

Israel, Palestine, and the Arabs

By Charles J. Stephens
charlesstephens@optonline.net

Pertinent Facts

Biblical Israel

Israel became a nation about 1300BC and a kingdom in 1020 BC. Though it was occupied on several occasions (Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks) the main population remained Jewish until the Roman conquest. By 135 AD some 3 million Jews had been expelled from their homeland by the Romans. Nonetheless, a continuous Jewish presence remained. This population fluctuated depending on the whims of imperial rulers. By the mid-19th century approximately 20,000 Jews were living in Palestine under the rule of the Ottoman Turks.

Palestine

Palestine was the name given by the Romans to a region that encompassed Israel, the West Bank, Gaza, Jordan, parts of Syria and Lebanon. **Palestine was never an independent nation**, a country with frontiers. From the fall of Israel in 70 AD until the early 20th century, Palestine was a group of provincial subdivisions in a succession of empires, principally the Roman and Byzantine empires, four Islamic dynasties (Omayyad, Abbasid, Fatimid, and Mameluke) and lastly, the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Turks ruled Palestine from 1517 to 1917. Turkey lost Palestine with its defeat in World War I.

Palestine under Ottoman rule

The Ottomans neglected and misruled Palestine. It became a sparsely settled region reduced to 275,000 people by 1800. In 1880 the area that became the Jewish state only had a population of 125,000. Widespread emigration occurred in Palestine under the Turks due to a near total lack of infrastructure, corruption, onerous taxation, and lawlessness. The area was overrun by Bedouin tribes who earned their livelihood from banditry. Tenant farmers were victimized by these marauders, and by absentee landlords and tax agents who imposed high rental burdens. By the mid-19th century only 10 percent of the tillable soil was under cultivation. Numerous European commentators noted the desolation. In his book, "The Innocents Abroad" Mark Twain describes the Palestine he saw in 1867 as a "barren," "empty" land. "Palestine," he wrote, "sits in sackcloth and ashes ... desolate and unlovely."

Zionism

A century's long process of population stagnation and emigration from Palestine was reversed with the advent of Zionism. Zion is the ancient name for Jerusalem. Zionism was/is a movement calling on Jews to return to their homeland. From 1880 to 1914 some 80,000 Jews immigrated to Palestine. By 1931 there were 175,000 Jews in Palestine and approximately 500,000 lived there on the eve of WWII. The population of Israel today is 6,500,000 of whom 1,250,000 are Arab Israelis.

Zionists created a panoply of organizations that later became institutions in the Jewish state. Among these was an organization called the Jewish National Fund. It collected and channeled monies for the purchase of land. Land was mainly purchased from absentee landlords. Properties were bought at exorbitant prices though most land purchased was barren and unproductive. It was reclaimed through a number of agricultural measures including the drainage of swamps and irrigation. By the late 1920s the Jews had purchased nearly 300,000 acres of land and were marketing hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of agricultural products. This precipitated the inflow of scores of thousands of Arab agricultural laborers and a growth in the Palestinian Arab population. By 1948, the year that Israel became a state, there were well over one million Arabs in what are now Israel and the West Bank. ***The arrival of Jewish settlers in Palestine did not displace the Arab population. On the contrary, it served to increase it.***

Mandated Palestine

After World War One the League of Nations mandated Palestine to Britain. In 1921 the English transferred 77% of Palestine to the Arabs. This became the Kingdom of Jordan. In 1923 the Golan Heights, comprising 1% of mandated Palestine, were given to the French mandate of Syria. In November 1947 the United Nations divided the remaining 22% of Palestine (extending from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea) between Arabs and Jews. Fifty-seven percent of this area was given to the Jews; 43 percent to the Arabs. The bulk of the territory granted the Jews was the Negev desert, comprising 60 percent of Israel's land mass. **Indeed, inhabited Israel comprised only 6.7% of the land of mandated Palestine.**

Self-determination

The United Nations' division of Palestine in November 1947 was based on the principle of self-determination. The majority of the people living on the Israel side of the divide were Jews (538,000 Jews; 397,000 Arabs). The majority of the people living on the Palestine side were Arabs (800,000 Arabs; 12,000 Jews). Jerusalem was internationalized. Its Jewish population numbered 100,000.

Arabs Reject Two State Solution

The two-state solution, promulgated by the international community through the United Nations and endorsed by the United States, was accepted by the Jewish authorities in Palestine. **It was rejected by all the Arab states, five of which sent armies of invasion to exterminate Israel when it declared its independence in May, 1948.** The Secretary of the Arab League, Azzha Pasha, said about this aggression: **“This will be a war of extermination and momentous massacre which will be spoken of like the Mongolian massacres and the crusades.”**

Arab Refugees

This war launched in May 1948 by Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon resulted in a flood of refugees. Some 600,000 Arabs fled the conflicted region **1.** because they feared for their safety in the zones of battle **2.** because they were encouraged to do so by the invading armies: Arab leaders urged Palestinians to” get out so that we can get in.” **3.**

because they were expelled by the Israeli armed forces. These refugees, who fled to Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Gaza, were not integrated into their new homes, but segregated from society and interred in squalid refugee camps.

Arabs in Israel

In 1948 about 150,000 Arabs remained in Israel. That number has grown to 1,250,000 – about 19% of the total Israeli population. Arab Israelis partake of all social services –such as health and education benefits- offered by the Israeli state. They vote and are represented by Arab delegates in the Israeli parliament (Knesset). Israeli Arabs have also served in the Cabinet, foreign ministry and the Supreme Court. Besides Hebrew, the only other official language in Israel is Arabic

Jewish Refugees

Following the creation of the State of Israel Arab nations expelled virtually all their Jewish residents. About 750,000 Jews had their assets confiscated and were forced to leave from Arab countries where they had resided for centuries. Israel absorbed a great majority of this exodus. Today there are fewer than 8,000 Jews in the Arab world, mostly living in Morocco and Tunisia. They are wholly excluded from meaningful participation in Arab life and treated like social outcasts.

Israel: Embattled Democracy

Arab rejection of Israel’s right to exist was marked by the following developments:

1. Arabs Reject Israel

The Arab League vowed never to recognize the existence of the Jewish state and issued a call for its destruction. The Egyptian Foreign Minister, Muhammad Salah al-Din said: **“The Arab people will not be embarrassed to declare: ‘We shall not be satisfied except by the final obliteration of Israel from the map of the Middle East.’”**

2. Arabs Absorb “Palestine”

The Arab state envisioned by the UN partition never materialized. The West Bank was seized by Jordan and Gaza was placed under Egyptian military occupation. Indeed, Palestinian statehood was not mentioned in the Covenant of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) which specifically denied that it had sovereignty over the West Bank and Gaza.

3. Arab Aggression Against Israel

The West Bank and Gaza were used as staging grounds by Jordan and Egypt for attacks against Israel. From 1949 to 1956 raiders called Fedayeen killed and wounded 1,300 Israelis. The Egyptian leader, Gamel Abdel Nasser called the Fedayeen “heroes” and said: **“There will be no peace on Israel’s border because we demand vengeance, and**

vengeance is Israel's death. In 1951 Egypt closed the Suez Canal to Israeli shipping. In 1953 Egypt, in an act of war, blockaded the Gulf of Aqaba to Israeli shipping and subsequently turned back vessels of other countries bound for the Israeli port of Eilat. In August 1955 Nasser signed an arms pact with the Soviet Union, rapidly building up his armies with Soviet weaponry. He sent columns of tanks across the Sinai to Israel's borders. On October 25, 1956 Egypt signed a tri-partite agreement with Syria and Jordan placing Nasser in command of all three armies. A few weeks earlier the president of Syria, Shukri al- Quwatli, declared: **“The present situation demands the mobilization of all Arab strength to liquidate the state that has arisen in our region.”**

4. “Operation Kadesh”

On October 29, 1956 Israel launched a pre-emptive strike against Egypt. In a swift campaign Israel drove Egyptian forces back across the Suez Canal, destroyed Fedayeen bases, and re-opened the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping. In March 1957 Israel withdrew its troops from the Sinai after receiving international guarantees that vital waterways would remain open, and that a United Nations Emergency Force would police the Sinai to safeguard the armistice. Though Israel returned the Sinai to Egypt, Egypt continued to deny Israel passage through the Suez Canal.

5. The Six Day War

In May 1967 Egypt once again mobilized its armies on Israel's borders. Nasser demanded the departure of the UN forces from the Sinai and the UN capitulated to his threats. Again Nasser closed the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping. He said: ***“The problem presently before the Arab countries is not whether the port of Eilat should be blockaded or how to blockade it –but how totally to exterminate the State of Israel for all time.”*** With an Egyptian invasion imminent, Israel launched a pre-emptive air strike that decimated the Egyptian air force. Israeli leaders tried to persuade the Jordanians to stay out of the conflict. Instead the Jordanians initiated an artillery bombardment of West Jerusalem from the hills of East Jerusalem. In a six day offensive Israel defeated its enemies. It occupied the West Bank, the Golan Heights, Gaza, and Sinai, but expressed its willingness to give up most of this territory in exchange for peace.

6. The Khartoum Conference. War of Attrition

The Arabs again refused to sign a peace settlement. Instead, at a conference in Khartoum from August 29 to September 1, 1967, the Arab world declared it's three “No's”: **1. No peace with Israel. 2. No negotiations with Israel. 3. No recognition of Israel.** This conference was followed by a low grade War of Attrition with Egypt in which 1,424 Israeli soldiers and 100 civilians were killed.

7. The Yom Kippur War

On October 6, 1973, Yom Kippur, the holiest day in the Jewish year, Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack against Israel. One thousand four-hundred Syrian tanks struck from the Golan Heights, and along the Suez Canal Israelis were assaulted by 600,000 Egyptian soldiers backed by 2,000 tanks. Egypt and Syria were actively aided by 9 Arab nations. Among those sending troops were Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Sudan. Israel prevailed at the cost of 2,688 soldiers killed.

8. Peace Treaties

Following a cease fire Egypt and Israel negotiated disengagement agreements. Israel then informed Egypt that it was prepared to trade land (Sinai) for peace. On November 7, 1977 Egyptian President Anwar Sadat flew to Israel and addressed the Knesset in Jerusalem. In September 1978 President Jimmy Carter hosted Menachem Begin and Anwar Sadat resulting in the signing of the Camp David Accords. By its terms Israel was committed to return the Sinai to Egypt within three years in exchange for diplomatic recognition and the normalization of relations. On March 26, 1979 a peace treaty between the two nations was signed at the White House. On October 6, 1994 Jordan also signed a peace treaty with Israel.

9. The Rejectionist Front

Syria refused to participate in the peace process. The Syrian dictator, Hafez Aassad, became the principal leader of the Rejectionist Front supported by numerous Arab regimes. Following the assassination of Anwar Sadat (October 1981) Egypt adopted a policy towards Israel that amounts to a “cold peace.” Cultural exchanges and trade between the two countries are minimal. **Under Hosni Mubarak the government controlled press routinely demonizes Jews and lavishes praise on their killers. For instance on April 27, 2001, the Egyptian government daily “Al-Akhar” featured an article about Adolf Hitler describing him as a leader of “blessed memory.” It went on to say: “Our only complaint against him is that his revenge on them [the Jews] was not enough.”**

10. Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)

This organization was created in 1964 by Egypt, with the backing of the Arab League. Its task was to wage a guerilla/terror campaign against Israel. Key articles in the Palestinian Covenant make this plain. Article 15 states: “The liberation of Palestine... aims at the elimination of Zionism in Palestine”. Article 19 states: “Israel is the instrument of the Zionist movement.” Article 22 states: “The partitioning of Palestine in 1947 and the establishment of Israel are fundamentally null and void.” Article 9 declares that the goal of eliminating the State of Israel is to be achieved by “armed struggle.” The PLO sub-divided into various groups. The largest of these factions was Fatah led by Yasir Arafat, who became PLO Chairman in 1969.

In the name of the Palestinian people the PLO conducted raids against Israel, directed mainly against civilians. Between 1965 and 1968 188 Israeli’s were killed and 762 wounded. **Commenting on the fate of the Israeli people on the eve of the 1967 “Six Day War” Ahmed Shukeiry, then Chairman of the PLO, said: “Those who survive, will remain in Palestine. I estimate that none of them will survive.”** In mid-May 1974 three PLO guerillas broke into a school in the village Ma’a lot and took some 120 children hostage, killing twenty teenagers, mostly girls. A week later three PLO guerillas broke into an apartment in Naharia killing a mother and her two children. In October of 1974 the Arab League recognized the PLO as “the sole, legitimate representative of the

Palestinian people.” In that year it was also granted recognition by the United Nations, which invited Arafat to address the General Assembly on November 13th.

11. Killing Jews Abroad. The First Intifada. PLO kills US ambassador to Sudan. The PLO Backs Saddam Hussein

On December 26, 1967 the PLO attacked an El Al plane in Athens. This was the first of a series of airplane hijackings for the purpose of murdering Jewish passengers and pilots. According to Ion Pacepa of Romania, the highest ranking intelligence officer ever to have defected from the Soviet bloc, Arafat bragged to him: “I invented the hijackings of passenger planes.” On May 30, 1972, Japanese terrorists working for the PLO faction, “The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine” (PFLP), machine gunned passengers at Lod airport in Tel Aviv killing 27 and wounding 80. The PLO faction, Black September, murdered 11 Israeli athletes at the 1972 Summer Olympics in Munich, Germany. On March 3, 1973 Black September gunmen, acting on Arafat’s orders, kidnapped and then murdered Cleo A. Noel, Jr., the US Ambassador in the Sudan. On October 7, 1985 another PLO faction, the “Palestine Liberation Front,” seized the cruise ship, Achille Lauro, and demanded the release of PLO prisoners in Israel. Before leaving the vessel they shot and killed Leon Klinghoffer – a wheel chair passenger, a US citizen, and a Jew.

From December 1987 till the end of 1991 the PLO led an uprising, the intifada, against the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. **In August 1990 when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait only the PLO and Libya opposed an Arab League resolution calling for an Iraqi withdrawal.** The intifada leadership praised the invasion of Kuwait as an important step in the “liberation of Palestine.” In the West Bank city of Jenin 1000 Palestinians marched for Saddam shouting: “Saddam, you hero; attack Israel with chemical weapons” **When Operation Desert Storm began Arafat sent Saddam Hussein a message condemning the “American dictatorship” and hailing Iraq as “the defender of the Arab nation, of Muslims, and of free men everywhere.”**

12. Black September. Operation Peace for Galilee

Through their control of refugee camps in Jordan, the PLO recruited an army that threatened to depose the regime of Jordan’s King Hussein. The show-down occurred in September 1970. Hussein’s army crushed the PLO, forcing its leadership and some 18,000 thousand followers into Lebanon. There they seized and tyrannized whole areas of the country. A multitude of witnesses, including Edward Ghorra, the Lebanese ambassador to the United Nations, attested to the widespread PLO brutality including kidnappings, rapes, torture, and murder.

From 1975 to 1982 Lebanon was plunged into a civil war that incurred 95,000 casualties. In southern Lebanon the PLO forces, commanding an enormous arsenal of weapons including Katyusha rockets, surface to air missiles, and hundreds of Russian tanks, launched a cross border campaign of raids and bombardment of Israelis in northern Galilee. These attacks killed hundreds and forced thousands of residents to abandon their homes and seek safety in bomb shelters. With the intensification of these attacks Israel

struck back on June 6, 1982. President Reagan said on June 21, 1982: **“We agree that Israel must not be subjected to violence from the north.”** “Operation Peace for Galilee” drove the PLO out of southern Lebanon and besieged some 14,000 combatants in Beirut. Israel agreed to a cease fire and the United States succeeded in mediating an evacuation of the PLO from Lebanon which began on August 21, 1982. Arafat set up his new headquarters in Tunis. Israel withdrew from Lebanon in 1984. It maintained a token force with the South Lebanese Army (SLA) that occupied a security zone adjacent to Israel’s border.

13. Sabra and Shatilla

In September 1982 the Lebanese Christian Phalangist militia massacred some 700 to 800 people in two Palestinian refugee camps in Beirut. The dead included 15 women and 23 children. The Christian militia was granted permission by the Israeli army to enter these camps to disarm some 200 Palestinians believed to be operating out of bunkers in the camps. By 11 pm on the night of the 16th an Israeli command post received reports from the Phalangists that “300 terrorists and civilians” had been “liquidated”. The Deputy Prime Minister of Israel had warned that the Phalangist militia might exploit the situation for revenge. (A day before the Christian militia entered the camps President elect Bashir Gemayel, a Christian, was assassinated.) This warning was not heeded either by Ariel Sharon, then Minister of Defense, or by the Chief-of-Staff, Raful Eitan.

In response to public outrage – 300,000 Israelis demonstrated in Israel in protest -- the “Kahan Commission of Inquiry” formed by the Israeli government found that Israel was “indirectly responsible” because it should have anticipated the massacre and denied the Phalangist militia entry into the camps. For this negligence both Sharon and Eitan were dismissed from their posts. **It is important to note that no Israeli soldiers, and no soldiers under Israeli command, took part in this massacre.**

14. Arafat and Oslo

In 1988 Arafat acknowledged Israel’s right to exist and declared that the PLO would renounce terrorism. This set off a flurry of diplomatic activity that culminated with a Declaration of Principles known as the Oslo Agreement signed in a ceremony held on the White House lawn, September 13, 1993. By its terms Israel agreed to turn over Gaza and most of the West Bank to Palestinian self-rule in stages over a five year period. Arafat sold the agreement to his people as a step toward statehood – a consequence not formally embodied in the Agreement, but tentatively accepted by Israeli leadership supported by a growing body of the Israeli public. In accordance with the Agreement Israel first turned over governance of Gaza and Jericho to the Palestinian Authority followed by a military withdrawal from six major West Bank cities. The Israelis also transferred to the PA civil control over education, culture, health, social welfare, banking, taxation and tourism. They released hundreds of Palestinian prisoners and armed a Palestinian police force of 24,000 men with light weapons. Israel also granted the PA \$25 million dollars and loaned \$50 million as part of a 2 billion aid package whose principal donors were the US, the EU, and Japan. These actions were intended to instill confidence necessary for furthering harmony and peace.

15. Arafat Sabotages the Oslo Agreement

When Oslo was signed Arafat pledged to “abstain from incitement, including hostile propaganda.” He pledged to police the West Bank and Gaza against terrorists. Israel armed his police forces based on this commitment. He promised to disarm, arrest, and incarcerate terrorists and otherwise take vigorous actions to quell the violence directed against Israel. Precisely the opposite actions occurred. Rather than discourage violence Arafat and the PA encouraged and unleashed it. It took place on three levels:

A. Incitement to violence and hate propaganda against Jews and Israel. Jews and the Israeli state were/are demonized by Palestinian leaders. **Arafat led in the incitement and vilification. In a speech to a group of Arab ambassadors meeting in Stockholm in January 1996 he said: “You understand that we plan to eliminate the state of Israel and establish a purely Palestinian state ... I have no use for Jews; they are and remain Jews.”** In July 1996 Arafat was quoted in the *New York Times* calling Israel a “demon.” In September 1996 Arafat announced: “We will be willing to die as martyrs ... Warfare is our only way to victory.” In speeches before fellow-Arabs he called on his people to wage holy war against Israel and expressed the hope that “one million shahids” (martyrs/suicide bombers) would lead the liberation battle.

Instead of seeking “to foster mutual understanding and tolerance,” as called for by Article 22 of the Oslo Accords, the Palestinian Authority gave the green light to all of its organs of public opinion for a campaign of hate propaganda against Jews and the Israeli state. On November 3, 1997, a religious program broadcast on PA controlled television described Jews as “the seed of Satan and the devils.” On November 7, 1997 the largest PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda* stated: “Corruption is part of the nature of the Jews. So much so that it is only on rare occasions that one finds corruption in which Jews were not behind it.” On July 15, 1998 the same daily published an article entitled “Jewish Control of the World Media” which states that the Holocaust was “a malicious fabrication by the Jews” and that furthermore “Jews spread prostitution as a means of plunging the world into decadence, abomination, and corruption.” **On October 13, 2000, Palestinian Authority television broadcast a sermon by Dr. Halabiya, a member of the PA appointed “Fatwa Council” and former Rector of Islamic University in Gaza. He said: “Have no mercy on the Jews no matter where they are, in any country. Fight them wherever they are. Wherever you meet them, kill them.”**

Article 22 of the Oslo II (Taba) Accords states that Israel and the PA “will ensure that their respective educational systems contribute to peace ... and will refrain from the introduction of any motifs that could adversely affect the process of reconciliation.” Yet the school system in Palestine was and is harnessed by the PA for the purpose of indoctrinating youth with hatred towards Israel and Jews. During the first seven years of its authority the PA used school textbooks published in Jordan and Egypt. They are filled with expressions of hatred and incitement. Zionism is depicted as a “germ” that must be eradicated. The name

“Israel” does not appear on any maps of the region. Grade handbooks address the question, “why must we fight against Jews and expel them from our country?” The nature of Jews is described as “corrupt, deceitful, and hostile.” In 2001 – 2002 new school textbooks were issued by the Palestinian Authority. Though anti-semitic statements are not as blatant there is no mention of values such as normalization, coexistence, harmony between Jews and Arabs. Cities founded by Israel such as Tel Aviv are never mentioned. “Palestine Martyrs” are glorified such as “The Engineer Ayash” responsible for suicide bombings in the 1990’s that killed dozens of Israelis. Jihad is extolled as a superior virtue.

The PA Ministry for Youth and Sports and the Islamic Foundation have organized summer camps for children ages 9 to 16 where they are taught the rudiments of basic army training, how best to conceal suicide bomb packs, how to attack Israeli settlements, infiltrate Israel proper, evade detection, etc. According to the chairman of the Islamic Foundation, Dr. Ahmed Baher, the main purpose of the camps is to “instill the seeds of hatred against Israel”. Given this indoctrination and training it is not surprising that in a recent poll 80% of all Palestinians favor suicide bombings even if directed against civilians.

B. Financial support for terrorist organizations. Since the signing of the Oslo Accords the international community has donated about 6 billion dollars to the PA. Though the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is entrusted with verifying that sums transferred go to the designated PA departments in the right amounts, none of the funds have been subject to audit, a measure categorically rejected by Arafat who said in 1994: “I completely refuse any controls by anybody on the Palestinian Autonomy, except the Palestinians themselves. We didn’t finish military occupation to get economic occupation.” Documents seized from Arafat’s compound in Ramallah by Israeli forces during Operation Defensive Shield in April 2002. include letters signed by Arafat authorizing the payment of thousands of dollars to the military wing of Fatah, formerly called Tanzim, but now known as the al-Aksa Martyrs Brigades. A BBC investigation found that up to \$50,000 dollars a month was being sent by the PA to the al-Aksa Martyrs Brigades.

C. PA armaments for terrorists. PA terrorist attacks against Israelis. On January 3, 2002 Israeli commandos boarded a cargo ship in the Red Sea, the “Karine A”, and confiscated 50 tons of weapons destined for the Gaza Strip and valued at 15 million dollars. Arafat’s denial of PA involvement in this purchase was contradicted by the captain of the vessel, Omar Akawi, an officer in the PA naval police who admitted to journalists from the New York Times that the originating party was the Palestinian Authority. Among the weapons seized were rockets with a range of 20km, anti-tank weapons, mines, mortars, and 2,200 kilograms of C4 explosive – enough for 300 suicide bombs. This seizure of smuggled arms is one of many made by the Israeli Defense Forces since the signing of the Oslo Accords. In addition to confiscations at sea, weapons have been intercepted in the Jordan Valley and at the Gaza border with Egypt. In Gaza the Israeli army has blown up more than 100 underground tunnels used as conduits for illicit arms.

Since the start of the September 2000 intifada the IDF has destroyed five illegal weapons factories costing the PA \$80,000 dollars each. A letter captured in the office of Fuad Shoubaki, Arafat's chief procurement and finance officer, details the requirements for a mortar and rocket factory costing \$100,000 dollars, with ongoing expenses estimated at \$15,000 dollars per month. This and other ordinance confiscated violate the Oslo Accords which designate a 24,000 man Palestinian police force to "assume responsibility for public order and internal security" and armed, therefore, with light weapons--- not rockets, mines, mortars, and bombs intended for guerilla combat and terror operations.

16. Arab terrorism. Israeli retaliation

From October 2000 to April, 2004, Palestinian terror has killed 1,212 Israelis and wounded approximately 5,500. During the same period Palestinians have suffered roughly 3 times as many casualties. An inference drawn from this "kill ratio" is that Palestinians have suffered more because they have been killed in greater numbers. Is this, in fact, the case? A statistical breakdown of Palestinian deaths between September 30, 2000 and May 7, 2002, was released by two Palestinian organizations, the Jerusalem Media and Communications Center and Palestine Monitor. They found that 75.1% of those killed were between the ages of 16 and 39. Another 11.7% were below age 15, 11% were above the age of 40, and only 2.8% of the total killed were women. A similar study of Israeli deaths by Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs found that equivalent Israeli figures were 57.7%, 7.4%, 34.9%, and 25%.

In other words, proportionally more than three times as many middle-age and elderly Israelis were killed during this period. For women the ratio was 9 to 1. Palestinian fatality rate among children was higher (11.7% vs. 7.4%) These figures have remained relatively constant. For example, as of May 15, 2004, the percentage of Palestinian females killed is 4.3% compared to 21.5% Israeli women killed. These statistics bear out a fundamental difference in the violence: Israelis do not deliberately target civilian populations; Palestinians do. On March 5, 2002 the Minister of Communications for the PLO, Imad al-Faluji, declared: **"We say that there are in fact no civilians in Israel. All the Israeli people are enrolled ... it is the full right of our Palestinian people to strike in any place."**

17. UN Resolution 242. The Settlements

A major criticism of Israel is that its occupation of Palestinian lands contravenes UN Resolution 242 which established the principles and provisions for the settlement of the June 6, 1967, Six Day War. Specifically, the critics charge that in not withdrawing its armed forces from the territories Israel is and has been in blatant violation of resolution 242. This is false. The document does not call on Israel to withdraw from "all" territories or even "the" territories. It does require withdrawal **"from territories occupied in the recent conflict"** pending Israel's **"right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force."** Since 1967 a condition of safety has yet to be accorded to Israel. Even so, in 1982 Israel did withdraw from 90% of the territories it occupied in 1967 when it returned the Sinai to Egypt. And with the signing of the Oslo Agreement Israeli forces subsequently withdrew from most of Gaza and the most populated areas of the West Bank.

The Oslo Accords do not contain any provisions prohibiting or restricting settlements. Nonetheless, critics and adversaries of Israel charge that the settlements are a major obstacle to peace. This contention is not borne out by the historical record. **From 1949 to 1967, when there were no Jewish settlements in Gaza or the West Bank, the Arabs refused to cease hostilities against Israel.** Nor was there peace with Israel from 1967-1977 when there were only a few strategic settlements in the territories. Settlements were subsequently expanded, but shortly after the signing of the Camp David peace treaty in 1979 between Egypt and Israel settlement activity was frozen and Israel dismantled its settlements in the Sinai. It was hoped that these actions would entice other Arab nations to join the peace process. None did. At the Camp David summit in July 2000 Prime Minister Ehud Barak offered to dismantle sixty-three settlements and recognize a Palestinian state in exchange for peace. Arafat rejected that offer.

Today in the West Bank there are roughly 150 Jewish settlements with a population of 235,000. More than 40% of this population lives in just six settlements near the 1967 border. The settlements comprise less than 5% of the territory of the West Bank and only 1.7% of that area is residential.

18. Camp David

The purpose of the Camp David summit meeting in July of 2000 was for Arafat and Barak, with President Clinton mediating, to negotiate a final settlement in accordance with the 1993 Oslo Accords. Over the course of two weeks the Israelis made a number of proposals all of which were rejected by Arafat. Early on in the discussions this negative attitude precipitated an outburst from a frustrated Clinton who stormed out of the room after exclaiming: “A summit’s purpose is to have discussions based on sincere intentions and you, Palestinians, did not come to this summit with sincere intentions!” About the Camp David experience Barak said about Arafat: **“He did not negotiate in good faith, indeed, he did not negotiate at all. He just kept saying no to every offer, never making any counter proposals of his own.”** After Camp David a final Israeli settlement was offered Arafat at a White House meeting in December. The following is what Arafat flatly turned down:

1. Palestinian sovereignty over 97% of the West Bank.
2. Palestinian sovereignty over 100% of Gaza.
3. A Palestinian land link between Gaza and the West Bank.
4. Israel’s annexation of 3% of the West Bank in exchange for the withdrawal of 63 settlements and an increase of the size of Gaza by one third.
5. Palestinian sovereignty over East Jerusalem which would become the capital of Palestine. Sovereignty over most of the Old City and “Religious Sovereignty” over the Temple Mount.
6. The right of refugees to return to the Palestinian state.
7. A reparations fund of 30 billion dollars for the returning refugees.

In exchange for this offer Arafat was required to do one thing: sign a clause specifying that the agreement meant an end to the conflict. This he would not do. It

seems clear that for Arafat the end of the conflict did not mean a resolution of disputes over borders, settlements, refugees, reparations, religious sites. It did not even mean the creation of a West Bank/Gaza Palestinian state. The end of the conflict for Arafat was the destruction of the State of Israel itself.

19. Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount and the outbreak of the al-Aksa Intifada.

On September 28, 2000, in Old Jerusalem, Ariel Sharon walked to the Temple Mount, the site of the al-Aksa Mosque. **Before his visit Sharon made his plans known to Jibril Rajub, the head of the Palestinian Preventive Security Service, who said about the proposed visit that "it would pose no problem."** In visiting the site Sharon was exercising the right of an Israeli citizen to peacefully enter a public area sovereign to Israel. He did not arrive with army troops. He did not enter the mosque. He did not make an inflammatory speech. **Once on the Temple Mount Sharon simply said: "I come with a message of peace. I believe that we can live together with the Palestinians."**

And then he left, but not before a crowd of 1,000 Palestinians with an ample supply of stones showered the police that was protecting Sharon's delegation. The next day Jewish worshippers at the Western Wall were stoned. On the third day Palestinian paramilitaries began shooting at Israelis. In an interview with the London based Arabic daily *Al-Hayat*, the commander of the *Tanzim* and the *Al-Aksa Martyrs Brigades*, Marwan Barghouti, admitted that the outbreak had been long planned. He said: **"I knew that the end of September was the last period of time before the explosion, but when Sharon reached the al-Aksa Mosque, this was the most appropriate moment for the outbreak of the intifada..."** And Imad Falouji, the Palestinian Authority Communications Minister, said at a rally in Lebanon on March 3, 2001: **"Whoever thinks that this [war] started as a result of Sharon's despicable visit to Al Aksa is in error. It was planned since Arafat's return from Camp David [where he] firmly stood up to Clinton and rejected the U.S. terms."**

Why, at this juncture, did Arafat unleash the intifada? US envoy, Dennis Ross, one of the chief negotiators during the Oslo process, stated: "There is no doubt in my mind that he thought the violence would create pressure on the Israelis and on us and maybe the rest of the world." Judging by the widespread condemnation of Israel's defensive actions, it is hard to quarrel with this assessment.

20 The Al-Aqsa Intifada. Operation Defensive Shield. Jenin.

On September 30, 2000, two days after the outbreak of the intifada, a 12 year old Palestinian boy, Muhammed al-Dura, was killed in an exchange of gunfire between Palestinian militants and Israeli troops at the Netzarim junction. Netzarim is a Jewish settlement in Gaza. An Israeli fortification designed to guard the road into the town was under attack at the time by Palestinians. A Palestinian cameraman, Talal Abu Radman, working for French Channel 2, filmed the action and attributed the death of the boy to Israeli gunfire. This tape, shown world-wide, generated widespread condemnation of Israel and the Israeli Defense Forces and, conversely, engendered widespread sympathy

for the Palestinians and their uprising. Subsequently, a German documentary called “Who Killed Muhammed al-Dura” produced by German ARD TV, made the case that Palestinian snipers shooting from six story buildings overlooking the Netazarim junction killed al Dura, and not Israeli soldiers bunkered in a guard post a kilometer away.

There is no doubt, however, about the October 12, 2000 killings by Palestinians of two Israeli reservists who took a wrong turn on a highway in the West Bank and were stopped by Arafat’s police. Held for questioning at a police station in Ramallah they were attacked by a mob, stabbed and beaten to death. Their bodies were disemboweled and dismembered and one of the corpses was set on fire while crowds of Palestinians danced and cheered. This gruesome act, combined with a spate of suicide bombings, and the failed last ditch peace talks at the Egyptian resort at Taba (January 22-28), undoubtedly influenced the outcome of elections held on February 6, 2001, resulting in the victory of Ariel Sharon over Ehud Barak by landslide vote of 62.5%. Upon assuming the premiership Ariel Sharon halted the policy of enticing Arafat, through Israeli concessions, to sign a peace agreement, though contacts with the Palestinian Authority were maintained.

It bears noting that intifada violence against Israel raged for 15 months before Israel called up its reserves and sent its troops and armored columns into Gaza and the populated areas of the West Bank. In that period -- September 28, 2000 to March 29, 2002 – more than 400 Israelis, mostly civilians, were killed. What finally triggered the Israeli incursion was the “Passover Massacre,” when a suicide bomber blew himself up in the Park Hotel in the city of Netanya killing 30 and wounding 140 people. Credit for this carnage was claimed by Hamas and Arafat’s al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade.

Operation Defensive Shield began on March 29, 2002 and ended on May 10, 2002. As conveyed to the Knesset by Sharon, its goals were:

“to enter cities and villages which have become haven for terrorists; to catch and arrest terrorists and, primarily, their dispatchers and those who finance and support them; to confiscate weapons intended to be used against Israeli citizens; to expose and destroy terrorist facilities and explosives, laboratories, weapons production factories and secret installations. The orders are clear: target and paralyze anyone who takes up weapons and tries to oppose our troops, resists them or endanger them – and to avoid harming the civilian population.”

By April 3, the IDF had seized six of the largest cities in the West Bank. This included the refugee camp at Jenin. The suicide bomber responsible for the “Passover Massacre” in Netanya came from Jenin. Indeed, from October 2000 to April 2002, 28 suicide attacks against Israel were launched from Jenin. Before entering the camp the IDF used loudspeakers urging, in Arabic, civilians to evacuate. A pitched battle with militants then ensued. An Islamic Jihad bomb maker by the name of “Omar” was quoted in the Egyptian newspaper “Al Ahram Weekly” as saying: “We had more than 50 houses booby-trapped around the camp.” And Sheik Jamal abu-Hija, a Hamas commander in Jenin, stated: “The truth is that the fighting is being conducted from neighborhood to

neighborhood, like guerilla warfare. The Mujahideen are using automatic rifles, explosive devices, and hand grenades.”

IDF action in Jenin ended April 18th. By then caches of weapons and bomb making laboratories had been destroyed, and terrorist suspects arrested. In the fighting a number of houses were demolished, amounting to ten percent of the town. The extent of the damage was estimated from satellite photographs of Jenin taken before and after the battle. According to a United Nations investigation, the human cost of the operation was the death of “... at least 52 Palestinians, of whom up to half may have been civilians, and 23 Israeli soldiers killed.”

This finding differs radically from the declarations made at the time by Palestinian Authority officials accusing Israel of massacre in Jenin, indiscriminate slaughter of the population, burial of bodies in mass graves, and the total obliteration of the town. On April 10 Saeb Erekat, PA Minister of Local Government, stated on CNN television “You know, the Jenin refugee camp is no longer in existence.” On April 12, the Secretary General of the Palestinian Authority, Ahmed Abdel Rahman, was quoted by UPI as saying: “thousands of Palestinians were either killed and buried in mass graves or smashed under houses destroyed in Jenin and Nablus.” Rahman later re-stated the number of dead Palestinians in Jenin telling CNN’s Aaron Brown that “...400 to 500 people, mostly civilians, were killed by the Israeli army.” **These bogus charges were flatly contradicted by the UN Jenin report which states: “... allegations by the Palestinian Authority officials in mid April that 500 or more persons were killed in Jenin camp were not substantiated by the evidence that subsequently emerged.”**

21. The Roadmap. The “Hudna”. Targeted Assassinations

During Operation Defensive Shield the IDF raided Arafat’s compound in Ramallah. Here they found numerous documents, many signed by Arafat himself, proving PLO financial support for terrorist attacks. A BBC report based on these documents found that the Palestinian Authority was remitting up to \$50,000 dollars per month to the al-Aqsa Martyrs’ Brigades for carrying out suicide attacks against Israeli citizens and soldiers. With this hard evidence the United States severed contact with Arafat and insisted on new PLO leadership. On March 13, 2003 Arafat appointed Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) as prime minister of the PLO, and within a few weeks of his appointment, on April 30, 2003, the US endorsed a “Roadmap for Peace” under the auspices of a Quartet: the United Nations, European Union, Russia, and the United States. The Road map outlined a three-phase plan leading to a “two state” solution to the conflict by the year 2005.

On the critical issue of security the Roadmap required the Palestinian Authority to “...declare an unequivocal end to violence and terrorism and undertake visible efforts on the ground to arrest, disrupt, and restrain individuals and groups conducting and planning violent attacks” and begin “sustained, targeted, and effective operations aimed at confronting all those engaged in terror, and dismantlement of terrorist capabilities and infrastructure.” These stipulations were publicly endorsed by Abbas on June 4, 2003 in Aqaba, Jordan. Speaking in the presence of President Bush, Ariel Sharon, and King Abdullah Abbas said: “.... we repeat our renunciation of terrorism against the Israelis

wherever they might be...the armed intifada must end... these methods conflict with the kind of state we wish to build based on human rights and the rule of law.”

Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and Fatah did not endorse the Roadmap. But on June 29th Mahmoud Abbas secured an agreement with them calling for a three months cessation of violence, a cease fire known as the “hudna.” It was signed on condition that Israel “releases all prisoners and detainees, Palestinian and Arab ... without condition or restriction.” The Roadmap did not address the issue of prisoners and Israel was not a party to the hudna. Yet, Israel was expected to release over 6,000 prisoners, many of whom were convicted murderers. As a good will gesture, Israel released more than 350 prisoners. But the terrorism did not stop. The worst of these acts was the August 19th suicide bombing by Hamas in a crowded bus in Jerusalem that killed 23 Israelis including seven children. The Roadmap, therefore, never got beyond Phase I. Despite repeated requests Arafat refused to grant Abbas command over the PA’s security forces; he refused to let Abbas dismantle the infrastructure of terror. Indeed, terrorism marked the whole of Mahmoud Abbas’s tenure. On the very day of his nomination as prime minister a suicide bombing by Hamas and the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades at a Tel-Aviv night club killed three and wounded fifty five. Faced with a no confidence vote in the Palestinian legislative council, Mahmoud Abbas tendered his resignation on September 6, 2003.

Two days after the August 19th bus bombing in Jerusalem the Israeli Defense Forces killed Ismael Abu Shanab, the deputy military leader of Hamas, personally responsible for the murder of an Israeli soldier and deeply involved in terrorism. Liquidating the terrorist leadership is critical for dismantling the terrorist apparatus. Hence an important measure taken by the Israeli government is assassinating terrorist leaders, men like Shanab, who plan terrorist acts, recruit and train terrorist disciples, supply the necessary resources for the commission of terrorist acts. These are “targeted” assassinations in that pains are taken to avoid killing people at the scene who have not been identified as terrorists.

Knowing of Israeli concern to avoid indiscriminate killing terrorist leaders deliberately use civilians as a cover for their actions, taking care to avoid exposure by shielding themselves with relatives and crowds. Such is the case of Hamas chieftain, Salah Shehadeh, killed July 23, 2002. An F16 missile strike on what was believed to be an empty building for plotting terror attacks killed Shehadeh plus 14 people among them Shehadeh’s wife and three children. According to IDF Major General Dan Harel, faulty intelligence was to blame for this miscarriage saying “we would have aborted the mission had we known the family was with him.” Since then the IDF has killed the founder of Hamas, Ahmed Yassin on March 22, 2004 and his successor, Abdal Aziz Rantisi on April 17, 2004. The pin point missile strike that killed Rantisi in his car also killed two of his aides. A similar missile strike against Yassin killed 5: Yassin, two aides, and two of Yassin’s grown sons, active in the Hamas organization.

Yassin’s death was criticized in the world press on the grounds that he was merely a “spiritual” leader. Yet Yassin inspired and personally approved scores of attacks against Israelis including: 1) The June 1, 2001 suicide bombing of Tel Aviv’s discotheque, “Dolphinarium” that left 21 dead and 120 wounded. 2) The March 27,

2002 Park Hotel “Passover Massacre” that killed 30 and wounded 140. 3) The June 18, 2002 suicide bombing of a commuter bus in Jerusalem that killed 19 and wounded 74. It is simply not an option for Israel, or any nation, to allow such carnage to continue without taking vigorous countermeasures.

22. The Security Fence

Shortly after launching Operation Defensive Shield in April 2002 Israel began construction on a West Bank anti-terrorist security fence. A similar barrier had already been built on the border with Gaza in 1996. The West Bank barrier, with an approximate length of 437 miles, is being built mainly along the 1967 border. It will, however, wrap around some Jewish settlements, the largest being Ariel with 20,000 inhabitants, located 12 miles inside the West Bank. Only a small fraction of the barrier -- 5%-- will consist of a 26 foot high wall built in areas adjacent to Israeli urban zones where there is a very real threat of sniper fire. The rest is a chain link electronic fence with coils of razor wire bisecting the center of a cleared area the width of a 4 lane highway. This buffer zone incorporates a variety of intruder prevention systems such as trenches, land mines, underground sensors, and watchtowers. The sole purpose of this barrier is to keep terrorist infiltrators out of Israel. Somewhat more than a quarter of the barrier has been built. It is due to be completed within two years.

These passive barriers have already proven their effectiveness. Only one suicide bomber has managed to enter Israel from Gaza since the completion of that fence. In Samaria (the northern West Bank) a partially completed fence reduced the number of suicide attacks from 17, between April to December 2002, to five in all of 2003. By contrast, along the border with Judea (the southern West Bank) which has no fence, there were 10 suicide attacks, April to December 2002, and 11 in 2003. In 2004 no Israeli has been killed by a terrorist attack where the fence has been completed.

Most of the fence is being built on public lands, but unavoidably the fence has inflicted hardships on Palestinians whose farms and villages are in its path. Its construction has meant building on private property, the destruction of some homes, the partition of farm land, the uprooting of olive and fig groves, the destruction of crops. To mitigate the damage the Israeli government has taken the following measures:

- (1) Private land is not expropriated from its owners who are eligible to receive compensation for its seizure, and annual payment for its use.
- (2) Scores of gates have been constructed along the route of the fence to facilitate access by farmers to their fields and provide passage for students to their schools.
- (3) Destroyed homes have been replaced with new dwellings. Agricultural assets have been safeguarded. To date more than 60,000 olive trees were spared destruction through relocation.
- (4) In response to petitions by Palestinian village councils, the Supreme Court of Israel has ruled that the route of the fence be altered to alleviate Palestinian hardship. For example, on June 30, 2004, in a decision affecting 8 Palestinian villages with 35,000 residents, the Israeli Ministry of Defense said it would abide by the ruling of the Supreme Court and re-route 18.6 miles of the fence

and destroy or move 1.9 miles already built. **The Chief Justice, Aharon Barak, acknowledged that the ruling did not make it easier to deal with terrorism. But he added: “This is the destiny of a democracy: she does not see all means acceptable, and the ways of her enemies are not always open before her. A democracy must sometimes fight with one arm tied behind her back. Even so, a democracy has the upper hand. The rule of law and individual liberties constitute an important aspect of her security stance...Only a separation fence built on the base of law will grant security to the state and its citizens. Only a separation route based on the path of law will lead the state to the security so yearned for.”**

Notwithstanding these measures, the Palestinian Authority has roundly condemned the fence in the most pejorative terms. It is described as a Berlin Wall, although that wall was constructed to keep captive peoples in, while the Israeli fence is meant to keep terrorists out. In building the barrier Israel is accused of creating Palestinian “ghettoes”, although the building of the fence will end the need for curfews and roadside Israeli military check points in the West Bank providing Palestinians greater freedom of movement than they have today. Palestinians also charge that the fence is a permanent fixture that creates an unjust border with Israel. **Yet The Israeli Foreign Ministry has publicly stated: “The fence is a temporary measure, not a permanent border... The border will be determined in the future, through political negotiations between the sides, which can only reconvene after the terrorism has ceased.”**

Condemnation of the fence has not been limited, however, to Palestinians. On July 8, 2004 the International Court of Justice at The Hague ruled that major portions of the fence are illegal and that it “cannot be justified by military exigencies or by the requirements of national security or public order.” Yet in its 60 page opinion The Court mentioned Palestinian terrorism only twice. Even the European Union endorsed the International Court’s ruling citing “untold humanitarian hardship” to the Palestinians while saying nothing about the death toll among Israelis exacted by terrorist warfare.

23. Israel and Truth

Ever since it’s founding Israel has been a democracy fighting for survival. In the western world this struggle was once viewed sympathetically. This perception has now changed drastically, especially in Europe, where a majority sees Israel as a pariah nation, the number one threat to world peace. It cannot be denied that anti-Semitism is a factor in this outlook. Yet it seems clear that the animus against Israel is also driven by ignorance. For those who care that political opinions and judgments be grounded in reality, a command of the facts is essential. By this yardstick Israel can count on the support of rational people of good will --- provided they are frequently exposed to the factual historical record.

24. Prospects for Peace

Following the death of Yasser Arafat (November 11, 2004), and the coming to power of Mahmoud Abbas (January 9 2005) there is renewed optimism that a two-state settlement based on the Road Map for Peace can be achieved. Unlike his predecessor, Mahmoud Abbas has renounced terrorism and actually deployed Palestinian Authority forces to counter-act Intifada violence. While this is a most significant first step, it is the apparent genuine desire by President Abbas for a harmonious two-state solution that augurs well for the future. Heretofore, the lack of such a disposition by the Palestinian leadership has rendered a settlement of the dispute with Israel impossible. Now it appears that the prospects are brighter for a lasting peace between Israel and the Palestinians and, one hopes, between Israel and the larger Arab world.

“STOP THE UNJUST ISRAELI OCCUPATION OF ARAB LANDS”



Facts & Statistics

Country	Government	Territory (km²)	Population (2001 est.)	GDP (billions)
Arab Total	Mostly monarchies	13,486,861	292,400,267	\$1,195.49
Israel	Democracy	20,770	5,938,093	\$110.20

Israel's total territory is no larger than .015% of all Arab lands.

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