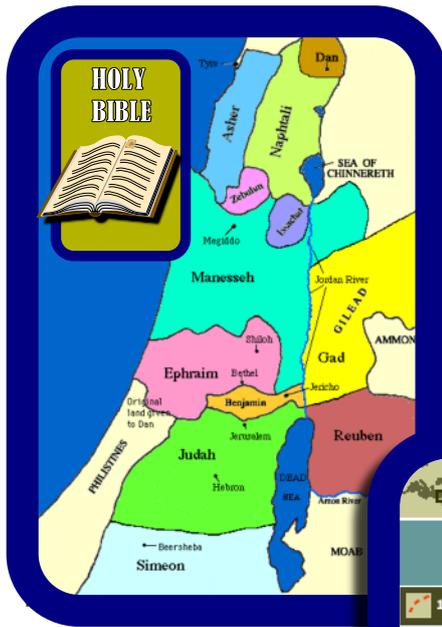




Israel: The People, The Land And The Bible

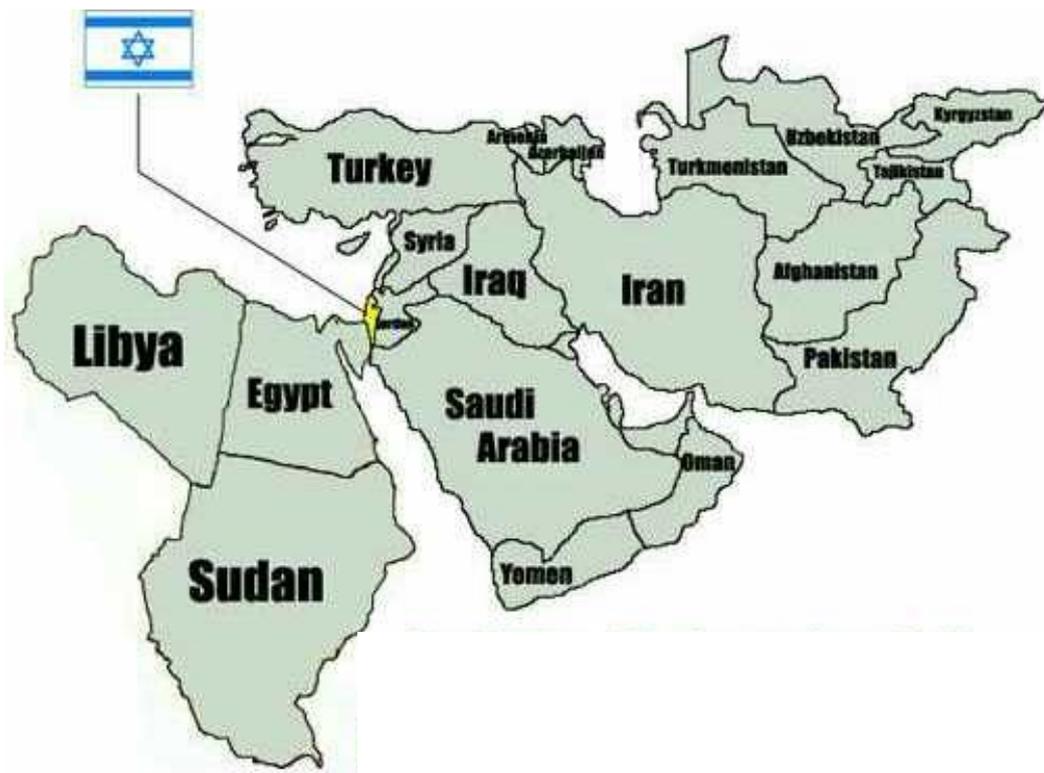


An anthology



Israel: The People, The Land And The Bible

An anthology



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Note: *This anthology was first created in 2002/3 and most of the above articles were current at that time. Needless to say that while the world has changed much since then, the Word of God stands forever.*

Preface

INTERPRETING THE PROPHETS

Lord Bishop of Liverpool
Late Right Rev. J. C. Ryle (19th Century)
(talking to his own fellow churchmen)

I believe it is high time for the Church of Christ to awaken out of its sleep about Old Testament prophecy. I think we have made great mistakes, and it is high time that we should confess it!

I warn you that unless you interpret the prophetic portion of the Old Testament in the simple, literal meaning of its words, you will find it no easy matter to carry on an argument with an unconverted Jew. Will you dare to tell him that Zion, Jerusalem, Jacob, Judah, Ephraim, Israel, do not mean what they seem to mean, but mean the Church of Christ?

[Oh, reader! If you are a man of this mind, take care what you are doing! I say again, take care! I think we should remember that we must reject Protestant traditions which are not according to the Bible, as much as the traditions of the Church of Rome.]

I believe it is high time for the Church of Christ to awaken out of its sleep about Old Testament prophecy. From the time of the Old Fathers Jerome and Origen down to the present day men have gone on in a pernicious habit of spiritualising the words of the prophets until their true meaning has been well nigh buried. It is high time to lay aside the traditional methods of interpretation and to give up our blind obedience to the opinions of such writers as Pool, Henry, Scott and Clark, upon unfulfilled prophecy.

It is high time to fall back on the good old principle that Scripture generally means what it seems to mean, and to

beware of that semi-sceptical argument: "*Such and such an interpretation cannot be correct, because it seems to us carnal.*" It is high time for Christians to interpret unfulfilled prophecy by the light of prophecy already fulfilled.

The curses on the Jews were brought to pass literally; so also will be the blessings. The scattering was literal; so also will be the gathering. The pulling down of Zion was literal; so also will be the building up. The rejection of Israel was literal; so also will be the restoration.

It is high time to cease from explaining the Old Testament prophecies in away not warranted by the New Testament. What right have we to say that the words Judah, Zion, Israel, and Jerusalem ever mean anything but literal Judah, literal Zion, literal Israel, and literal Jerusalem? What precedent shall we find in the New Testament? Hardly any, if, indeed, any at all.

I can only discover three senses in which the word Israel is used: First, it is one of the names of Jacob; Second, a name given to the Ten Tribes which separated from Judah and Benjamin and became a distinct Kingdom, often called Israel in contradistinction to the Kingdom of Judah; Third, the name given to the whole Jewish (sic) or Twelve-Tribed nation.

For centuries there has prevailed in the churches of Christ an unwarrantable mode of dealing with the word 'Israel'; it has been interpreted in many passages of the Psalms and

Prophets as if it meant nothing more than Christian believers. Have promises been held out to Israel? Men have been told continually that they are addressed to Gentile saints. Have glorious things been described as laid up in store for Israel? Men have been incessantly told that they describe the victories and triumphs of the Gospel in Christian churches. The proofs of these things are too many to require quotation.

Against that system I have long protested, and I hope I shall always protest as long as I live . . . What I protest against is the habit of allegorising plain sayings of the Word of God concerning the future history of the Nation Israel, and explaining away the fullness of their contents in order to accommodate them to the Gentile church. I believe the habit to be unwarranted by anything in Scripture and to draw after it a long train of evil consequences.

Where in the whole New Testament, shall we find any plain authority for applying the word Israel to anyone but the nation Israel? I can find none.

We are often told in the New Testament that under the Gospel, believing Gentiles are 'fellow-heirs and partakers of the same hope' with believing Jews (Eph. 3:6), but that believing Gentiles may be called 'Israel' I cannot see anywhere at all.

To what may be attributed that loose system of interpreting the language of the Psalms and Prophets? To nothing so much, I believe, as the habit of inaccurately interpreting the word Israel and the consequent application of the promises to the Gentile churches, with which they have nothing to do.

Beware of that system of allegorising and spiritualising and accommodating, which the School of Origen first brought in and found such an unfortunate degree of favour in the Church.

In reading the words which God addressed to His Ancient People, never lose sight of the primary sense of the text.

-oOo-

THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL

Past, Present and Future

Extract from *Christians Together* (an Inverness newsletter) - Winter 2000/1

The conflict between the Jews and the Palestinians in Israel is one which attracts differing and deeply-held opinions. However it is pointless, for a Christian, to view the situation from the same secular-humanist perspective as most commentators. What follows is a small attempt to clarify the question from a biblical (God's) standpoint.

The Past:

Israel was chosen by God and promised possession¹ of the land if the nation remained true to God. However they did not.

"Son of man, when the people of Israel were living in their own land, they defiled it by their conduct and their actions. Their conduct was like a woman's monthly uncleanness in my sight. So I poured out my wrath on them because they had shed blood in the land and because they had defiled it with their idols.

I dispersed them among the nations, and they were scattered through the countries; I judged them according to their conduct and their actions."

(Ezek 36:17-19)

But God has promised:

"Yet in spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them or abhor them so as to destroy them completely, breaking my covenant with them. I am the Lord their God. But for their sake I will remember the covenant¹ with their ancestors whom I brought out of Egypt in the sight of the nations to be their God. I am the Lord."

(Lev 26:44-45)

Because:

"I had concern for my holy name, which the house of Israel profaned among the nations where they had gone."(Ezek 36:21)

And thus God said to them:

"I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west. I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' and to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth--"

(Isaiah 43:5&6)

The Present:

God has - increasingly over the last 50 years - gathered the Jews back to Israel. He has said that he will use "hunters" and "fishermen" (persecution and inducements) in the process.² This has been especially evident in the holocaust and the re-creation of the modern state of Israel through a 2/3rds majority vote by the United Nations in 1947.

However, the Jews have been gathered in unbelief and so God has said of His plans for -

The Future:

"I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws."

(Ezek 36:25)

And all for the sake of God's holy Name:

"Then the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Sovereign LORD, when I show myself holy through you before their eyes."

(Ezek 36:23b)

God continues:

"In those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. There I will enter into judgment against them concerning my inheritance, my people Israel, for they scattered my people among the nations [diaspora] and divided up [partitioned] my land."

(Joel 3:1-2)

He also warns:

"On that day I will set out to destroy all the nations that attack Jerusalem."

(Zech 12:9)

And He will ultimately open the Jewish eyes to the Messiah:

"I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son."

(Zech 12:10)

Meanwhile:

GOD has given some guidance to the Gentile church regards what should be the Christian's attitude to his ancient people:

"If some of the branches [the Jews] have been broken off, and you [Gentile Christians], though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, do not boast over those branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you. You will say then, 'Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in.' Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but be afraid. For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either. Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off. And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!"

(Rom 11:17-24)

Then reinforces:

"I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: [know that] Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in.

And so all Israel will be saved"³

(Rom 11:25,26)

1. Possession of the land was conditional; ownership was and is an eternal and unconditional covenant made to Abraham and subsequently confirmed to Isaac and Jacob. (Gen 17:8; Psalm 105:8-11)

2. But now I will send for many fishermen," declares the LORD, "and they will catch them. After that I will send for many hunters, and they will hunt them down on every mountain and hill and from the crevices of the rocks. (Jeremiah 16:16)

3. Nowhere in the New Testament is the word "Israel" used to mean "the church". (cf: The Destiny of Israel and the Church. D.Prince)

THE LAND OF ISRAEL

A Modern History

by Steve Maltz, Saltshakers (www.saltshakers.com)

There is nothing more confusing than the Israel/Palestinian conflict. Millions of words have been written and spoken about it, but how much of it has truly sunk in, how much of it has made sense, how much of it has been untainted by personal opinion or editorial slant? Jews and Zionists will tell you one thing and Arabs and Arabists will tell you the opposite! Surely they can't both be right, surely there can only be one truth, one set of proven historical events that can unravel the whole mess. Unfortunately it isn't that straightforward. The situation is so complex, puzzling and emotionally charged that it is well-nigh impossible to get an objective viewpoint - it is difficult to find historical sources with no 'axes to grind', commentators who could be accepted as truly impartial. Nevertheless please indulge me over the next few minutes, while I try to unravel the mystery, sweep away the web of confusion, set my course for the heart of the matter and try to make sense of it all.

There are two main issues to look at. Firstly, who really owns the land, particularly the area known as the 'West Bank' and, secondly, what is the origin of the Palestinian refugee situation?

Let's first go back to the 19th Century and look at the 'lie of the land'. Palestine, as it was called then (a name given by the Romans in the 1st Century in an effort to remove any Jewish associations with the land) was a poor country, ruled by absentee Turkish landlords, as part of the crumbling and corrupt Ottoman empire. By all accounts the land was largely barren and uninhabited, its population was either nomadic or largely involved with agriculture, despite the poor environment. Sir John William Dawson, writing in 1888, said, "*no national union and no national spirit has prevailed there. The motley impoverished tribes which have occupied it have held it as mere tenants at will, temporary landowners, evidently waiting for those entitled to the permanent possession of the soil*" (Modern

Science in Bible Lands - New York 1890 - pp. 449-450).

In 1835, Alphonse de Lamartine wrote, "*Outside the gates of Jerusalem we saw indeed no living object, heard no living sound, we found the same void, the same silence .*" (Recollections of the East, Vol I (London 1845) pp 268).

Thanks to the Turks, the land had been totally neglected. Hundreds of years of abuse had turned the country into a treeless waste, with malaria-ridden swamps, a sprinkling of towns and an unliveable desert in the south. This was the position in 1880, and this is incontestable fact.

But now we start to get discrepancies. How many people DID live in the land at that time, and WHO were they? Jewish sources put the figure at between 100,000 and 250,000. Arab sources put the figure at about 480,000 (456,000 Arab, 24,000 Jewish). And who were these Arabs? Arab sources would simply say that these were indigenous people, Arabs who have lived in this land for generations. Jewish and independent sources say otherwise. They would point to immigrations from Egypt (to escape heavy taxes), Algeria, Turkey and elsewhere. There are suggestions that up to 25% of the Moslem population of Palestine in the 19th century were immigrants.

A final word here from the author of 'Tom Sawyer' and 'Huckleberry Finn'. According to the American author Mark Twain's independent eye-witness account in 1867, "The Innocent's Abroad", the land was barely populated, just a collection of small villages in a dry, barren land. This complete book is available on the Internet, so you can check it for yourself. Here's his summary.

"Of all the lands there are for dismal scenery, I think Palestine must be the prince . It is a hopeless, dreary, heart-broken land . Palestine sits in sackcloth and ashes. Over it broods the spell of a curse that has withered its fields and fet-

tered its energies . Nazareth is forlorn; about that ford of Jordan where the hosts of Israel entered the Promised Land with songs of rejoicing, one finds only a squalid camp of fantastic Bedouins of the desert; Jericho the accursed, lies a moldering ruin, to-day, even as Joshua's miracle left it more than three thousand years ago . Renowned Jerusalem itself, the stateliest name in history, has lost all its ancient grandeur, and is become a pauper village . Capernaum is a shapeless ruin; Magdala is the home of beggared Arabs; Bethsaida and Chorazin have vanished from the earth . Palestine is desolate and unlovely. And why should it be otherwise? Can the curse of the Deity beautify a land?" ." (The Innocents Abroad (New York 1966) - summary of Palestine visit)

Palestine was simply an outpost of the corrupt and decaying Turkish Ottoman Empire, a part of Greater Syria. It was not a country or a state in the manner of, say, an England or Germany at that time. It was simply a collection of villages that happen to exist within the geographical region known as Palestine. Although many Arabs did own their own homes, the majority were the poor "fellahin", who worked as hired hands for the landowners. There was no nationalism in the land, no feeling of belonging to a "people", loyalty was to the local clan or village. Arabs did not see themselves as "Palestinians" and often referred to their homeland as Southern Syria.

Jews had lived in the land right from biblical times, though, in the 19th century, they were very much the minority. The first major wave of Jewish immigration started in the 1880s and, by the end of the 19th century, Jewish population had tripled to over 80,000 (Arab sources).

This included the foundation of the Jewish settlement of Rishon-le-Zion, where 40 Jewish families settled - followed later by more than 400 Arab families from Egypt and elsewhere. This was a community that worked and was at peace. The Arabs saw the benefits of what the Jews were doing to the land and joined them. Between 1882 and 1914 pioneering Jews started, slowly, to transform the land. They worked on the swamps and the un-drained rivers. Life was tough, if you didn't die of malaria, you could be killed by Bedouins. Soon Jewish villages were springing up all over, and the towns

of Jerusalem, Tiberias, Safed and Haifa started to grow. In 1909 they founded the first modern Jewish city, Tel Aviv. Life was still tough, although disease wasn't so much the problem. Attacks by Arab neighbours increased, even though, through the efforts of these Jewish pioneers, life for all in the land was improving - including the Arab neighbours.

Newspapers and other media sources today give the impression that Israel "occupy" land once owned by people living in a "Palestinian state". But evidence is to the contrary. For a start, the Arabs in no way saw themselves as "Palestinians". When the First congress of Muslim-Christian Associations met in Jerusalem in February 1919, the agreement was that "we consider Palestine as part of Arab Syria". The only people who considered themselves "Palestinians" in the first half of the 20th century were the Jewish inhabitants! Even the Jewish national newspaper was called "The Palestine Post" (now called "The Jerusalem Post").

The other point concerns ownership of the land. Did Jewish immigrants seize it or was the land acquired legally? Land settled in by these first immigrants in the 1880s was bought from the absentee Turkish landlords, who were eager for the extra cash. The land initially settled in was the uncultivated swampy cheap and empty land. Later on they bought cultivated land, some of it at exorbitant prices. In his memoirs, King Abdullah of Jordan wrote: "the Arabs are as prodigal in selling their land as they are in useless wailing and weeping". Up until 1948, with the formation of the State of Israel, no land was seized or acquired in any way other than through legal means.

In the 20th century, Arabs as well as Jews were immigrating into Palestine, mainly from Egypt, TransJordan, Syria and Lebanon. Between 1922 and 1931, when the country was administered by the British, illegal Arab immigrants (i.e. extra to the agreed quotas) comprised almost 12% of the Arab population. The Hope Simpson Report acknowledged in 1930 that there was "uncontrolled influx of illegal immigrants from Egypt, Trans-Jordan and Syria". The rate of immigration increased during the early 1930s, which was a period of prosperity in Palestine. The Syrian Governor of Hauran admitted in 1934 that 30,000 - 36,000 people from his district entered Palestine

that year and settled there. In 1939, Winston Churchill said "Far from being persecuted, the Arabs have crowded into the country and multiplied until their population has increased more than even all world Jewry could lift up (increase) the Jewish population". This is an important (though much contested) point, because it dispels the myth that the Palestinian people have lived there for generations. When we talk about Palestinian refugees, displaced as a result of the formation of the State of Israel, consider how many of them would have been as recent to the land as the Jews themselves!

So now we reach that magic date, 1948, the formation of the State of Israel. And the major point of contention - the Palestinian refugees. This is where objectivity flies out of the window and we get the sharpest divide in people's perceptions of actual historic events. In a nutshell, what happened was that the day after Israel became a country, it was invaded by Egypt, TransJordan, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq. Within 2 weeks, against all odds, Israel was victorious, resulting in an expansion of territory and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Arabs who had been living in Palestine.

As a result of these events not one but two refugee situations were created.

Just under 750,000 Arabs (U.N. estimate) lost their homes. These became the 'Palestinian' refugees. They lost their homes through two main reasons. Some were driven out by the Jewish (Israeli) army, others fled after being told to do so by Arab army commanders, expecting an eventual victory (i.e. when the Jews would be driven out of the land), at which time people could return to their homes. Apart from extremists on either side, people generally accept these as the main reasons, though the proportions (i.e. what percentage were driven out or told to leave) would vary wildly, depending on your viewpoint. The Palestinian website, www.palestinehistory.com/palst.htm concedes that "about half probably left out of fear and panic", which is a grudging concession to the Jewish view. The quote continues: "while the rest were forced out to make room for Jewish immigrants from Europe and from the Arab world". This leads us to examine the second refugee situation, the lesser known and the largest one.

Up until 1948, Jews had lived in most of the Arab Muslim countries of the Middle East. In most cases they had been there over 1000 years before Islam even existed. From 1947 hundreds of Jews in Arab lands were killed in government-organized rioting, leaving thousands injured and millions of dollars in Jewish property destroyed. In 1948 Jews were forcibly ejected from Iraq, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria, who confiscated property from the fleeing Jews worth tens of billions in today's dollars. Of the 820,000 Jewish refugees created by this situation, 590,000 were absorbed by Israel. Now we get to the real point of this article. All the facts presented so far are from an endlessly contested history. People have argued about these facts until the cows come home and have got nowhere in the process. So I'm now going to ask you to move on from the murkiness of endless debate and into the light of certainties. And the certainty is as clear cut as they come. You can witness it with your very eyes. It is a fact that cannot be contested. Palestinian refugees still exist, in camps, on the West Bank, in Gaza and elsewhere. Have you ever wondered why?

The 820,000 Jewish refugees who were forcibly ejected from Arab countries where they had often lived for thousands of years were all welcomed and integrated into Israel or the Jewish world elsewhere, where they became full citizens. There are no Jewish refugee camps.

The 750,000 Arab refugees who were displaced in 1948, were placed into squalid refugee camps by fellow Arabs who had just gone to war (and lost) on their behalf but were unwilling to pay for the consequences. Incredibly, over 50 years later, over a million of these poor people are still in these camps, despite billions of dollars of relief paid by rich Arab states, the United Nations, the EU and others. Where on earth has this money gone and why on earth are they still in camps and not integrated into Arab society?

Palestinian Arabs are no doubt a peaceful, welcoming and gifted people, but they have been the greatest victims of the whole sorry affair, pawns in a wider struggle orchestrated by their powerful Arab brethren. For reasons known only to their political and religious masters they have lived for two or three genera-

tions within the bounds of these camps. Isn't a refugee camp meant to be a temporary home, as it has been for millions of refugees in other situations, until the people could be relocated to homes of their own? Not so here. Palestinians were never allowed to be "ordinary" refugees. They have been kept in a form of forced captivity for a sinister purpose. A purpose that has succeeded in transforming a peace-loving gentle people into terrorist pariahs and has provided an atmosphere where it is considered holy and noble to send your young men and women out as living weapons of destruction to blow up other young men and women. What must this do to their national psyche, when suicide is seen as a positive ideal? Let's be honest here and consider who is really responsible for this tragedy. It is not Israel. Can't they see who their real enemy is?

"But they lost their homeland", you may say. This is true, though, as I have suggested, many would have been recent immigrants to the land, rather than having lived there for generations, as suggested by the propaganda. And, of course, they were surrounded by oil-rich neighbours who shared their race, culture and religion. A homeland in Jordan, for example, would have been perfectly possible and logical. But let's look at it in a wider context. When I walk the streets and look around I see people of every hue and shade, I hear accents ranging from the Russian Urals to the Hindu Kush. These are not people who have been born in my country, these are people who have relocated here, many as refugees. There is nothing unique about Palestinians! Let's look at other recent refugee situations. Quoting from Encyclopaedia Britannica,

"The Russian Revolution of 1917 and the post-revolutionary civil war (1917-21) caused the exodus of 1,500,000 opponents of communism. Between 1915 and 1923 over 1,000,000 Armenians left Turkish Asia Minor, and several hundred thousand Spanish Loyalists fled to France in the wake of the 1936-39 Spanish Civil War. When the People's Republic of China was established in 1949, more than 2,000,000 Chinese fled to Taiwan and to the British crown colony of Hong Kong. Between 1945 and 1961, the year that the communist regime erected the Berlin Wall (opened 1989), over

3,700,000 refugees from East Germany found asylum in West Germany . The partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947 resulted in the exchange of 18,000,000 Hindus from Pakistan and Muslims from India--the greatest population transfer in history. Some 8,000,000-10,000,000 persons were also temporarily made refugees by the creation of Bangladesh in 1971 . During the 1980s and early '90s, the principal source of the world's refugees was Afghanistan, where the Afghan War (1978-92) caused more than 6,000,000 refugees to flee to the neighbouring countries of Pakistan and Iran. Iran also provided asylum for 1,400,000 Iraqi refugees who had been uprooted as a result of the Persian Gulf War (1990-91). The breakup of Yugoslavia, for example, displaced some 2,000,000 people by mid-1992."

Then, of course, the Jews themselves, over the last 3000 years, have been 'relocated' more times than you could count.

And what of the "West Bank" or the occupied West Bank, as it is more often known? It is true that Israel "occupy" the land, since gaining it as a result of the victory in the Six Day War in 1967, but who did they occupy it from? Well, believe it or not, the West Bank itself was illegally seized by Jordan after 1948. After doing so, they made it an area forbidden to Jews - can you imagine the fuss there would be if Israel adopted this same attitude with Arab settlers! So who did Jordan take the West Bank from? Before 1948 the West Bank was part of the area administered by the British as part of the British Mandate. It didn't belong to them, they were just caretakers. Before that, the West Bank - called Judea and Samaria by the Jews - was just the eastern part of Palestine, occupied by whoever happened to live there, Jew or Arab. It was not land owned by any state, as Palestine was just a neglected province of the crumbling Ottoman Empire. So, in reality, the West Bank has not legally ever belonged to any State in modern history. So when Jewish settlers make their home there, they are doing so on land that has been legally bought, not seized from anyone else, whether a State or individuals.

The crisis in the Middle East is over a strip of land the size of Wales, a hoped-for safe haven for a people with historical links to the land going back over

4000 years, a people who have not, in truth, been welcome anywhere else in the world. The fact that this land is surrounded by over a dozen nations gripped by a religion characterized by military conquest and subjugation is one of those tragedies of history that make you realize that there's more than meets the eye in the affairs of man. Israel is surrounded by nations that hate it intensely because its very existence is an affront to their religion. And try as they might, with whatever tactics they have at their disposal - even if this includes the callous exploitation of a whole people, the Palestinians - they will do their best to "right" the situation. They have failed to date, but they won't give up. That is the nature of Islam. You only need to look at its historical record. But they neglect one thing. The God of the Jews is far greater than theirs and will ultimately prevail.



A HISTORY OF THE ISRAELI / PALESTINE CONFLICT

By Ami Isseroff

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This very brief account is intended to provide an overview and introduction to Palestinian and Israeli history, and the history of the conflict. It is unlikely that anyone has written or will write an "objective" and definitive summary that would be accepted by everyone, but it is hoped that this document will provide a fair introduction.

It would be wrong to try to use this history to determine "who is right," though many "histories" have certainly been written by partisans of either side, with precisely that purpose in mind. Those who are interested in advocacy, in collecting "points" for their side, cannot find the truth except by accident. If they find it, and it is inconvenient, they will bury it again. This account intends to inform, and nothing more.

Geography and Early History

The land variously called Israel and Palestine is a small, (10,000 square miles at present) land at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea. During its long history, its area, population and ownership varied greatly. The present state of Israel formally occupies all the land from the Jordan river to the Mediterranean ocean, bounded by Egypt in the south, Lebanon in the north, and Jordan in the East. The recognized borders of Israel constitute about 78% of the land. The remainder is divided between land occupied by Israel since the 1967 6-day war and the autonomous regions under the control of the Palestinian autonomy. The Gaza strip occupies an additional 141 square miles south of Israel along the sea coast, and is mostly under the control of the Palestinian authority with small areas occupied by Israeli settlements.

Palestine has been settled continuously for tens of thousands of years. Fossil remains have been found of Homo Erectus, Neanderthal and transitional types between Neanderthal and modern man. Archeologists have found hybrid Emer wheat at Jericho dating from before 8,000 B.C., making it

one of the oldest sites of agricultural activity in the world. Amorites, Canaanites, and other Semitic peoples related to the Phoenicians of Tyre entered the area about 2000 B.C. The area became known as the Land of Canaan.

The Jewish Kingdoms

The archeological record indicates that the Jewish people evolved out of native Canaanite peoples and invading tribes. Some time between about 1800 and 1500 B.C., a Semitic people called Hebrews (hapiru) left Mesopotamia and settled in Canaan. According to the Bible, Moses led the Israelites, or a portion of them, out of Egypt. Under Joshua, they conquered the tribes and city states of Canaan. Based on biblical traditions, it is estimated that king David conquered Jerusalem about 1000 B.C. and established an Israelite kingdom over much of Canaan including parts of what is now Transjordan. The kingdom was divided into Judea in the south and Israel in the north following the death of David's son, Solomon. Jerusalem remained the centre of Jewish sovereignty and of Jewish worship whenever the Jews exercised sovereignty over the country in the subsequent period, up to the Jewish revolt in 133 AD.

The Assyrians conquered Israel in 722 or 721 B.C. The Babylonians conquered Judah in 587 or 586 B.C. destroyed Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem, and exiled a large number of Jews. About 50 years later, the Persian king Cyrus conquered Babylonia. Cyrus allowed a group of Jews from Babylonia to rebuild and settle in Jerusalem. However, a large number of Jews remained in Babylonia, forming the first Jewish Diaspora. After the re-establishment of a Jewish state or protectorate, the Babylonian exiles maintained contact with authorities there. The Persians ruled the land from about 530 to 331 B.C. Alexander the Great then conquered the Persian Empire. After Alexander's death in 323 B.C., his generals divided his empire. One of these generals, Seleucus, founded a dy-

nasty that gained control of much of Palestine about 200 B.C. At first, the new rulers, called Seleucids, allowed the practice of Judaism. But later, one of the kings, Antiochus IV, tried to prohibit it. In 167 B.C., the Jews revolted under the leadership of the Maccabeans and either drove the Seleucids out of Palestine or at least established a large degree of autonomy, forming a kingdom with its capital in Jerusalem. The kingdom received Roman "protection" when Judah Maccabee was made a "friend of the Roman senate and people" in 164 B.C.

From Roman to Ottoman Rule

About 61 B.C., Roman troops under Pompei invaded Judah and sacked Jerusalem. The land came under Roman control. The Romans called the area Judea. Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem in the early years of Roman rule. Roman rulers put down Jewish revolts in about A.D. 70 and A.D. 132. In A.D. 135, the Romans drove the Jews out of Jerusalem. The Romans named the area Palaestina, at about this time. The name Palaestina, which became Palestine in English, is derived from Herodotus, who used the term Palaistine Syria to refer to the entire southern part of Syria, meaning "Philistine Syria." Most of the Jews who continued to practice their religion fled or were forcibly exiled from Palestine, eventually forming a second Jewish Diaspora. However, Jewish communities continued to exist in Galilee, the northernmost part of Palestine. Palestine was governed by the Roman Empire until the fourth century A.D. (300's) and then by the Byzantine Empire. In time, Christianity spread to most of Palestine. The population consisted of Jewish converts to Christianity and paganism, peoples imported by the Romans, and others who had probably inhabited Palestine continuously.

During the seventh century (A.D. 600's), Muslim Arab armies moved north from Arabia to conquer most of the Middle East, including Palestine. Muslim powers controlled the region until the early 1900's. The rulers allowed Christians and Jews to keep their religions. However, most of the local population gradually accepted Islam and the Arab-Islamic culture of their rulers. Jerusalem became holy to Muslims as the site where, according to the Qu'ran, Muhammed ascended to heaven after a miraculous overnight ride on his horse Al-Buraq. The al-Aqsa mosque was built on the site generally regarded as the area of the Jewish temples.

The Seljuk Turks gained control of Jerusalem in 1071. Seljuk rule of Palestine lasted less than 30 years. Christian crusaders from Europe captured Jerusalem in 1099. A great slaughter of the Jewish and Muslim defenders followed, and no Jews were allowed to live in Jerusalem. The crusaders held the city until 1187, when the Muslim ruler Saladin attacked Palestine and took control of Jerusalem.

In the mid-1200's, Mamelukes based in Egypt established an empire that in time included the area of Palestine. Arab-speaking Muslims made up most of Palestine's population. Beginning in the late 1300's, Jews from Spain and other Mediterranean lands settled in Jerusalem and other parts of the land. The Ottoman Empire defeated the Mamelukes in 1517, and Palestine became part of the Ottoman Empire. The Turkish Sultan invited Jews fleeing the Catholic inquisition to settle in the Turkish empire, including several cities in Palestine.

In 1798, Napoleon entered the land. The war with Napoleon and subsequent misadministration by Egyptian and Ottoman rulers, reduced the population of Palestine. Arabs and Jews fled to safer and more prosperous lands. Revolts by Palestinian Arabs against Egyptian and Ottoman rule at this time may have helped to catalyze Palestinian national feeling. Subsequent reorganization and opening of the Turkish Empire to foreigners restored some order. They also allowed the beginnings of Jewish settlement under various Zionist and proto-Zionist movements. Both Arab and Jewish population increased. By 1880, about 24,000 Jews were living in Palestine, out of a population of about 400,000. At about that time, the Ottoman government imposed severe restrictions on Jewish immigration and land purchase. These were evaded in various ways by Jews seeking to colonize Palestine.

The Rise of Zionism

In the nineteenth century, the emancipation of Jews in Europe and nationalist ideas were blended with traditional Jewish ideas about Israel and Zionism. The marriage of "love of Zion" with modern nationalism took place first among the Sephardic (Spanish and Eastern) Jewish community of Europe, where the tradition of living in the land of the Jews and return to Zion had remained practical goals rather than messianic aspirations, and where Hebrew was a living language. Rabbi Yehuda Alcalay, who lived in what is now Yugo-

slavia, published the first Zionist writings in the 1840s. Though practically forgotten, these ideas took root among a few European Jews. Beginning in the late 1800's, oppression of Jews in Eastern Europe catalyzed emigration of Jews to Palestine. The Zionist movement became a formal organization in 1897 with the first Zionist congress in Basle, organized by Theodore Herzl. Herzl's grandfather was acquainted with the writings of Alcalay, and it is very probable that Herzl was influenced by them. The Zionists wished to establish a "Jewish Homeland" in Palestine under Turkish or German rule. They were not concerned about the Arab population, which they ignored, or thought would agree to voluntary transfer to other Arab countries. In any case, they envisioned the population of Palestine by millions of European Jews who would soon form a decisive majority in the land. The Zionists established farm communities in Palestine at Petah Tikva, Zichron Jacob, Rishon Le-Zion and elsewhere. Later they established the new city of Tel Aviv, north of Jaffa. At the same time, Palestine's Arab population grew rapidly. By 1914, the total population of Palestine stood at about 700,000. About 615,000 were Arabs, and 85,000 were Jews.

World War I

During World War I (1914-1918), the Ottoman Empire joined Germany and Austria-Hungary against the Allies. An Ottoman military government ruled Palestine. The war was hard on both Jewish and Arab populations, owing to outbreaks of cholera and typhus, however, it was more difficult for the Jews. For a time, the Turkish military governor ordered internment and deportation of all foreign nationals. A large number of Jews were Russian Nationals. They had been able to enter Palestine as Russian nationals because of the concessions Turkey had granted to Russian citizens, and they had used this method to overcome restrictions on immigration. They had also maintained Russian citizenship to avoid being drafted into the Turkish army. Therefore, large number of Jews were forced to flee Palestine during the war. A small group founded the NILI underground that fed intelligence information to the British, in order to free the land of Turkish rule. The Turks eventually caught members of the NILI group.

Britain and France planned to divide the Ottoman holdings in the Middle East among themselves after the war. The Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 called for

part of Palestine to be under British rule, part to be placed under a joint Allied government, and for Syria and Lebanon to be given to the France. However, Britain also offered to back Arab demands for postwar independence from the Ottomans in return for Arab support for the Allies and seems to have promised the same territories to the Arabs. In 1916, Arabs led by T.E. Lawrence and backed by Sharif Husayn revolted against the Ottomans in the belief that Britain would help establish Arab independence in the Middle East. The Arabs later claimed that Palestine was included in the area promised to them, but the British denied this.

The British Mandate and the Balfour Declaration

In November 1917, before Britain had conquered Jerusalem and the area to be known as Palestine, Britain issued the Balfour Declaration. The declaration stated Britain's support for the creation of a Jewish national home in Palestine, without violating the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities. The declaration was the result of lobbying by the small British Zionist movement, especially by Dr. Haim Weizmann, who had emigrated from Russia to Britain, but it was motivated by British strategic considerations. Paradoxically, perhaps, a major motivation for the declaration may have been the belief, inspired by anti-Semitism, that international Jewry would come to the aid of the British if they declared themselves in favour of a Jewish homeland, and the fear that the Germans were about to issue such a declaration.

After the war, the League of Nations divided much of the Ottoman Empire into mandated territories. The Arabs opposed the idea of a Jewish national home, considering that the areas now called Palestine were their land. The Arabs felt they were in danger of dispossession by the Zionists, and did not relish living under Jewish rule. Arabs lobbied the American King-Crane commission, in favour of annexation of the Palestine mandate area to Syria, and later formed a national movement to combat the terms of the Mandate. At the instigation of US President Wilson, the King Crane commission had been dispatched to hear the views of the inhabitants. At the commission hearings, Aref Pasha Dajani expressed this opinion about the Jews, "Their history and their past proves that it is impossible to live with them. In all the countries where they are at present, they are

not wanted...because they always arrive to suck the blood of everybody..."

By this time, Zionists had recognized the inevitability of conflict with the Palestinian Arabs. David Ben Gurion, who would lead the Yishuv (the name for the Jewish community in Palestine) and go on to be the first Prime Minister of Israel, told a meeting of the governing body of the Jewish "Yishuv" in 1919 "But not everybody sees that there is no solution to this question...We as a nation, want this country to be ours, the Arabs as a nation, want this country to be theirs."

The Zionists and others presented their case to the Paris Peace conference. Ultimately, the British plan was adopted. The main issues taken into account were division of rights between Britain and France, rather than the views of the inhabitants.

In 1920, Britain received a provisional mandate over Palestine, which would extend west and east of the River Jordan. The area of the mandate given to Britain at the San Remo conference was much larger than historic Palestine as envisaged by the Zionists, who had sought an eastern border to the West of Amman. The mandate, based on the Balfour declaration, was formalized in 1922. The British were to help the Jews build a national home and promote the creation of self-governing institutions. An agency, later called "The Jewish Agency for Palestine" was created to represent Jewish interests in Palestine to the British and to promote Jewish immigration.

In 1922, the British declared that the boundary of Palestine would be limited to the area west of the river. The area east of the river, called Transjordan (now Jordan), was made a separate British mandate and eventually given independence. A part of the Zionist movement felt betrayed at losing part of what they termed "historic Palestine" to Transjordan, and split off to form the "revisionist" movement, headed by Benjamin Ze'ev Jabotinsky.

The British hoped to establish self-governing institutions in Palestine, as required by the mandate. However, the Arabs would not accept any proposals for such institutions if they included Jews, and so no institutions were created. The Arabs wanted as little as possible to do with the Jews and would not participate in municipal councils, nor even in the Arab Agency that the British wanted to set up. Ormsby-Gore, undersecretary of state for the colo-

nies concluded, "Palestine is largely inhabited by unreasonable people."

Arab Riots and Jewish immigration

In the spring of 1920, spring of 1921 and summer of 1929, Arab nationalists instigated riots and pogroms against Jews in Jerusalem, Hebron, Jaffa and Haifa. The major instigators were Haj Amin El-Husseini, later Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, and Arif -El Arif, a prominent Palestinian journalist. The pogroms led to evacuation of the Jewish community of Hebron. About half the 5,000 residents of the Jewish quarter of the old city of Jerusalem were forced to flee as well. The violence led to the formation of the Hagana Jewish self-defense organization.

Jewish immigration swelled in the 1930s, driven by persecution in Eastern Europe, even before the rise of Nazism. Large numbers of Jews began to come from Poland owing to discriminatory measures of the Polish government and harsh economic conditions. The rise of Hitler in Germany added to this tide of immigration. The Jewish Agency made a deal, the Hesper, that allowed Jews to escape Germany to Palestine in return for hard currency that the Reich needed. The Hesper saved tens of thousands of lives.

Arab Revolt and the White Paper

In 1936 the Arab Revolt led by Haj Amin Al-Husseini broke out. Hundreds of Arabs and Jews were killed. The Husseini family killed both Jews and members of Palestinian Arab families opposed to their hegemony. The Yishuv responded with both defensive measures, and with random terror and bombings of Arab civilian targets, perpetrated by the Irgun (Irgun Tsvai Leumi or "Etsel,"). Etsel was the military underground of the right-wing dissident "revisionist group" headed first by Vladimir Jabotinsky, who seceded from the Zionist movement, and later by Menahem Begin. The British took drastic steps to curtail the riots. Husseini fled to Iraq and then to Nazi Germany, where he subsequently broadcast for the Axis powers and organized SS death squads in Yugoslavia. The Peel and Woodhead commissions of 1937 and 1938 recommended partitioning Palestine into a small Jewish state and a large Arab one. The commissions recommendations also included voluntary transfer of Arabs and Jews to separate the populations. The Jewish leadership considered the plan but the Arab leadership rejected the plan outright. In

response to the riots, the British began limiting immigration and the 1939 White Paper decreed that 15,000 Jews would be allowed to enter Palestine each year for five years. Thereafter, immigration would be subject to Arab approval.

The Holocaust

During World War II (1939-1945), many Palestinian Arabs and Jews joined the Allied forces. Jews had a special motivation for fighting the Nazis. In 1941 the British freed Jewish Haganah underground leaders in a general amnesty, and they joined the British in fighting the Germans. After the war, it was discovered that the Germans had murdered about six million Jews in Europe, in the Holocaust. These people had been trapped in Europe, because virtually no country would allow them to flee the Nazis. The British restriction of immigration to Palestine had cost hundreds of thousands of lives. The Jews were now desperate to bring the remaining Jews of Europe, about 250,000 people being held in displaced persons camps, to Palestine. The Haganah attempted to bring immigrants into Palestine illegally. The Zionist underground groups, in particular the Irgun and Lehi ("Stern gang") dissident terrorist groups, used force to try to drive the British out of Palestine by bombings and by kidnapping and murder of British personnel. The US and other countries brought pressure to bear on the British to allow immigration. An Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry recommended allowing 100,000 Jews to immigrate immediately to Palestine. The Arabs brought pressure on the British to block such immigration. The British found Palestine to be ungovernable and returned the mandate to the United Nations, successor to the League of Nations. The report of the Anglo-American Committee provided a detailed summary of the British mandate period and the security situation in Palestine, as well as a report on the effects of the Holocaust and the condition of European Jewry.

Partition

The United Nations Special Commission on Palestine (UNSCOP) recommended that Palestine be divided into an Arab state and a Jewish state. The commission called for Jerusalem to be put under international administration. The UN General Assembly adopted this plan on Nov. 29, 1947 as UN Resolution (GA 181), owing to support of both the US and the Soviet Union, and in particular, the personal support of US

President Harry S. Truman. Many factors contributed to Truman's decision to support partition, including domestic politics and intense Zionist lobbying, no doubt. Truman wrote in his diary, however, "I think the proper thing to do, and the thing I have been doing, is to do what I think is right and let them all go to hell."

The Jews accepted the UN decision, but the Arabs rejected it. The resolution divided the land into two approximately equal portions in a complicated scheme with zig-zag borders. The intention was an economic union between the two states with open borders. At the time of partition, slightly less than half the land in all of Palestine was owned by Arabs, slightly less than half was "crown lands" belonging to the state, and about 8% was owned by Jews or the Jewish Agency. There were about 600,000 Jews in Palestine, almost all living in the areas allotted to the Jewish state or in the internationalised zone of Jerusalem, and about 1.2 million Arabs. The allocation of land by Resolution 181 was intended to produce two areas with Jewish and Arab majorities respectively. Jerusalem and environs were to be internationalised. The relatively large Jewish population of Jerusalem and the surroundings, about 100,000, were geographically cut off from the rest of the Jewish state, separated by a relatively large area, the "corridor," allotted to the Palestinian state. The corridor included the populous towns of Lod and Ramla and the smaller towns of Qolonyeh, Emaus, Qastel and others which guarded the road to Jerusalem.

It soon became evident that the scheme could not work. Mutual antagonism would make it impossible for either community to tolerate the other. The Arab League, at the instigation of Haj Amin Al-Husseini, declared a war to rid Palestine of the Jews. In fact however, the Arab countries each had separate agendas. Abdullah, king of Jordan, had an informal and secret agreement with Israel, negotiated with Golda Meir, to annex the portions of Palestine allocated to the Palestinian state in the West Bank, and prevent formation of a Palestinian state. Syria wanted to annex the northern part of Palestine, including Jewish and Arab areas.

During the period before Israeli independence was declared, two armies of Arab irregular volunteers, led by Haj Amin El Husseini in the Jerusalem area, and by Fawzi El Kaukji in the Galilee, placed their fighters in Arab towns and conducted various aggressive operations against the

Jewish towns and village under the eyes of the British. Kaukji and his irregulars were allowed into Palestine from Syria by the British, with the agreement that he would not engage in military actions, but he soon broke the agreement and attacked across the Galilee. The Arab irregulars were met by the Zionist underground army, the Haganah, and by the underground groups of the "dissident" factions, Irgun and Lehi.

In Jerusalem, Arab riots broke out on November 30 and December 1 1947. Palestinian irregulars cut off the supply of food, water and fuel to Jerusalem during a long siege that began in late 1947. Fighting and violence broke out immediately throughout the country, including ambushes of transportation, a Palestinian attempt to blockade Jewish Jerusalem, riots such as the Haifa refinery riots, and massacres that took place at Gush Etzion and in Deir Yassin. Arab Palestinians began leaving their towns and villages to escape the fighting. Notably, most of the Arab population of Haifa left in March and April of 1948, despite pleas by both Jewish and British officials to stay.

The British did little to stop the fighting, but the scale of hostilities was limited by lack of arms and trained soldiers on both sides. It is generally agreed that April 1948 marked a turning point in the fighting, in favor of the initially outnumbered and outgunned Jewish forces. In the center, the Haganah mounted its first full scale operation, Operation Nahshon, which attacked the Arab villages of Qolonyah and Qastel on the road to Jerusalem and temporarily broke the siege, allowing convoys of supplies to reach the city. Qastel fell on April 8, and the key Palestinian military commander, Abdel Khader Al-Husseini was killed there. In the north, Fawzi El-Kaukji's "Salvation Army" was beaten back at the battle of Mishmar Haemeq on April 12 1948. These successes helped convince US President Truman that the Jews would not be overrun by Arab forces, and he abandoned the trusteeship proposal that the US had put before the UN earlier. Following attacks by Arab irregulars, the Irgun attacked the Arab town of Jaffa, just south of Tel Aviv. Palestinians fled en masse despite the pleas of the British to remain.

1948- 2000

The 1948 War of Independence

On May 14, 1948, the Jews proclaimed the independent State of Israel, and the British

withdrew from Palestine. In the following days and weeks, neighboring Arab nations invaded Palestine and Israel. The fighting was conducted in several brief periods, punctuated by cease fire agreements (truces were declared June 11 to July 8, 1948 and July 19- October 15, 1948). Palestinian attempts to set up a real state were blocked by Egypt and Jordan. Jordan kept to its agreement not to invade areas allocated to the Jewish state, but Syria and Egypt did not. In his book, "In the Fields of Phillistia," Israeli peace activist Uri Avnery recounts how the Egyptian army attempted a massed armoured strike against Tel Aviv. The strike was turned back by a few recently arrived Messerschmidt aircraft, bought from Czechoslovakia. While Jordan did not invade Jewish territory, the Arab Legion blocked convoys to besieged Jewish Jerusalem from its fortified positions in Latroun. Jerusalem was to have been internationalised according to UN General Assembly Resolution 181 and UN General Assembly Resolution 303. Despite initial setbacks, better organization and intelligence successes, as well as timely clandestine arms shipments, enabled the Jews to gain a decisive victory. The underground armies of the Haganah, Palmah, Irgun and Lehi were amalgamated into a single national fighting force, the Israel Defense Force (IDF). The revisionist Irgun movement attempted to bring a shipload of arms into Israel on a ship called the Altalena, in order to maintain a separate fighting force. Israeli PM Ben Gurion ordered the IDF to sink the Altalena when Irgun leader Menahem Begin refused to give up its cargo of arms.

The Jordanian positions at Latroun could not be overcome despite three bloody attacks. To get around them, the Israelis built a "Burma Road" that was completed in June of 1948 and broke the siege of Jerusalem. A cease fire in June gave all sides time to regroup and reorganize. The Israelis took advantage of the cease fire to reorganize and recruit and train soldiers. The Palestinians and Arabs did not. A large shipment of arms intended for the Palestinians was blocked by the IDF/Haganah and never reached Syria.

The Syrians made some advances into the territory that had been allotted to the Palestinian state. The Egyptians had attempted to cut off the Negev from the rest of Israel, but were isolated in the "Faluja" pocket in central Israel. Israel took the war with the Egyptians to their territory and entered the Sinai peninsula. The IDF was

forced to withdraw after encounters with British aircraft.

In the center, the IDF cut a swath of land to open the "corridor" between Jerusalem and the rest of Israel. During the "ten days" period of fighting between the two truces, they invaded the Arab towns of Lod and Ramla that had been blocking the road to Jerusalem and expelled most of the Palestinians living there, after killing a large number. They destroyed numerous small Palestinian villages surrounding Tel-Aviv, so that virtually no Palestinians were left in central Israel. (Click here for a map of Palestine before 1948)

The Arabs and Palestinians lost their initial advantage when they failed to organize and unite. When the fighting ended in 1949, Israel held territories beyond the boundaries set by the UN plan - a total of 78% of the area west of the Jordan river. The UN made no serious attempt to enforce the internationalisation of Jerusalem, which was now divided between Jordan and Israel, and separated by barbed wire fences and no man's land areas. Click here to view a map of the UN plan for Jerusalem and Jerusalem as divided under the armistice agreements. The rest of the area assigned to the Arab state was occupied by Egypt and Jordan. Egypt held the Gaza Strip and Jordan held the West Bank. About 726,000 Arabs fled or were driven out of Israel and became refugees in neighbouring Arab countries. The Arab countries refused to sign a permanent peace treaty with Israel. Consequently, the borders of Israel established by the armistice commission never received de jure (legal) international recognition.

The UN arranged a series of cease-fires between the Arabs and the Jews in 1948 and 1949. UN GA Resolution 194 called for cessation of hostilities and return of refugees who wish to live in peace. Security Council Resolution 62 called for implementation of armistice agreements that would lead to a permanent peace. The borders of Israel were established along the "green line" of the armistice agreements of 1949. (Click here for a map of the armistice lines (so called "green line") . These borders were not recognized by Arab states, which continued to refuse to recognize Israel. Though hostilities ceased, the refugee problem was not solved. Negotiations broke down because Israel refused to readmit more than a small number of refugees. The USSR, initially in favor of the Zionist state, now aligned itself with the Arab countries. Despite continued US sup-

port for the existence of Israel, US aid to Israel was minimal and did not include military aid during the Truman and Eisenhower administrations. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) were equipped with surplus arms purchased third hand and with French aircraft and light armor. The Arab countries, especially Syria and Egypt, began receiving large quantities of Soviet military aid. The Arab League instituted an economic boycott against Israel that was partly honored by most industrial nations and continued in force until the 1990s.

The Sinai Campaign

Following the overthrow of King Farouk of Egypt by the free officers headed by Naguib and Nasser, Egypt made some moves toward peace with Israel. However, in 1954, an Israeli spy ring was caught trying to blow up the US Information agency and other foreign institutions in Egypt. The goal was to create tension between the US and Egypt and prevent rapprochement. In Israel, both Defense Minister Pinhas Lavon and Prime Minister David Ben Gurion disclaimed responsibility for the action, and blamed each other. This incident came to be known variously as "the Lavon affair" and "the shameful business." Egypt became suspicious of Israeli intentions, and began negotiating to purchase large quantities of arms. When they were turned down by the West, the Egyptians turned to the Eastern bloc countries and concluded a deal with Czechoslovakia. Egyptian President Gamal Nasser also closed the straits of Tiran and Suez Canal to Israeli shipping. Israeli strategists believed that Egypt would go to war or force a diplomatic showdown as soon the weapons had been integrated, and began looking for a source of arms as well. Israel concluded an arms deal with France. A series of border incursions by Palestinians and by Egyptians from Gaza evoked increasingly severe Israeli reprisals, triggering larger raids. The assessment of Israeli "activists" like Moshe Dayan was that Israel should wage preventive war before Egypt had fully integrated the new weapons.

In the summer of 1956, Israel, France and Britain colluded in a plan to reverse the nationalization of the Suez canal. Israel would invade the Sinai and land paratroopers near the Mitla pass. Britain and France would issue an ultimatum, and then land troops ostensibly to separate the sides. The plan was carried out beginning October 29, 1956. Israel swiftly conquered

Sinai. The US was furious at Israel, Britain and France. UN General Assembly Resolution 997 called for immediate withdrawal. Israeli troops remained in Sinai for many months. Israel subsequently withdrew under pressure from the UN and in particular the United States. Israel obtained guarantees that international waterways would remain open to Israeli shipping from the US, and a UN force was stationed in Sinai.

The 1967 6-Day War

Tension began developing between Israel and Arab countries in the 1960s. Israel began to implement its National Water Carrier plan, which pumps water from the Sea of Galilee to irrigate south and central Israel. The project was in accordance with a plan proposed by US envoy Eric Johnston in 1955, and agreed to by Arab engineers. Arab governments refused to participate however, because of the implied recognition of Israel. In secret meetings, Israel and Jordan agreed to abide by the water quotas set by the plan. In several summit conferences beginning in 1964, Arab leaders decided on establishment of the PLO, declared their resolve to destroy Israel, and decided to divert the sources of the Jordan river that feed the Sea of Galilee, to prevent Israel from implementing the water carrier plan. The Syrians and Lebanese began to implement the diversions. Israel responded by firing on the tractors and equipment doing the work in Syria, using increasingly accurate and longer range guns as the Syrians moved the equipment from the border. This was followed by Israeli attempts to cultivate the demilitarised zones (DMZ) as provided in the armistice agreements. Israel was within its rights according to the armistice agreements, but Moshe Dayan claimed many years later that 80% of the incidents were deliberately provoked. The Syrians responded by firing in the DMZs (Click here for a map of the demilitarised zones). When Israelis responded in force, Syria began shelling Israeli towns in the north, and the conflict escalated into air strikes. The USSR was intent on protecting the new Ba'athist pro-Soviet government of Syria, and represented to the Syrians and Egyptians that Israel was preparing to attack Syria. As tension rose, Syria appealed to Egypt, believing the claim of the USSR that Israel was massing troops on the Syrian border. The claim was false and was denied by the UN.

Against this background, in Mid-May, 1967, Egyptian President Gamal Nasser

again closed the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping and dismissed the UN peace force from the Sinai Peninsula. The United States failed to live up to its guarantees of freedom of the waterways to Israel. A torrent of bellicose rhetoric issued from Arab capitals and in the UN. At the UN, PLO Chairman Ahmed Shukhairi announced that "if it will be our privilege to strike the first blow" the PLO would expel from Palestine all Zionists who had arrived after 1917 and eliminate the state of Israel. Nasser said on May 27, "Our basic objective will be the destruction of Israel. The Arab people want to fight." On May 28, he added: "We will not accept any...coexistence with Israel...Today the issue is not the establishment of peace between the Arab states and Israel....The war with Israel is in effect since 1948."

On May 30, Jordan signed a defense pact with Egypt, readying itself for war. King Hussein stated: "The armies of Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon are poised on the borders of Israel...to face the challenge, while standing behind us are the armies of Iraq, Algeria, Kuwait, Sudan and the whole Arab nation. This act will astound the world. Today they will know that the Arabs are arranged for battle, the critical hour has arrived. We have reached the stage of serious action and not declarations."

On June 4, Iraq likewise joined a military alliance with Egypt and committed itself to war. On May 31, the Iraqi President Rahman Aref announced, "This is our opportunity to wipe out the ignominy which has been with us since 1948. Our goal is clear-to wipe Israel off the map."

Despite the bellicose rhetoric, analysts such as Avi Shlaim (The Iron Wall) and others believe that each country was dragged into the conflict by inter-Arab rivalry and did not contemplate a war. According to Michael Oren, recently released documents show that the Arab side had planned an attack on Israel and then cancelled it when it was compromised by leaks.

US and Israel assessments were that Israel would win any war handily, despite the huge superiority in armor, aircraft, and troops favouring the combined forces of the Arab countries. On paper, Israel had almost as many aircraft as the Egyptians, but the Israeli aircraft were mostly old, and even the Super-Mirages were no match for the Mig-21 fighters acquired by Egypt from the USSR. On paper, the IDF

had a huge number of "tanks." However, while Syrians and Egyptians were equipped with late model Soviet heavy tanks, most of the Israeli "tanks" were in fact tiny French AMX anti-tank vehicles, and the heavy tanks were refurbished WWII Sherman tanks fitted with diesel engines. The Israeli and Jewish public, and some in the government, believed that there was a mortal threat to Israel.

Israel probably did not want war. Ben Gurion berated Chief of Staff Itzhak Rabin for making aggressive moves that had, according to him, escalated the conflict and gotten Israel into trouble. Israeli Prime Minister Levi Eshkol appeared hesitant, and stuttered in a dramatic radio speech to the nation. Under great public pressure from opposition parties, a unity government was formed. Foreign Minister Abba Eban tried in vain to obtain from the US a guarantee that they would reopen the Straits of Tiran. At first, President Johnson promised an international flotilla, and warned Israel not to attack on its own. However, the US was unable to initiate any international action, and reversed its position, hinting broadly that Israel would have to handle the problem itself.

Israel attacked the Egyptians beginning on June 5, 1967. In the first hours of the war, Israel destroyed over 400 enemy aircraft to achieve total air superiority. Israeli troops quickly re-conquered the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza. Jordanian artillery began firing at Jerusalem on the first day of the war, and then the Jordan Legion advanced and took over the headquarters of the UN (Governor's house - Armon Hanatziv) in Jerusalem. After warning King Hussein repeatedly to cease fire, Israel conquered the West Bank and Jerusalem. During the first days of the war, Syrian artillery based in the Golan Heights pounded civilian targets in northern Israel. After dealing with Egypt, Israel decided to conquer the Golan heights, despite opposition and doubts of some in the government, including Moshe Dayan, who had been appointed defence minister. (see map of territories occupied in 1967) Israel agreed to a cease fire on June 11, 1967. UN Resolution 242 called for negotiations of a permanent peace between the parties, and for Israeli withdrawal from lands occupied in 1967.

The 1967 6-Day war changed the perceived balance of power in the Middle East and created a new reality. Israel had acquired extensive territories - the Sinai Desert, the Golan heights and the West Bank, that were several times larger than

the 1948 borders. (Click here to view a map of Israeli borders after the 6 day war) According to analysts such as Fouad Ajami, the disastrous defeat of the Arabs spelled the end of the Pan-Arab approach advocated by Gamal Abdul Nasser and contributed to the rise of Islamic fundamentalism. It also brought about a million Palestinian Arabs under Israeli rule. After the war, the fate of the Palestinians came to play a large role in the Arab-Israeli struggle. The Fatah organization (The Movement for Liberation of Palestine) was founded about 1957 (though it was formalized much later), and the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) was founded in 1964. Both had the declared aim of destroying Israel. After the 6-day war, Ahmad Shukairy, who had headed the PLO, was replaced as Chairman by Yasser Arafat, who headed the Fatah. In time, the Palestine Liberation Organization became recognized by all the Arab states as the representative of the Palestinian people. Israel strongly opposed the PLO because of its terrorist acts against Jews and because of its charter aims of destroying the state of Israel and expelling Jews who had arrived after 1917.

The Israeli government originally declared that it was ready to return all of the territories except Jerusalem in return for peace treaties with its Arab neighbours. However, religious and nationalist groups began agitating for annexation and settlement of areas in the West Bank and Golan heights. By July 1967, Yigal Alon had submitted his "Alon Plan" which called for Israeli retention of large parts of the West Bank in any peace settlement for strategic reasons. An increasing number of settlements were established as it became evident that Arab states would not negotiate with Israel. A decisive turning point was the Khartoum Arab summit, in August and September of 1967, which seemed to shut the door on the possibility of negotiations with Israel or recognition of Israel in any form. A second landmark was the "Zionism is Racism" resolution passed by the United Nations in 1975, which gave credibility in Israel to claims of Israeli extremists that opposition to settlements was opposition to Israel, and that Israel was essentially alone in a hostile world and could expect no justice. Though the resolution was repealed in 1991, similar sentiments surfaced at a UN conference in Durban in 2001.

Settlement expansion became official Israeli policy after the opposition revisionist Likud party came to power in 1977, and

continued during the Oslo accords. As of 2003, about 220,000 Israelis had settled in areas of the West Bank and Gaza, and an additional 200,000 were settled in areas of Jerusalem and environs conquered in 1967. About 15,000 Jews were settled in the Golan heights taken from Syria. (Click for Map of Israeli West Bank Settlements-2002)

The War of Attrition

Egyptian president Nasser launched the war of attrition on the Suez canal, breaking the cease fire. In Israel, Prime Minister Levi Eshkol had died and was replaced by the hawkish Golda Meir. The sides fought to a standstill in increasingly bloody exchanges that included participation by Soviet pilots on the Egyptian side. Under US pressure, a second cease fire was signed in August 1970, with both sides declaring officially their acceptance of UN Resolution 242. Nasser died shortly thereafter, and was replaced by Anwar Sadat. Sadat tried repeatedly to interest Israel in partial peace deals in return for partial Israeli withdrawal, and the US and UN tried to mediate peace through the offices of Gunnar Jarring. Nothing came of these peace efforts, partly owing to the stubborn attitude of Israeli PM Golda Meir, who insisted that Israeli troops would not budge until there was a peace agreement in place. Sadat continued to alternate peace plans with threats of war, but he was not taken seriously in Israel. Israeli army intelligence as well as the government were convinced that Israel had total military superiority and that Egypt would not dare to attack until it had rebuilt its army. Therefore, the best course seemed to be to wait until the Arab countries met Israel's terms.

The 1973 (Yom Kippur) War

In October 1973, Egypt and Syria launched another war against Israel, after the Israeli government headed by Golda Meir rebuffed Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's offers to negotiate a settlement. The Egyptians crossed the Suez Canal on the afternoon of October 6, Yom Kippur, the holiest day in the Jewish religious calendar. The Israeli government had ignored repeated intelligence warnings. They were convinced that Israeli arms were a sufficient deterrent to any aggressor. Sadat had twice announced his intention to go to war, but nothing had happened. When the intelligence reports were finally believed, on the morning of the attack, PM Meir and Defense Minister Dayan decided not to mobilize reserves.

The Israelis were caught by surprise in more ways than one. Egyptians poured huge numbers of troops across the canal unopposed and began setting up beachhead. The Israel Army had neglected basic maintenance tasks and drill. As troops mustered, it became apparent that equipment was missing and tanks were out of commission. The line of outposts built as watch posts along the Suez canal - the Bar Lev line, was used instead as a line of fortifications intended to hold off the Egyptians as long as possible. A tiny number of soldiers faced the Egyptian onslaught and were wiped out after stubborn resistance. The Soviets had sold the Egyptians new technology - better surface to air missiles (SAM) and hand held Sagger anti-tank weapons. Israel had counted on air power to tip the balance on the battlefield, and had neglected artillery. But the air-force was initially neutralized because of the effectiveness of SAM missiles, until Israel could destroy the radar stations controlling them. Futile counterattacks continued in Sinai for several days as Israeli divisions coped with traffic jams that prevented concentration of forces, and with effective Egyptian resistance.

Meanwhile, less than 200 Israeli tanks were left guarding the Golan heights against far superior numbers. Syrians made serious and at first unopposed inroads in the Golan as Egyptians crossed the Suez canal and retook a strip of the Sinai peninsula. After suffering heavily losses, Israel re-conquered the Golan. Click for map of Syrian Front

In Sinai, Israel troops crossed the canal. General Ariel Sharon, disobeying the orders of cautious superiors, ran ahead of logistics and support to develop the bridgehead on the Egyptian side of the Suez canal, and to cut off the entire Egyptian third army. Cease-fires ended most of the fighting within a month. About 2,700 Israeli soldiers and 8,500 Arab soldiers died in the war. As a result of the war, the Golda Meir was forced to resign as Prime Minister in Israel, making way for Izhak Rabin, who had been Israeli ambassador to the US and previously Chief of staff of the IDF.

Peace With Egypt

Subsequent shuttle diplomacy by US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger resulted in partial Israeli withdrawals from the Sinai peninsula, under much less favorable terms than could have been obtained be-

fore the war. Right-wing opposition leader Menahem Begin was adamant in his opposition to any withdrawals. However, in 1978, Egypt led by Anwar Sadat, and Israel, now led by Menahem Begin, signed the Camp David framework agreements, leading to a Peace treaty in 1979. Israel withdrew from the Sinai Peninsula in 1982.

The 1982 War in Lebanon (Peace for the Galilee)

A revolt by the PLO against the Jordanian government led to their expulsion from Jordan in 1970. PLO fighters streamed into Lebanon and turned it into a base for attacks on Israel. The Syrians entered Lebanon beginning in 1976 ostensibly to protect the Christians and the fragile Lebanese multi-ethnic multi-religious constitution, but in fact, in realization of Syrian claims to Lebanon as part of Greater Syria. An Israeli invasion in 1982 resulted in expulsion of the PLO from Lebanon to Tunis. The invasion was the initiative of Defence Minister Ariel Sharon, who had decided to smash the power of the PLO. However, the war aroused furore in Israel as the army exceeded the official war aims, and brought down the wrath of the international community on Israel after right-wing Lebanese Phalangist militia allied to Israel committed massacres in the Sabra and Shatilla Palestinian refugee camps. Israel subsequently extricated itself slowly from Lebanon, but the war had created a fanatic Shi'ite anti-Israel terror group in Lebanon, the Hizbolla. As Israel withdrew, Lebanon became essentially a satellite of Syria.

The First Intifada and the start of the Oslo Process

While the fortunes of the PLO waned, Palestinians in the occupied territories took their fate into their own hands. Beginning in 1987, a revolt called the Intifada began in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Following the Gulf war, US pressure, the on-going break up of the USSR and favourable international opinion made it possible to convene negotiations toward settlement of the Palestinian problem. In 1993 and 1995, Israel and the PLO signed the Oslo Declaration of Principles and The Oslo Interim Agreement. Israel and Jordan signed a peace treaty in 1994. The peace process with the Palestinians led to the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the Gaza Strip and most cities and towns of the West Bank by early 1996. As the Israelis withdrew, Palestinians took control of these areas. About 97% of the Palestinians

in these areas were nominally under Palestinian rule, but the area controlled by the Palestine National Authority amounted to about 8% of the land. In January 1996, Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and the Palestinian-controlled parts of the West Bank elected a legislature controlled by the Fatah faction, with Yasser Arafat as Chairman (titled "Rais" - "President" by the Palestinians) to administer these areas.

Recent Events

The Second Intifada

Negotiations for a final settlement ended in deadlock July, 2000. Palestinians insisted that refugees should have the right to return to Israel, which would produce an Arab majority in Israel. Israel insisted on annexing key portions of the Palestinian areas and on leaving most settlements intact, and offered only a limited form of Palestinian statehood. Palestinian violence erupted on September 28, 2000, triggered by a visit of Ariel Sharon to the temple mount in Jerusalem, which is also the site of the Al-Aqsa mosque holy to Muslims. In negotiations at Taba, Palestinians rejected a settlement offer mediated by President Clinton, and shortly thereafter, Israeli PM Barak, who had furthered the peace process, was voted out of office and replaced by a right wing government headed by Ariel Sharon.

Violence continued into 2001 and 2002, despite attempts by the Mitchell commission and others to restore calm. The terror attack on the World Trade Center in the US on September 11, 2001, had direct repercussions for the Israel-Palestine conflict. On the one hand, Arab and Islamic countries tried to leverage on the need for their cooperation in the war against terror to win concessions against Palestine. On the other, many Americans began to view terrorist actions in a new light, as organizations such as Hamas and Hizbulla came to be linked with the Al-Qaeda group of Osama Bin-Laden. Particularly damaging for the Palestinians were the demonstrations held in favor of Bin Laden, and evidence linking a boatload of illegal arms intercepted by Israel, the Karine A, with Iranian support for the PNA. The boat was intercepted on January 3, 2002, on the day that US envoy Anthony Zinni arrived to attempt to arrive at a settlement. Against this background, the US and EU seemed to give Israel wider latitude for action against the Palestinians. Israel made increasing incursions into Palestinian areas, and confined PNA Chairman Arafat to his

compound in Ramallah. but the Palestinians stepped up attacks on soldiers as well as suicide bombings.

The Saudi Peace Proposal and the Palestinian State Resolution

Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah made a dramatic proposal to end the long Arab war against Israel in return for Israeli withdrawal from Palestinian territories, withdrawal in the Golan and appropriate arrangements regarding Jerusalem and the refugees. This proposal, modified to be more specific about refugee issues, was adopted by a meeting of the Arab League, and eventually became incorporated in the quartet roadmap plan. On March, 12, 2002 the UN Security Council passed resolution 1397, calling on the sides to stop the violence once again, mentioning the peace plan of Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah, and for the first time calling for creation of a Palestinian State alongside Israel.

Operation Defensive Wall

Meanwhile however, terror and suicide attacks and Israeli reprisals continued. Yasser Arafat declared a cessation of violence several times, but this did not seem to affect the frequency or severity of suicide bombings and ambushes. The Israelis, for their part, continued with their policy of assassinating wanted men in the Palestinian areas. During the last week in March, as General Zinni was again coming to the Middle East, the Palestinians launched a successful suicide attack almost every day, in addition to many unsuccessful ones. A blast at the Park Hotel in Nethanya killed 27 people as they were celebrating Passover. Israel launched a massive raid intended to root out terror infrastructure, including reoccupation of Ramallah, Nablus, Jenin, Tulkarm and other towns. Hundreds of Palestinians may have been killed, including many reported civilian casualties. Israel alleges that only about 50 were killed in Jenin, mostly members of the Fatah Al-Aqsa Martyrs suicide brigades. These figures appear to be borne out by independent sources, but they are not accepted or believed in the Arab world. Suicide attacks abated, but did not stop. During the course of the fighting, Israel captured numerous documents demonstrating that Yasser Arafat had personally approved the organization of terror cells, and that the PNA treasury had approved payments for suicide-bomber explosive belts. The Israelis captured or killed numerous persons suspected of involvement in terrorist activities. The IDF

also destroyed records, building, roads and other innocent civilian infrastructure of banks, NGOs and other organizations clearly not involved in terror. Later in the fighting, the IDF managed to locate Marwan Barghouti, head of the Fatah Tanzem, and to capture him. Israel claims it has evidence of complicity by Barghouti in numerous terrorist acts, and it plans to put him on trial. Critics of the Israeli military operation, called "Defensive Wall," argued that it would be impossible to put an end to terror by military activity in the absence of progress toward a peaceful solution.

The violence continued despite the arrival of US Secretary of State Colin Powell, who needed quiet in Israel and Palestine to leave the US free hand to organize an alliance against Iraq. Powell's mission did not accomplish anything. He was unable to get the Israelis to withdraw completely from the areas reoccupied, nor could he get the Palestinians to agree to a cease fire. Demonstrations and public outrage in Arab countries, fueled by charges of a massacre, prompted UN action. UN resolution 1402 directed that Israel withdraw from the territories immediately. By the time Powell had left, Israel had withdrawn from some towns, but Yasser Arafat was still imprisoned in Ramallah, and the Israelis were besieging the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, where armed Palestinians had sought refuge from the IDF. The UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1403, expressing dismay that resolution 1402 had not been implemented. Palestinians charged that the Israelis had committed a massacre in the Jenin refugee camp. On April 19, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1405, calling for an impartial investigative team to be sent to determine the truth of Palestinian allegations. Israel objected to the composition of the team. Israel at first agreed to the investigation, but later backtracked and blocked it, claiming that the composition and procedures of the investigation would be unfair to Israel, and that the UN had reneged on initial agreements about the investigation. Opposition to the investigation was fueled by Israeli memories of the recent Durban conference as well as by the infamous Zionism is Racism resolution of the UN, which was recalled repeatedly in public debate. Israeli PM Ariel Sharon visited the US in May of 2002, under pressure from the US administration to advance a peace program that could be acceptable to Palestinians and the Arab states. The two discussed plans for a regional summit to be held later in 2002, and the Israelis present-

ed documents that they claim prove the involvement of Yasser Arafat and the PNA in terrorist activities. News of a suicide bombing committed by the Hamas came while Bush and Sharon were meeting, causing the Israeli PM to cut the visit short and return to Israel.

The sieges of Muqata and Church of Nativity were also resolved in May. Militants in the Church of Nativity were exiled to Cyprus and Europe. The wanted men in the Muqata compound in Ramalah were jailed in Jericho. The head of the PFLP allegedly coordinated a suicide attack from his cell in Jericho. At the end of May, under pressure for democratic reform, Yasser Arafat signed into law the Basic Law or constitution of the Palestinian transitional state. The law states that Palestinian law will be based on the principles of Islamic law (Sha'ariyeh).

In June, following another wave of Palestinian suicide attacks, Israeli forces essentially reoccupied all of the West Bank, though the Israeli government was quick to claim that the re-occupation would not continue indefinitely, but later indicated otherwise. President Bush made a long awaited speech on Middle East policy calling for a Palestinian state, but insisting on democratic reform of the Palestine National Authority.

In August and September, several attempts at Palestinian cease fire initiatives were foiled by refusal of extremist groups to participate and by Israeli acts such as the killing of Salah Shehadeh, head of the military wing of the Hamas in a missile attack on Gaza that cost the lives of 13 civilians. Shehadeh was replaced by Mohamed Deif. August and September witnessed a six week respite from major suicide and terror attacks, facilitating an Israeli-Palestinian plan to return full Palestinian authority in Gaza and Bethlehem first. However, this fizzled after several violent attacks in Gaza. At the beginning of September, Israeli security forces foiled several suicide attack attempts and detected a truck laden with 1300 pounds of explosives and gas tanks, that was to be used by Palestinians in a suicide attack.

The PLC convened in September to approve the new cabinet chosen in line with reform efforts. PLC cabinet members refused to ratify the cabinet until Yasser Arafat would allow a Prime Minister to share power. Instead, Arafat agreed to elections in January, 2003, despite Israeli

occupation. Arafat's popularity was at a nadir.

The period of relative calm came to an end with suicide bombings in Umm El Fahm and in a Tel-Aviv bus. The Israeli government proceeded with an attack on Gaza including entry into Gaza city and besieged Yasser Arafat and an estimated 200 others in the Muqata compound in Ramala. Israel demanded that Palestinians give up wanted persons who had taken refuge in the Muqata including Palestinian preventive security boss Tawfiq Tirawi. Arafat remained defiant. Israel destroyed all buildings in the compound except the main one, promising not to harm Arafat. After a rumour was spread that Israel was about to blow up the Muqata, widespread demonstrations took place in the West Bank and Gaza, resulting in four deaths. The USA exerted pressure on Israel to stop destroying buildings in the Muqata and to withdraw. Despite a UN resolution, Israel continued the siege. Arafat's popularity with Palestinians soared. Eventually, the siege was lifted, but Arafat remained confined to Ramalla and isolated. A second siege was re-instituted in the fall. (Click here for commentary on the Muqata Siege)

In April of 2002, the US government initiated a series of consultations with a group of diplomats that became known as the "Quartet." The quartet evolved a roadmap for a settlement, including Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories and establishment of a Palestinian state.

In October of 2002, the Labor party withdrew from the Israel unity government. PM Ariel Sharon initiated immediate elections, to be held January 28. Ariel Sharon's Likud Party won a sweeping mandate to continue hard line policies against the Palestinians. The Israel Labor party refused to form a unity government. Israel continued to occupy most of the West Bank.

During this period, the US continued to mass forces for an invasion of Iraq, and the US and quartet partners continued to advance the quartet road map for middle east peace. The quartet partners and especially the US pressured the Palestinians to commit to a thoroughgoing reform of their government that would eliminate corruption and support for terror. It was proposed that Mahmud Abbas (Abu Mazen) would assume the post of Prime Minister, overshadowing and displacing the still-popular Yasser Arafat.

The Iraq War and Palestinian Reform - On March 20, 2003, US, British and Australian forces invaded Iraq to remove the regime of Saddam Hussein. The Palestinians had supported Hussein and his regime had provided payments for families of suicide bombers, as well as sheltering Palestinian militants. US forces entered Baghdad on April 9, and President Bush declared the war over on May 1. The war produced an upheaval in the Middle East. Arabs were astounded by the swiftness of Iraq's collapse. Arab governments including the Palestinians hurried to make conciliatory gestures and talk of democracy, at the same time criticizing the US occupation of Iraq, which generated a great deal of resentment. Mahmud Abbas was elected Palestinian PM on April 29, however the violence did not abate. Israelis made bloody raids in Gaza and elsewhere on the day of his election. A few hours later, Fatah and Hamas perpetrated a suicide attack at a Tel Aviv night club, and the next day Israel began extensive raids in the territories. In violation of the roadmap, Yasser Arafat put himself in charge of organizing a new unified security force. As it had promised the Palestinians, the US released an updated road map on April 30 immediately after the election of Abu Mazen.

At a festive summit held on June 4, 2003 in Aqaba, Israeli PM Sharon and Palestinian PM Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) pledged to fulfill the conditions of the road map and shook hands in the presence of US President George Bush. Abu Mazen called for an end to violence. Click here for more commentary on the roadmap.

Islamist extremist Hamas and Islamic Jihad leaders vowed to continue violence. Soon after the summit, four Israeli soldiers in Gaza were killed in a joint operation that included not only the Islamist extremists but also the Fatah movement of Abu Mazen. Israel began dismantling about ten of the 100 illegal outposts, but dismantled only uninhabited ones. On June 10, Israel tried to assassinate Hamas leader Ahmed Rantissi, kindling fury in Palestine and eliciting criticism from the US. On June 11, a Hamas suicide bombing killed 16 Israelis in a bus on the main street of Jerusalem.

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TWENTY FACTS ABOUT ISRAEL and the MIDDLE EAST (from a geo-political perspective)

by William Bennett, Jack Kemp, Jeane Kirkpatrick
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The world's attention has been focused on the Middle East. We are confronted daily with scenes of carnage and destruction. Can we understand such violence? Yes, but only if we come to the situation with a solid grounding in the facts of the matter -- facts that too often are forgotten, if ever they were learned. Below are twenty facts that we think are useful in understanding the current situation, how we arrived here, and how we might eventually arrive at a solution.

ROOTS OF THE CONFLICT

1. When the United Nations proposed the establishment of two states in the region -- one Jewish, one Arab -- the Jews accepted the proposal and declared their independence in 1948.

The Jewish state constituted only 1/6 of one percent of what was known as "the Arab world." The Arab states, however, rejected the UN plan and since then have waged war against Israel repeatedly, both all-out wars and wars of terrorism and attrition.

In 1948, five Arab armies invaded Israel in an effort to eradicate it. Jamal Hussein of the Arab Higher Committee spoke for many in vowing to soak "the soil of our beloved country with the last drop of our blood."

2. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was founded in 1964 -- three years before Israel controlled the West Bank and Gaza. The PLO's declared purpose was to eliminate the State of Israel by means of armed struggle. To this day, the website of Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority (PA) claims that the entirety of Israel is "occupied" territory. It is impossible to square this with the PLO and PA assertions to Western audiences that the root of the conflict is Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.

3. The West Bank and Gaza (controlled by Jordan and Egypt from 1948 to 1967)

came under Israeli control during the Six Day War of 1967 that started when Egypt closed the Straits of Tiran and Arab armies amassed on Israel's borders to invade and liquidate the state.

It is important to note that during their 19-year rule, neither Jordan nor Egypt had made any effort to establish a Palestinian state on those lands.

Just before the Arab nations launched their war of aggression against the State of Israel in 1967, Syrian Defense Minister (later President) Hafez Assad stated, "Our forces are now entirely ready... to initiate the act of liberation itself, and to explode the Zionist presence in the Arab homeland... the time has come to enter into a battle of annihilation."

On the brink of the 1967 war, Egyptian President Gamal Nassar declared, "Our basic objective will be the destruction of Israel."

4. Because of their animus against Jews, many leaders of the Palestinian cause have long supported our enemies. The Grand Mufti of Jerusalem allied himself with Adolf Hitler during WWII. Yasser Arafat, chairman of the PLO and president of the PA, has repeatedly targeted and killed Americans.

In 1973, Arafat ordered the execution of Cleo Noel, the American ambassador to the Sudan.

Arafat was very closely aligned with the Soviet Union and other enemies of the United States throughout the Cold War. In 1991, during the Gulf War, Arafat aligned himself with Saddam Hussein, whom he praised as "the defender of the Arab nation, of Muslims, and of free men everywhere."

5. Israel has, in fact, returned most of the land that it captured during the 1967 war and right after that war offered to return all of it in exchange for peace and normal relations; the offer was rejected. As a result of the 1978 Camp David accords -- in which Egypt recognized the right of Israel to exist and normal rela-

tions were established between the two countries -- Israel returned the Sinai desert, a territory three times the size of Israel and 91 percent of the territory Israel took control of in the 1967 war.

6. In 2000, as part of negotiations for a comprehensive and durable peace, Israel offered to turn over all but the smallest portion of the remaining territories to Yasser Arafat. But Israel was rebuffed when Arafat walked out of Camp David and launched the current Intifada.

7. Yasser Arafat has never been less than clear about his goals -- at least not in Arabic. On the very day that he signed the Oslo accords in 1993 -- in which he promised to renounce terrorism and recognize Israel, he addressed the Palestinian people on Jordanian television and declared that he had taken the first step "in the 1974 plan."

This was a thinly veiled reference to the "phased plan," according to which any territorial gain was acceptable as a means toward the ultimate goal of Israel's destruction.

8. The recently deceased Faisal al-Husseini, a leading Palestinian spokesman, made the same point in 2001 when he declared that the West Bank and Gaza represented only "22 percent of Palestine" and that the Oslo process was a "Trojan Horse."

He explained, "When we are asking all the Palestinian forces and factions to look at the Oslo Agreement and at other agreements as 'temporary' procedures, or phased goals, this means that we are ambushing the Israelis and cheating them." The goal, he continued, was "the liberation of Palestine from the river to the sea," i.e., the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea -- all of Israel.

9. To this day, the Fatah wing of the PLO (the "moderate" wing that was founded and is controlled by Arafat himself) has as its official emblem the entire state of Israel covered by two rifles and a hand grenade -- another fact that belies the claim that Arafat desires nothing more than the West Bank and Gaza.

10. While criticism of Israel is not necessarily the same as "anti-Semitism," it must be remembered that the Middle East press is, in fact, rife with anti-Semitism.

More than fifteen years ago the eminent scholar Bernard Lewis could point out that "The demonization of Jews [in Ara-

bic literature] goes further than it had ever done in Western literature, with the exception of Germany during the period of Nazi rule."

Since then, and through all the years of the "peace process," things have become much worse. Depictions of Jews in Arab and Muslim media are akin to those of Nazi Germany, and medieval blood libels -- including claims that Jews use Christian and Muslim blood in preparing their holiday foods have become prominent and routine.

One example is a sermon broadcast on PA television where Sheik Ahmad Halabaya stated, "They [the Jews] must be butchered and killed, as Allah the Almighty said: 'Fight them: Allah will torture them at your hands.' Have no mercy on the Jews, no matter where they are, in any country. Fight them, wherever you are. Wherever you meet them, kill them."

11. Over three-quarters of Palestinians approve of suicide bombings -- an appalling statistic but in light of the above facts, an unsurprising one. THE STATE OF ISRAEL

12. There are 21 Arab countries in the Middle East and only one Jewish state: Israel, which is also the only democracy in the region.

13. Israel is the only country in the region that permits citizens of all faiths to worship freely and openly. Twenty percent of Israeli citizens are not Jewish.

14. While Jews are not permitted to live in many Arab countries, Arabs are granted full citizenship and have the right to vote in Israel. Arabs are also free to become members of the Israeli parliament (the Knesset).

In fact, several Arabs have been democratically elected to the Knesset and have been serving there for years. Arabs living in Israel have more rights and are freer than most Arabs living in Arab countries.

15. Israel is smaller than the state of New Hampshire and is surrounded by nations hostile to her existence. Some peace proposals including the recent Saudi proposal demand withdrawal from the entire West Bank, which would leave Israel 9 miles wide at its most vulnerable point.

16. The oft-cited UN Resolution 242 (passed in the wake of the 1967 war) does not, in fact, require a complete withdrawal from the West Bank. As le-

gal scholar Eugene Rostow put it, "Resolution 242, which as undersecretary of state for political affairs between 1966 and 1969 I helped produce, calls on the

parties to make peace and allows Israel to administer the territories it occupied in 1967 until 'a just and lasting peace in the Middle East' is achieved.

When such a peace is made, Israel is required to withdraw its armed forces 'from territories' it occupied during the Six-Day War -- not from 'the' territories nor from 'all' the territories, but from some of the territories."

17. Israel has, of course, conceded that the Palestinians have legitimate claims to the disputed territories and is willing to engage in negotiations on the matter. As noted above, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak offered almost all of the territories to Arafat at Camp David in 2000.

18. Despite claims that the Israeli settlements in the West Bank are the obstacle to peace, Jews lived there for centuries before being massacred or driven out by invading Arab armies in 1948-49. And contrary to common misperceptions, Israeli settlements -- which constitute less than two percent of the territories -- almost never displace Palestinians.

19. The area of the West Bank includes some of the most important sites in Jewish history, among them Hebron, Bethlehem, and Jericho. East Jerusalem, often

cited as an "Arab city" or "occupied territory," is the site of Judaism's holiest monument. While under Arab rule (1948-67), this area was entirely closed to Jews. Since Israel took control, it has been open to people of all faiths.

20. Finally, let us consider the demand that certain territories in the Muslim world must be off-limits to Jews. This demand

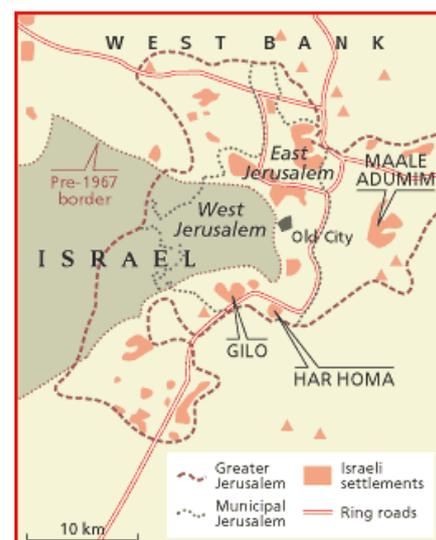
is of a piece with Hitler's proclamation that German land had to be "Judenrein" (empty of Jews). Arabs can live freely throughout Israel, and as full citizens. Why should Jews be forbidden to live or to own land in an area like the West Bank simply because the majority of people is Arab?

In sum, a fair and balanced portrayal of the Middle East will reveal that one nation stands far above the others in its commitment to human rights and democracy as well as in its commitment to peace and mutual security. That nation is Israel.



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GREATER JERUSALEM



SIXTEEN FACTS THAT EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT ISRAEL

(from a biblical perspective)

by Jacob Prasch

Two peoples claim the same land in the Middle East. Whose land is it? Who is right: Israel or the Palestinians? Does it belong to both peoples? Who has the right to decide to whom the Land belongs? Israel? The Arab League? The United States? The United Nations Security Council? The United Nations General Assembly? How should it be decided? By the Koran? By the various competing claims of history? By voting? By war? When the Word of God speaks authoritatively on any subject, that is the final word. God has much to say about the Land and people of Israel in His supernatural revelation, the Bible, which is the very Word of God.

Fact No.1. The Jewish people are the Chosen People: After Adam and Eve sinned, humanity deteriorated so badly that God destroyed the early world of men with the Great Flood. Noah and his family knew the Lord, and were spared, but after they came out of the Ark and started repopulating, their descendants abandoned God, became idolatrous, perverse and evil. Then God created a special nation to be a light to the other nations. The Creator of the universe specifically chose the nation of Israel to be that unique people who would witness to His reality. *"For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the people who are on the face of the Earth"* (Deuteronomy 7:6).

"You are My witnesses," declares the Lord, "and My servant whom I have chosen, in order that you may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, and there will be none after Me. I, even I am the Lord; and there is no Saviour beside Me" (Isaiah 43:10-11). If the Chosen People were faithful to our calling, God promised to bless us above all the other nations, so that the nations of the world would know that the God of Israel is the true God who alone can save us, by reconciling us to Himself, thereby restoring us to peace, joy, blessing and life. But if we were disobedient to our calling, the Lord promised to severely punish us so that the nations of the world would learn a lesson from us, and know that it is a terrible thing to disobey the God of Israel. Either way, through our obedience or disobedience, the Cho-

sen People would witness to the other nations of the world that the God of Israel is to be reckoned with.

Fact No.2. The Land of Israel belongs to God: *"The Earth is the Lord's and all it contains, the world and those who dwell in it"* (Psalm 24:1). Since the entire world belongs to God, He has the right to apportion it as He chooses, and He specifically gave the nations their lands based on the Jewish people's right to the Land of Israel! *"When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of man, He set the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the sons of Israel. For the Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the allotment of His inheritance"* (Deuteronomy 32:8-9).

Fact No.3. The Chosen People needed a Chosen Land, and so the God of Israel strategically chose the Land of Israel for the People of Israel: *"This is Jerusalem; I have set her at the centre of the nations, with lands around her"* (Ezekiel 5:5). The Land that God chose for us is located in the centre of the nations, connecting the continents of Europe, Africa and Asia. Because of this strategic location, the Jewish people had ample exposure to all the nations of the world.

Fact No.4. The Land of Israel was given by God to the descendants of Abraham as an everlasting possession: *"The Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this Land"* (Genesis 12:7). God further said to Abraham: *"I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. And I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession"* (Genesis 17:7-8).

Fact No.5. Even though Abraham had many sons, the Land of Israel wasn't given to Ishmael, or to any of the other sons of Abraham, but only to Isaac: *"Abraham said to God, "Oh that Ishmael might live before You!" But God said 'No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlast-*

ing covenant for his descendants after him" (Genesis 17:18-19). God rejected Abraham's request that Ishmael be the heir of the covenant, and appointed Isaac instead. Years later the Lord God appeared to Isaac and said, *"to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore to your father Abraham. And I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven and will give your descendants all these lands; and by your descendants all the nations of the Earth shall be blessed"* (Genesis 26:3-4). Knowing that Isaac was the heir of the covenant, which included the Land of Israel, Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac. He gave gifts to his other sons, but he sent them away to the lands of the east, not wanting the heir of the everlasting covenant to have rivalry over the Land of Israel from his siblings. (Genesis 25:5-6).

Fact No.6. Even though Isaac had two sons, the Land wasn't given to Esau, but to Jacob: One night Jacob had a dream while fleeing from his brother Esau. In his dream the Lord said to him, *"I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac; the Land on which you lie, I will give it to you and to your descendants."* (Genesis 28:13). God later appeared to Jacob and said to him, *"the Land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac, I will give it to you, and I will give the Land to your descendants after you"* (Genesis 35:11-12). This promise deeds the Land of Israel to the descendants of Jacob - the Jewish people of today.

Fact No.7. There is no doubt about Israel's God-given borders because they are described for us in detail in the Holy Scriptures: *"The Lord said to Abram after Lot had separated from him, "Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever... Arise, walk about the land through its length and breadth; for I will give it to you"* (Genesis 13:14-17). *"The Lord made a covenant with Abraham, saying, "To your descendants I have given this Land, from the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates"* (Genesis 15:18-21). *"I will fix your boundary from the Red Sea to the sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness to the River Euphrates"* (Exodus 23:31). Therefore we must conclude that the entire Land of Israel, including Judea and Samaria (the so-called "West Bank"), Gaza, the Golan Heights, and all of Jerusalem, was given by the God of Israel to the people of Israel in perpetuity. We, and we alone, have been given the title to the Land of Israel as a permanent inheritance

by the Lord. No human government or coalition of governments has the right or authority to cede portions of the Land of Israel to anyone else.

Fact No.8. In addition to the everlasting covenant (which includes the Land), God swore an oath to give the Jewish people this Land: Keep in mind that it's absolutely impossible for God to break an oath (see Hebrews 6:16-18). In the Holy Scriptures, this oath is reiterated more than forty times. Here is just one example: *"He has remembered His covenant forever, the word which He commanded to a thousand generations, the covenant which He made with Abraham, and His oath to Isaac. Then He confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant, saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan as the portion of your inheritance"'* (Psalm 105:8-11). There is no other passage in which there are so many words used to describe God's unyielding commitment to Israel: covenant, word, oath, confirm, commandment, a thousand generations, statute, everlasting covenant. A person has to have a terrible bias not to understand that God is assuring the Jewish people the perpetual right to the Land of Israel in the strongest possible language.

Fact No.9. Israel's sin and resulting exile from the Land of Israel never annulled God's covenant with His Chosen People, nor did it permanently abrogate our right to the Land of Israel: *"Yet in spite of this (Israel's disobedience), when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, nor will I so abhor them as to destroy them, breaking My covenant with them; for I am the Lord their God. But I will remember for them the covenant with their ancestors"* - which includes the Land of Israel (Leviticus 26:44-45). Our exile from Israel was meant to be temporary! In Deuteronomy 30:1-5, Moses specifically predicted that we would experience a time of obedience and blessing within the Land, followed by a period of disobedience and exile from the Land, followed by spiritual restoration to God and physical restoration to the Land: *"So it shall be when all of these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind in all nations where the Lord your God has banished you, and you return to the Lord your God and obey Him with all your heart and soul according to all that I command you today, you and your sons, then the Lord your God will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all the people where the Lord your God has scattered you. If your outcasts are at the ends of the Earth, from there the Lord your God will gather you, and from there He*

will bring you back. And the Lord your God will bring you into the Land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it." It's no coincidence that after two thousand years of exile, the Chosen People are being restored to the Land that our fathers possessed, and simultaneously, we are being spiritually restored to God through the Messiah, as is evidenced by the growth of the Messianic Jewish movement in Israel and around the world.

The Son of God Himself predicted that because the majority of Israel did not believe He was the Messiah, Jerusalem would be destroyed, and we would be exiled among the nations, but eventually, we would return to Israel (Luke 21:23-24). This prophecy began in 70 AD when Jerusalem was destroyed, and then again in 135 AD, when the Second Jewish Revolt against the Roman Empire was crushed. We were scattered to the nations, and lost political control of Jerusalem. However, over the past 2,000 years, there were always some Jewish people who remained in the Land of Israel. Starting in the 1880's, this prophesied regathering of Jewish people to Israel picked up speed, and now there is a reborn nation of Israel, with Jerusalem as its capital, with 5.3 million Jewish people regathered from more than 70 countries, just as Israel's Messiah predicted.

Fact No.10. In His prophetic Word, God promised to regather us to "our own Land": *"I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands, and bring you into your own Land... And you will live in the Land that I gave to your forefathers"* (Ezekiel 36:24, 28). Again Ezekiel predicts: *"Thus says the Lord God, 'Behold, I will take the sons of Israel from among the nations where they have gone, and I will gather them from every side and bring them into their own Land'"* (Ezekiel 37:21). Jeremiah adds: *"Behold days are coming' declares the Lord, when it will no longer be said, "As the Lord lives, who brought up the sons of Israel out of the land of Egypt," but, "As the Lord lives, who brought up the sons of Israel from the land of the north and from all the countries where He had banished them." For I will restore them to their own Land which I gave to their fathers'"* (Jeremiah 16:14-15). Ultimately this regathering to our own Land will be greater than the Exodus out of Egypt!

Fact No.11. In His prophetic Word, God calls this restored Land "Israel" - not "Palestine": *"I will open up your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves, My people; and I will bring you into the Land of Israel"* (Ezekiel 37:12). The name "Palestine" comes from the Philistines, the ancient enemies of the Jewish people.

"Palestine" was the derogatory name given to the Land of Israel by the Romans after they conquered us. But throughout the Word of God, this Land is always called Israel - never Palestine.

Fact No.12. God, speaking to us through the prophet Ezekiel, informs us that this Land is specifically reserved for the Jewish people: *"You O mountains of Israel, you will put forth your branches and bear your fruit for My people Israel; for they will soon come. For behold, I am for you, and I will turn to you, and you will be cultivated and sown. I will multiply men on you, all the house of Israel, all of it; and the cities will be inhabited and the waste places will be rebuilt"* (Ezekiel 36:8-10). 2,500 years ago Ezekiel told us that in the Last Days the Jewish people would be restored to our Land. The Land would begin to prosper and the Jewish population would greatly increase. In the past century these prophetic words have been coming to pass. The Land of Israel, which lay barren for centuries, has seen increasing numbers of the sons of Israel returning to our ancient homeland, repopulating the cities and cultivating the Land.

Fact No.13. 2,500 years ago the Lord also told us that the Jewish return to the Land would provoke a reaction from Israel's neighbours: *"Because the enemy has spoken against you "'Aha' and 'The everlasting heights have become our possession'... Surely in the fire of My jealousy I have spoken against the rest of the nations, and against all Edom, who appropriated My Land for themselves as a possession with wholehearted joy and scorn of soul, to drive it out as a prey"* (Ezekiel 36:2-5). Even though the nations surrounding Israel would claim possession of the Land of Israel for themselves, and try to drive out its rightful Jewish inhabitants, God repudiates the claims of these nations. Even though the majority of the Jewish people were exiled from our Land (there always was a remnant of Jewish people who remained within Israel), that doesn't give anyone else the right to claim the Land of Israel for themselves. If a landlord has some bad tenants that he evicts from his property, he does not expect anyone else to enter his vacant property and claim it for their own. Due to our sins, the Landlord of Israel evicted most of us from the Land, but that didn't give the Romans, the Byzantines, the Crusaders, the Ottomans or the Arabs the right to claim God's holy Land for themselves.

Fact No.14. God will severely judge any nation who divides up any part of this special Land: *"In those days and at that time when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all the nations*

and bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat. Then I will enter into judgment with them there on behalf of My people and My inheritance Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations; and they have divided up My Land" (Joel 3:1-2). When Messiah Yeshua returns, the fortunes of the Jewish people will be fully restored, and the nations will be summoned to Jerusalem, where they will be judged for scattering the Jewish people and dividing up our Land.

Fact No.15. Eventually this conflict over the Land of Israel will entangle the entire world: God, speaking through the prophet Zechariah in 12:1-3, in the Sixth Century BC, predicted: "Behold I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that causes reeling to all the peoples around" (the nations will react to the regathering of the Jewish people with senseless behaviour and irrational hatred); "and when the siege is against Jerusalem, it will also be against Judah. And it will come about in that day that I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples" (Israel's Islamic neighbours want to destroy the hated "Zionist Entity" because the Islamic worldview teaches that the entire world will ultimately come under the control of Islam. A Jewish state in the midst of the Moslem Middle East is by its very existence an insult to Allah and Islam, and must be destroyed. Islam can have no true and lasting peace with Israel - only a temporary cease-fire. Hostilities will once again be renewed when Islamic strength is renewed. At its core, this is a religious conflict - not a political or economic one); "all who lift it will be severely injured." (The nations of the world will be drawn into this conflict and try to remove the Jewish presence from Jerusalem. However, be warned - every nation that tries to remove the Jewish people from our Land and capital city will be severely injured). "And all the nations of the Earth will be gathered against it." (The world's united nations will wage a final world war in the Middle East, directed against Israel). It's amazing to see this 2,500-year-old prophetic scenario shaping up before our very eyes! Zechariah's prophecy continues and informs us that the army of the united nations will be defeated; God will destroy all those nations that fight against Israel; Israel will be miraculously saved and recognize Yeshua as the Messiah!

Fact No.16. This will be a time of great difficulty for the Jewish people, but we will be miraculously delivered out of it: "Alas! for that day is great, there is none like it; and it is the time of Jacob's distress, but he will be saved from it" (Jeremiah 30:7). The fires of anti-Semitism will reach their hottest point in the near future,

but with God's help, we will come through our fiery trials to a time of unparalleled salvation. Israel's salvation and blessing will then overflow to the other nations of the world.

Sadly, many Christians won't accept these facts because they accept "Replacement Theology," the erroneous teaching that God is finished with the Jewish people, and has replaced Israel with the Church. Speaking to us through the prophet Jeremiah, the Lord specifically warns against having a theology that denies Israel's future destiny: "*Have you not observed what this people have spoken, saying, 'The two families which the Lord chose, He has rejected them?' Thus they despise My people, no longer are they as a nation in their sight. Thus says the Lord, 'If My covenant for day and night stand not, and the fixed patterns of Heaven and Earth I have not established, then I would reject the descendants of Jacob and David My servant, not taking from His descendants rulers over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But I will restore their fortunes and will have mercy on them!'"* (Jeremiah 33:24-26). All of God's promises to the Jewish people will literally be fulfilled! Christians must repudiate "Replacement Theology." No one who claims to follow the Messiah ought to teach or believe that the Jewish people have been lost, destroyed, replaced, superseded, permanently set aside or continually exiled from our Land.

Don't ignore the admonition given by Rabbi Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, specifically directed to Gentile Christians, which I paraphrase here: "*do not be arrogant toward the natural branches, the Jewish people. God chose them to be the root of the Tree of Salvation. They support you - you don't support or replace them! Only some of them were broken off from the Tree of Salvation - not all of them. Moreover, it is God's plan to graft the entire Jewish nation back into the Tree of Salvation, so don't be arrogant or conceited toward the Jewish people. Be respectful to them, lest God punish you!*" (Romans 11:17-24).

Someone observed that knowing that God will not break His covenant with the Jewish people, even in spite of our sins, should be reassuring to every Christian. If God broke His covenant with the Jewish people (which includes the Land of Israel) due to our sins, what about twenty centuries of Christian history? It's true that there has been a faithful remnant within the Church, just as there has always been a faithful remnant of true Believers within Israel, but there has also been an endless succession of anti-Semitism, heresy, apos-

tasy, greed, immorality, division, and ceaseless struggles for power and prominence within the visible Church. Professing Christians have subjected fellow Christians to torture and death in the name of Christ. If God can annul His covenant with Israel, then He can just as easily annul His covenant with the Church! But the faithful God will never break any of His covenants with Israel or the Church.

If you are a Christian you need to stand by Israel, and support Israel as much as possible. God's ancient promise in Genesis 12:3 is still very much in effect: "*I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse.*" And God, speaking to Israel, promises, "*Behold, all those who are angered at you will be shamed and dishonoured; those who contend with you will be as nothing and will perish. You will seek those who quarrel with you, but will not find them, those who war with you will be as nothing and non-existent*" (Isaiah 41:11-12).

Christian churches should regularly pray "for the peace of Jerusalem," asking God to send King Messiah back to Jerusalem, so He can rule on the throne of David, bringing peace to Israel and the other nations. There will never be peace in the Middle East, or on Earth, until Messiah Yeshua is ruling from Jerusalem over a restored Israel populated by Messianic Jews. We need to pray for our Arab brothers, that they too might come into relationship with the God of Israel through Messiah Yeshua.

Rather than persecuting us for the death of Yeshua, and engaging in any form of anti-Semitism, true Christians must reach out to the Jewish people with love and mercy, and help us find God and the Messiah. Because of the way that God has used Israel to bring salvation to the other nations, every true Christian is under a special obligation to help the Chosen People, who have stumbled, come into a right relationship with God, which includes Messiah Yeshua. Rabbi Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, declared: "*Salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel jealous*" (Romans 11:11). True Christians should have compassion on us, love us and make us jealous of their relationship with the God of Israel. Your peace and joy, your love and mercy, and your knowledge of God and Messiah should challenge us to re-evaluate our rejection of Yeshua.

Finally, Christians need to support those who are reaching out to the Jewish people with the Good News about Messiah Yeshua, supporting those that not only bless Israel, but also bring us the Good News.

NEW JEWISH PERSPECTIVE

on

CHRISTIANS AND CHRISTIANITY

ISRAEL and CHRISTIANS TODAY - Autumn 2000

A statement on Christians and Christianity has recently been drawn up by four Jewish scholars in the United States. It has received the support of nearly 170 Jewish leaders from around the world including leading UK academics such as Dr Edward Kessler, Rabbi Jeremy Rosen, Dr Nicholas de Lange, Rabbi Julian Sinclair and Dr Geza Vermes. The statement, entitled Dabru Emet (speak truth), has been written in response to what the scholars describe as 'a dramatic and unprecedented shift in Jewish and Christian relations'.

The scholars acknowledge the unprecedented recent statements of remorse by Christians [reported in past issues of this newspaper] and list the following eight statements about how Jews and Christians 'may relate to one another'.

1. Jews and Christians worship the same God.

Before the rise of Christianity, Jews were the only worshippers of the God of Israel. But Christians also worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; creator of heaven and earth. While Christian worship is not a viable religious choice for Jews, as Jewish theologians we rejoice that, through Christianity, hundreds of millions of people have entered into relationship with the God of Israel.

2. Jews and Christians seek authority from the same book - the Bible (what Jews call *Tanakh* and Christians call the *Old Testament*)

Turning to it for religious orientation, spiritual enrichment, and communal education, we each take away similar lessons: God created and sustains the universe; God established a covenant with the people Israel, God's revealed word guides Israel to a life of righteousness; and God will ultimately redeem Israel and the whole world. Yet, Jews and Christians interpret the Bible differently on many points. Such differences must always be respected.

3. Christians can respect the claim of the Jewish people upon the land of Israel.

The most important event for Jews since the Holocaust has been the re-establishment

of a Jewish state in the Promised Land. As members of a biblically based religion, Christians appreciate that Israel was promised -and given - to Jews as the physical centre of the covenant between them and God. Many Christians support the State of Israel for reasons far more profound than mere politics. As Jews, we applaud this support. We also recognise that Jewish tradition mandates justice for all non-Jews who reside in a Jewish state.

4. Jews and Christians accept the moral principles of Torah.

Central to the moral principles of Torah is the inalienable sanctity and dignity of every human being. All of us were created in the image of God. This shared moral emphasis can be the basis of an improved relationship between our two communities. It can also be the basis of a powerful witness to all humanity for improving the lives of our fellow human beings and for standing against the immoralities and idolatries that harm and degrade us. Such witness is especially needed after the unprecedented horrors of the past century.

5. Nazism was not a Christian phenomenon.

Without the long history of Christian anti-Judaism and Christian violence against Jews, Nazi ideology could not have taken hold nor could it have been carried out. Too many Christians participated in, or were sympathetic to, Nazi atrocities against Jews. Other Christians did not protest sufficiently against these atrocities. But Nazism itself was not an inevitable outcome of Christianity. If the Nazi extermination of the Jews had been fully successful, it would have turned its murderous rage more directly to Christians. We recognise with gratitude those Christians who risked or sacrificed their lives to save Jews during the Nazi regime. With that in mind, we encourage the continuation of recent efforts in Christian theology to repudiate unequivocally contempt of Judaism and the Jewish people. We applaud those Christians who reject this teaching of contempt, and we do not blame them for the sins committed by their ancestors.

6. The humanly irreconcilable difference between Jews and Christians will not be settled until God redeems the entire world as promised in scripture.

Christians know and serve God through Jesus Christ and the Christian tradition. Jews know and serve God through Torah and the Jewish tradition. That difference will not be settled by one community insisting that it has interpreted scripture more accurately than the other; nor by exercising political power over the other. Jew's can respect Christians' faithfulness to their revelation just as we expect Christians to respect our faithfulness to our revelation. Neither Jew nor Christian should be pressed into affirming the teaching of the other community.

7. A new relationship between Jews and Christians will not weaken Jewish practice.

An improved relationship will not accelerate the cultural and religious assimilation that Jews rightly fear. It will not change traditional Jewish forms of worship, nor increase intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews, nor persuade more Jews to convert to Christianity, nor create a false blending of Judaism and Christianity. We respect Christianity as a faith that originated within Judaism and that still has significant contacts with it. We do not see it as an extension of Judaism. Only if we cherish our own traditions can we pursue this relationship with integrity.

8. Jews and Christians must work together for justice and peace.

Jews and Christians, each in their own way, recognise the unredeemed state of the world as reflected in the persistence of persecution, poverty, and human degradation and misery. Although justice and peace are finally God's, our joint efforts, together with those of other faith communities, will help bring the kingdom of God for which we hope and long. Separately and together, we must work to bring justice and peace to our world. In this enterprise, we are guided by the vision of the prophets of Israel:

"It shall come to pass in the end of days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established at the top of the mountains and be exalted above the hills, and the nations shall flow unto it... and many peoples shall go and say, 'come ye and let us go up to the mountain of The Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob and He will teach us of His ways and we will walk in his paths' ". (Isaiah 2:2-3)

WHY THE JEWS ARE ALWAYS TO BLAME

Melanie Phillips say that the Israelis are victims of terror but are being portrayed as cold-hearted, fascist thugs.

© THE SPECTATOR 20 April 2002

It has come to something when the Sun becomes so alarmed at the fire-storm of anti-Israel and anti-Jewish hatred blazing daily out of the British media that it feels the need to publish a full-page leading article telling its readers, 'The Jewish faith is not an evil religion'.

Not evil? Why should anyone even think such a vile thing? After all, aren't the Jews in Israel the victims of terror? Aren't they being blown to bits by suicide bombers who are deliberately targeting elderly Holocaust survivors at Passover Seders and children in pizza parlours? Haven't they suffered casualties that would be equivalent in Britain to some 4,000 dead and many thousands more injured since this intifada began in November 2000?

But Israel has committed a heinous crime. That crime is to seek to defend itself against the attempt to annihilate it. For this effrontery, a torrent of lies, distortions, libels, abandonment of objectivity and the substitution of malice and hatred for truth is pouring out of the British and European media and Establishment.

The authorised version, from which there is barely any deviation, goes as follows. The Palestinians, denied a homeland by Israel and understandably driven to terrorism in their despair, are now under murderous assault by Israel's Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon, who is using the suicide bombings as an excuse to destroy the Palestinians.

This will understandably produce more suicide bombings; so, if more Israelis are blown to smithereens, it will be their own fault. Indeed, all this mayhem is their fault anyway because they won't negotiate. If only they would give the Palestinians what they want, the violence would end, and the world would be a safer place. As it is, the whole region may go

up in flames, Israel included. That, too, will be Israel's fault.

The double standards, twisted history and hate-imbued moral blindness in this analysis defy belief. Imagine if a terror organisation camped out in, say, Wales, were sending suicide bombers into English towns and cities every day, murdering dozens of people every week and injuring thousands more. Would anyone seriously suggest that Tony Blair should not use the army to stop the killings but instead should negotiate the terrorists' demands while they continued to murder British citizens?

But for the British and European media, Israel doesn't do self-defence, apparently; it only does revenge and collective punishment. Because, hey, doesn't everyone know from their cradle that vengeance is the Jewish thing?

Thus the battle in Jenin was an Israeli massacre. The media know it happened because the Palestinians said so, and that must be true because everyone knows that Israel is awful and Sharon is a butcher and, oh yes, a Jewish Nazi. So they tell the world about the undoubted suffering in Jenin and the brutality of the Israelis, often without even recording the Israeli version of events. This was that Jenin was riddled with men ready and armed for suicide missions; the Israelis had offered the gunmen in Jenin safe passage if they surrendered, but the terrorists had booby-trapped their houses and were determined to make a deadly last stand.

The devastation in Jenin is indeed dreadful. But war is not pleasant. If terrorists hide among civilians, there will obviously be countless human tragedies; this is a war, however, not a massacre. If the Israelis had really wanted to kill Palestinians indiscriminately, they would have carpet-bombed them. Instead, they engaged in the tactic most dangerous to themselves - house-to-house searches.

Some 23 Israeli soldiers died in Jenin, a grievous toll for this tiny country.

Israel, for all its faults, is a democracy and an open society. The Palestinian Authority is a corrupt despotism which has brainwashed its people into believing mediaeval blood libels against the Jews. But Western journalists and intellectuals automatically assume that the Israelis are telling lies. For everyone knows that the Israelis cannot be victims because they are always to blame.

In the same fashion, everyone knows that Chairman Arafat is not a terrorist. He is a statesman with the support of such world figures as EU commissioner Chris Patten. The worst Arafat is guilty of, according to Patten, is failing to denounce suicide bombings with sufficient vigour. Israel, by contrast, as a democracy 'contradicts much of what it stands for'. Dear me. So just what do Chairman Arafat and the Palestinian Authority (PA) stand for?

Many of the suicide bombings carried out in the last few weeks have been the work of outfits connected to Fatah, the PA's terror department. Israel has produced seized documents bearing Arafat's signature relating to payments for bombs made to men who they say were orchestrating suicide attacks. If anyone doesn't believe Israel, they should look at what the PA itself has said. In December 2000 Sakhr Habash, a Fatah official, told the PA daily Al-Hayat Al-Jadida that the intifada was being orchestrated by Arafat. 'The leadership of the PA remained the source of authority, and it alone was the factor capable of leading the operations of the intifada throughout the homeland. I can say for certain that brother Abu-Ammar [Arafat] is the ultimate authority for all operations, and whoever thinks otherwise does not know what is going on....'

Even worse is the PA's incitement to children to become 'martyrs' and suicide bombers. It puts out sickening, mesmeric television appeals which glorify the sacrifice of children, urging them to come forward and blow themselves up, and their families are paid blood money for the terrorist deaths of their brainwashed children.

On the basis of such facts, Arafat should be put on trial as the fount of terror. But of course we cannot expect our media to report such evidence. After all, has not the Nobel Peace Prize committee shown the proper response to Arafat's terrorism by calling not for Arafat but for Israel's former prime minister, Shimon Peres, to be deprived of the 1994 peace

prize they shared? Clearly, for the Europeans, if suicide bombs are going off, the right response is to attack the victims.

The reason everyone gives for blaming Israel is the running sore of the West Bank and Gaza. There is no doubt that Israel has behaved badly to the Palestinians in these territories. It was wholly wrong to settle them; those settlements should have been dismantled and the territories returned years ago.

But the territories are a monumental diversion from the issue, which is that the Palestinians want the Jewish state destroyed. They do not want a 'two-state' solution. That was offered in 1948 and - with only a few brave exceptions - has been rejected by the Arabs from that time onwards. Their demand for the 'right of return' of all Palestinians to Israel - in addition to their own state - which would destroy the Jewish homeland, makes that clear. Sakhr Habash has said, 'When we declare the establishment of a state and independence, we will have the right to liberate the rest of the occupied land...'. The leading Palestinian dove Faisal Husseini told the Egyptian daily *Al-Arabi* in July 2001 shortly before he died that the peace process was a 'Trojan horse' and that the long-term goal was 'the liberation of Palestine from the river to the sea'.

The territories are not the issue, above all, because Israel did offer them back. At Camp David and then at Taba in 2000 Israel offered back some 96 per cent of the West Bank and Gaza, plus half of Jerusalem, a gesture widely agreed to be startlingly courageous.

The Palestinians claim that this still didn't amount to a viable state. But anyone negotiating in good faith would have presented an alternative peace proposal. Instead, Arafat responded by starting the intifada and unleashing the suicide bombers. Imad Al-Faluji, the PA communications minister, was reported on more than one occasion as saying that the intifada was a premeditated response to the Palestinians' failure to achieve their goals at Camp David.

But everyone knows that giving back the territories would bring peace. Just as they knew that when Israel withdrew from Lebanon there would be peace there because Sharon was to blame then too, big time. So Israel withdrew and what has been the result? Armed by Iran (from whom a shipment of arms was intercepted en route to the non-terrorist Arafat), Hezbollah now has 8,000 Katyusha rock-

ets trained on Israel's northern towns, and has been lobbing mortars at Israeli targets.

Have the media acknowledged this? Did they report the fact that journalists had to flee for their lives after trying to take footage of Palestinians who had been shot and strung up as Israeli collaborators? Did they report that ambulances were being used to harbour terrorists? Did they report that the Palestinian 'victims' holed up in the Church of the Nativity had shot the locks off the church and desecrated it by taking it and its inhabitants hostage? Did they report Israel's list of the terrorists in that church? Of course not; because everyone knows that whatever terrible deeds the Palestinians commit, it's always the Israelis who are to blame.

There is a widespread view that the Middle East impasse has to be solved before the assault on terror can proceed. This is precisely the wrong way round. There will be no prospect of the Palestinians making peace until their terrorist sponsors in Iran, Iraq and Syria are dealt with.

Israel's incursions are said to have inflamed Arab grievances and made terror attacks more likely. When the Americans launched their attack on al-Qa'eda, their action was conceived as an attack on Islam, thus justifying further outrages. So it is with the Palestinians. They view Israeli self-defence as an unjustified assault. The response of Britain and Europe is not to acknowledge that this is a monstrous inversion of moral reasoning but to agree that such self-defence is an act of brutality.

This is in part because the mind-twisting of the terrorist feeds the moral confusion of the West's corrupted liberal orthodoxy. This sees a moral equivalence between terror and measures to protect against it. Believing there is no such thing as truth, it embraces lies instead and cannot distinguish victims from their victimisers. And, of course, Israelis can't be victims because they have the power of America behind them. After all, everyone knows that the Jews run America.

The facts are, as ever, somewhat different. The Jews are merely one lobby among many. The biggest and most uncritical American supporters of Israel are the evangelical Christians. America gives as much aid to Arab states such as Egypt as it does to Israel. The biggest funder of the PA is Commissioner Patten's EU. Does he ever stop to ponder the fact that this has funded the guns and explosives

with which the PA is murdering Israeli families? Of course not; because Commissioner Patten knows that Israel is to blame.

The view that America is run by Jews is a classic anti-Semitic trope. And here comes the really vicious bit: just as everyone knows Arafat cannot be a terrorist, so everyone also knows that the Jews always start whingeing about anti-Semitism to cover up their own misdeeds. A.N. Wilson has told us so in the *Evening Standard*. Indeed, he mused, he was no longer sure that he was against terrorism at all. Because, after all, it was Israel that was committing the 'wilful' burning of church buildings and massacring the innocent.

For the real crime of Israel is this: to have fought back. Jews aren't supposed to do this. They are supposed to go passively to their deaths. If the Jews do fight, they should lose. What they must never do is to win.

People who think that the Jews are all-powerful cannot imagine that Israel could ever be destroyed. But it is all too possible. Continuous terror through suicide bombing - the weapon that tears up the rules of human behaviour - could so demoralise it, cripple its economy and sap its military strength that it could finally become vulnerable to the Arab states that have always wanted it gone. An armed Palestinian state imposed by Chris Patten's EU would then really be revealed as a Trojan horse.

But if all those who believe the Jews run America really think that the world would be better off if only those dreadful Jews would kindly disappear, they should think again. For radical Islam, the West is next on the list.

The question is whether the West will stand shoulder-to-shoulder with Israel in its war against terror or whether it will side with terror against it. At present the signs are ominous. The leitmotiv of the state of Israel, forged after the world looked the other way from the Holocaust, is 'never again'. The West has now given its response: 'Yes, again'; and if they are destroyed, the Jews, as ever, will be to blame.

Melanie Phillips is a Daily Mail columnist.

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A WORD CONCERNING ISRAEL AND THE CHURCH?

(edited extract from an e-mail received June 2002)

Mark R. Ensign is the leader of Adot Adonai in Amarillo, Texas, USA
and the author of the paper, 'The Torah is not the Law'.

A PS added at the beginning.

Before you read on, I am compelled by the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit) to ask you to be extremely sensitive about sharing this message with others. Unlike other updates, you are hereby granted permission to share this message and forward it via e-mail. But, please pause in prayer before our Father and ask the Ruach HaKodesh to guide you and direct you specifically to send this to people who need it. Please pass it on only to individuals the Ruach Hakodesh specifically directs because he will know the state of their hearts and spirits and whether they are prepared to receive and handle this message. Thank you. I think you will understand my impassioned plea after you finish reading. Similarly, you may print this letter and share it as the Ruach HaKodesh directs you, one on one.

Shalom, dear lovers of YHVH, our loving Father, Y'shua his Son who came as YHVH in the flesh, Bnei Yisrael (all the sons of Israel) and Eretz Yisrael, the Land of Israel.

As I am sure many of you are, my heart is really grieving for all my beloved friends in Israel, almost all of whom I have never met. You ask, "How can you have so many beloved friends in Israel and have not met them - not even by e-mail?" Here's my answer.

I've come to the point that if one is a lover of YHVH (G-d) and trying to follow our Abba's loving instructions, the Torah, to the best of his/her ability, even if it does not include acceptance of Y'shua HaMashiach out of ignorance or blindness or not having been offered the truth, he/she is my beloved friend. All of those in that condition ARE my beloved friends. They love the same G-d and Father I know and worship and serve - the one revealed in the same Bible. Yes, they love YHVH and I love YHVH and we both worship and honor and serve Him, although in different ways.

Both of us are awaiting the coming (first or second time) of Moshiach -the Messiah of all Israel as is prophesied.

"I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will

weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn." (Zech. 12:10)

I pray that as they look upon him and mourn they will call upon Him for salvation which he freely gives.

And both of us will only be saved by the manifest greatness of YHVH as he pours out his grace, mercy and loving kindness upon those who love him and seek him. So I and my untold number of beloved friends have a great deal in common. And that is why my heart is so grieved and I'm sharing with you from a broken heart.

Tonight former PM Binyamin Netanyahu said that the number of Americans that would have been killed in the terrorist attacks on Israel in the last 20 months (not years or decades but months), when computed as a comparative fraction of the population, would be 25,000 to 30,000!!! How terrible was the tragedy of America when we lost about 10% of 30,000 on 9/11? Can we even begin to comprehend what our beloved friends in Israel have experienced?

The stories I've read in just the recent past of the personal tragedies of family ripped apart by bombings and home invasions and drive-by shootings, etc etc. tears my heart out and my anger (righteous indignation) rises. This is my family - my beloved friends - who are being decapitated, amputated, mutilated, blasted with screws and nails that rip into the soft flesh of children!!! These are my mothers, my brothers, my sisters, my children, my grandchildren whose lives are being

changed forever or terminated. Yes, beloved readers who love YHVH, these are your family and beloved friends too. Do you get it?

When will this reign of terror against our family - our beloved friends ever end? When will the terrorism against the "people of the book" (as the radical Muslims call the Jews and Christians), wherever they are located, ever end? I believe it will only end when the Sar HaShalom, the Prince of Peace, returns to rule and reign from Yerushalayim (Jerusalem) in the Millennium of Shalom when the Torah will go forth from Zion and will be written on the hearts of every man (Jer 31:33) and everyone will know YHVH from the least to the greatest (Jer 31:32). What a great experience in living that will be - true living and not existing as so many of us are experiencing now while awaiting the glorious day of the L-rd and his return.

So what do we do in the mean time? I sure don't have all the answers but I offer a few for your consideration.

Above all, get to know YHVH, the ALMIGHTY, the CREATOR of heaven and earth, the KING of kings and L_RD of lords, in all his majesty, glory and fullness as revealed in his Word. The study of his Word is the HIGHEST form of worship for without study you can't really know the One to whom you say you are offering your worship.

So if you are spending most of your time in worship through music and dancing and spiritual ecstasy that seems so fulfilling, I encourage you to try the Word - the meat - that will draw you into a deeper and more loving relationship with the One who created you and love you and gave himself for you from the foundation of the earth.

So if you are getting your wisdom about YHVH and the unfolding of his plans and purposes from the books of prophecy and commentary by "profits" and false prophets, the fictionalised stories of "rapture" and life after the false hope of the "rapture," etc. I suggest you spend that valuable time in the books of YHVH's true prophets (you know -Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Joel, etc.) and let THE TEACHER, the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit) lead you into all truth - his Word is THE TRUTH. As Y'shua said, *"Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth."* (John 17:17.)

So if you are getting all the hype - and the fleecing of the sheep - and the feel good - and the false promises of riches and seeking the gift rather than the giver - and the _____ and _____ (you fill in the blanks for you could go on and on) from the TV preachers and the televangelists (oops, telemarketers) with the latest and greatest book, tape, trinket, etc. I suggest you spend that irreplaceable time with the Word of the One who loves you and desires an intimate relationship with you and in cultivating the relationship he has promised that you will never find through the TV screen.

Rav Sha'ul wrote to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 10:1-13) some of the greatest words of admonition for these times. Won't you take a minute (yes, right now) to look these up and read them in your favourite version? See if they don't help you understand the overriding priority of study of the Torah in preparation for these last days. STOP did you read those verses? OK, continue.

I dare say that your Tanakh (Old Testament) has more information that will be vital to your endurance to the end of testing than does the whole Brit Chadashah (New Testament). Don't get me wrong, I'm not asking you to throw out the Brit Chadashah but only to study the foundation of the Brit Chadashah, the Torah, Nevi'im and Ketuvim (Instructions, Prophets and Writings - the Old Testament) for critical and relevant instructions for enduring to the end found therein.

Now, for a taste of your future in this world, see what Rav Sha'ul and the Apostles endured by reading what he wrote to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 4:9-14) as his "beloved children" and get yourself prepared. Ok, I won't make you look it up I'll just give it to you to be sure you have no excuse for not reading it.

For, I think, G-d has exhibited us apostles last of all, as men condemned to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are prudent in Christ; we are weak, but you are strong; you are distinguished, but we are without honor. To this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, and are poorly clothed, and are roughly treated, and are homeless; and we toil, working with our own hands; when we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure; when we are slandered, we try

to conciliate; we have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things, even until now. I do not write these things to shame you, but to admonish you as my beloved children." (1 Cor. 4:9-14)

Why do we think that such hardships will never come upon us? Could it be we are so spiritual, so heavenly minded that the god we have created in our minds (not the True G-d revealed in the Scriptures) would never let this happen to us? If that's the god you worship and serve, the one you've created in your mind, I warn you that the real One has told us to make no gods before him. Such mental creations are just as much idols (and the worship of them just as much idolatry) as those idols carved from wood or stone.

Now read what real people of faith endured in the last few verses of "the Faith Chapter" - the verses that so-called "faith teachers" never like to read and explain in contrast to their "victory in faith" and "faith in faith" theology. Here, you won't even have to look it up!

"Women received back their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection; and others experienced mockings and scourings, yes, also chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground. (Heb. 11: 35-38)

And here's what Y'shua offered as a glimpse of days to come.

"Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another. Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. Because lawlessness (Torahlessness) is increased, most people's love will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved." (Matt 24:9-13)

And also this from Y'shua

"But be on your guard; for they will deliver you to the courts, and you will be flogged in the synagogues (churches), and

you will stand before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them. The gospel must first be preached to all the nations. When they arrest you and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but it is the Holy Spirit. Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and have them put to death. You will be hated by all because of My name, but the one who endures to the end, he will be saved." (Mark 13:9-13)

Will you be prepared to endure to the end? You and I will never do this by our own wisdom, cunning, knowledge, skill, self-discipline, etc., etc. Only the the guidance and protection of the Ruach HaKodesh and trusting, faithful obedience to our Father's loving instructions - thievery same ones he gave to his beloved, chosen people as he took them out of Egypt - will enable you to endure to the end. For example, if you don't know his loving instructions (not laws) about what you can and cannot eat, you may subject yourself to diseases and even death when you don't have the ability to buy and sell, to refrigerate, etc., etc.

So how do you prepare? Get into the Word and get those divine loving instructions into you - NOW.

I think the time for preparation is short. I am not suggesting that you do anything physically but that you prepare your spirit to hear the voice of the Great Shepherd through the Ruach HaKodesh so that you will be ready, willing and able to follow him in trusting, faithful obedience wherever and whenever he leads you. If, and only if, you are clearly led by the Ruach HaKodesh to make physical preparations should you do so. And be sure it is the same Ruach who leads you into the Word who leads you to make physical preparations

Read these words of Y'shua and contemplate both the times in which we live and the response he expects when he calls you out of Sodom and Gomorrah.

"And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. "It was the same

as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were reselling, they were planting, they were building; but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. "It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed. "On that day, the one who is on the housetop and whose goods are in the house must not go down to take them out; and likewise the one who is in the field must not turn back. "Remember Lot's wife." (Luke 17:26-32)

Yes, remember Lot's wife!!! Not only that she looked back - which you will NOT do - but how Lot and his wife and daughters left the city. Remember?

When morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, "Up, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away in the punishment of the city." But he hesitated. So the men seized his hand and the hand of his wife and the hands of his two daughters, for the compassion of the LORD was upon him; and they brought him out, and put him outside the city. When they had brought them outside, one said, "Escape for your life! Do not look behind you, and do not stay anywhere in the valley; escape to the mountains, or you will be swept away." But Lot said to them, "Oh no, my lords!" (Gen. 19:15-18)

So many lessons here to learn but here are a few.

Do not hesitate when the Ruach HaKodesh tells you to move so that he doesn't have to send angels to seize you by the hand and drag you out of danger. Don't put the compassion of the L-rd to the test. When told to "Escape for your life!" RUN! DRIVE! Whatever it takes to get away! Go where you are told to go. And don't argue with the messengers of the L-rd. They may not look like angels to you but they will be there to instruct you, particularly if you can't heed the gentle but urgent call of the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit). But why wait for angels when you can respond in faithful, trusting obedience?

Now, where was I as the Ruach HaKodesh started me on this outpouring of my heart and spirit - this stream of spiritual consciousness that has flowed out over the two last hours or so?

My heart is so burdened and so torn - but, Baruch HaShem (Praise YHVH), I feel a little healing from sharing these things with you because I love you and feel a part of you - as members of the same body - those who are called as the remnant. Quite frankly, I think of you as my blood kin. I believe many of you are actually the physical seed - no, not really of Avraham for that is too broad - but of Israel (Jacob) who are being called out and identified for the purpose of YHVH, to reunite the whole House of Israel, all of Bnei Yisrael (sons of Israel).

If that is true, and I believe it is, it helps to explain the great kinship the bond - that I feel not only with you (many of whom are Messianic - both Jewish and Israelite - in belief) but also with our family, the Jewish people individually and as a whole, the sons of Judah our ancestors' brother.

No, I'm not heading off into a theological dissertation on this topic. I just hope to plant the thought in your mind for you to take before the L-rd in prayer consideration. You may be more than you think you are. You really may be one of the physical descendants of our Father Israel. You may be the blood relative of hundreds of millions of other Israelites, which includes Jewish people. You may have a share in the heritage that was promised to ancestors - a covenant promise that was never broken by Abba and which he promises to renew at the end of times. You may have a stake in Eretz Yisrael that you can claim one day. I believe Abba by the Ruach HaKodesh is plowing a lot of ground in preparation for the restoration of the full House of the Sons of Israel and their return to the land of promise. Do you sense that? Do you have a drawing to a heritage? Do you feel a growing kinship with your brothers in the House of Israel? Do you have a hunger for the instructions Abba gave to our ancestors in his Word? Do you feel drawn to the land and the people who have pioneered it?

Please, please do not get me wrong. My statement and belief about being the physical see of Israel is NOT about salvation! ALL have sinned and fallen short of the glory of G-d but he offers the righteousness of G-d through faith in Y'shua HaMashiach (Jesus Christ) for ALL those who believe. There is no distinction when it comes to sin and salvation. But there is a distinction when it comes to the generations of the descendants of Israel to

whom the special promises of Abba were given.

We have to get past that old song that says, "Every promise in the book is mine, every chapter, every verse, every line." We have to allow the Ruach HaKodesh to teach us to discern which promises are for whom and recognize that a lot of the promises of YHVH are bad - death and destruction! We've got to realize that the blessings are not for the church while the curses are for the Jews. We've got to find what applies to all Israel (Ephraim and Judah) and what applies to the nations, the goyim, the peoples who do not follow the Torah (Instructions) of our Father.

Oooohhh there is so much I'd feel like writing to you - just like Rav Yachanan wrote: "*Though I have many things to write to you ...*" (2 John 1:12) But now is not the time to share further as the Ruach HaKodesh seems to be drawing this to a close. Rav Yochanan wanted to tell his readers face to face and I sure would like to do that too. But I recognise there is no way for me to do that. So I am grateful for our loving Father's provision of this means of communication through e-mail. If and when the Ruach HaKodesh leads me to pour out my heart to you like I have tonight, I'll try to be obedient. May Abba bless you in every way and encourage you by these words to seek Him in His Word, the Truth for your life, the divine and loving Instructions for your enduring to the end. May He enable you by the teaching of the Ruach HaKodesh to understand and apply his Instructions and practice them now in preparation for application in the future. If they are your habit, your routine, your way of life now, they will be when the time of testing comes.

Please pray for me that the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart as poured out before you will be acceptable in the sight of our Father. And please pray that I will practice what he has asked me to share with you from my heart so I, too, will be ready to endure to the end in the face of the storms. May you and I and all those we love - including all those beloved family and friends we have never met - be kept safe by burying ourselves deep in the hollow of Abba's hand, being covered by his sheltering wing and staying centered in the eye of the storm.

Shalom in Y'shua,

Mark

ISRAEL AND THE CHURCH

by Art Katz
(August 2002)

This cosmic drama is the setting for the church of the Last Days, and the powers of darkness will not regard as serious threat the church in any locality that does not see this cosmic setting. The powers of darkness are the epitome of deception, but they have a faculty to recognize authenticity.

They tremble and fear wherever they see apostolic authenticity in God's people. Wherever they see a congregation of the casual and a conglomerate of individualities going about their own business and their own self-will, whose government is not upon His shoulder, who do not take His Word seriously, who do not see themselves as participants in the eschatological future and are just wanting to "get by" in a succession of services – these same powers yawn and are unmoved.

Israel is for the church God's designated litmus test as to our authenticity and the degree of the truth of our sanctification. Greater saints than we have failed the test historically. Luther, the giant of the Reformation, collapsed at this test. He spent some time with three prominent Rabbis thinking naively that he could persuade them about the truth of the Reformation, and that they would recognize in the Reformation church the revelation of the faith of the God of Israel – but the Rabbis failed to agree. They were no more impressed with Reformed Protestantism than they were with Catholicism.

In fact, their refutation of Luther's biblical arguments for Jesus as the Messiah according to the fulfillment of scripture were of such a horrendous kind that they were regarded as blasphemous. And by that, Luther saw that the very presence of a Jewish or a Judaistic-rejecting body in Reformed Europe constituted a threat to the young Reformation itself. He then lapsed into a kind of foaming at the mouth, by which he produced a book called *The Lies of the Jews* which fuelled the Nazi German persecution of Jews four centuries later. The Jew has ever and always been the severest test for the church. They are a goad and a thorn in our side. There is something about them that is so mockingly intimidating and repugnant.

One of the first significant martyrs of the early church was a man by the name of

Polycarp, who according to *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, was brought to the stake to be burned to death, and the Jews were among the first to find the combustible materials. It says in the account that they did this always. They seem to have taken a malicious delight in aiding in the martyrdom of God's choicest saints, revealing the depth of the hatred against Christianity on the part of Jews who were strung out in all of the Mediterranean communities where the church itself was being established.

Moving the Jew to Jealousy

When Paul said that "...salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them (Israel) jealous" (Romans 11:11 – parenthesis mine), [see *Editor's Note*] we need to know, as the church, that there is something that will be required of us because of Israel's fall. From God's side, the purpose of our salvation is to move Jews to jealousy. If we are not occupied with God's side and His purpose for our salvation, then we are not apostolic; we cannot say that we are authentically under His Lordship. We can have our services, our outreaches, our programs and we can bless the people – and the Lord will let us, but we are not to think that we will have any part with Him in the things that pertain to His eternal purposes.

The first and foremost thing that distinguishes church as church is not its preoccupation with its benefits, but its preoccupation with His benefits. Making a demonstration to the principalities and powers of the air of the manifold wisdom of God is not for our benefit, but for His. We are still centred in ourselves; our blessing; our benefit. What accrues to us by believing. We are saved from tribulation. We are going to heaven. Was the service good? How did you like the preaching? What did you get out of it?

Everything is predicated on us – our likes and our satisfactions. We have brought into the church the egocentrism that occupied us in the world and now have another face – religious or spiritual – but equally egocentric. Can you see that even unconsciously and inadvertently we are so self-centred, and that the very air that we breathe, the egocentric wisdom of the world, has permeated even the church? Every decision we make is predicated, in

the last analysis, on the benefit we receive. We need something to break the power of that self-centred orbit, and God has given us a mandate and a call for something outside of our self-orbit, namely, that the purpose for our being and salvation, from God's perspective, is that we might move Israel to jealousy.

A necessary suffering must always precede anything that has to do with the glory of God. How many will hold steady and bear that suffering in the church before it becomes a glory? Inevitably, if we are together long enough and intensely enough, conditions will arise that will make us to spit our guts out in the betrayal and disappointments that come, not only in others but more painfully in ourselves.

The only reason that we have not tasted that suffering is because we are not together long enough and intensely enough to experience it. Just when it begins to get a bit sticky, we go and find another alternative down the street. We would rather be in a church setting that pleases us; not understanding that church is a place of suffering before it is a place of glory. We will not be an authentic body unless our sole purpose for being is the glory of God – whatever that takes.

If the church is going to move Jews to jealousy, it is not going to be because our amplifiers are louder than the church down the street, or we have a talented musical group. It has got to be demonstration of another kind, a heavenly kind in which abides righteousness, truth and reality.

As we have said, the key to Israel is the Gentile church. And the key to the church is this dynamic of obligation that it would never have chosen for itself, yet is alone calculated to save the church from its religious self-centredness and spiritual egocentricity that would have been its apostolic ruin. We would otherwise be inextricably and unavoidably self-centred, as is true of most individuals, fellowships and movements.

Even the consciousness of what is required is more or less absent from the church's consideration. What kind of demonstration can the church make that will provoke a people who have been the historical enemies of the gospel to the jealousy of the thing that they have despised and resisted till now? Do we have to become more charismatic? What does 'true church' mean? What must they see? What will do it?

The remarkable thing is that Paul lets that statement stand. He gives no explanation as to what he means by that or how it is to be done. As we have said, the church that can move Israel to jealousy is the church that can defeat the powers of the air. Whatever is required for the one, serves also for the other. We know that there are two mysteries to be fulfilled. One is the mystery of Israel and the other is the eternal purpose of God, through the church, of manifesting the manifold wisdom of God to the principalities and powers of the air. These are two mysteries that are waiting to be fulfilled for which purpose God has created all things.

Truth would be one thing that would impress a people who have been the church's toughest critics and who have seen our defects and failures. The love of God would be another. More than we know, we have allowed shabby sentimentality or our natural temperament and disposition to serve in place of the love of God. But God's love is the love of the unlovely, the love of the enemy, the love of the Jew by Gentiles. It is a love that is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. We are presently embarrassingly deficient, and so we are not going to be the church that moves them to jealousy until these are obtained.

Back to Beginnings

Whatever these things are that we are groping for and touching, they cannot be obtained on the basis of Sunday morning services and a mid-week Bible study. It is clear that requirements of this kind demand a totality toward God and to those with whom we are joined. Sunday church is a convenience, but what I am suggesting is profoundly inconvenient. This is the going from house to house once again, breaking bread daily. This is working through issues, tensions, difficulties and misunderstandings, and it is amazing how easily they pop up and how quickly they can bring to nothing a relationship that has been years in the making. It requires and compels us toward a daily vigilance and dependency upon God.

We cannot from our own humanity produce the unmistakable sincerity and authenticity that is required of us. We cannot stamp it out on the production line. We do not get it by going to a three-month discipleship school. It is rather a labour of love, of sacrifice and of suffering under the hand of God, and you will only get it in a church that itself is a place of suffer-

ing. Church is a suffering before it is a glory. It is not the attack that comes from without, but the suffering that comes from within in the misunderstandings, the confusions and the accusations. You cannot believe the way people can sometimes be pressed because of the intensity of issues that arise! You wonder how they could say such things to you! And often there can be no explaining and no arbitrating. It is just something that needs to be borne because we have to bear each other. We are in different places of maturity, self-control and understanding.

Church, of necessity, if it is true church, if it is intensive, if the relationships are true, if it is face-to-face, if we are speaking of real things, if we are speaking the truth in love, if we are correcting, reproving and exhorting, is going to be a place of being misunderstood. We are going to have tensions. There will be times when the tensions will be so thick that you almost stop breathing, where you thought, "This is it. There is no way out. There is no way that there could be understanding and reconciliation." We find that we are utterly cast upon God and His mercy.

There is not only a warp that comes when powers of darkness can intervene, but also in our own awkwardness and inability, especially with words and the way we are heard subjectively. We meant one thing, but it was heard in another way. To untangle that and to come finally to an understanding and agreement requires a tolerance and patience beyond one's capabilities. The time that it takes, the anguish and all of that, is a suffering. But we will not be able to move Israel to jealousy except we have passed through that and have found the reality of God in the midst of it.

It is easier to send Jewish evangelism organisations a monthly contribution and let them do the work of evangelism than that the church in every locality takes up this mandate and obligation to the Jews of its own area. God's criterion of success as church is not whether we are pleased with the services or what we enjoy, but that whatever has been established and created is able to touch Jews. That is why Paul cried, "Who is adequate for these things?" We need to know our inadequacy and insufficiency. It will compel us toward God. It forces us to the issue of the love of God, which is no abstraction, but which grows out of the gratitude for His faithfulness, when we have cast ourselves upon Him again and again out of crisis situations. If it were not for the issue of Israel, then we would never have had the urgency to be-

come this. We would have satisfied ourselves with a much lesser church than that which would have glorified God, because the church that can move Jews to jealousy is the church that will be unto Him a glory. We would not have been that glory if we had not had this requirement.

For Your Sake

There is hardly a church in a thousand that has so much as considered that the criterion of its success is not what it enjoys, but its ability to move the Jews of their locality to jealousy. That criterion is not even so much as considered because we instinctively know that it is an ultimate requirement. Jews are the enemies of the gospel. It is not just that they resist the gospel or are indifferent to it, they actively oppose it. Yet Paul says that they are the enemies of the gospel and then he tacks on, "*for your sake*" (Romans 11:28a). Can you understand why this page has been ripped out of the Bible in modern times? It is as if the church and its teachers have passed over and omitted it because it is radical in its requirement, and both Jew and Gentile have suffered unspeakably for that omission.

What does Paul mean, "*for your sake*"? Do we need enemies, particularly enemies like that? We are not talking about a bunch of amateurs. Jews are powerful; they are brilliant; they are intellectual; they are authoritative. Have you ever had confrontation with a Rabbi or a Jewish intellectual and radical? As a former missionary to the Jews and having been an unbelieving one myself for a long time, there is no more formidable enemy of the gospel than the Jewish people.

The only reason we do not know that is because we have never faced them nose-to-nose. We have never had a door slammed in our face. We have never seen the bristling anger and indignation. We have never been cut to shreds by the cruelest words that human ingenuity can conceive. They make you to feel like a fool, "How dare you present this message to us who have been on the receiving end of two thousand years of Christian persecution culminating in the Holocaust! Are you going to tell me that I need your Christ?" You do not know what confrontation is until you meet the Jew head-on. All of a sudden you feel like a weak little nothing; your gospel is so utterly foolish; you just want to shrivel up and blow away.

But God is not taken by surprise by these factors, for He knows them well. In fact, He has been the Author of the factors that would make the Jew in the Last Days the most conspicuous and powerful enemy of Jesus Christ.

That is why Paul says, *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, (foolish though it is, intellectually speaking) for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, (and here he comes again) to the Jew first, and also to the Greek"* (Romans 1:16 - parentheses mine).

If only we could try the gospel out on the Greeks first, and if it is successful there, then we will try it on the Jew, because they are the toughest! But no, in the wisdom of God, it is, *"To the Jew first."* We are not to begin where it is easiest, but where it is hardest. "Go into all the world, but begin at Jerusalem where I was crucified and where the prophets were stoned to death. Then you can go on to Samaria and all these other places, but begin with the Jew first" (paraphrased).

We signal something to the principalities and the powers of the air when we do not take this requirement seriously. They see that we do not take the Lord seriously. They take note of our failure to obey His word as the Lord who commanded us to go into all the world and to preach this gospel to every creature, beginning in Jerusalem and to the Jew first. They regard us, therefore, as lightly as we regard Him by our refusal to acknowledge the Lordship of His Word in the priority that He has given us to Israel. They see how neatly we circumvent the most difficult requirement of all through our cowardice and lack of confidence in our own spirituality. They see how we have taken the easy way and allowed the Jews to have their own existence because their synagogues are to be found in the same communities with our churches. To the powers, it is the statement that we accord to the synagogue a certain validity of an equal kind with Christianity as being tenable, authoritative and valid.

To validate Judaism by honouring and respecting the synagogue and having dialogues with them, as if they represent an equally valid faith position, would have made Paul to vomit. How could he have done that and begin Romans chapter 9 by saying, *"For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh"* (verse 3)? If Judaism were valid, then why would he wish him-

self accursed? We have allowed Judaism to have a valid existence, as if it represents a faith posture that has its own validity.

To confront the Jew is to confront the world at its most prestigious and powerful. Jews have won more Nobel Prizes, more distinctions and awards in the fields of medicine, literature, culture and science out of any proportion to their number in the population. They are a gifted people, but misusing their gifts in the spirit of the world against God rather than for Him, and that makes them powerfully intimidating.

That is why, when God says, *"To the Jew first"*, He knows what He is talking about. When you touch Jewish life you are touching a whole world system, a whole humanistic, moral, ethical, religious and secular system opposed to God in every point and particular. Although it is a false light, it has the most compelling reasoning and enticements. If there is a God, however, it makes that very same body of humanism absolutely an abomination and vile.

The Fullness of the Gentiles

"For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel, until..." (Rom. 11:25a).

That word *"until"* is critical. There is a condition that only the church can meet.

"...until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in" (v.25b).

When God says *"fullness"* it is the completion of all that He has intended. There is a fullness for which God waits, of a people for His name, from among every nation (Acts 15:14), and herein lies the mission mandate of the church. According to the text in Romans, the greatest incentive that God gives the church to go into all the world and proclaim the gospel is that,

"...the Deliverer will come from Zion" (v26a).

When that mission is completed, something will happen, independent of Israel's condition. The Deliverer is released in the moment that the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. Israelis delivered and the Deliverer takes His throne on the holy hill of Zion, and rules over the nations.

It is clear that we oppose the 'pre-tribulation' rapture mentality, a mentality that sees the church as being removed before the tribulation. Though this theory is widely accepted, it is not a doctrine of the faith at all. Nothing has more disarmed the church for the necessity for preparation, discipleship, maturity and of being the church that can stand in the Last Days and overcome tribulation, than the confidence that they will not have to face it.

It is also partly because of this 'pre-tribulation' rapture expectation that the church is presently operating now toward Israel from the place of guilt. Anything that issues from the church that has an ulterior motive, that relieves our conscience, where we operate out of guilt or obligation rather than from a priestly place, is not a valid place of ministry. Only priestly ministry is valid. The heart of priestly ministry is that the priest gains no advantage or benefit for himself in his priestly ministrations. If you are, however, operating out of guilt and out of bad conscience, then you are alleviating something for yourself by being condescending to Jews. Most believers have the attitude toward present Israel that is of this condescending kind.

If we elevate and exalt ourselves, as the church, as something separate, independent or superior to the Jew, by that one thing, we are no longer the church. The church loses its character and it loses its humility. We need to be reminded that we were grafted into their root and that we are made, by the gospel, partakers with them.

The church is not some phenomenon independent of Israel, but the graciousness of God to allow Gentiles to come into Israel's promise, into their hope and into their expectation, which they themselves have lost and no longer know. Part of our task is to remind Israel, not verbally, but by exhibiting what it means to have been invited into the commonwealth of Israel.

Editor's Note:

Jealousy and *envy* are words describing two different concepts. One is legitimate, the other is not.

Envy is a covetous desire for something belonging to someone else. However, jealousy is a right response to a third parties interest in something which is rightfully ours. For example, it would be right for a husband to be jealous regarding his own wife, but wrong for him to be envious of the wife of another.

TREATMENT OF ISRAEL STRIKES AN ALIEN NOTE

by Alan M. Dershowitz,
The National Post, November 5, 2002

If a visitor from a far away galaxy were to land at an American or Canadian university and peruse some of the petitions that were circulating around the campus, he would probably come away with the conclusion that the Earth is a peaceful and fair planet with only one villainous nation determined to destroy the peace and to violate human rights. That nation would not be Iraq, Libya, Serbia, Russia or Iran. It would be Israel.

There are currently petitions circulating on most North American university campuses that would seek to have universities terminate all investments in companies that do business in or with Israel. There are also petitions asking individual faculty members to boycott scientists and scholars who happen to be Israeli Jews, regardless of their personal views on the Arab-Israeli conflict.

There have been efforts, some successful, to prevent Israeli speakers from appearing on college campuses, as recently occurred at Concordia University. There are no comparable petitions seeking any action against other countries that enslave minorities, imprison dissidents, murder political opponents and torture suspected terrorists. Nor are there any comparable efforts to silence speakers from other countries.

The intergalactic visitor would wonder what this pariah nation, Israel, must have done to deserve this unique form of economic capital punishment.

If he then went to the library and began to read books and articles about this planet, he would discover that Israel was a vibrant democracy, with freedom of speech, press and religion, that was surrounded by a group of tyrannical and undemocratic regimes, many of which are actively seeking its destruction. He would learn that in Egypt, homosexuals are routinely imprisoned and threatened with execution; that in Jordan suspected terrorists and other opponents of the government are tortured, and that if

individualized torture does not work, their relatives are called in and threatened with torture as well; that in Saudi Arabia, women who engage in sex outside of marriage are beheaded; that in Iraq, political opponents are routinely murdered en masse and no dissent is permitted; that in Iran members of religious minorities, such as Baha'is and Jews, are imprisoned and sometimes executed; that in all of these surrounding nations, anti-Semitic material is frequently broadcast on state-sponsored television and radio programs; in Saudi Arabia apartheid is practiced

The intergalactic visitor would wonder what this pariah nation, Israel, must have done to deserve this unique form of punishment.

against non-Muslims, with signs indicating that Muslims must go to certain areas and non-Muslims to others; that China has occupied Tibet for half a century; that in several African countries women are stoned to death for violating sexual mores; that slavery still exists in some parts of the world; and that genocide has been committed by a number of countries in recent memory.

Our curious visitor would wonder why there are no petitions circulating with regard to these human rights violators. Is Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza -- an occupation it has offered to end in exchange for peace -- worse than the Chinese occupation of Tibet?

Are the tactics used to combat terrorism by Israel worse than those used by the Russians against Chechen terrorists? Are Arab and Muslim states more democratic than Israel? Is there any comparable institution in any Arab or Muslim state to the Israeli Supreme Court, which frequently rules in favour of Palestinian claims against the Israeli government and military?

Does the absence of the death penalty in Israel alone, among Middle East nations, make it more barbaric than the countries which behead, hang and shoot political dissidents? Is Israel's settlement policy, which 78% of Israelis want to end in exchange for peace, worse than the Chinese attempt at cultural genocide in Tibet? Is Israel's policy of full equality for openly gay soldiers and members of the Knesset

somehow worse than the policy of Muslim states to persecute those who have a different sexual orientation than the majority? Is Israel's commitment to equality for women worse than the gender apartheid practised in Saudi Arabia?

Our visitor would be perplexed to hear the excuses made by university professors and students for why they are prepared to de-legitimise Israel while remaining silent about the far worse abuses committed by other countries.

If he were to ask a student about the abuses committed by other countries, he would be told (as I have been): "You're changing the subject. We're talking about Israel now." This reminds me of an incident from the 1920s involving then-Harvard president A. Lawrence Lowell. Lowell decided that the number of Jews admitted to Harvard should be reduced because "Jews cheat." When a distinguished alumnus, Judge Learned Hand, pointed out that Protestants also cheat, Lowell responded, "You're changing the subject; we're talking about Jews."

It is not surprising, therefore, that as responsible and cautious a writer as Andrew Sullivan, formerly editor of *The New Republic* and now a writer for *The New York Times Magazine*, has concluded that "fanatical anti-Semitism, as bad or even worse than Hitler's, is now a cultural norm across much of the Middle East and beyond. It's the acrid glue that unites Saddam, Arafat, al-Qaeda, Hezbollah, Iran and the Saudis. They all hate the Jews and want to see them destroyed."

Our intergalactic traveller, after learning all of these facts, would wonder what kind of a planet he had landed on. Do we have everything backwards? Do we know the difference between right and wrong? Do our universities teach the truth?

These are questions that need asking, lest we become the kind of world the visitor would have experienced had he arrived in Europe during the late 1930s and early 1940s.

-oOo-

Alan M. Dershowitz is a professor of law at Harvard and author of Why Terrorism Works. This essay is based on a speech he is making at a United Jewish Appeal forum tonight in Toronto.

ONE SMALL STEP

Is the U.N. finally ready to get serious about anti-Semitism?

by Anne Bayefsky

(Editor's note: Ms. Bayefsky is a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute and an adjunct professor at Columbia University Law School. She delivered this speech at the U.N. at a conference on Confronting Anti-Semitism: Education for Tolerance and Understanding, sponsored by the United Nations Department of Information, this morning., 21 June 2004)

I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you at this first U.N. conference on anti-Semitism, which is being convened six decades after the organization's creation. My thanks to the U.N. organizers and in particular Shashi Tharoor [the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information] for their initiative and to the Secretary-General for his willingness to engage.

This meeting occurs at a point when the relationship between Jews and the United Nations is at an all-time low. The U.N. took root in the ashes of the Jewish people, and according to its charter was to flower on the strength of a commitment to tolerance and equality for all men and women and of nations large and small. Today, however, the U.N. provides a platform for those who cast the victims of the Nazis as the Nazi counterparts of the 21st century. The U.N. has become the leading global purveyor of anti-Semitism, intolerance and inequality against the Jewish people and its state.

Not only have many of the U.N. members most responsible for this state of affairs rendered their own countries Judenrein, they have succeeded in almost entirely expunging concern about Jew-hatred from the U.N. docket. From 1965, when anti-Semitism was deliberately excluded from a treaty on racial discrimination, to last fall, when a proposal for a General Assembly resolution on anti-Semitism was withdrawn after Ireland capitulated to Arab and Muslim opposition, mention of anti-Semitism has continually ground the wheels of U.N.-led multilateralism to a halt.

There has never been a U.N. resolution specifically on anti-Semitism or a single

report to a U.N. body dedicated to discrimination against Jews, in contrast to annual resolutions and reports focusing on the defamation of Islam and discrimination against Muslims and Arabs. Instead there was Durban - the 2001 U.N. World Conference "Against Racism," which was a breeding ground and global soapbox for anti-Semites. When it was over U.N. officials and member states turned the Durban Declaration into the centrepiece of the U.N.'s anti racism agenda-allowing Durban follow-up resolutions to become a continuing battlefield over U.N. concern with anti-Semitism.

Not atypical is the public dialogue in the U.N.'s top human rights body - the Commission on Human Rights - where this past April the Pakistani ambassador, speaking on behalf of the 56 members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, unashamedly disputed that anti-Semitism was about Jews.

For Jews, however, ignorance is not an option. Anti-Semitism is about intolerance and discrimination directed at Jews - both individually and collectively. It concerns both individual human rights and the group right to self-determination - realized in the state of Israel.

What does discrimination against the Jewish state mean? It means refusing to admit only Israel to the vital negotiating sessions of regional groups held daily during U.N. Commission on Human Rights meetings. It means devoting 6 of the 10 emergency sessions ever held by the General Assembly to Israel. It means transforming the 10th emergency session into a permanent tribunal - which has now been reconvened 12 times since 1997. By contrast, no emergency session was ever held on the Rwandan genocide, estimated to have killed a million people, or the ethnic cleansing of tens of thousands in the former Yugoslavia, or the death of millions over the past two decades of atrocities in Sudan. That's discrimination.

The record of the Secretariat is more of the same. In November 2003, Secretary-General Kofi Annan issued a report on Israel's security fence, detailing the purported harm to Palestinians without describing one terrorist act against Israelis which preceded

the fence's construction. Recently, the secretary-general strongly condemned Israel for destroying homes in southern Gaza without mentioning the arms-smuggling tunnels operating beneath them. When Israel successfully targeted Hamas terrorist Abdel Aziz Rantissi with no civilian casualties, the Secretary-General denounced Israel for an "extrajudicial" killing. But when faced with the 2004 report of the U.N. special rapporteur on extra-judicial executions detailing the murder of more than 3,000 Brazilian civilians shot at close range by police, Mr. Annan chose silence. That's discrimination.

At the U.N., the language of human rights is hijacked not only to discriminate but to demonise the Jewish target. More than one quarter of the resolutions condemning a state's human rights violations adopted by the commission over 40 years have been directed at Israel. But there has never been a single resolution about the decades-long repression of the civil and political rights of 1.3 billion people in China, or the million female migrant workers in Saudi Arabia kept as virtual slaves, or the virulent racism which has brought 600,000 people to the brink of starvation in Zimbabwe. Every year, U.N. bodies are required to produce at least 25 reports on alleged human rights violations by Israel, but not one on an Iranian criminal justice system which mandates punishments like crucifixion, stoning and cross-amputation of right hand and left foot. This is not legitimate critique of states with equal or worse human rights records. It is canonization of the Jewish state.

As Israelis are demonised at the U.N., so Palestinians and their cause are deified. Every year the U.N. marks Nov. 29 as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People - the day the U.N. partitioned the British Palestine mandate and which Arabs often style as the onset of *al nakba* or the "catastrophe" of the creation of the state of Israel. In 2002, the anniversary of the vote that survivors of the concentration camps celebrated, was described by Secretary-General Annan as "a day of mourning and a day of grief."

In 2003 the representatives of over 100 member states stood along with the Secretary-General, before a map predating the state of Israel, for a moment of silence "for all those who had given their lives for the Palestinian people"-which would include suicide bombers. Similarly, U.N. rapporteur John Dugard has described Palestinian terrorists as "tough" and their efforts as characterized by "determination, daring, and success." A commission resolution for the past three years has legitimised the Pal-

estinian use of "all available means including armed struggle" - an absolution for terrorist methods which would never be applied to the self-determination claims of Chechens or Basques.

Although Palestinian self-determination is equally justified, the connection between demonising Israelis and sanctifying Palestinians makes it clear that the core issue is not the stated cause of Palestinian suffering. For there are no U.N. resolutions exploring the practice of encouraging Palestinian children to glorify and emulate suicide bombers, or the use of the Palestinian population as human shields, or the refusal by the vast majority of Arab states to integrate Palestinian refugees into their societies and to offer them the benefits of citizenship. Palestinians are lionized at the U.N. because they are the perceived antidote to what U.N. envoy Lakhdar Brahimi called the great poison of the Middle East - the existence and resilience of the Jewish state.

Of course, anti-Semitism takes other forms at the U.N. Over the past decade at the commission, Syria announced that yeshivas train rabbis to instill racist hatred in their pupils. Palestinian representatives claimed that Israelis can happily celebrate religious holidays like Yom Kippur only by shedding Palestinian blood, and accused Israel of injecting 300 Palestinian children with HIV-positive blood.

U.N.-led anti-Semitism moves from the canonization of Jews to the disqualification of Jewish victimhood: refusing to recognize Jewish suffering by virtue of their ethnic and national identity. In 2003 a General Assembly resolution concerned with the welfare of Israeli children failed (though one on Palestinian children passed handily) because it proved impossible to gain enough support for the word Israeli appearing before the word children. The mandate of the U.N. special rapporteur on the "Palestinian territories", set over a decade ago, is to investigate only "Israel's violations of . . . international law" and not to consider human-rights violations by Palestinians in Israel.

It follows in U.N. logic that non-victims aren't really supposed to fight back. One after another concrete Israeli response to terrorism is denounced by the secretary-general and member states as illegal. But killing members of the command-and-control structure of a terrorist organization, when there is no disproportionate use of force, and arrest is impossible, is not illegal. Homes used by terrorists in the midst of combat are legitimate military targets. A nonviolent, temporary separation of parties to a conflict on disputed territory by a se-

curity fence, which is sensitive to minimizing hardships, is a legitimate response to Israel's international legal obligations to protect its citizens from crimes against humanity. In effect, the U.N. moves to pin the arms of Jewish targets behind their backs while the terrorists take aim.

The U.N.'s preferred imagery for this phenomenon is of a cycle of violence. It is claimed that the cycle must be broken-every time Israelis raises a hand. But just as the symbol of the cycle is chosen because it has no beginning, it is devastating to the cause of peace because it denies the possibility of an end. The Nuremberg Tribunal taught us that crimes are not committed by abstract entities.

The perpetrators of anti-Semitism today are the preachers in mosques who exhort their followers to blow up Jews. They are the authors of Palestinian Authority textbooks that teach a new generation to hate Jews and admire their killers. They are the television producers and official benefactors in authoritarian regimes like Syria or Egypt who manufacture and distribute programming that depicts Jews as bloodthirsty world conspirators.

Listen, however, to the words of the secretary-general in response to two suicide bombings which took place in Jerusalem this year, killing 19 and wounding 110: "Once again, violence and terror have claimed innocent lives in the Middle East. Once again, I condemn those who resort to such methods." "The Secretary General condemns the suicide bombing Sunday in Jerusalem. The deliberate targeting of civilians is a heinous crime and cannot be justified by any cause." Refusing to name the perpetrators, Mr. Secretary-General, Teflon terrorism, is a green light to strike again.

Perhaps more than any other, the big lie that fuels anti-Semitism today is the U.N.-promoted claim that the root cause of the Arab-Israeli conflict is the occupation of Palestinian land. According to U.N. revisionism, the occupation materialized in a vacuum. In reality, Israel occupies land taken in a war which was forced upon it by neighbours who sought to destroy it. It is a state of occupation which Israelis themselves have repeatedly sought to end through negotiations over permanent borders. It is a state in which any abuses are closely monitored by Israel's independent judiciary. But ultimately, it is a situation which is the responsibility of the rejectionists of Jewish self-determination among Palestinians and their Arab and Muslim brethren-who have rendered the Palestinian civilian population hostage to their violent and anti-Semitic ambitions.

There are those who would still deny the existence of anti-Semitism at the U.N. by pointing to a range of motivations in U.N. corridors including commercial interests, regional politics, preventing scrutiny of human rights violations closer to home, or enhancement of individual careers. U.N. actors and supporters remain almost uniformly in denial of the nature of the pathogen coursing through these halls. They ignore the infection and applaud the host, forgetting that the cancer which kills the organism will take with it both the good and the bad.

The relative distribution of naiveté, cowardice, opportunism, and anti-Semitism, however, matters little to Noam and Matan Ohayon, ages 4 and 5, shot to death through their mother's body in their home in northern Israel while she tried to shield them from a gunman of Yasser Arafat's al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades. The terrible consequences of these combined motivations mobilized and empowered within U.N. chambers are the same.

The inability of the U.N. to confront the corruption of its agenda dooms this organization's success as an essential agent of equality or dignity or democratisation. This conference may serve as a turning point. We will only know if concrete changes occur hereafter: a General Assembly resolution on anti-Semitism adopted, an annual report on anti-Semitism forthcoming, a focal point on anti-Semitism created, a rapporteur on anti-Semitism appointed.

But I challenge the Secretary-general and his organization to go further-if they are serious about eradicating anti-Semitism:

- start putting a name to the terrorists that kill Jews because they are Jews.
- start condemning human-rights violators wherever they dwell-even if they live in Riyadh or Damascus.
- stop condemning the Jewish people for fighting back against their killers.

And the next time someone asks you or your colleagues to stand for a moment of silence to honour those who would destroy the state of Israel, say no.

Only then will the message be heard from these chambers that the U.N. will not tolerate anti-Semitism or its consequences against Jews and the Jewish people, whether its victims live in Tehran, Paris or Jerusalem.

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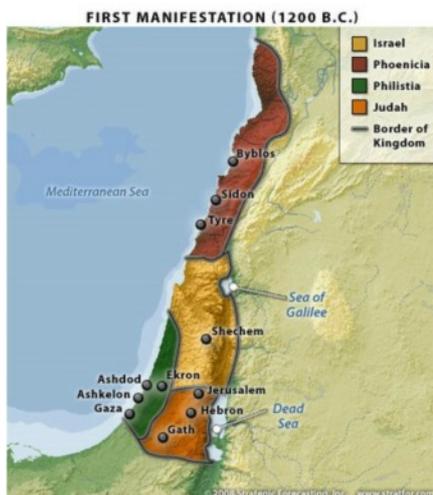


by
Dr. George Friedman
 Strategic Forecasting, Inc.
 2001

**THE GEOPOLITICS OF ISRAEL:
 Biblical and Modern**

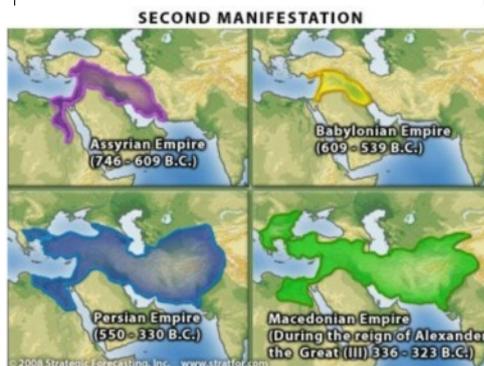
The founding principle of geopolitics is that place – geography – plays a significant role in determining how nations will behave. If that theory is true, then there ought to be a deep continuity in a nation's foreign policy. Israel is a laboratory for this theory, since it has existed in three different manifestations in roughly the same place, twice in antiquity and once in modernity. If geopolitics is correct, then Israeli foreign policy, independent of policy makers, technology or the identity of neighbours, ought to have important common features. This is, therefore, a discussion of common principles in Israeli foreign policy, over nearly 3,000 years.

For convenience, we will use the term "Israel" to connote all of the Hebrew and Jewish entities that have existed in the Levant since the invasion of the region as chronicled in the Book of Joshua. As always, geopolitics requires a consideration of three dimensions: the internal geopolitics of Israel, the interaction of Israel and the immediate neighbours who share borders with it, and Israel's interaction with what we will call great powers, beyond Israel's borderlands.

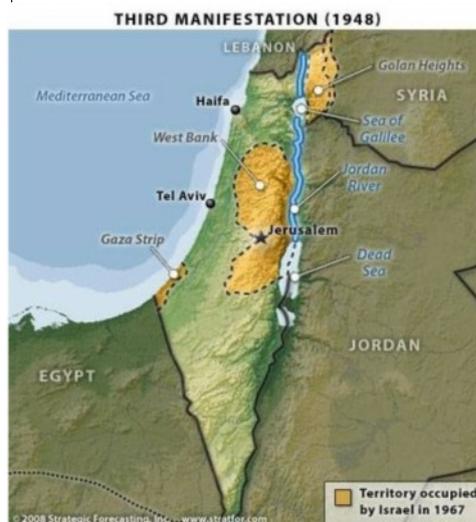


Israel has manifested itself three times in history. The first manifestation began with the invasion led by Joshua and lasted through its division into two kingdoms, the

Babylonian conquest of the Kingdom of Judah and the deportation to Babylon early in the sixth century B.C.



The second manifestation began when Israel was recreated in 540 B.C. by the Persians, who had defeated the Babylonians. The nature of this second manifestation changed in the fourth century B.C., when Greece overran the Persian Empire and Israel, and again in the first century B.C. when the Romans conquered the region. The second manifestation saw Israel as a small actor within the framework of larger imperial powers, a situation that lasted until the destruction of the Jewish vassal state by the Romans.



Israel's third manifestation began in 1948, following (as in the other cases) an ingathering of at least some of the Jews who had been dispersed after conquests. Israel's founding takes place in the context of the decline and fall of the British Empire and

must, at least in part, be understood as part of British imperial history. During its first 50 years, it plays a pivotal role in the confrontation of the United States and the Soviet Union and, in some senses, is hostage to the dynamics of these two countries. In other words, like the first two manifestations of Israel, the third finds Israel continually struggling between independence, internal tension and imperial ambition. Israel.

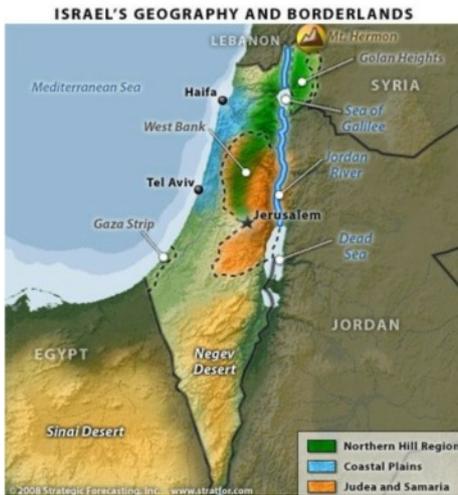
Israeli Geography and Borderlands

At its height, under King David, Israel extended from the Sinai to the Euphrates, encompassing Damascus. It occupied some, but relatively little, of the coastal region, an area beginning at what today is Haifa and running south to Jaffa, just north of today's Tel Aviv. The coastal area to the north was held by Phoenicia, the area to the south by Philistines. It is essential to understand that Israel's size and shape shifted over time. For example, Judah under the Hasmoneans did not include the Negev but did include the Golan. The general locale of Israel is fixed. Its precise borders have never been.

Thus, it is perhaps better to begin with what never was part of Israel. Israel never included the Sinai Peninsula. Along the coast, it never stretched much farther north than the Litani River in today's Lebanon. Apart from David's extreme extension and fairly tenuous control to the north, Israel's territory never stretched as far as Damascus, although it frequently held the Golan Heights. Israel extended many times to both sides of the Jordan but never deep into the Jordanian Desert. It never extended southeast into the Arabian Peninsula.

Israel consists generally of three parts. First, it always has had the northern hill region, stretching from the foothills of Mount Hermon south to Jerusalem. Second, it always contains some of the coastal plain from today's Tel Aviv north to Haifa. Third, it occupies area between Jerusalem and the Jordan River – today's West Bank. At times, it controls all or part of the Negev, including the coastal region between the Sinai to the Tel Aviv area. It may be larger than this at various times in history, and sometimes smaller, but it normally holds all or part of these three regions.

Israel is well buffered in three directions. The Sinai Desert protects it against the Egyptians. In general, the Sinai has held little attraction for the Egyptians. The difficulty of deploying forces in the eastern Sinai poses severe logistical problems for them, particularly during a prolonged presence. Unless Egypt can rapidly move



through the Sinai north into the coastal plain, where it can sustain its forces more readily, deploying in the Sinai is difficult and unrewarding. Therefore, so long as Israel is not so weak as to make an attack on the coastal plain a viable option, or unless Egypt is motivated by an outside imperial power, Israel does not face a threat from the southwest.

Israel is similarly protected from the southeast. The deserts southeast of Eilat-Aqaba are virtually impassable. No large force could approach from that direction, although smaller raiding parties could. The tribes of the Arabian Peninsula lack the reach or the size to pose a threat to Israel, unless massed and aligned with other forces. Even then, the approach from the southeast is not one that they are likely to take. The Negev is secure from that direction.

The eastern approaches are similarly secured by desert, which begins about 20 to 30 miles east of the Jordan River. While indigenous forces exist in the borderland east of the Jordan, they lack the numbers to be able to penetrate decisively west of the Jordan. Indeed, the normal model is that, so long as Israel controls Judea and Samaria (the modern-day West Bank), then the East Bank of the Jordan River is under the political and sometimes military domination of Israel – sometimes directly through settlement, sometimes indirectly through political influence, or economic or security leverage.

Israel's vulnerability is in the north. There is no natural buffer between Phoenicia and its successor entities (today's Lebanon) to the direct north. The best defence line for Israel in the north is the Litani River, but this is not an insurmountable boundary under any circumstance. However, the area along the coast north of Israel does not present a serious threat. The coastal area prospers through trade in the Mediterranean basin. It is oriented toward the sea and

to the trade routes to the east, not to the south. If it does anything, this area protects those trade routes and has no appetite for a conflict that might interrupt trade. It stays out of Israel's way, for the most part.

Moreover, as a commercial area, this region is generally wealthy, a factor that increases predators around it and social conflict within. It is an area prone to instability. Israel frequently tries to extend its influence northward for commercial reasons, as one of the predators, and this can entangle Israel in its regional politics. But barring this self-induced problem, the threat to Israel from the north is minimal, despite the absence of natural boundaries and the large population. On occasion, there is spill-over of conflicts from the north, but not to a degree that might threaten regime survival in Israel.

The neighbour that is always a threat lies to the northeast. Syria – or, more precisely, the area governed by Damascus at any time – is populous and frequently has no direct outlet to the sea. It is, therefore, generally poor. The area to its north, Asia Minor, is heavily mountainous. Syria cannot project power to the north except with great difficulty, but powers in Asia Minor can move south. Syria's eastern flank is buffered by a desert that stretches to the Euphrates. Therefore, when there is no threat from the north, Syria's interest – after securing itself internally – is to gain access to the coast. Its primary channel is directly westward, toward the rich cities of the northern Levantine coast, with which it trades heavily. An alternative interest is southwestward, toward the southern Levantine coast controlled by Israel.

As can be seen, Syria can be interested in Israel only selectively. When it is interested, it has a serious battle problem. To attack Israel, it would have to strike between Mount Hermon and the Sea of Galilee, an area about 25 miles wide. The Syrians potentially can attack south of the sea, but only if they are prepared to fight through this region and then attack on extended supply lines. If an attack is mounted along the main route, Syrian forces must descend the Golan Heights and then fight through the hilly Galilee before reaching the coastal plain – sometimes with guerrillas holding out in the Galilean hills. The Galilee is an area that is relatively easy to defend and difficult to attack. Therefore, it is only once Syria takes the Galilee, and can control its lines of supply against guerrilla attack, that its real battle begins.

To reach the coast or move toward Jerusalem, Syria must fight through a plain in front of a line of low hills. This is the decisive battleground where massed Israeli

forces, close to lines of supply, can defend against dispersed Syrian forces on extended lines of supply. It is no accident that Megiddo – or Armageddon, as the plain is sometimes referred to – has apocalyptic meaning. This is the point at which any move from Syria would be decided. But a Syrian offensive would have a tough fight to reach Megiddo, and a tougher one as it deploys on the plain.

On the surface, Israel lacks strategic depth, but this is true only on the surface. It faces limited threats from southern neighbours. To its east, it faces only a narrow strip of populated area east of the Jordan. To the north, there is a maritime commercial entity. Syria operating alone, forced through the narrow gap of the Mount Hermon-Galilee line and operating on extended supply lines, can be dealt with readily.

There is a risk of simultaneous attacks from multiple directions. Depending on the forces deployed and the degree of coordination between them, this can pose a problem for Israel. However, even here the Israelis have the tremendous advantage of fighting on interior lines. Egypt and Syria, fighting on external lines (and widely separated fronts), would have enormous difficulty transferring forces from one front to another. Israel, on interior lines (fronts close to each other with good transportation), would be able to move its forces from front to front rapidly, allowing for sequential engagement and thereby the defeat of enemies. Unless enemies are carefully coordinated and initiate war simultaneously – and deploy substantially superior force on at least one front – Israel can initiate war at a time of its choosing or else move its forces rapidly between fronts, negating much of the advantage of size that the attackers might have.

There is another aspect to the problem of multi-front war. Egypt usually has minimal interests along the Levant, having its own coast and an orientation to the south toward the headwaters of the Nile. On the rare occasions when Egypt does move through the Sinai and attacks to the north and northeast, it is in an expansionary mode. By the time it consolidates and exploits the coastal plain, it would be powerful enough to threaten Syria. From Syria's point of view, the only thing more dangerous than Israel is an Egypt in control of Israel. Therefore, the probability of a coordinated north-south strike at Israel is rare, is rarely coordinated and usually is not designed to be a mortal blow. It is defeated by Israel's strategic advantage of interior lines.

Israeli Geography and the Convergence Zone

Therefore, it is not surprising that Israel's first incarnation lasted as long as it did – some five centuries. What is interesting and what must be considered is why Israel (now considered as the northern kingdom) was defeated by the Assyrians and Judea, then defeated by Babylon. To understand this, we need to consider the broader geography of Israel's location.

Israel is located on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, on the Levant. As we have seen, when Israel is intact, it will tend to be the dominant power in the Levant. Therefore, Israeli resources must generally be dedicated for land warfare, leaving little over for naval warfare. In general, although Israel had excellent harbors and access to wood for shipbuilding, it never was a major Mediterranean naval power. It never projected power into the sea. The area to the north of Israel has always been a maritime power, but Israel, the area south of Mount Hermon, was always forced to be a land power.

The Levant in general and Israel in particular has always been a magnet for great powers. No Mediterranean empire could be fully secure unless it controlled the Levant. Whether it was Rome or Carthage, a Mediterranean empire that wanted to control both the northern and southern littorals needed to anchor its eastern flank on the Levant. For one thing, without the Levant, a Mediterranean power would be entirely dependent on sea lanes for controlling the other shore. Moving troops solely by sea creates transport limitations and logistical problems. It also leaves imperial lines vulnerable to interdiction – sometimes merely from pirates, a problem that plagued Rome's sea transport. A land bridge, or a land bridge with minimal water crossings that can be easily defended, is a vital supplement to the sea for the movement of large numbers of troops. Once the Helle-spont is crossed, the coastal route through southern Turkey, down the Levant and along the Mediterranean's southern shore provides such an alternative.

There is an additional consideration. If a Mediterranean empire leaves the Levant unoccupied, it opens the door to the possibility of a great power originating to the east seizing the ports of the Levant and challenging the Mediterranean power for maritime domination. In short, control of the Levant binds a Mediterranean empire together while denying a challenger from the east the opportunity to enter the Mediterranean. Holding the Levant, and control-

ling Israel, is a necessary preventive measure for a Mediterranean empire.

Israel is also important to any empire originating to the east of Israel, either in the Tigris-Euphrates basin or in Persia. For either, security could be assured only once it has an anchor on the Levant. Macedonian expansion under Alexander demonstrated that a power controlling Levantine and Turkish ports could support aggressive operations far to the east, to the Hindu Kush and beyond. While Turkish ports might have sufficed for offensive operations, simply securing the Bosphorus still left the southern flank exposed. Therefore, by holding the Levant, an eastern power protected itself against attacks from Mediterranean powers.

The Levant was also important to any empire originating to the north or south of Israel. If Egypt decided to move beyond the Nile Basin and North Africa eastward, it would move first through the Sinai and then northward along the coastal plain, securing sea lanes to Egypt. When Asia Minor powers such as the Ottoman Empire developed, there was a natural tendency to move southward to control the eastern Mediterranean. The Levant is the crossroads of continents, and Israel lies in the path of many imperial ambitions.

Israel therefore occupies what might be called the convergence zone of the Eastern Hemisphere. A European power trying to dominate the Mediterranean or expand eastward, an eastern power trying to dominate the space between the Hindu Kush and the Mediterranean, a North African power moving toward the east, or a northern power moving south – all must converge on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean and therefore on Israel. Of these, the European power and the eastern power must be the most concerned with Israel. For either, there is no choice but to secure it as an anchor.

Internal Geopolitics

Israel is geographically divided into three regions, which traditionally have produced three different types of people. Its coastal plain facilitates commerce, serving as the interface between eastern trade routes and the sea. It is the home of merchants and manufacturers, cosmopolitans – not as cosmopolitan as Phoenicia or Lebanon, but cosmopolitan for Israel. The northeast is hill country, closest to the unruliness north of the Litani River and to the Syrian threat. It breeds farmers and warriors. The area south of Jerusalem is hard desert country, more conducive to herdsman and warriors than anything else. Jerusalem is where

these three regions are balanced and governed.

There are obviously deep differences built into Israel's geography and inhabitants, particularly between the herdsmen of the southern deserts and the northern hill dwellers. The coastal dwellers, rich but less warlike than the others, hold the balance or are the prize to be pursued. In the division of the original kingdom between Israel and Judea, we saw the alliance of the coast with the Galilee, while Jerusalem was held by the desert dwellers. The consequence of the division was that Israel in the north ultimately was conquered by Assyrians from the northeast, while Babylon was able to swallow Judea.

Social divisions in Israel obviously do not have to follow geographical lines. However, over time, these divisions must manifest themselves. For example, the coastal plain is inherently more cosmopolitan than the rest of the country. The interests of its inhabitants lie more with trading partners in the Mediterranean and the rest of the world than with their countrymen. Their standard of living is higher, and their commitment to traditions is lower. Therefore, there is an inherent tension between their immediate interests and those of the Galileans, who live more precarious, warlike lives. Countries can be divided over lesser issues – and when Israel is divided, it is vulnerable even to regional threats.

We say "even" because geography dictates that regional threats are less menacing than might be expected. The fact that Israel would be outnumbered demographically should all its neighbours turn on it is less important than the fact that it has adequate buffers in most directions, that the ability of neighbours to coordinate an attack is minimal and that their appetite for such an attack is even less. The single threat that Israel faces from the northeast can readily be managed if the Israelis create a united front there. When Israel was overrun by a Damascus-based power was when it was deeply divided internally.

It is important to add one consideration to our discussion of buffers, which is diplomacy. The main neighbours of Israel are Egyptians, Syrians and those who live on the east bank of Jordan. This last group is a negligible force demographically, and the interests of the Syrians and Egyptians are widely divergent. Egypt's interests are to the south and west of its territory; the Sinai holds no attraction. Syria is always threatened from multiple directions, and alliance with Egypt adds little to its security. Therefore, under the worst of circumstances, Egypt and Syria have difficulty supporting

each other. Under the best of circumstances, from Israel's point of view, it can reach a political accommodation with Egypt, securing its southwestern frontier politically as well as by geography, and thus freeing Israel to concentrate on the northern threats and opportunities.

Israel and the Great Powers

The threat to Israel rarely comes from the region, except when the Israelis are divided internally. The conquests of Israel occur when powers not adjacent to it begin forming empires. Babylon, Persia, Macedonia, Rome, Turkey and Britain all controlled Israel politically, sometimes for worse and sometimes for better. Each dominated it militarily, but none of them were neighbours of Israel. This is a consistent pattern. Israel can resist its neighbours; danger arises when more distant powers begin playing imperial games. Empires can bring force to bear that Israel cannot resist.

Israel therefore has this problem: It would be secure if it could confine itself to protecting its interests from neighbours, but it cannot confine itself because its geographic location invariably draws larger, more distant powers toward Israel. Therefore, while Israel's military can focus only on immediate interests, its diplomatic interests must look much further. Israel is constantly entangled with global interests (as the globe is defined at any point), seeking to deflect and align with broader global powers. When it fails in this diplomacy, the consequences can be catastrophic.

Israel exists in three conditions. First, it can be a completely independent state. This condition occurs when there are no major imperial powers external to the region. We might call this the David model. Second, it can live as part of an imperial system – either as a subordinate ally, as a moderately autonomous entity or as a satrapy. In any case, it maintains its identity but loses room for independent manoeuvre in foreign policy and potentially in domestic policy. We might call this the Persian model in its most beneficent form. Finally, Israel can be completely crushed – with mass deportations and migrations, with a complete loss of autonomy and minimal residual autonomy. We might call this the Babylonian model.

The Davidic model exists primarily when there is no external imperial power needing control of the Levant that is in a position either to send direct force or to support surrogates in the immediate region. The Persian model exists when Israel aligns itself with the foreign policy interests of such an imperial power, to its own benefit. The Ba-

bylonian model exists when Israel miscalculates on the broader balance of power and attempts to resist an emerging hegemony. When we look at Israeli behaviour over time, the periods when Israel does not confront hegemonic powers outside the region are not rare, but are far less common than when it is confronting them.

Given the period of the first iteration of Israel, it would be too much to say that the Davidic model rarely comes into play, but certainly since that time, variations of the Persian and Babylonian models have dominated. The reason is geographic. Israel is normally of interest to outside powers because of its strategic position. While Israel can deal with local challenges effectively, it cannot deal with broader challenges. It lacks the economic or military weight to resist. Therefore, it is normally in the process of managing broader threats or collapsing because of them.

The Geopolitics of Contemporary Israel

Let us then turn to the contemporary manifestation of Israel. Israel was recreated because of the interaction between a regional great power, the Ottoman Empire, and a global power, Great Britain. During its expansionary phase, the Ottoman Empire sought to dominate the eastern Mediterranean as well as both its northern and southern coasts. One thrust went through the Balkans toward central Europe. The other was toward Egypt. Inevitably, this required that the Ottomans secure the Levant.

For the British, the focus on the eastern Mediterranean was as the primary sea lane to India. As such, Gibraltar and the Suez were crucial. The importance of the Suez was such that the presence of a hostile, major naval force in the eastern Mediterranean represented a direct threat to British interests. It followed that defeating the Ottoman Empire during World War I and breaking its residual naval power was critical. The British, as was shown at Gallipoli, lacked the resources to break the Ottoman Empire by main force. They resorted to a series of alliances with local forces to undermine the Ottomans. One was an alliance with Bedouin tribes in the Arabian Peninsula; others involved covert agreements with anti-Turkish, Arab interests from the Levant to the Persian Gulf. A third, minor thrust was aligning with Jewish interests globally, particularly those interested in the re-founding of Israel. Britain had little interest in this goal, but saw such discussions as part of the process of destabilizing the Ottomans.

The strategy worked. Under an agreement with France, the Ottoman province of Syria was divided into two parts on a line rough-

ly running east-west between the sea and Mount Hermon. The northern part was given to France and divided into Lebanon and a rump Syria entity. The southern part was given to Britain and was called Palestine, after the Ottoman administrative district Filistina. Given the complex politics of the Arabian Peninsula, the British had to find a home for a group of Hashemites, which they located on the east bank of the Jordan River and designated, for want of a better name, the Trans-Jordan – the other side of the Jordan. Palestine looked very much like traditional Israel.

The ideological foundations of Zionism are not our concern here, nor are the pre- and post-World War II migrations of Jews, although those are certainly critical. What is important for purposes of this analysis are two things: First, the British emerged economically and militarily crippled from World War II and unable to retain their global empire, Palestine included. Second, the two global powers that emerged after World War II – the United States and the Soviet Union – were engaged in an intense struggle for the eastern Mediterranean after World War II, as can be seen in the Greek and Turkish issues at that time. Neither wanted to see the British Empire survive, each wanted the Levant, and neither was prepared to make a decisive move to take it.

Both the United States and the Soviet Union saw the re-creation of Israel as an opportunity to introduce their power to the Levant. The Soviets thought they might have some influence over Israel due to ideology. The Americans thought they might have some influence given the role of American Jews in the founding. Neither was thinking particularly clearly about the matter because neither had truly found its balance after World War II. Both knew the Levant was important, but neither saw the Levant as a central battleground at that moment. Israel slipped in between the cracks.

Once the question of Jewish unity was settled through ruthless action by David Ben Gurion's government, Israel faced a simultaneous threat from all of its immediate neighbours. However, as we have seen, the threat in 1948 was more apparent than real. The northern Levant, Lebanon, was fundamentally disunited – far more interested in regional maritime trade and concerned about control from Damascus. It posed no real threat to Israel. Jordan, settling the eastern bank of the Jordan River, was an outside power that had been transplanted into the region and was more concerned about native Arabs – the Palestinians – than about Israel. The Jordanians secretly collaborated with Israel. Egypt did pose a

threat, but its ability to maintain lines of supply across the Sinai was severely limited and its genuine interest in engaging and destroying Israel was more rhetorical than real. As usual, the Egyptians could not afford the level of effort needed to move into the Levant. Syria by itself had a very real interest in Israel's defeat, but by itself was incapable of decisive action.

The exterior lines of Israel's neighbours prevented effective, concerted action. Israel's interior lines permitted efficient deployment and redeployment of force. It was not obvious at the time, but in retrospect we can see that once Israel existed, was united and had even limited military force, its survival was guaranteed. That is, so long as no great power was opposed to its existence.

From its founding until the Camp David Accords re-established the Sinai as a buffer with Egypt, Israel's strategic problem was this: So long as Egypt was in the Sinai, Israel's national security requirements outstripped its military capabilities. It could not simultaneously field an army, maintain its civilian economy and produce all the weapons and supplies needed for war. Israel had to align itself with great powers who saw an opportunity to pursue other interests by arming Israel.

Israel's first patron was the Soviet Union – through Czechoslovakia – which supplied weapons before and after 1948 in the hopes of using Israel to gain a foothold in the eastern Mediterranean. Israel, aware of the risks of losing autonomy, also moved into a relationship with a declining great power that was fighting to retain its empire: France, which was struggling to hold onto Algeria and in constant tension with Arabs, saw Israel as a natural ally. And apart from the operation against Suez in 1956, Israel saw in France a patron that was not in a position to reduce Israeli autonomy. However, with the end of the Algerian war and the realignment of France in the Arab world, Israel became a liability to France and, after 1967, Israel lost French patronage.

Israel did not become a serious ally of the Americans until after 1967. Such an alliance was in the American interest. The United States had, as a strategic imperative, the goal of keeping the Soviet navy out of the Mediterranean or, at least, blocking its unfettered access. That meant that Turkey, controlling the Bosphorus, had to be kept in the American bloc. Syria and Iraq shifted policies in the late 1950s and by the mid-1960s had been armed by the Soviets. This made Turkey's position precarious: If the Soviets pressed from the

north while Syria and Iraq pressed from the south, the outcome would be uncertain, to say the least, and the global balance of power was at stake.

The United States used Iran to divert Iraq's attention. Israel was equally useful in diverting Syria's attention. So long as Israel threatened Syria from the south, it could not divert its forces to the north. That helped secure Turkey at a relatively low cost in aid and risk. By aligning itself with the interests of a great power, Israel lost some of its room for manoeuvre: For example, in 1973, it was limited by the United States in what it could do to Egypt. But those limitations aside, it remained autonomous internally and generally free to pursue its strategic interests.

The end of hostilities with Egypt, guaranteed by the Sinai buffer zone, created a new era for Israel. Egypt was restored to its traditional position, Jordan was a marginal power on the east bank, Lebanon was in its normal, unstable mode, and only Syria was a threat. However, it was a threat that Israel could easily deal with. Syria by itself could not threaten the survival of Israel.

Following Camp David (an ironic name), Israel was in its Davidic model, in a somewhat modified sense. Its survival was not at stake. Its problems – the domination of a large, hostile population and managing events in the northern Levant – were sub-critical (meaning that, though these were not easy tasks, they did not represent fundamental threats to national survival, so long as Israel retained national unity). When unified, Israel has never been threatened by its neighbours. Geography dictates against it.

Israel's danger will come only if a great power seeks to dominate the Mediterranean Basin or to occupy the region between Afghanistan and the Mediterranean. In the short period since the fall of the Soviet Union, this has been impossible. There has been no great power with the appetite and the will for such an adventure. But 15 years is not even a generation, and Israel must measure its history in centuries.

It is the nature of the international system to seek balance. The primary reality of the world today is the overwhelming power of the United States. The United States makes few demands on Israel that matter. However, it is the nature of things that the United States threatens the interests of other great powers who, individually weak, will try to form coalitions against it. Inevitably, such coalitions will arise. That will be the next point of danger for Israel. In the event of a global rivalry, the United States might

place onerous requirements on Israel. Alternatively, great powers might move into the Jordan River valley or ally with Syria, move into Lebanon or ally with Israel. The historical attraction of the eastern shore of the Mediterranean would focus the attention of such a power and lead to attempts to assert control over the Mediterranean or create a secure Middle Eastern empire. In either event, or some of the others discussed, it would create a circumstance in which Israel might face a Babylonian catastrophe or be forced into some variation of a Persian or Roman subjugation.

Israel's danger is not a Palestinian rising. Palestinian agitation is an irritant that Israel can manage so long as it does not undermine Israeli unity. Whether it is managed by domination or by granting the Palestinians a vassal state matters little. Nor can Israel be threatened by its neighbours. Even a unified attack by Syria and Egypt would fail, for the reasons discussed. Israel's real threat, as can be seen in history, lies in the event of internal division and/or a great power, coveting Israel's geographical position, marshalling force that is beyond its capacity to resist. Even that can be managed if Israel has a patron whose interests involve denying the coast to another power.

Israel's reality is this. It is a small country, yet must manage threats arising far outside of its region. It can survive only if it manoeuvres with great powers commanding enormously greater resources. Israel cannot match the resources and, therefore, it must be constantly clever. There are periods when it is relatively safe because of great power alignments, but its normal condition is one of global unease. No nation can be clever forever, and Israel's history shows that some form of subordination is inevitable. Indeed, it is to a very limited extent subordinate to the United States now.

For Israel, the retention of a Davidic independence is difficult. Israel's strategy must be to manage its subordination effectively by dealing with its patron cleverly, as it did with Persia. But cleverness is not a geopolitical concept. It is not permanent, and it is not assured. And that is the perpetual crisis of Jerusalem.

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VERSES THAT SPEAK OF ISRAEL'S RETURN AND RESTORATION

(compiled by C. Wilson)

Lev 26:40-46

"But if they will confess their sins and the sins of their fathers-- their treachery against me and their hostility toward me,

which made me hostile toward them so that I sent them into the land of their enemies-- then when their uncircumcised hearts are humbled and they pay for their sin,

I will remember my covenant with Jacob and my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land.

For the land will be deserted by them and will enjoy its sabbaths while it lies desolate without them. They will pay for their sins because they rejected my laws and abhorred my decrees.

Yet in spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them or abhor them so as to destroy them completely, breaking my covenant with them. I am the Lord their God.

But for their sake I will remember the covenant with their ancestors whom I brought out of Egypt in the sight of the nations to be their God. I am the Lord."

These are the decrees, the laws and the regulations that the Lord established on Mount Sinai between himself and the Israelites through Moses.

Deut 30:1-6

When all these blessings and curses I have set before you come upon you and you take them to heart wherever the Lord your God disperses you among the nations,

and when you and your children return to the Lord your God and obey him with all your heart and with all your soul according to everything I command you today,

then the Lord your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where he scattered you.

Even if you have been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there the Lord your God will gather you and bring you back.

He will bring you to the land that belonged to your fathers, and you will take possession of it. He will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers.

The Lord your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants,

so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live.

Ps 105:8-11

He remembers his covenant forever, the word he commanded, for a thousand generations,

the covenant he made with Abraham, the oath he swore to Isaac.

He confirmed it to Jacob as a decree, to Israel as an everlasting covenant:

"To you I will give the land of Canaan as the portion you will inherit."

Isa 11:11-12

In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the remnant that is left of his people from Assyria, from Lower Egypt, from Upper Egypt, from Cush, from Elam, from Babylonia, from Hamath and from the islands of the sea.

He will raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel; he will assemble the scattered people of Judah from the four quarters of the earth.

Isa 43:1-6

But now, this is what the Lord says-- he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.

For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I give Egypt for your ransom, Cush and Seba in your stead.

Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you, I will give men in exchange for you, and people in exchange for your life.

Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west.

I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' and to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth--

Jer 3:18

In those days the house of Judah will join the house of Israel, and together they will

come from a northern land to the land I gave your forefathers as an inheritance.

Jer 16:14-15

"However, the days are coming," declares the Lord, "when men will no longer say, 'As surely as the Lord lives, who brought the Israelites up out of Egypt,'

but they will say, 'As surely as the Lord lives, who brought the Israelites up out of the land of the north and out of all the countries where he had banished them.' For I will restore them to the land I gave their forefathers.

Jer 23:7-8

"So then, the days are coming," declares the Lord, "when people will no longer say, 'As surely as the Lord lives, who brought the Israelites up out of Egypt,'

but they will say, 'As surely as the Lord lives, who brought the descendants of Israel up out of the land of the north and out of all the countries where he had banished them.' Then they will live in their own land."

Jer 31:7-8

This is what the Lord says: "Sing with joy for Jacob; shout for the foremost of the nations. Make your praises heard, and say, 'O Lord, save your people, the remnant of Israel.'"

See, I will bring them from the land of the north and gather them from the ends of the earth. Among them will be the blind and the lame, expectant mothers and women in labor; a great throng will return.

Ezek Ch. 36

"Son of man, prophesy to the mountains of Israel and say, 'O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord.

This is what the Sovereign Lord says: The enemy said of you, 'Aha! The ancient heights have become our possession.' "

Therefore prophesy and say, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Because they ravaged and hounded you from every side so that you became the possession of the rest of the nations and the object of people's malicious talk and slander,

therefore, O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Sovereign Lord: This is what the Sovereign Lord says to the mountains and hills, to the ravines and valleys, to the desolate ruins and the deserted towns that have been plundered and ridiculed by the rest of the nations around you--

this is what the Sovereign Lord says: In my burning zeal I have spoken against the rest of the nations, and against all Edom, for with glee and with malice in their hearts they made my land their own possession so that they might plunder its pastureland.'

Therefore prophesy concerning the land of Israel and say to the mountains and hills, to the ravines and valleys: 'This is what the

Sovereign Lord says: I speak in my jealous wrath because you have suffered the scorn of the nations.

Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I swear with uplifted hand that the nations around you will also suffer scorn.

"But you, O mountains of Israel, will produce branches and fruit for my people Israel, for they will soon come home.

I am concerned for you and will look on you with favor; you will be plowed and sown,

and I will multiply the number of people upon you, even the whole house of Israel. The towns will be inhabited and the ruins rebuilt.

I will increase the number of men and animals upon you, and they will be fruitful and become numerous. I will settle people on you as in the past and will make you prosper more than before. Then you will know that I am the Lord.

I will cause people, my people Israel, to walk upon you. They will possess you, and you will be their inheritance; you will never again deprive them of their children.

"This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Because people say to you, 'You devour men and deprive your nation of its children,'"

therefore you will no longer devour men or make your nation childless, declares the Sovereign Lord.

No longer will I make you hear the taunts of the nations, and no longer will you suffer the scorn of the peoples or cause your nation to fall, declares the Sovereign Lord."

Again the word of the Lord came to me: "Son of man, when the people of Israel were living in their own land, they defiled it by their conduct and their actions. Their conduct was like a woman's monthly uncleanness in my sight.

So I poured out my wrath on them because they had shed blood in the land and because they had defiled it with their idols.

I dispersed them among the nations, and they were scattered through the countries; I judged them according to their conduct and their actions.

And wherever they went among the nations they profaned my holy name, for it was said of them, 'These are the Lord's people, and yet they had to leave his land.'

I had concern for my holy name, which the house of Israel profaned among the nations where they had gone.

"Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone.

I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the

nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Sovereign Lord, when I show myself holy through you before their eyes.

"For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land.

I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols.

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God.

I will save you from all your uncleanness. I will call for the grain and make it plentiful and will not bring famine upon you.

I will increase the fruit of the trees and the crops of the field, so that you will no longer suffer disgrace among the nations because of famine.

Then you will remember your evil ways and wicked deeds, and you will loathe yourselves for your sins and detestable practices.

I want you to know that I am not doing this for your sake, declares the Sovereign Lord. Be ashamed and disgraced for your conduct, O house of Israel!

"This is what the Sovereign Lord says: On the day I cleanse you from all your sins, I will resettle your towns, and the ruins will be rebuilt.

The desolate land will be cultivated instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass through it.

They will say, "This land that was laid waste has become like the garden of Eden; the cities that were lying in ruins, desolate and destroyed, are now fortified and inhabited."

Then the nations around you that remain will know that I the Lord have rebuilt what was destroyed and have replanted what was desolate. I the Lord have spoken, and I will do it.'

"This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Once again I will yield to the plea of the house of Israel and do this for them: I will make their people as numerous as sheep, as numerous as the flocks for offerings at Jerusalem during her appointed feasts. So will the ruined cities be filled with flocks of people. Then they will know that I am the Lord."

Ezek. Ch. 37

The hand of the Lord was upon me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord

and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones.

He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry.

He asked me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" I said, "O Sovereign Lord, you alone know."

Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord!'

This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life.

I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord."

So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone.

I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them.

Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath; prophecy, son of man, and say to it, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe into these slain, that they may live.'"

So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet-- a vast army.

Then he said to me: "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.'"

Therefore prophecy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: O my people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel.

Then you, my people, will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and bring you up from them.

I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the Lord have spoken, and I have done it, declares the Lord."

The word of the Lord came to me:

"Son of man, take a stick of wood and write on it, 'Belonging to Judah and the Israelites associated with him.' Then take another stick of wood, and write on it, 'Ephraim's stick, belonging to Joseph and all the house of Israel associated with him.'

Join them together into one stick so that they will become one in your hand.

"When your countrymen ask you, 'Won't you tell us what you mean by this?'

say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I am going to take the stick of Joseph-- which is in Ephraim's hand-- and of the Israelite tribes associated with him,

and join it to Judah's stick, making them a single stick of wood, and they will become one in my hand.'

Hold before their eyes the sticks you have written on

and say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land.

I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. There will be one king over all of them and they will never again be two nations or be divided into two kingdoms.

They will no longer defile themselves with their idols and vile images or with any of their offenses, for I will save them from all their sinful backsliding, and I will cleanse them. They will be my people, and I will be their God.

"My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd. They will follow my laws and be careful to keep my decrees.

They will live in the land I gave to my servant Jacob, the land where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children's children will live there forever, and David my servant will be their prince forever.

I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant. I will establish them and increase their numbers, and I will put my sanctuary among them forever.

My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people.

Then the nations will know that I the Lord make Israel holy, when my sanctuary is among them forever."

Ezek 39:25-29

"Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will now bring Jacob back from captivity and will have compassion on all the people of Israel, and I will be zealous for my holy name.

They will forget their shame and all the unfaithfulness they showed toward me when they lived in safety in their land with no one to make them afraid.

When I have brought them back from the nations and have gathered them from the countries of their enemies, I will show myself holy through them in the sight of many nations.

Then they will know that I am the Lord their God, for though I sent them into exile among the nations, I will gather them to their own land, not leaving any behind.

I will no longer hide my face from them, for I will pour out my Spirit on the house of Israel, declares the Sovereign Lord."

Joel 3:1-2, 16-18

'In those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem,

I will gather all nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. There I will enter into judgment against them concerning my inheritance, my people Israel, for they scattered my people among the nations and divided up my land.

The Lord will roar from Zion and thunder from Jerusalem; the earth and the sky will tremble. But the Lord will be a refuge for his people, a stronghold for the people of Israel.

'Then you will know that I, the Lord your God, dwell in Zion, my holy hill. Jerusalem will be holy; never again will foreigners invade her.

'In that day the mountains will drip new wine, and the hills will flow with milk; all the ravines of Judah will run with water. A fountain will flow out of the Lord's house and will water the valley of acacias.

Amos 9:13-15

"The days are coming," declares the Lord, "when the reaper will be overtaken by the plowman and the planter by the one treading grapes. New wine will drip from the mountains and flow from all the hills.

I will bring back my exiled people Israel; they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will make gardens and eat their fruit.

I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them," says the Lord your God.

Luke 1:31-33

You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus.

He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David,

and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

Luke 1:68-75

"Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come and has redeemed his people.

He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago),

salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us--

to show mercy to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant,

the oath he swore to our father Abraham: to rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and to enable us to serve him without fear

in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

Luke 2:30-32

For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."

Acts 15:13-18

When they finished, James spoke up: "Brothers, listen to me.

Simon has described to us how God at first showed his concern by taking from the Gentiles a people for himself.

The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written:

"After this I will return and rebuild David's fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it,

that the remnant of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who bear my name, says the Lord, who does these things' that have been known for ages.

Rom 11:11-12

Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious.

But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their fullness bring!

Rom 11:25-27

I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in.

And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob.

And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins."

Eph 2:12-13

remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.

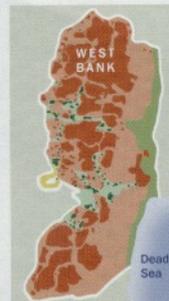
Eph 2:19

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household,

-oOo-

A LAND DIVIDED

In a sliver of territory between the river and the sea, borders have rarely been fixed for long



2002

Plans and Proposals

A variety of plans for Middle East peace are in circulation. The Mitchell Report, authored by a former U.S. Senator, suggests several steps each side must take toward a lasting peace, while the Tenet plan, proposed by the CIA director, focuses on a reduction of violence. Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah creates a flutter when he suggests that peace and normalization of relations would follow if Israel withdrew from lands occupied after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

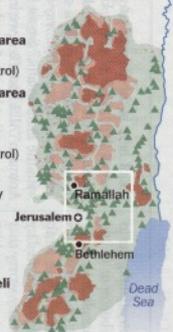


TUG-OF-WAR

Settlements in Jerusalem and the occupied territories diminish Palestinian self-rule

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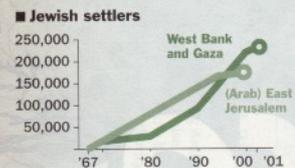
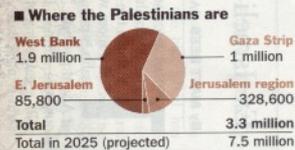
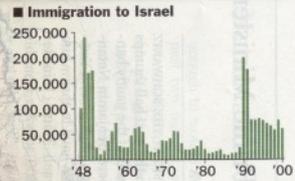
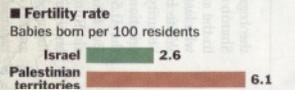
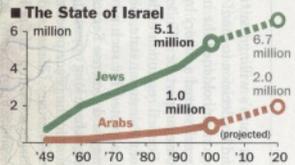
- Palestinian area (civil and security control)
- Palestinian area (civil control, joint Israeli-Palestinian security control)
- Israeli civil and security control
- Israeli civil and military facility
- Jewish-Israeli settlement



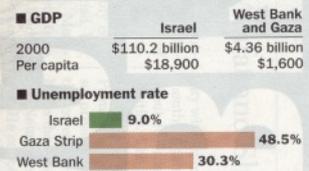
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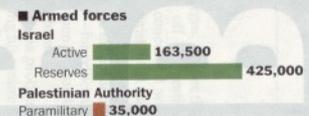
Populations



Economies



Military



THE Graphic by Joe Lertola, Ed Gabriel, Lori Juelson, Missy Adams and Ulmrich Nier. Sources: www.cpa-jordan.org, www.jep.org, Palestinian Authority, Census, Central Bureau of Statistics, IMF, UNRWA, Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics, CIA World Factbook, Military Balance, Library of Congress, East View Cartographic, www.eastview.com



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