majority by 1944. Zionists were outraged, and Arab leaders were upset that Jewish immigration was allowed to continue at all. After World War II, fighting among Arabs, Jews, and British soldiers escalated in the mandate. In 1947, the British, recognizing that they had lost control of the conflict that they helped to create, decided to turn over the mandate to the newly created United Nations. A United Nations committee found that Arabs outnumbered Jews two to one (1,269,000 to 608,000), though Jews owned 20 percent of the cultivable land.

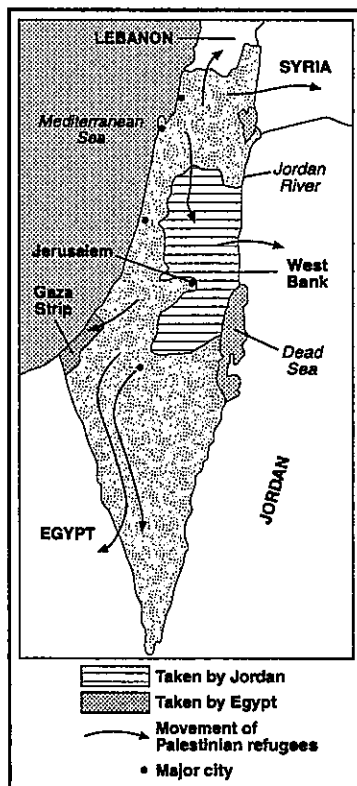
Critical-Thinking Question A: You are a member of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine. Which of the following responses do you think most fairly addresses the concerns of all groups involved?

- A. Make Palestine one state, and hold democratic elections to set the foundation for a democratic, secular (nonreligious) state.
- B. Make part of Palestine into a Jewish state, and annex the Arab part of Palestine to the neighboring nation of Transjordan (the king of Transjordan claimed that any part of Palestine allotted to Arabs should be part of Transjordan).
- C. Divide Palestine into two states, an Arab state and a Jewish state.
- D. Keep Palestine as a United Nations mandate until violence between Jews and Arabs ceases and peace is secure.

Event B: The 1948 War



United Nations partition plan of 1947



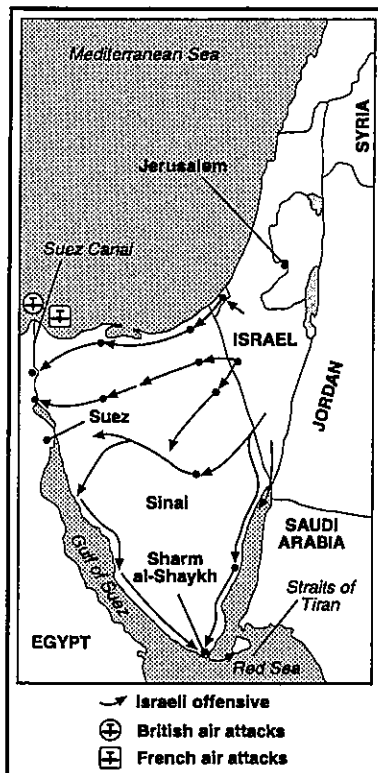
Results of the 1948 war

In November 1947, the United Nations voted to partition Palestine into a Jewish state, an Arab state, and a UN-administered international zone of Jerusalem. The Jewish state included 51 percent of Palestine, the Arab state 44 percent, and Jerusalem 5 percent. The Jews rejoiced over the creation of a state, while the Arabs expressed outrage at the division of their homeland. On May 14, 1948, the British left Palestine, and Zionist leader David Ben-Gurion proclaimed the independence of the state of Israel, the Jewish name for their new homeland. The next day, Arab troops from Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia invaded Palestine and attacked Israel. By the end of 1948, Israel had captured much of the UN-proposed Arab state. In all, over 900,000 Palestinian Arabs fled the fighting and became refugees. Many went to Gaza Strip, controlled by Egypt, while others escaped to West Bank (of the Jordan River), controlled by Jordan. Israel immediately began occupying former Palestinian villages and resettling them with Jews, thousands of whom were immigrating into Israel from other Middle Eastern countries and Europe. Palestinians demanded that they either be allowed to return to their homes or be compensated for lost land and property. Israel claimed that most Palestinians chose to leave the land and that the Israeli army had rightfully won the land in a war after the Arabs had attacked the state of Israel.

Critical-Thinking Question B: You are a member of the United Nations. Which of the following responses to the 1948 war do you think most fairly addresses the concerns of all groups involved?

- Pass a resolution demanding that Israel, Egypt, and Jordan return land to Palestinian refugees so they can form a Palestinian state.
- Do nothing, because the Israelis were attacked and simply struck back at the aggressor Arab nations. The Palestinians must suffer the consequences of losing.
- Set up a fund to support Palestinian refugees with food and shelter.
- Pass a resolution demanding that Israel compensate Palestinian refugees for lost land and property.

Event C: The Suez Canal Crisis



Military offensives during the Suez Canal crisis in 1956

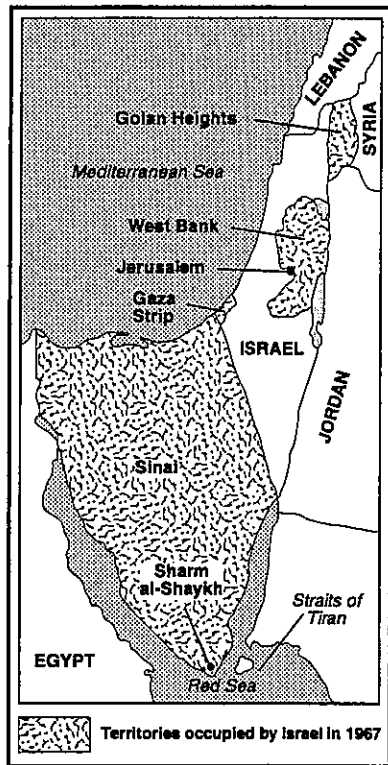
In 1956, the Arab nationalist leader of Egypt, Gamal Abdel Nasser, nationalized (brought a part of the economy under government control) the Suez Canal, which linked the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea. The canal was operated by a French company but was the lifeline of the British Empire because it provided a transport route between Britain and India. To Arabs, the Suez Canal symbolized western imperialism and domination in the Middle East. Nasser planned to use profits from the canal to build a dam on the Nile River in Egypt that would generate electricity and increase agricultural production. Nasser offered to pay compensation to the French company that had owned the canal, but he would not bend under international pressure to return the canal to the West. Britain, France, and Israel reacted by preparing for a joint military venture to reclaim the canal. Israel joined the British and French effort because it claimed the Egypt had sponsored terrorist attacks on Israel from the Sinai peninsula. On October 29, Israeli forces attacked the Sinai. Two days later, the British bombed Egyptian towns and military installations, and on November 5, French and British troops landed at Port Sa'id on the Mediterranean coast. The next day at midnight, with the capture of the Suez Canal complete,

Britain and France agreed to a UN-sponsored cease-fire. British, French, and Israeli forces occupied the entire Sinai peninsula in Egypt.

Critical-Thinking Question C: You are a member of the United Nations. Which of the following responses to the invasion of the Sinai peninsula do you think most fairly addresses the concerns of all groups involved?

- Condemn the attack, and demand that British, French, and Israeli forces withdraw from the Sinai, returning control of the Suez Canal to Egypt.
- Support the attack, and demand that Egypt relinquish claim to the Suez Canal and allow Britain and France to regain control.
- Pass a resolution making the Suez Canal an International Zone under United Nations control.
- Allow Egypt to retain control of the Suez Canal, but employ peacekeeping forces as a buffer between Israel and Egypt.

Event D: The 1967 War



Results of the 1967 war

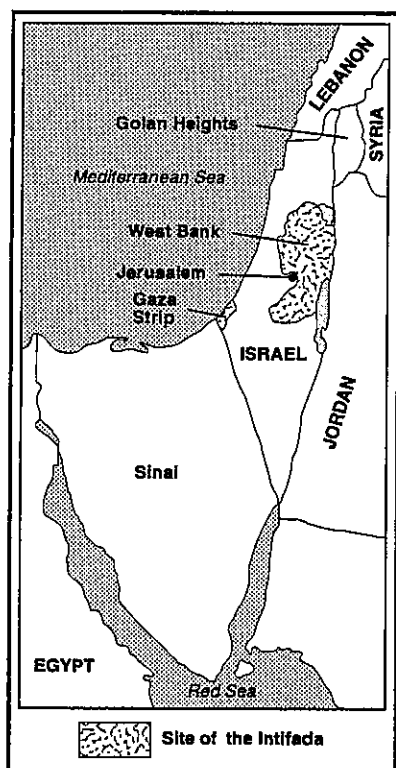
In the spring of 1967, Nasser began to threaten to go to war with Israel. In May he demanded that the United Nations Emergency Force leave Sharm al-Shaykh, and Egyptian troops occupied the port town. Nasser then closed the strategic Straits of Tiran, cutting Israel off from the Red Sea. Israel considered these moves acts of war and prepared for combat. During the previous year, Israel had suffered increasing terrorist attacks by Palestinian groups in Syrian and Jordanian territories and had aggressively retaliated against Syria and Jordan. The Israeli government felt itself surrounded by hostile forces. On June 5, 1967, Israel launched a surprise attack against Egypt. Six days later, Israel had defeated Egypt, Syria, and Jordan and captured Gaza Strip, the Sinai peninsula, Golan Heights, and West Bank. Israel proclaimed a united Jerusalem as its capital, which outraged Arabs and Muslims, for whom Jerusalem is the third holiest city. More than 300,000 Palestinian refugees fled into neighboring Arab countries. Another 1.5 million remained in Gaza Strip and West Bank, known since as the Occupied Territories. Immediately after the war, Israel destroyed three Arab villages. Soon thereafter, Israel began confiscating Arab

lands to build Jewish neighborhoods in East Jerusalem and Jewish settlements in the conquered areas.

Critical-Thinking Question D: You are a member of the United Nations. Which of the following responses to the 1967 war do you think most fairly addresses the concerns of all groups involved?

- A. Support Israel against its hostile Arab neighbors by recognizing Israel's capture of the Occupied Territories.
- B. Pass a resolution condemning the acquisition of land through military conquest, refuse to acknowledge Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, and demand the return of the Occupied Territories.
- C. Send peacekeeping forces into the Occupied Territories to act as a buffer between Israeli soldiers and Palestinians, as well as to guard the borders against further fighting.
- D. Establish an international commission to study the situation in Israel/Palestine, and devise a plan to bring peace to the region.

Event E: The Intifada



Location of the Intifada

During the 1980s, Israeli forces in the Occupied Territories increased their harassment of Palestinians. Israel confiscated more land, deported many suspected Palestinian political activists, and increased the number of people arrested and jailed for six months without a warrant or charge. Palestinians were made to pay taxes but rarely benefited from the services—such as unemployment insurance and health care—that the taxes supported. In addition, they were forced to undergo extensive background checks to receive any sort of licenses or permits, a process which Jewish Israelis did not have to go through. This policy of repression did not break the Palestinians; instead, it led to increased unity and anti-Israeli activity. In December 1987, an Israeli military vehicle killed four Palestinians in a road accident in Gaza Strip. The protest that followed swelled into a huge demonstration throughout Gaza Strip, and quickly spread to West Bank. This uprising was called the *intifada*, which means a “shaking off” in Arabic. Soon after the *intifada* broke out, the United National Leadership of the Intifada, representing the main Palestinian political parties, was formed. Leaders planned strikes,

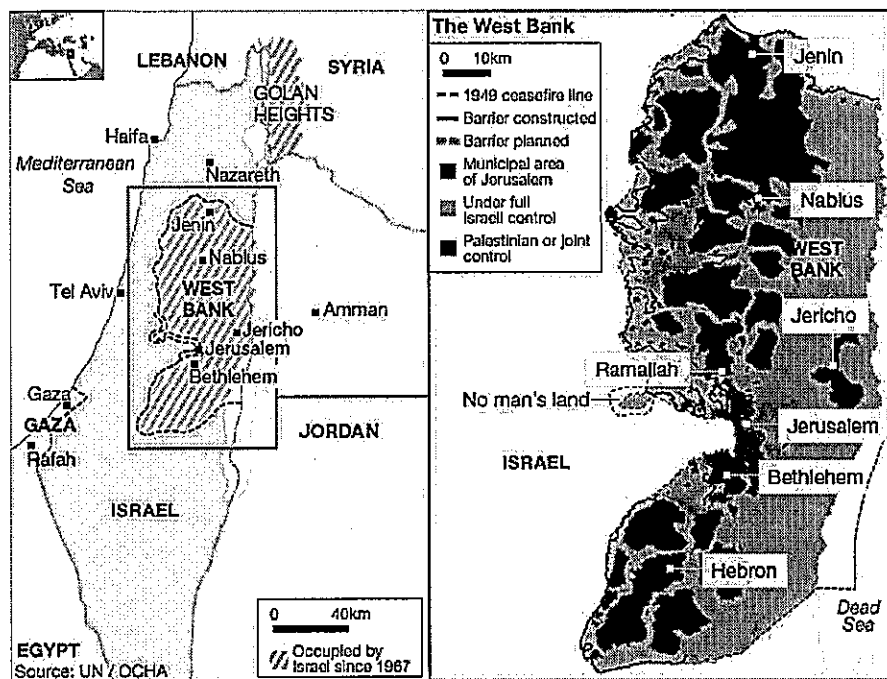
boycotts, and marches and refused to pay taxes. Violent confrontations, largely confined to rock throwing for the first two years but escalating to include guns and hand grenades, became common with Israeli troops. Israel responded violently, following Prime Minister Rabin’s policy of “force, might, and beatings.” Israeli troops demolished homes and businesses and arrested tens of thousands of people. In the first three years of the Intifada, more than 1,000 Palestinians died and more than 37,000 were wounded. In addition, 56 Israelis were killed. The rate of violence increased in 1990.

Critical-Thinking Question E: You are a member of the United Nations. Which of the following responses to the Intifada do you think most fairly addresses the concerns of all groups involved?

- A. Pass a resolution condemning Israeli human rights violations committed against Palestinians in the Occupied Territories.
- B. Send peacekeeping forces into the Occupied Territories to stop the violence.
- C. Encourage Israeli and Palestinian leaders to meet and attempt to negotiate a diplomatic end to the Intifada.
- D. Send a Special Commission into the Occupied Territories to study Palestinian living conditions as a first step to ending the Intifada.

Event F: Israeli settlements in the West Bank

Israel and the West Bank



Critical Thinking Question F:

Which of the responses to the Israeli settlements do you think most fairly addresses the concerns of all groups involved?

- A. Pass a resolution returning all land from the 1967 agreement back to the Palestinians; removing all Israeli settlers.
- B. Send in United Nations forces to remove the settlers and return land to Palestinians.
- C. Allow the Israeli settlers to stay on the lands and stop any further expansion.
- D. Allow Israelis to continue developing the settlements in the West Bank.

Israel's policy of building settlements in occupied territory is one of the core issues in the conflict. Illegal under international law, settlements are built on confiscated or stolen Palestinian land, are one of the core justifications for the building of the wall and the restriction of Palestinian movement within the West Bank, contribute to forced displacement, severely limit Palestinian access to basic resources including land and water, and perpetuate a system of segregation and legal and structural inequality between Palestinians and Israelis. Understanding Israel's settlement policy and its impacts is important to understanding what continues to drive the conflict.

Settlements are illegal Jewish-only communities built by Israel for its citizens on territories it occupied in 1967. According to B'Tselem there are 124 official settlements^[1] in the West Bank^[i] with approximately 350,000 residents in 2013.^[ii] Official settlements are all authorized by the Israeli government, have approved planning schemes, and receive the same benefits and services as towns within Israel's pre-1967 borders.

In addition to official settlements there are approximately 100 "outpost" settlements located throughout the West Bank. These communities are built without official approval from the Israeli government, but with financial support from Israeli government ministries and agencies. Although even the Israeli government recognizes these communities as illegal, it provides most "outposts" with state funded protection and access to water, electricity, and other basic services. Together, settlements and outposts control approximately 42% of the total land area of the West Bank.