

"The Swiss Cheese of the Century"

SPHEX Club Presentation

Michael A. Gillette, Ph.D. February 4, 2021

PART ONE: ANCIENT HISTORY

As it turned out, it was a very bad precedent. What seemed like a good idea at the time, 161BCE after six years of battle against the Seleucid Empire of Assyrian Greeks, was actually not much more than an invitation for the camel to put his nose under the tent flap. Once the Maccabees entered into an alliance with Rome, the future of the Hasmonean dynasty would be forever linked with Roman power. The Roman Senate officially recognized the dynasty in 139BCE, but the effort at independent rule initiated by Mattathias, Judah, and Simon would always be subject to Roman military and political intrigue. Later, when a Hasmonean civil war developed and Hyrcanus II needed assistance, it seemed only natural once again to invite Roman support. This time, however, victory came at a very high price. In 63BCE the Roman army under command of Pompeii laid siege to the Temple Mount and the City of David, eventually penetrating its walls and killing 12,000 Jewish inhabitants who had been loyal to the would-be usurper Aristobulus II, and solidified Hyrcanus' position as ruler of what was then clearly a vassal state of Rome.

Priests and governors were appointed by Rome for several generations, but not all were happy with this new political arrangement. The Great Revolt began in 66CE and enjoyed some initial successes. Apparent victory was fleeting, however, and the Romans decisively and devastatingly put the revolt down with the complete destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem and the massive slaughter of its Jewish inhabitants in 70CE. The final remnants of the revolt were defeated in 73CE with the fall of Masada, and it appeared that the dream of Jewish self-rule had come to an end. Sixty years later, however, that assumption would once again be tested.

In 132CE, the charismatic and tenacious Bar Kokhba launched a new revolt. Lasting for four years, this violent clash convinced the Romans that the inhabitants of Judea were a very stubborn lot who likely would never fully accept a subordinate position within the empire. When this

latest revolt was vanquished in 136CE, the Romans initiated a general exile of the vast majority of the region’s indigenous people. Thus was the genesis of the 2,000-year long period in Jewish history known as the “galut”. The meager number of Jews who were allowed to remain in the area clustered in the four cities of Jerusalem, Sfat, Hebron, and Tiberias. The Romans, in an effort to embarrass the now defeated Jews and remove their claim to their land, renamed the province of Judea as Palaestina – a clear reference to the prior inhabitants of the area, the Philistines, who were early Hellenistic colonizers of the coastal plane. Roman and then Byzantian rule, followed by Muslim rule under Caliph Omar and a string of crusades that never really altered Muslim control, left the status quo for the Jews relatively undisturbed into the modern era.

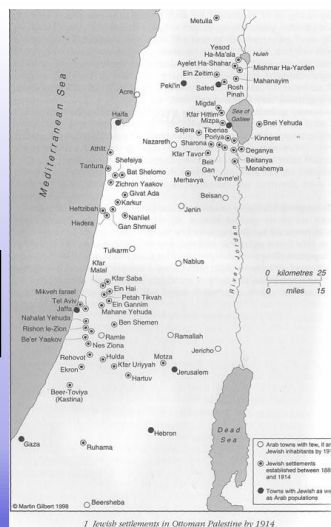
PART TWO: MODERN HISTORY

When Mehmed the Conqueror effectively destroyed the Byzantine Empire with his successful 1453 conquest of Constantinople, the remnants of Roman rule in the Middle East came to a conclusive end. It did not take long until the Ottoman Empire expanded its boundaries, and in 1517 under the leadership of Suleiman the Great, Jerusalem saw a new sheriff ride into town. The Ottoman period in this region lasted for 400 years without any inkling of independent local

**The Ottoman Period
1517CE-1917CE**

Under Ottoman rule, the population of Palestine slowly rose:

Year	Population	Jews	Arabs
1840	300,000	10,000	290,000
1872	350,000	16,000	334,000
1895	432,000	60,200	372,000
1914	700,000	85,000	615,000



rule, or even the development of any specifically local character. The land itself was substantially owned by Syrian and Egyptian absentee landlords, and the local population slowly began to rise. By 1840, the region was home to approximately 300,000 people; 10,000 Jews who were clustered primarily in the four previously mentioned cities, and 290,000 Arabs. Beginning in 1882,

a wave of Jewish immigration known as the First Aliyah brought 25,000-35,000 Jews from Eastern Europe and Yemen. The Second Aliyah, from 1904-1914, brought an additional 20,000 Jews mostly from Russia. By 1914, the regional population was approximately 700,000, comprised of 85,000 Jews and 615,000 Arabs.

In a 1916 effort to bolster its World War I efforts, the British Empire convinced local Arab inhabitants to rise in revolt against the Ottomans in exchange for self-rule over a portion of the Levant. In 1917, with the Balfour Declaration, the British also recognized the right of the Jewish people to secure a national homeland in Palestine (the name of which is a modern variant of Palaestina) which would encompass the existing Jewish settlements that had been in place since antiquity and accommodate the growing number of Jews who were fleeing pogroms in Russia and poverty and persecution in Europe and Asia.

A significant increase of antisemitic persecution around the globe, conjoined with recognition of the need for Jews to regain a national homeland, spurred an increased level of immigration. The Third and Fourth Aliyot brought an additional 120,000 Jews to Palestine between 1919 and 1928. The rise of Nazi

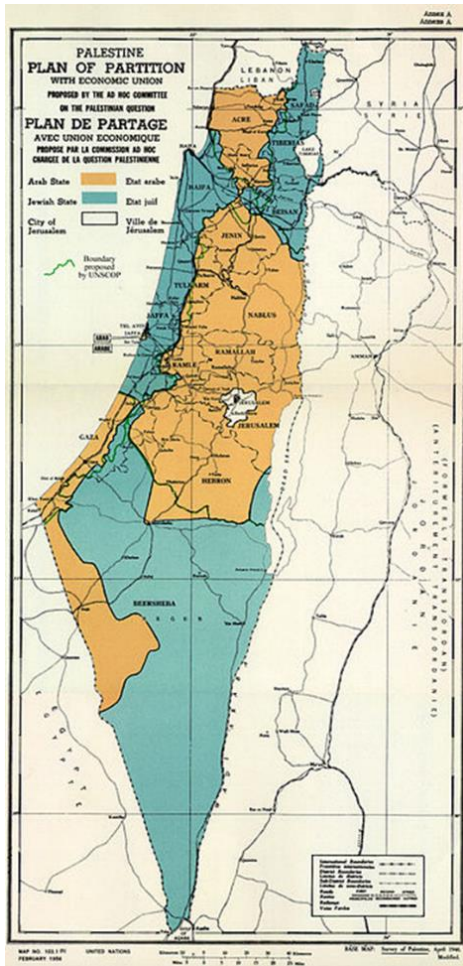


The Third Aliyah The Fourth Aliyah The Fifth Aliyah Aliyah Bet

Year	Population	Jews	Arabs
1918	682,000	57,000	625,000
1922	751,000	84,000	667,000
1928	1,010,000	150,000	860,000
1931	1,145,000	175,000	970,000
1936	1,404,000	404,000	1,000,000
1947	1,830,000	630,000	1,200,000

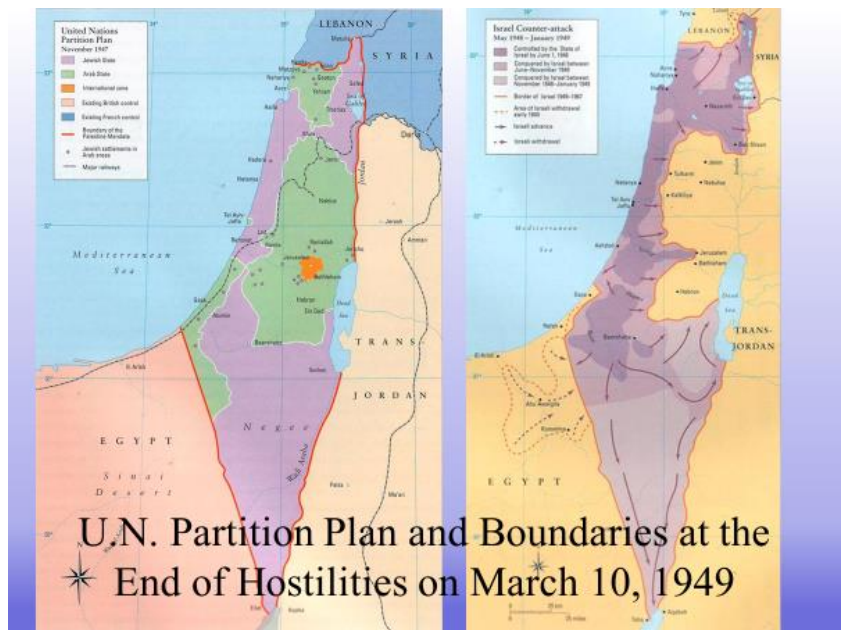
Germany sparked the Fifth Aliyah along with Aliyah Bet, involving the illegal smuggling of Jews out of Europe and into Palestine, which brought an additional 370,000 Jews to Palestine between 1929 and 1945. By 1947, Palestine was home to 1.83million people, of which 630,000 were Jews living on legally purchased land, and 1.2million were Arabs.

While the local inhabitants often lived and worked together, tensions rose as the population swelled. A series of violent attacks against the Jewish population took place between 1920 and 1939, and the British began to realize that they did not want to govern such a volatile region, and that partitioning the land into two separate states – one Jewish and one Arab – would make sense. The area of the trans-Jordan was allocated to be entirely Arab in nature, and thus was



born the Kingdom of Jordan, over which the British installed the Hashemites from Saudi Arabia to rule. According to the British plan, the cis-Jordan region would be partitioned into two states, one Jewish and one Arab, each group comprising a majority within its own territory. U.N. Resolution 181 was formally adopted in November of 1947 which outlined the plan for what would take place, as a matter of international agreement, upon the expiration of the British Mandate the following spring. Jewish leadership accepted the proposal and declared independence on May 15, 1948. The Arab population did not accept the partition and immediately attacked. The now newly minted Palestinians were supported by armies from Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Egypt. After intense fighting, hostilities ended on March 10, 1949 with U.N. recognition that each party to the conflict would retain jurisdiction over whatever contiguous territory it could control. Israel gained territory in this Arab-initiated war, and the nascent Palestinian state was subsumed by its Arab neighbors of Jordan and Egypt.

The 1948 War of Independence is often romanticized by the Israeli public. It is true that a seemingly rag-tag army successfully fought back against overwhelming odds. It true that many of the local Arab inhabitants were encouraged by the attacking countries to leave their homes voluntarily based on the promise of a short effort leading to a great victory, sure to result in the people's ability to reclaim an even greater share of land.



It is also true that some Arab villages were forcefully evacuated by the Haganah, that isolated atrocities took place, and that for years afterwards the military police dealt harshly, unfairly, and cruelly with those Arab residents who remained in Israeli territory. War is, no matter the motivation or attempt to retain focus, a messy business. It is estimated that up to 750,000 Arab residents were displaced from their homes as a result of the “Nakba”. At the same time, as many as 850,000 Jews were displaced from Arab countries when they were either explicitly exiled or implicitly pressured to leave. This exchange of populations created a politically contentious point of negotiations that we will discuss later, namely the “right of return”. Israel absorbed the exiled Jewish population into its own state, while the displaced Palestinians were substantially rejected by their Arab neighbors. It is that group of people, and their descendants, who currently make claim to the disputed territories.

PART THREE: WARFARE CONTINUES

In 1956, Gamal Abdel Nasser closed the Suez Canal to international shipping and threatened to destroy the State of Israel. At the behest of England and France, Israel joined a combined military response, took control over the entire Sinai Peninsula and liberated the canal. All territory was returned at the end of hostilities, and there was no adjustment of borders.

In 1967, the surrounding Arab states explicitly announced an intent to “push Israel into the sea”. While Arab forces amassed around its borders, Israel attacked pre-emptively and in the ensuing six days of battle, Israel took control over the Sinai, extended its control into the Golan Heights, and captured the entire West Bank. Some in high Israeli echelons argued for the evacuation of the newly occupied territories but argued that such an action should be held as a bargaining chip in negotiating to secure a comprehensive peace agreement. Most argued that at least portions of the area should be kept in order to enhance strategic depth and protect dangerously narrow supply lines, but that the bulk should be relinquished. In this camp, a minority argued that the area should be returned to Jordanian sovereignty and the majority advocated for an independent, albeit truncated, Palestinian state. The most detailed plan for a Palestinian state was offered by Yigal Allon, who advocated for a return of the Sinai to Egypt, creation of a Druze state in the Golan, and creation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank. Ultimately, the “Palestinian Option” was abandoned and the “Jordanian Option” became the



basis of Israeli government policy. Extremists, who were in the minority, believed that Jews had a divine right to the West Bank and wanted immediately to annex the newly acquired territory. Ultimately, none of these options were immediately realized, and Israel became the occupying power over an area of nebulous status.

Additional wars have been fought and less formal uprisings staged. Israel was caught off guard and almost ceased to exist when attacked in 1973's Yom Kippur War. Wars were fought on Israel's northern border with Lebanon in 1982 and 2006. Two

uprisings, or intifada, took place between 1987-1993 and 2000-2004. Operations in 2008, 2012, and 2014 took place in Gaza. Throughout all of these clashes, however, the core issue of Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza were not resolved. Israel withdrew unilaterally from the Gaza strip in 2005, but the status quo in the West Bank remained substantially unchanged. It is this history, centered on the fateful outcome of the 1967 conflict when Israel became an occupying power, that forms the basis of our discussion this evening.

PART FOUR: OCCUPATION AND SETTLEMENT

The Majority of Israelis recognize a three-part formula that they desire for their country which includes A) Israel existing as the national homeland of the Jews with a distinctly Jewish character, B) commitment to democratic principles in the structure of government and respect for human rights, and C) a connection to the land itself. Recognition of all three of these components is essential to understand the current situation. First, Jews have been persecuted and rejected in every country in which we have lived at one point or another and have often been left without any place that could offer a safe haven. Second, the structure of Israeli politics, as convoluted as it seems, is deeply democratic. Third, Jews have always, consistently, and without interruption lived in this region of the world and those who have not have always prayed for return. When other alternatives, such as Galveston, TX or Uganda were suggested, Zionist

leaders responded to British offers by replying that Jews were living in Jerusalem while London was still a swamp! But this tripartite equation of Jewishness, democracy, and the land cannot exist unless limits are placed on at least one leg of the stool. If Israel is to remain Jewish and fully democratic, then it cannot retain control over all of the land. If it is to remain Jewish and retain control over all of the land, then it cannot be fully democratic. If it is to retain control over all of the land and be fully democratic, then it cannot be Jewish. This puzzle is referred to as “the demographic problem”, since it recognizes that incorporating a large non-Jewish population into the body politic and giving it a full franchise threatens the Jewish character of the country. The majority of the Israeli population realizes that a resolution to this problem requires a two-state solution; not everyone agrees.

After the Six Day War, it became clear that certain conquered areas would have to be retained for strategic reasons. Some had been part of the partition plan of 1947 and were lost during the War of Independence and others provided strategic depth and geographic continuity. Some were simply natural expansions of pre-existing Jewish settlements that experienced typical population growth. However, many were not. A new clandestine “settler movement” emerged that operated on the fringes of the law. Mostly young and typically fervently religious settlers would move into a specific area without building permits or official recognition, where they would erect small enclaves. Then, under threat from local reasonably offended Arabs, they would demand protection from the IDF. Unwilling to let their fellow countrymen remain unprotected, the army complied, and the settlement would then enjoy military support. Soon afterward, roads would be built for logistical support, and what started as a renegade hamlet inhabited by “hilltop youth” became undeniable “facts on the ground” that threatened the character and continuity of any potential Palestinian state. This



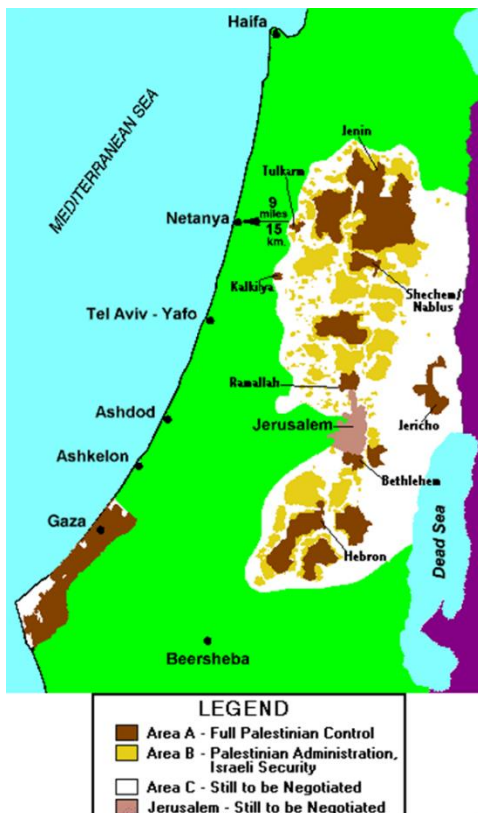
process repeated itself and intensified from the 1970s onward. Population figures within the newly developed settlement blocks ballooned at much faster rates than could be attributed to natural growth, and the effort to make a separation of the populations impossible gained momentum.

In 2005, Israel withdrew all Jewish inhabitants from the Gaza strip and abandoned its settlements in that territory. Many believe that Ariel Sharon, a historically hard-liner of a general turned Prime Minister who orchestrated the Gaza withdrawal, had full intention of doing the same in the West Bank. He suffered a stroke, however, and lingered in a persistent vegetative state for years. Under new leadership, a combination of major settlement blocks that are close to Israeli territory proper and more far-flung smaller settlements that dot the West Bank countryside, continued to grow. At present, 2.75 million people live in the West Bank, of which 80% are Palestinian. Virtually 100% of the 1.8 million residents of the Gaza Strip are Palestinian. In Israel, which boasts a population of nearly 9 million, 75% of the population is Jewish, 20% are Arab, 2% are Christian, and the remaining few percent represent a variety of other ethnic groups. Coexistence is successful in certain Israeli cities and respect is often afforded on a personal level. Within the territories, and on the political level, however, tensions continue to simmer, and outbreaks of violence are common. From isolated knife attacks in Jerusalem to rocket launches from Gaza, along with the unavoidable retaliation, the situation can hardly be considered tenable. The occupation is brutal. It is unfair to the millions of Palestinians who deserve a life of dignity, freedom, and full political participation in a state of their own. It is corrosive of Israeli values and antithetical to the survival of true Zionist principles, casting each generation and the next into a pit of despair that results in a muddled confusion of legitimate nationalistic goals and abhorrent violent attacks on civilian populations. Neither side is fully innocent, and neither side is fully guilty, but the status quo is unacceptable. And so, efforts have been made to resolve the conflict.

PART FIVE: PROSPECTS FOR AN AGREEMENT

The 1978 Camp David Accords are most famous for brokering a formal peace treaty between Israel and Egypt. The state of war that had remained in place since 1948 was then over, and Egypt became the first Arab country to make peace with Israel. When final borders were

negotiated, Egypt officially renounced all claim to the Gaza Strip, which continued to be occupied by the Israelis. A similar pattern would follow in 1988 when Jordan, which had annexed the West Bank in 1950 and granted citizenship to any of its inhabitants who wanted it, relinquished all claim to the territory. Although this was ostensibly done in order to provide the basis for a Palestinian homeland, King Hussein’s move was also clearly political. As a minority ruler in his own country, whose lower house of parliament was 50% Palestinian, the King was concerned that his own hegemony could be threatened by retaining the West Bank under Jordanian control. In fact, in 1970, King Hussein mounted a military assault known as “Black September” against the separatist fedayeen who were supported by the PLO under Yasser Arafat’s control. The Syrian army invaded Jordan in support of the Palestinians and the Israeli Air Force came to the aid of the embattled King Hussein, convincing Syria to withdraw. In 1994, Jordan became the second Arab country to sign a peace treaty with Israel, and the status of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as the sites for a future Palestinian state were solidified. The Camp David Accords contained a framework for the development of the “two-state solution” that envisioned the creation of an independent Palestine alongside Israel. This was the scaffolding upon which the Oslo Accords were built.



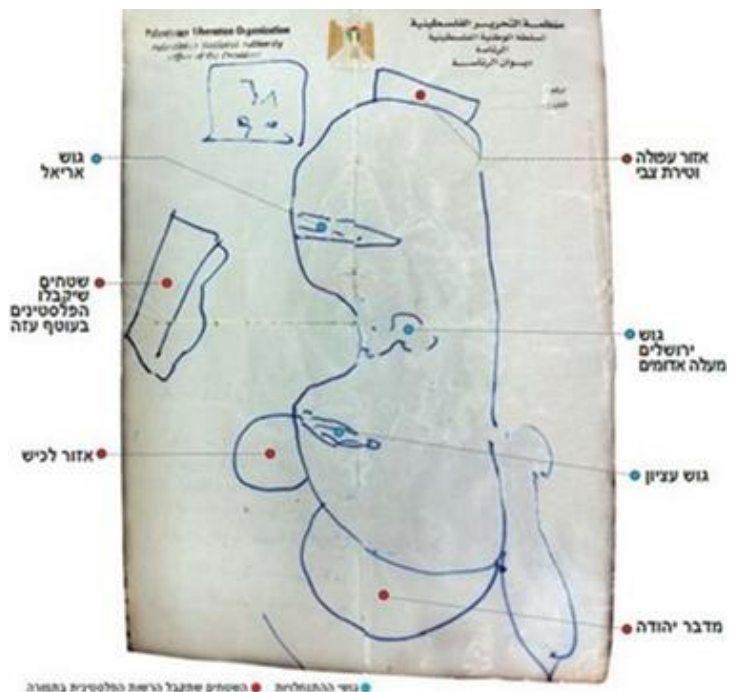
The Oslo Accords envisioned a staged implementation of the two-state solution. The disputed territory was divided into three designated types. Areas A would enjoy complete Palestinian control. Areas B would experience Palestinian administrative control with security maintained by Israel. Areas C would remain in limbo, pending final status negotiations. This basic framework has, until early in 2020, formed the bedrock understanding of what a peace deal between Israel and the Palestinians would look like. It assumed the pre-1967 borders as a starting point for negotiation, recognized that specific settlement blocks would become Israeli territory, and offered an offsetting exchange of land to compensate Palestine for territories ceded to Israel.

The Oslo process spanned from 1993-2000 when Israel offered the Palestinian Liberation Organization 100% of the Gaza Strip, 97% of the West Bank including sections of East Jerusalem, and \$30billion in aid for Palestinian refugees. That offer was rejected out of hand by Yasser Arafat who then initiated the Second Intifada. Arafat refused the offer because Palestine would not have controlled its own borders or airspace, and movement between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank would have been difficult. Prince Bandar of Saudi Arabia blamed Arafat for the collapse of negotiations, and just recently, Arafat's widow has stated that the Second Intifada was a mistake. Nevertheless, what began hopefully in Oslo, ended with a frozen admixture of territorial status.

The Saudis attempted to revive negotiations with the Saudi Initiative in 2002, which was similar to the Oslo Accords but with the notable lack of land swaps. The demand for Israel to relinquish all settlements and captured territory, including the Golan Heights, along with a demand for a right of return for all displaced Palestinians and all of their descendants, scuttled the deal. This "right of return" continues to pose a particularly knotty portion of the problem. The Arab states argue that the Palestinians who left Israel in 1948 are refugees and have a right to return to their ancestral lands. The Israelis claim that most of those families left voluntarily at the behest of the attacking Arab countries, and that the number of refugees has been artificially inflated by the unique occurrence of inherited refugee status. In no other conflict have subsequent generations been granted recognition as refugees by the international community, and the 850,000 Jews forced out of Arab countries, or the millions of descendants of Jews displaced from Europe, enjoy no such recognition. The Palestinians argue that Israel's development of a physical security barrier thwarts their ability to build cohesive communities, but the Israelis point to the 80% reduction in civilian deaths due to terrorist attack since 2002 to justify the move. In short, the Saudi Initiative offered nothing new to solve underlying challenges.

In 2003, the Geneva Accords filled the vacuum left by the latent Saudi Initiative and offered the most detailed picture yet as to how a 1967-border-agreed-upon-land-swap deal might work. Efforts continued in this direction until 2008 when Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert made a generous offer. Israel had already withdrawn from Gaza at that point, and it offered the Palestinians 93% of the West Bank, holding 6.3% of the territory for security and neighborhood continuity reasons, and providing sufficient alternative land to make up for lost area. Olmert included in his offer that portions of East Jerusalem would become the capitol of Palestine. In private negotiations, Olmert drew a rough sketch of the offer on a napkin, which Palestinian Authority head Mahmoud Abbas immediately rejected. Thus, we hear the old adage that “the Palestinians never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity”.

The Geneva Accord 'Land Swap'



(Map of the Olmert Offer)

PART SIX: THE SWISS CHEESE OF THE CENTURY AND THE ABRAHAM ACCORDS

On January 28, 2020, the Trump Administration revealed its version of an Israeli-Palestinian peace plan entitled “Peace to Prosperity: A Vision to Improve the Lives of the Palestinian and Israeli People”, in an effort to secure what it considers to be the “deal of the century”. The plan includes two parts. The first is a political framework for creating a two-state solution, and the second is a \$50billion economic effort to enhance quality of life for the Palestinians. The major components of the plan are as follows:

- Israel gains sovereignty over all existing settlement blocks
- Israel retains control over other existing towns including secure access
- Israel gains sovereignty over the Jordan River Valley and Northern Dead Sea.
- Jerusalem remains “undivided” and in Israeli control
- The status quo remains for Haram al-Sharif (the Temple Mount)
- The Palestinians have four years to demonstrate the capacity to self-govern, recognize Israel as the Jewish homeland, renounce violence and end incitement including in textbooks and media, and drop all charges against Israel in international courts. At that point, the following things will take place:
 - The U.S. will formally recognize the Palestinian State
 - Palestine will become a full member of the U.N.
 - The State of Palestine will have a capitol in “Al Quds” (East Jerusalem) and the U.S. will establish an embassy there
 - A \$50b economic plan will be engaged to improve the quality of life for the Palestinian people
- During this four-year transition period, Israel will not build any new settlements or towns, and it will not expand any existing settlements or towns

Additional key aspects of the plan include the following:

- 97% of Israelis in the West Bank will be incorporated into contiguous Israeli territory. 97% of Palestinians in the West Bank will be incorporated into contiguous Palestinian territory
- Palestinians living within enclaves inside Israeli territory will become Palestinian citizens and be provided easy access routes to Palestine

- Israelis living within enclaves inside Palestinian territory will retain their existing Israeli citizenship and be provided easy access routes to Israel
- Israel will control the Jordan Valley and thus all borders
- Parts of the Negev Desert that are currently part of Israel will be transferred to Palestinian control and connected to Gaza in order to create new industrial and agricultural opportunities
- Palestine, including Gaza, must be completely demilitarized
- Israel will control all territorial waters
- The “Triangle Communities”, which were originally planned to fall under Jordanian control with the 1949 armistice, will be transferred to the State of Palestine
- Gaza and the West Bank will be linked by high-speed transportation and Palestine will have access to Israeli ports
- Two access roads between Palestine and Jordan will be developed and controlled by Israel
- Improved transportation will be created to provide for unimpeded movement within Palestinian territory
- The security barrier will be realigned based on the new borders
- Freedom of access to all religious sites will be guaranteed
- The current security barrier in Jerusalem will demarcate the border between Israeli Jerusalem and Palestinian East Jerusalem (Al Quds). Arabs who choose to remain in Israeli territory will have a choice to become citizens of Israel, citizens of Palestine, or retain permanent resident status in Israel
- There will be no right of return for refugees

The Trump “Deal of the Century” offers some significant advantages including the fact that:

- The plan preserves a vision of two states for two peoples and avoids a bi-national apartheid state
- The plan includes resumption of U.S. economic support to Palestine and it encourages significant additional economic development from neighboring countries
- The plan respects Israel’s defense and security needs
- The plan calls for mutual recognition and a formal end of the conflict

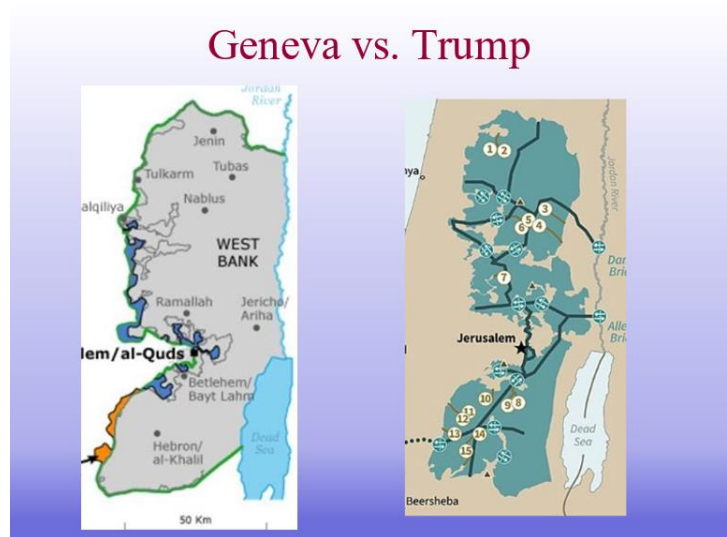
Unfortunately, the “Deal of the Century” also contains a number of significant problems:

- The Palestinian State clearly does not have geographic continuity
- The Palestinian State will have no port, no control over air space, no control over its borders, and no right to engage in international negotiations
- The map is the worst example of gerrymandering imaginable. It will create a reality on the ground of continued Israeli control over daily Palestinian life
- Israeli Arabs in the Triangle do not want to give up their Israeli citizenship
- Israeli’s in the Negev do not want to give up their lands



In fact, the unrealistic nature of the plan is plain to see when one examines the map of what would become Palestine – a “country” comprised of swiss cheese in which the Israelis would control daily Palestinian life with their ability to close connecting roads at their pleasure. It seems that the Trump administration completely misunderstood the nature of this conflict. The Palestinians are not looking solely for economic advantage. They want a country of their own which is geographically viable and within which they are able to exercise their collective autonomy. What Trump offers amounts to a semi-autonomous region within another country that has no power to control its international affairs. If this is the best that the United States can offer, then no one should be fooled into thinking that it can serve as an honest and objective broker in the peace process.

There is perhaps one silver lining to the embarrassing plan offered by the Trump administration, and that is to finally convince the Palestinians that they had already been offered the best possible deal that they will ever get, and that something along the lines of the Geneva Accords is a viable option. The comparison in the accompanying figure demonstrates clearly how superior Ehud Olmert's offer was in 2008, and how shortsighted it was for Abbas to reject it.



Although the “Peace to Prosperity” vision has received little attention since its unveiling last January, other developments have demonstrated an opportunity for far greater impact on the Israeli-Palestinian situation. Beginning in the fall of 2020, a series of agreements were announced that have been referred to collectively as “The Abraham Accords”. These agreements should not be considered peace treaties, as they involve countries that have never engaged in military conflict. Most reveal pre-existing covert relationships that have now been made public and extended in important ways. These steps should be considered the formalization of open diplomatic relationships, and they are likely to have a profound impact on future negotiations regarding the Palestinians.

On September 15, 2020, the United States announced that agreements had been reached between Israel and the countries of the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain. Both countries agreed to initiate full diplomatic relationships with Israel and to open travel opportunities so that tourist and joint economic investment partnership dollars could begin to flow. It has since become apparent that the UAE was enticed to join the Abraham Accords in exchange for an opportunity to purchase F-35 fighter jets from the U.S. This condition was somewhat controversial, as the U.S. has always remained committed to avoiding any action that would threaten Israel's qualitative military edge in the region. Israel quickly signed off on the deal, however, and the Abraham Accords were ratified.

Soon afterward, on October 23, 2020, Sudan agreed to normalize relationships with Israel in exchange for a U.S. agreement to remove them from the United States' list of state sponsors of terrorism. On December 10, 2020 Morocco agreed to normalize diplomatic ties with Israel in exchange for U.S. recognition of its claim to the Western Sahara. Although not technically part of the Abraham Accords, Israel and Kosovo agreed to mutual recognition and the opening of diplomatic relations. Already there is talk of additional countries following suit. It is likely that Oman will resume its diplomatic ties with Israel that have been frozen since the year 2000, and rumors indicate that Indonesia and Mauritania are next on the list. The greatest diplomatic prize of all, however, is the much-anticipated decision by the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, Mohammed bin Salman, to make plain what all have not-so-secretly known – that Israel and Saudi Arabia have been working jointly on security issues for years. A true peace treaty with Saudi Arabia would surely mark a seismic shift in Israel-Arab relations.

PART SEVEN: LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

So where do we stand now and what is likely to break the Israeli-Palestinian logjam in the near future? The most significant factor at the current time is the split within the Muslim world. Jordan most definitely did not want violence on its Western border while it was contending with an ISIS threat from the East, and the Shiite-Sunni split is even more impactful. There can be no doubt that the willingness of so many Islamic states to embrace Israel openly is based on a realignment of interests as Saudi Arabia seeks to restrain Iran's influence. The fear of Iran, it seems, is powerful enough to overshadow lingering hatred for Israel. The Arab states have realized that a festering Palestinian cause, which up until now had served as a ready excuse to distance itself from Israel and prop up outdated notions that Israel would and should soon cease to exist, is becoming more of a liability than a benefit. They have seemingly lost patience with Palestinian leadership that refuses to compromise and which rejects rational offers to end the conflict. With Iran in ascendance, Israel looks like a good ally, and the Palestinians are no longer an obstacle to peace.

This fact bodes poorly for the Palestinians if they cling to the dream of a Palestinian state from river to sea, but it also creates for them an opportunity. If I were an optimist, I would suggest

that the pitiful offer made by Trump, combined with the waning interest of major Muslim players, would convince the Palestinians to return to a Geneva Accord type deal. Also, as an optimist, I would hope that Israeli leadership would look past previous grievances and resurrect the Olmert offer. Unfortunately, I am not so optimistic.

As a result of the Oslo Accords, based on agreement between Israel and the PLO, The Palestinian Authority was created in 1993. This entity was charged with governing the Palestinian territories and would serve as a negotiating partner with Israel. 2006 elections resulted in a victory for Hamas over its competitor Fatah. However, Hamas rejected all pre-existing commitments that had been written into the Oslo Accords. Specifically, Hamas refused to renounce violence, refused to recognize the State of Israel, and refused to accept any previous agreements made by the Palestinian Authority. Mahmoud Abbas dissolved the government 2007 based on what he viewed as a Hamas coup. Hamas was left to govern Gaza while Fatah held control in the West Bank. Although multiple unity agreements have been generated, none have been successfully implemented and Israel finds itself without a clear negotiating partner.

On the Israeli side, politics is organized around the principle of proportional democracy. The 120 seats in the Knesset are apportioned based on national vote, and the Prime Minister is the leader of whatever party can wield a majority of mandates. Since there is no party in Israel large enough to take a majority of Knesset seats by itself, coalition governments are the norm. This has the unintended consequence that very small parties, which provide the necessary votes to secure a coalition of 61 or more seats, have outsized influence over the agenda of the coalition. No small number of Israelis sympathize with the settler movement. Therefore, although they do not comprise anything close to a majority of the public, a combination of settler representatives and the ultra-orthodox are able to lead the government by the nose. That would not be the case if the larger parties that represent greater swaths of the Israeli public could band together to form a unity government, but individual egos have prevented that from happening. While we can discuss the matter further during the question-and-answer portion of the evening, I do not believe that Likud (the largest single party that presently exists in Israel) will be able to disentangle itself from the Israeli right until Netanyahu leaves politics (which might or might not be necessitated by his pending corruption trial). The result will either be a Likud that will continue to lean right

on matters of settlement in order to appease its faction members, or it will be replaced by an even more ideological figure in Neftali Bennet as his Yamina party cobbles together a coalition, perhaps with the aid of Likud defector Gideon Sa'ar's New Hope party. The only hope for Israel right now is a disintegration of Netanyahu's strangle-hold over Likud so that Center-Right, Center, and Center-Left parties can form a strong and stable government that will put the peace process back on the front burner.

Given the state of Palestinian and Israeli politics, I am not sanguine about the chances for an imminent resolution to the conflict. With interest on the decline in neighboring Arab countries, I fear as a justice loving person that the Palestinians are going to be left with nothing but swiss cheese. As a lover of Israel, I fear that the rot of that rancid cheese will spread to Israel proper. On both sides, average people, not politicians, will continue to suffer while we still wait for the true deal of the century.

The Swiss Cheese of the Century

Michael A. Gillette, Ph.D.

SPHEX Club
February 4, 2021



Ancient History: The Roman Expulsion

The Roman Period: 63BCE-325CE



Jewish Self-Rule ends in 63BCE when Pompeii captures Jerusalem

The Great Revolt 66-73CE

The Romans decisively ended the rebellion by sacking Jerusalem in 70CE, destroying the Temple, massacring most of the Jewish population, and expelling the rest.

A small band of zealots held out on Masada until 73CE when they committed suicide rather than submit to Roman rule.

Bar Kokhba 132-136CE

Sixty years after the destruction of the Temple, Bar Kokhba led a new revolt that was put down in 136CE.

Transition into the “Galut”, “Exile”, or “Diaspora” was thus complete, although remnants of the Jewish community remained in Israel.

Byzantium

313CE

Constantine adopts Christianity as the
Roman state religion

638CE

The Region is conquered by Caliph Omar
and Christian rule comes to an end



The First Crusade (1096-1099) succeeded in the Christian capture of Jerusalem.

Saladin recaptured Jerusalem for the Muslims (Mamlukes) in 1187.

The status quo held until 1517 when the region was conquered by the Ottoman Turks.

Modern History: 1517 to Present

(a relatively short period of time as the Middle East goes)

The Ottoman Period

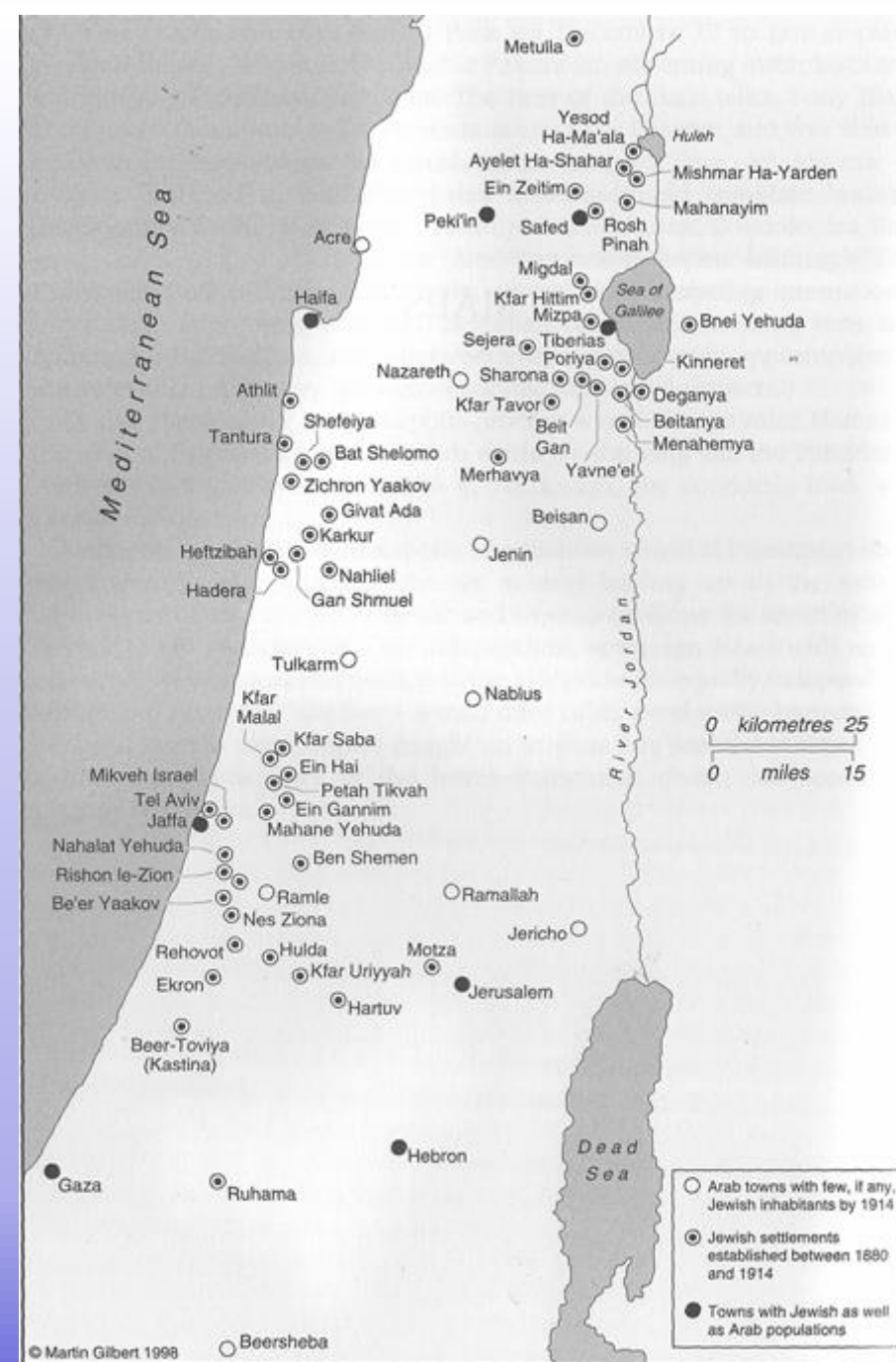
1517CE-1917CE

- The region was controlled mostly by absentee Egyptian and Syrian landowners who rented it out to local Arab farmers.
- The Jewish population was substantially limited to the “Old Yishuv”.

The Ottoman Period 1517CE-1917CE

Under Ottoman rule, the population of Palestine slowly rose:

Year	Population	Jews	Arabs
1840	300,000	10,000	290,000
1872	350,000	16,000	334,000
1895	432,000	60,200	372,000
1914	700,000	85,000	615,000



1 Jewish settlements in Ottoman Palestine by 1914

Old Yishuv: 1800-1882

The Old Yishuv refers to Jewish communities that maintained a constant population since ancient times. The Yishuv was limited mostly to the four “holy cities” of Jerusalem, Hebron, Sefat and Tiberias

First Aliyah: 1882-1904

This first wave of 25k-35k immigrants came mostly from Eastern Europe and Yemen in the wake of economic hardship and anti-semitic persecution.

Second Aliyah: 1904-1914

This second wave of approximately 20k immigrants came mostly from Russia in the wake of continuing pogroms.

The Birth of “Palestine” and the Concept of Two States

1916

The British Empire convinced Arab leaders to revolt against the Ottoman Empire. In return, the Empire promised to support the establishment of an Arab State in the Levant, including Palestine.

1917

Lord Arthur Balfour, the British Foreign Minister, issued “The Balfour Declaration” that explicitly communicated the Empire’s support for “A Jewish National Home In Palestine”.

Third Aliyah: 1919-1923

40k immigrants arrived from Eastern Europe and Russia in flight from pogroms and in response to the Balfour Declaration. This wave of immigrants began pioneering efforts in new parts of the country.

Fourth Aliyah: 1924-1928

80k immigrants from Europe, Asia and Yemen fled increasing antisemitism. This wave of Aliyah contained many middle-class families who strengthened the country's business base.

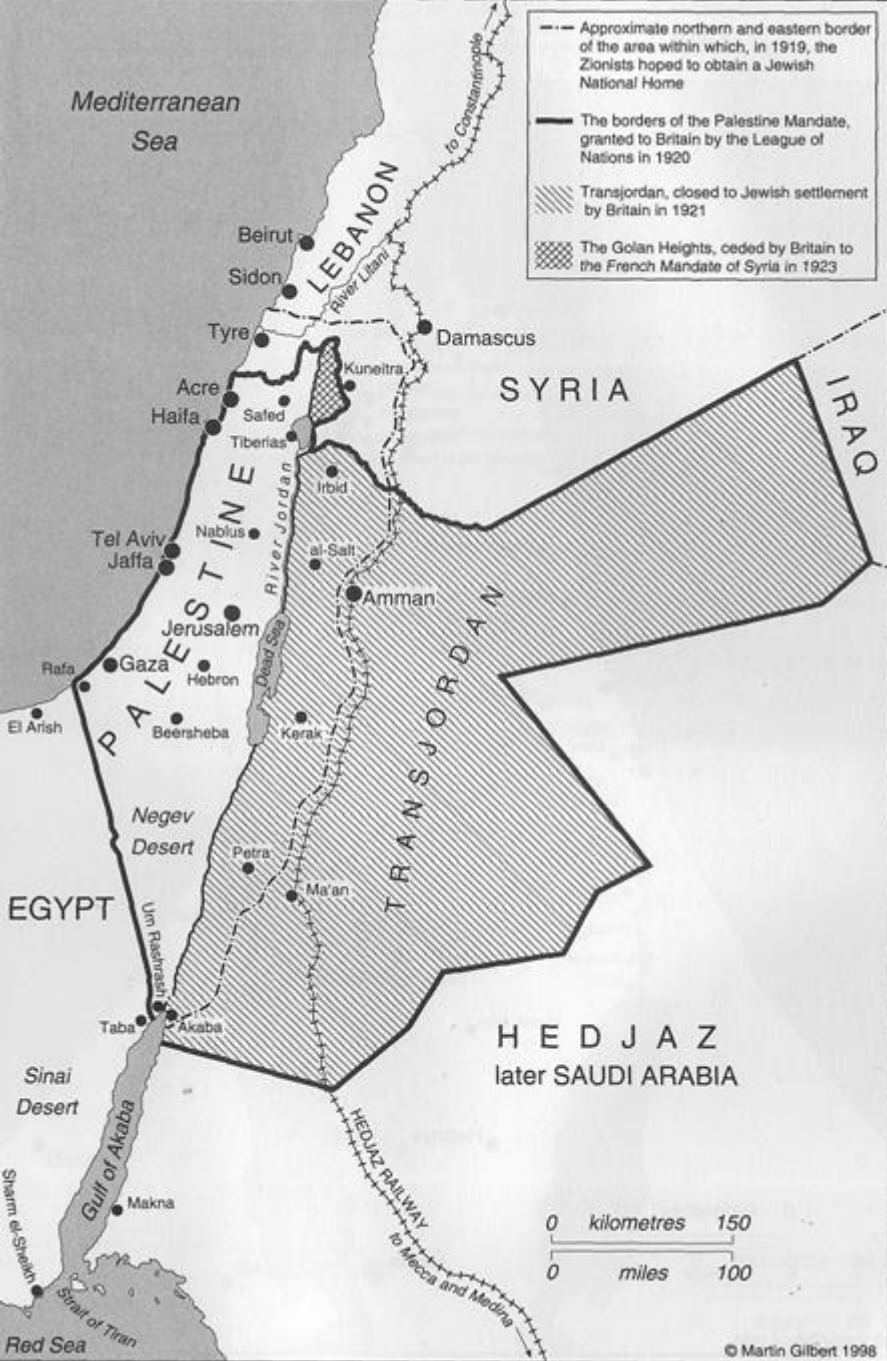
Fifth Aliyah: 1929-1939

As many as 300k immigrants came in response to the rise of the Nazi regime in Europe.

Aliyah Bet: 1940-1945

Approximately 70k Jews were illegally smuggled into Palestine under the British Mandate

The Third Aliyah The Fourth Aliyah The Fifth Aliyah Aliyah Bet



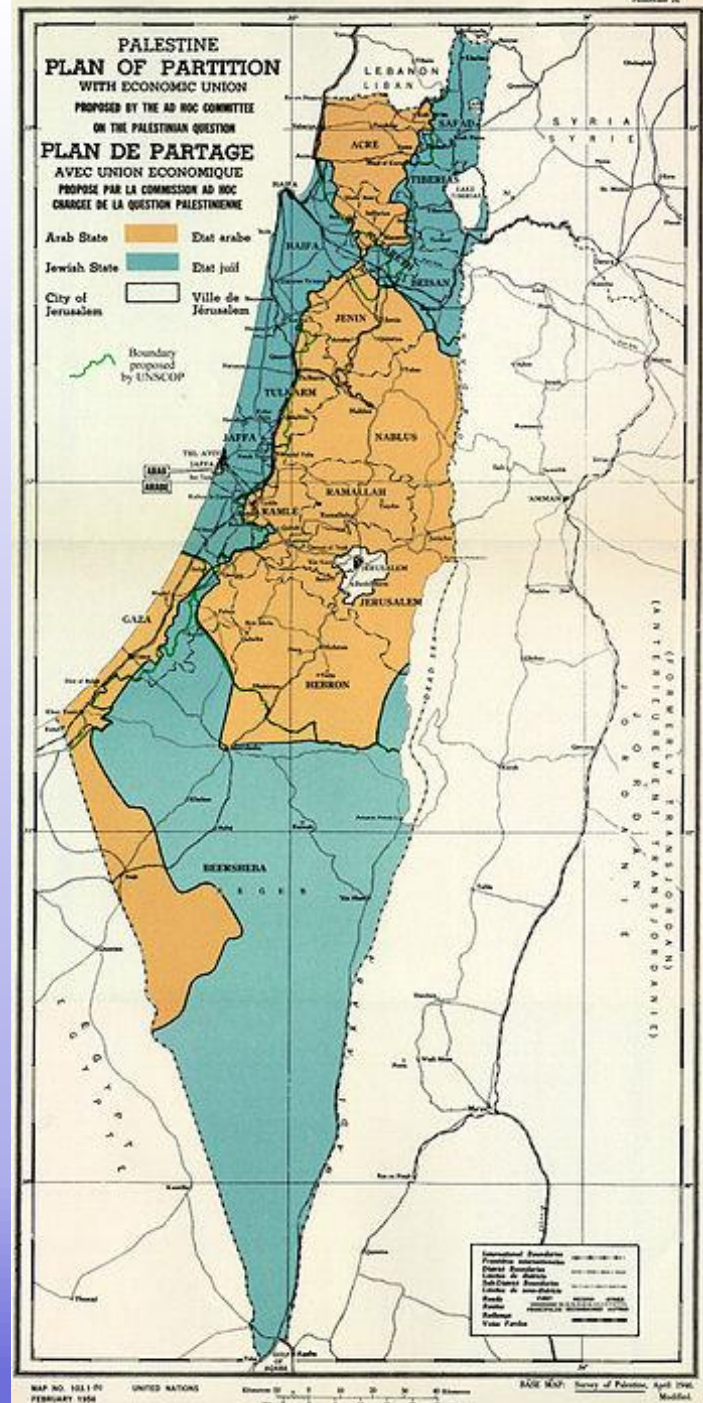
Riots and White Papers

1920 Neba Musa Riot, Palin Report and 1922 White Paper
(Lack of British Protection- Development of the Haganah)

1929 Wailing Wall Riot, Shaw Commission and 1930 White Paper
(Hebron Massacre)

1936-1939 Great Arab Revolt
(1938 Tiberias Massacre)

The U.N. Partition Plan:
U.N. General Assembly
Resolution 181
Adopted in November, 1947



May 15, 1948: Israeli Declaration of Independence



Israel was immediately attacked by the armies of Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Egypt.



U.N. Partition Plan and Boundaries at the End of Hostilities on March 10, 1949

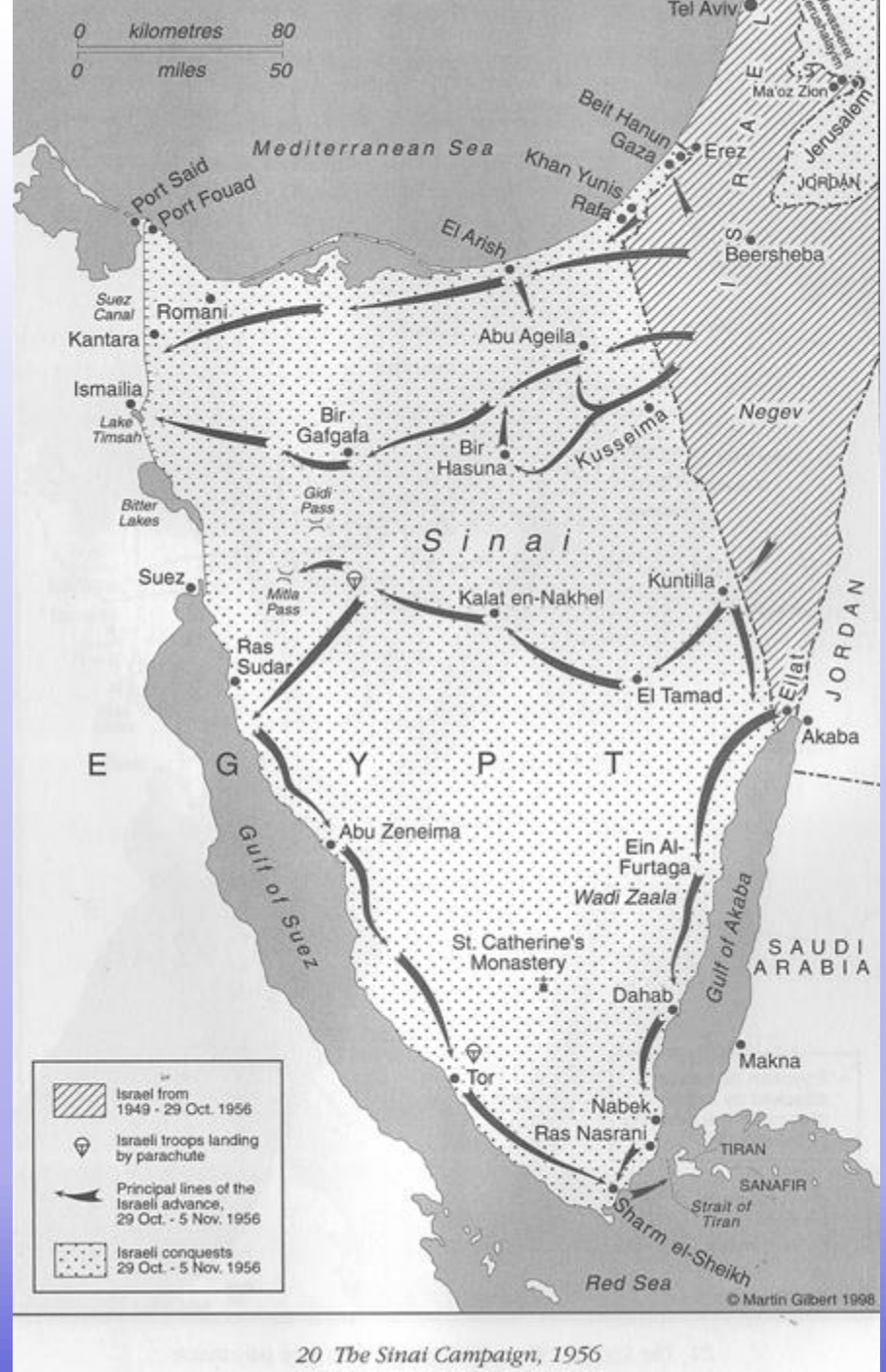
Up to 750,000 Arabs were displaced from Palestine.

Approximately 850,000 Jews were displaced from Arab countries once Israel declared independence.

Modern Military History

1956

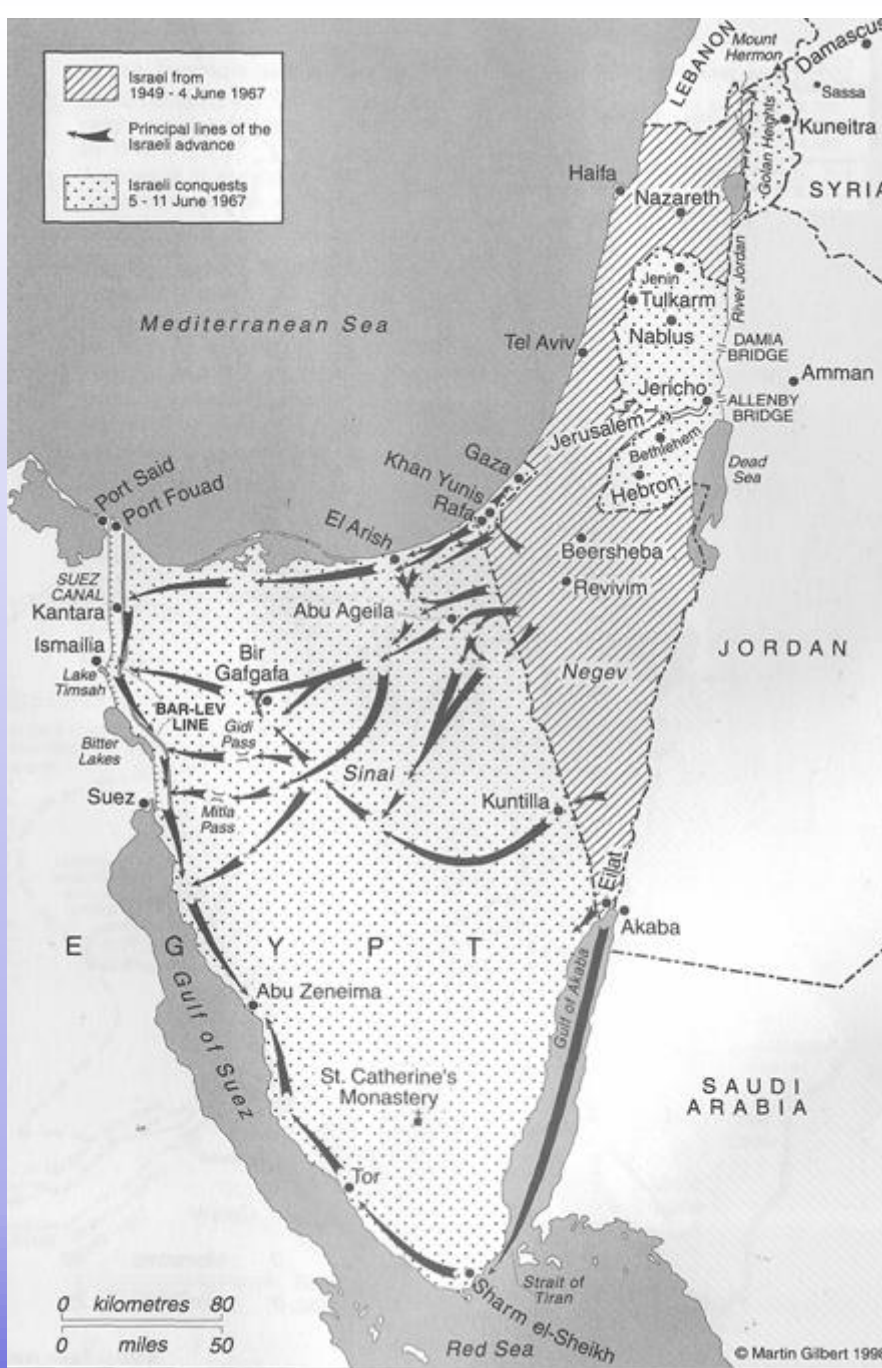
Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel Nasser closed the Suez Canal and threatened Israel. During the ensuing war, Israel took the Sinai and liberated the canal, then returned all territory as part of the end of hostilities.



1967

The Arab states threatened to push Israel into the sea and amassed troops on all borders. Israel launched a pre-emptive strike and during the Six Day War (June 5-10, 1967), Israel captured the Sinai, the West Bank and the Golan Heights.

The Sinai was evacuated 12 years later as part of the Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty.



The Allon Plan originally argued for Palestinian autonomy but was eventually rejected. It was then converted into a plan to return much of the area to Jordanian control.



Yom Kippur War: 1973

First Lebanon War: 1982

First Intifada: 1987-1993

Second Intifada: 2000-2004

Second Lebanon War: 2006

Cast Lead: 2008

Pillar of Defense: 2012

Protective Edge: 2014

Occupation and Settlement

Settlements

Israel withdrew from the Gaza Strip in 2005 but continues to occupy the West Bank. In addition to its occupation, Israel continues to build Jewish settlements in disputed territory.



Israel

6.1million Jews 75%

1.7million Arab Citizens 20%

161k Christians 2%

West Bank

2.2million Palestinians 80%

500k Jews 17%

214k Christians 8%

Gaza

1.8million Palestinians 100%

0 Jews 0%

12k Christians 0.7%



Prospects for an Agreement

The Oslo Accords, 1993-2000

The Oslo Accords offered a staged implementation under which Palestinian territory was divided into three categories, each with a different level of autonomous control, with final status to be determined based on negotiations.



Camp David, 2000

The Israeli Government offered the entire Gaza Strip, parts of East Jerusalem, 97% of the West Bank, and \$30billion in compensation to Palestinian refugees.

Yassar Arafat flatly rejected the proposal and launched the 2nd Intifada.

Prince Bandar of Saudi Arabia blamed Arafat for the failure of the negotiations.

The Saudi Initiative: 2002

The plan included the following points:

- (a) Complete withdrawal from the occupied territories to the 4 June 1967 line.
- (b) Right of return for all Palestinians and their descendants
- (c) Establishment of sovereign Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Israel rejected this initiative because it would have created indefensible borders in the north and implies a law of return for all Palestinian refugees.

The Geneva Accord

'Land Swap'

- Israeli annexation
- Palestinian annexation
- Green Line
- The Wall (completed/projected)



Geneva Accord

2003

Both sides to the conflict have stated support for a “Two State Solution”, and we know the basic parameters of the ultimate agreement. Nevertheless, there has been insufficient political will on both sides to engage in final status discussions.

“Deal of the Century”

Donald Trump and “The Deal of the Century”

Major Components:

- Israel gains sovereignty over all existing settlement blocks
- Israel retains control over other existing towns including secure access
- Israel gains sovereignty over the Jordan River Valley and Northern Dead Sea
- Jerusalem remains “undivided” and in Israeli control
- The status quo remains for Haram al-Sharif
- The Palestinians have four years to demonstrate the capacity to self-govern, recognize Israel as the Jewish homeland, renounce violence and end incitement including in textbooks and media, and drop all charges against Israel in international courts. At that point the following things will take place:
 - The U.S. will formally recognize the Palestinian State
 - Palestine will become a full member of the U.N.
 - The State of Palestine will have a capital in “Al Quds” (East Jerusalem) and the U.S. will establish an embassy there
 - A \$50b economic plan will be engaged to improve the quality of life for the Palestinian people
- During this four-year transition period, Israel will not build any new settlements or towns, and it will not expand any existing settlements or towns

Donald Trump and “The Deal of the Century”

Key Aspects:

- 97% of Israelis in the West Bank will be incorporated into contiguous Israeli territory. 97% of Palestinians in the West Bank will be incorporated into contiguous Palestinian territory
- Palestinians living within enclaves inside Israeli territory will become Palestinian citizens and be provided easy access routes to Palestine
- Israelis living within enclaves inside Palestinian territory will retain their existing Israeli citizenship and be provided easy access routes to Israel
- Israel will control the Jordan Valley and thus all borders
- Parts of the Negev Desert that are currently part of Israel will be transferred to Palestinian control and connected to Gaza in order to create new industrial and agricultural opportunities
- Palestine, including Gaza, must be completely demilitarized
- Israel will control all territorial waters
- The “Triangle Communities”, which were originally planned to fall under Jordanian control with the 1949 armistice, will be transferred to the State of Palestine

Donald Trump and “The Deal of the Century”

Key Aspects (continued):

- Gaza and the West Bank will be linked by high-speed transportation and Palestine will have access to Israeli ports
- Two access roads between Palestine and Jordan will be developed and controlled by Israel
- Improved transportation will be created to provide for unimpeded movement within Palestinian territory
- The security barrier will be realigned based on the new borders
- Freedom of access to all religious sites will be guaranteed
- The current security barrier in Jerusalem will demarcate the border between Israeli Jerusalem and Palestinian East Jerusalem (Al Quds). Arabs who choose to remain in Israeli territory will have a choice to become citizens of Israel, citizens of Palestine, or retain permanent resident status in Israel
- There will be no right of return for refugees

Donald Trump and “The Deal of the Century”

Major Advantages:

- The plan preserves a vision of two states for two peoples and avoids a bi-national apartheid state
- The plan includes resumption of U.S. economic support to Palestine and it encourages significant additional economic development from neighboring countries
- The plan respects Israel’s defense and security needs
- The plan calls for mutual recognition and a formal end of the conflict

Major Problems:

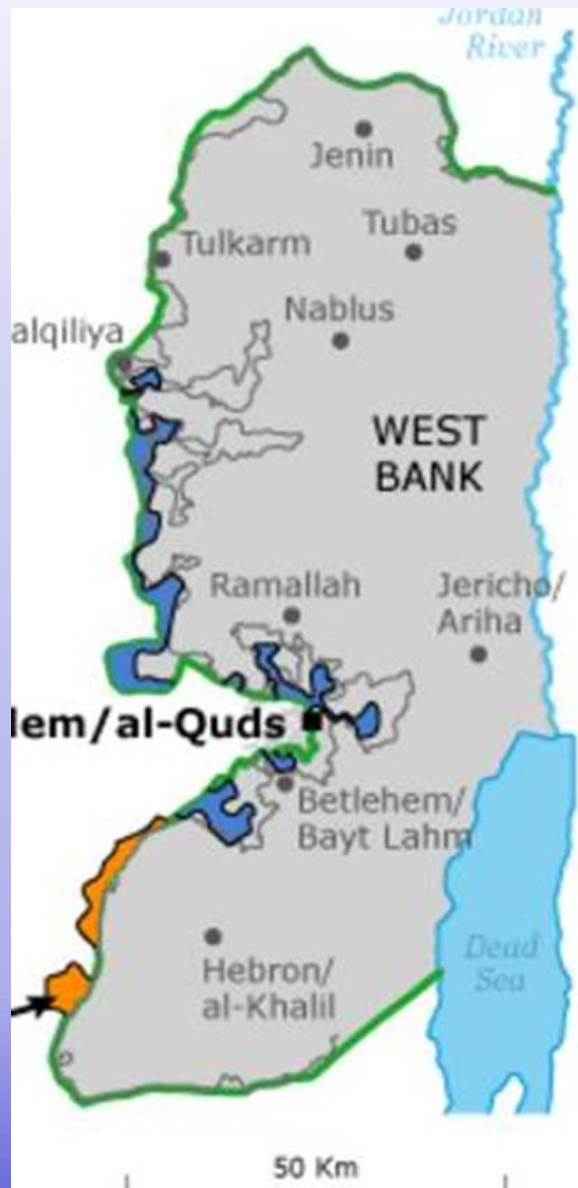
- The Palestinian State clearly does not have geographic continuity
- The Palestinian State will have no port, no control over air space, no control over its borders, and no right to engage in international negotiations
- The map is the worst example of gerrymandering imaginable. It will create a reality on the ground of continued Israeli control over daily Palestinian life
- Israeli Arabs in the Triangle don’t want to give up their Israeli citizenship
- Israeli’s in the Negev don’t want to give up their lands

**VISION
for
PEACE**
CONCEPTUAL MAP

*The State
of Israel*



Geneva vs. Trump



The Abraham Accords

(and other similar announcements)

Beginning in the fall of 2020, a series of agreements were announced that have been referred to collectively as “The Abraham Accords”. They should not be considered peace treaties, as they involve countries that have never engaged in military conflict. Most reveal pre-existing covert relationships that have now been made public and extended in important ways. These agreements should be considered the formalization of open diplomatic relationships.

The Abraham Accords

September 15, 2020: Israel – United Arab Emirates
In exchange for a supply of F-35 Fighter Jets

September 15, 2020: Israel – Bahrain

Similar Announcements

October 23, 2020: Israel – Sudan

In exchange for Sudan being removed from the United States' list of State Sponsors of Terrorism

December 10, 2020: Israel – Morocco

In exchange for U.S. recognition of Morocco's claim of sovereignty over portions of the Western Sahara

September 4, 2020

Israel agrees to recognize an independent Kosovo, which will open its embassy in Jerusalem

Pending Agreements?

Oman

To unfreeze current relations and return to pre-existing diplomatic ties

Saudi Arabia

As a hedge against Iran (this would be a real peace treaty)

Indonesia and Mauritania

Could be next?

Looking To The Future

Map 6: Israel's Strategic Vulnerability from the West Bank

2.75 million people live in the West Bank under control of Fatah.

1.8 million people live in Gaza under control of Hamas.

“Israel will exist and will continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it, just as it obliterated others before it.”
(Preamble to the Hamas Charter)



February 4, 2021 Polls For The March 23, 2021 Israeli Elections

<u>Party</u>	<u>Projected Seats</u>
Likud	29
Yesh Atid	17
Tikvah Chadasha	14
Yamina	11
(Balad, Hadash, Ta'al) + Ra'am	10
Shas	8
Yisrael Beiteinu	8
Y'hudit Hatorah	7
Avodah	6
Meretz	5

<u>Party</u>	<u>Projected Seats</u>
Otzma Yehudit + Naom + Hatzionut Hadadit	5
Kachol Lavan	0
Hakalkalit	0
Bayit Hayehudi	0

Conclusion and Discussion