

## **ENDLESS BATTLE**

### **SIXTY YEARS OF CONFLICT TOWARD THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ISRAEL AS A JEWISH STATE**

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We must expel Arabs and take their place.

David Ben-Gurion, 1937

Israel will create in the course of the next 10 or 20 years conditions which would attract natural and voluntary migration of the refugees from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank to Jordan.

Yitzak Rabin

The partition of Palestine is illegal. It will never be recognized. Eretz Israel will be restored to the people of Israel. All of it. And forever.

Menachim Begin

It is the duty of Israeli leaders to explain to public opinion, clearly and courageously, a certain number of facts that are forgotten with time. The first of these is that there is no Zionism, colonization or Jewish state without the eviction of the Arabs and the expropriation of their lands.

Ariel Sharon

I believed and to this day still believe, in our people's eternal and historic right to the entire land.

Ehud Olmert

All passages quoted here are from James Petras's book, *The Power of Israel in the United States* (Fernwood Books, 2006), p. 93.

With the establishment of the state of Israel in 1947-48, Jews identified as Zionists sought to liberate themselves from the ravages of anti-Semitism without compromising their Jewish identity. This would be possible, they felt, by building their own nation, and what better site than Palestine, where they had been expelled nineteen hundred years earlier? Here they felt they could enjoy all the benefits of an independent state without fear of persecution by others as in the past. However, they did not want to share this nation with the Palestinians, an indigenous society whose remote ancestors, like their own, had migrated to the Levant during the second millennium before Christ. Unlike the Jews, Palestinians had continued to live in this region without being forced into exile. Their total number was small in 1947--in the range of 1,300,000--but it was roughly twice the size of the Jewish presence at the time, and Palestinians were just as deserving of a national identity as the citizens of Jordan, Syria, and the other Near Eastern states that had been created from the remnants of the Ottoman Empire.

As David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first Prime Minister, repeatedly insisted, Zionists who sought a truly independent Jewish state were thus confronted with the unpleasant necessity to remove as many Palestinians as possible from the holy land they themselves wanted to occupy. For it was essential to establish a permanent Jewish state dedicated to serving the Jewish people undiluted by the needs of a different and essentially alien population. Paradoxically, Jews able to commit themselves to this objective found they were up against much the same problem as Hitler had during the early and mid-thirties when he sought to transfer as many Jews as possible from Germany. Of course Israel's leadership did not want to impose any kind of a final solution comparable to concentration camps and mass executions, but an alternative soon emerged that seemed simple and relatively painless. If there was an exodus of 856,000 Jews from Arab and Muslim states from 1948 into the 1970's, with approximately 600,000 of them having resettled in Israel, what prevented Palestinians from making a similar exodus to the various frontier states? They could be absorbed with relative ease by Arab societies that were similar to their own. The tradeoff would be easy, or so it seemed.

This was apparently the goal of Ben-Gurion and others, and even today it remains attractive to approximately half of Israel's population [Petras, p. 15].

However, it could not be stated as Israel's official policy because of international law as well as humanitarian considerations. Fortunately the 1948 war caused the flight of half the Palestinian population from the territory allotted to Israel by the UN, and the effective transfer of the remaining half could be encouraged by giving second class citizenship to Palestinians who did not take flight as well as making their continued presence as unpleasant as possible. When Israel captured the West Bank in the 1967 Six-Day War, it took an even more stringent approach with the newly captive population, depriving Palestinians of citizenship and subverting negotiations that might let them recover their sovereignty. Again, the effort to encourage the departure of Palestinians could not be admitted, but its active pursuit provides the only credible explanation for Israel's refusal to arrive at an acceptable peace agreement for the next forty years. As Sharon explained in 1988, "You don't simply bundle people onto trucks and drive them away. I prefer to advocate a positive policy, to create, in effect, a condition that in a positive way will induce people to leave" [Petras, p. 93].

Totally unacceptable to Israel has been the extension of full citizenship to all Palestinians including those who fled in 1948. For one thing Israel refused to accept any challenge to property rights by Palestinians returning from exile, and for another it anticipated the likelihood that Palestinians could soon become a dominant majority in Israel if enough refugees returned from exile. The creation of a government with such a split citizenship could only destroy Israel in the sense that they no longer had a country exclusively their own. However, the alternative two-state option of Israel and Palestine lying side by side was also problematic because it gave Palestinians sovereignty in Gaza and the West Bank territory adjacent to Israel. This, too, was unacceptable, since it would prevent expansion through the creation of new Israeli settlements on the West Bank as well as legitimizing the existence of an unavoidably hostile society at the edge of Israel. For how could its Palestinian inhabitants not be hostile after the way they had already been treated by Israel. The two nations would be separated by a relatively long and irregular border that would be hard to defend even with a massive barrier such as is now under construction. Israel has accordingly resisted negotiations favorable to either of the alternatives, full Palestinian citizenship and/or the two-state choice, so the only remaining option has been the continued *de facto* military occupation of the West Bank until some kind of an exodus could be brought into effect.

None of the wars of 1948, 1956, 1967, 1973, and 1982 (the latter involving the invasion of Lebanon) nor Operation Summer Rains and the Siege of Gaza within the last two years has culminated in successful peace negotiations. Many consider these conflicts to have been caused by the Palestinians or to have been the combined responsibility of both Israel and the Palestinians. However, closer scrutiny discloses that except for the 1973 Yom Kippur War, all the others were

mostly, if not entirely, promoted by Israel, and that the purpose in all but one instance, the 1967 Six-Day War, has not been to obtain a negotiated settlement, but, quite the opposite, to prevent such a settlement on the assumption that it would frustrate Israel's intentions. In the simplest possible terms, what Israel has sought is the acquisition of as much of the West Bank as possible and the transfer of its Palestinian residents elsewhere. In the single instance when Israel itself sought to initiate negotiations, with Jordan soon after its 1967 defeat, the Arab League prohibited bilateral diplomacy with Israel by any Arab nation in order to avoid a giveaway while under occupation by Israel. The attempt led by Arthur Goldberg just a couple months later to obtain a negotiated UN settlement bogged down as much as anything because of Israeli objections. That everybody, Israel included, was finally willing to accept UN Resolution 242 as modified by Israel (the elimination of the word *the* in one crucial sentence) was all that was achieved

The 1978 Camp David Accords arranged by President Carter a decade later was successful only because of the generous economic package Carter provided both nations as a reward for their cooperation. It also helped that Israel had little interest in retaining the Sinai Peninsula. Two decades later, the unsuccessful 2000 Camp David Accords arranged by President Clinton seemed to offer a fair settlement foolishly rejected by Arafat, but it included unpublicized non-negotiable demands by Israel that no Palestinian representative could have accepted. All later opportunities for a negotiated settlement--at Madrid in 1991, at Oslo in 1994, at Taba in 2000--as well as the 2002 Saudi Peace Plan, the 2003 Road Map, and now President Bush's 2007 Annapolis plan and the revised Saudi Plan, have been subverted by Israel in one way or another. They have been ignored, subjected to incessant niggling, and/or rendered irrelevant through the timely resumption of hostilities against Palestinians. Why? Once again simply because Israel has wanted more than would be possible through negotiations. The better choice, as before, was to perpetuate the status quo until a bigger giveaway could be obtained under more fortuitous circumstances.

Zionist apologists often deny this obstructive strategy, but it seems plain once all the wars and failed efforts toward a comprehensive peace treaty can be compared with each other. This strategy was also confirmed recently by the candid explanation of Dov Weisglass, Sharon's closest advisor, when he sought to justify Sharon's successful effort to thwart Roadmap negotiations: "The significance of what we did . . . is the freezing of the political process. And when you freeze that process you prevent the establishment of a Palestinian state and you prevent a discussion about the refugees, the borders and Jerusalem. Effectively, this whole package that is called the Palestinian state, with all that it entails, has been removed from the agenda indefinitely." (Mearsheimer, p. 217] However one wishes to parse this quotation, it is obvious that the very highest

priority has been the prevention of a Palestinian state, and that the first and most important diplomatic task has been to subvert negotiations that might produce such an outcome. One suspects that Sharon, Weisglass, and the rest of Israel's political leadership have had exactly the same strategy since the very beginning.

Unfortunately, the failure of negotiations has necessitated Israel's sustained occupation of Gaza and the West Bank, and this has served to intensify conflict, not to lessen it. In what seems an endless cycle of retribution, one attack followed by another, Israel has provoked Palestinians into acts of violence that could be featured in the media in order to justify massive counterattacks planned in advance, often producing kill ratios highly favorable to Israel. As a useful byproduct of this strategy, Israel has also conducted an ongoing campaign of targeted assassinations [well over a dozen of them listed in this chronology] to keep in power a hostile, battle-weary Palestinian leadership without charismatic appeal. The one top Fatah leader who escaped assassination was Yasser Arafat, the leader of the PLO, an unshaven gnomish figure with bulging eyes who was supposedly untrustworthy in negotiations. Significantly, Israel chose not to eradicate him despite many opportunities to do so, his chauffeur for several years having been a Mossad agent fully aware of his whereabouts [Ostrovsky, p. 249]. Why was Arafat kept alive? One would suggest this was at least partly because his appearance alone could be treated as an asset to the Zionist cause, especially in the U.S. He was obviously a bad guy not to be negotiated with, therefore somebody to be exploited in the charade of negotiations.

Except for the Annapolis debacle, the most recent (and perhaps most horrendous) example of Israel's avoidance strategy has been Sharon's invention of "unilateral disengagement" in 2003. As earlier indicated, his purpose was to undercut Roadmap negotiations sought by President Bush to satisfy Tony Blair, England's Prime Minister, who advocated this tradeoff for the Iraq invasion in order to appease the Arab states. The logic seemed simple enough, that Israel's refusal to accommodate Palestinians was obliged by the potential military threat of Iraq as well as other frontier states. Once Iraq was neutralized by U.S. troops, Israel could finally work with Palestinians toward a full diplomatic resolution of their differences. Israel was of course delighted by the elimination of Iraq as a potential threat--something it had long sought--but it also wanted to make as few concessions as possible at its end of the tradeoff. For once it was already in possession of what it wanted (the destruction of Iraq), it was in the position to sacrifice less for it--howzabout Iraq for Gaza with the four settlements tossed in? As explained by Weisglass in the passage quoted above, the settlements would be dismantled, and Gaza would be granted limited sovereignty in a "unilateral" giveaway that excluded any further concessions to Roadmap's grand design for peace in the region. This in retrospect seems to have been the tradeoff obtained. Unfortunately, now that Gaza was free, Sharon had no compunctions about

treating it as hostile territory to be dealt with accordingly. This turned out to be more of a problem in the near future than anybody anticipated.

Abbas, the newly elected as president of the Palestinian National Authority, tried to revive more inclusive peace negotiations, and Israel's refusal to cooperate produced a backlash among Palestinians that led to a "surprise" Hamas victory in the 2006 Parliamentary elections imposed by President Bush despite the warning of Abbas and many others that Palestinians weren't quite ready for it. Once in power, Hamas offered a cease fire, peaceful coexistence, and cooperation with Abbas in working toward a two-state solution. Also, it chose as its Prime Minister Ismail Haniya, the most moderate member of its top leadership. However this flexibility was totally ignored, crowded from news coverage by Hamas's presumed threat to Israel as a Jewish state, a supposedly bloodthirsty goal that for the most part involved a secular government without the preferential treatment of Jews. And of course such an outcome was (and remains) strictly academic if any kind of a two-state solution is imposed, as Hamas was (and remains) willing to settle for.

It turned out that the impression of Hamas as an irreconcilable enemy was of essential importance in providing Israel with the excuse to mount a new campaign of aggressive warfare against Gaza. And thus occurred Operation Summer Rains, a full-scale invasion by over 5,000 troops reinforced by tanks and supportive air cover. Its assignment seemed nothing less than to destroy the commerce and infrastructure of Gaza and to reduce its population to extreme misery, presumably to teach it the value of restoring a Fatah government without any participation by Hamas. Altogether, 249 Palestinians were killed and countless others were wounded and deprived of their homes and jobs to bring home this valuable lesson.

The immediate excuse for the invasion was the capture of one Israeli soldier by Hamas militants who crossed the border into Israel for this purpose. Ignored by the press was the fact that this seemingly inexcusable act of hostility was provoked by Israeli troops having entered Gaza on the previous day in order to break into a house and capture two non-combatant Palestinian brothers, one of them a medical intern, the other a religious student. Also overlooked was the fact that Israel detains at least 9,000 Palestinian POWs in its prison camps, as opposed to the single live Israeli soldier the Palestinians could finally claim for their own. Also overlooked, finally, was Hezbollah's willingness to take on Israeli troops in Lebanon, producing a second military front to help reduce the thrust against Palestinians in Gaza. Israel was glad for the opportunity to attack Hezbollah with a contingency plan long in the works, as demonstrated by its quick overwhelming response. Nevertheless, Hezbollah actually held its own against a 34-day assault, which meant that it was victorious despite 750

Lebanese having been killed. For the first time in its history Israel's military capacity was overextended.

Despite--or perhaps because of--Israeli pressure, the two principal Palestinian factions, Fatah and Hamas, finally settled their differences well enough to coalesce in a national unity government with peace negotiations still on the table as insisted by Abbas. Also attractive was the backing of a new peace proposal offered by the Arab League led by Saudi Arabia. However, Condoleezza Rice and others of the U.S. foreign policy team (as well as their Israeli friends, one must assume) were opposed to this unification--the Americans undoubtedly because of Israel's excuse that Hamas posed a major threat to Israel, the Israeli because such a coalition could in fact lead to a genuine peace settlement. Rice had already pressured Abbas to exclude Hamas from Palestine's newly elected government, but he had procrastinated in response to her demands, and once a coalition government combining Fatah and Hamas had become a *fait accompli* despite her effort, she brought into play a plan to bypass Abbas by obtaining the cooperation of Muhammad Dahlan, Abbas's national security advisor, as well as others in Fatah willing to cooperate. And of course Israel was also included in the strategy. How, otherwise, could four trucks full of weapons be routed to Fatah loyalists in Gaza through an Israeli checkpoint without any difficulty in late December, 2006? Why, though, was Israel so obvious about this? Was somebody stupid? Were strategists too clever by half? Or did they get exactly what they wanted?

Hamas prematurely initiated hostilities in a 4-day civil war that once again split Fatah and Hamas. Dahlan was in Europe for an operation, and Hamas fighters turned out to be more effective in combat, so Abbas and other Fatah officials were forced to escape from Gaza to the West Bank. Having severed the link between Fatah and Hamas with obvious divide-and-conquer intentions, Israel as well as the U.S. and other nations quickly provided Abbas's government in exile with generous financial aid and Israel just as quickly released the Palestinian taxes it had previously sequestered. At the same time Israel put Hamas and the 1,400,000 residents of Gaza under an airtight siege meant to impose the results Fatah had failed to achieve at the expense of Hamas. Israeli air and rocket attacks at this particular stage was repeatedly justified by the media as having been necessitated by dangerous rocket attacks by Hamas--more probably by Islamic Jihad and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine with the tacit permission of Hamas. Ignored was the fact that not more than 13 Israeli have been killed by these attacks since 2001, five years earlier, as opposed to the many hundreds of Palestinians killed in the so-called counter-attacks. For who exactly was counter-attacking whom?

And what has been the outcome of all this? Judged in retrospect, conflict with Israel once Sharon undertook his “unilateral” strategy has been ruinous to both the people and infrastructure of Gaza. It was as if Gaza was liberated in order to be destroyed--actually given its freedom in order to be eradicated. Meanwhile, the Road Map as well as the Arab League’s revised version of the earlier Saudi Peace Plan have also been scuttled, and the blame for all this has been pinned on relatively harmless Palestinian rocket attacks. As agreed in the tradeoff at least implicit in the Roadmap, Iraq was no longer a potential military threat to Israel, yet Tony Blair’s expectation to be able to carry out his end of the tradeoff with a genuine peace plan for Israel has been reversed to undermine the chances of such a possibility even further. In retrospect, the entire episode, inclusive of excessive bloodshed for the Palestinians, can be treated as having been a total victory for Israel in its sixty-year campaign to thwart a negotiated settlement. Iraq was finally out of the picture, and at the cost of nothing more than the military clout needed to abort a new peace settlement effort with relatively little cost to the Israeli people.

A quicker and more surgical implementation of this strategy hostile to negotiations has been in Israel’s response to President Bush’s declared intentions at Annapolis on November 27, 2007, to impose a settlement by the end of his second term in office. On January 8, 2008, after a month of inactivity toward this end, Bush visited the Near East to get the process started, and on January 15, a week later, negotiations did begin. However, the very next morning Israeli commandos staged a “routine” pre-dawn raid on Gaza that cost the lives of at least 18 Palestinians, mostly Hamas soldiers including the son of a top Hamas official. Palestinians immediately launched rocket attacks in response, killing a guest worker in a field just outside Gaza. Hostilities intensified over the next three days during which at least 40 Palestinians were killed, while continuing rocket attacks on Israel had no effect beyond minor injuries. Nevertheless, the media blamed the episode on Hamas, so it seemed appropriate that Israel punished Gaza by closing all border crossings on January 18. On January 22 Palestinians broke down a wall separating Gaza from Egypt, swarming into an Egyptian village for necessities no longer available in Gaza. Typically, their frenzy was featured by the media as evidence of the lawlessness to be expected of Palestinians.

Less than three weeks later, on February 12, Haim Ramon, a vice prime minister of Israel, explained to the press that a “declaration of principles” for peace might be possible by the end of the year, but that a full-fledged peace treaty would only be possible after the end of Bush’s presidency. The obvious explanation was that the turmoil in recent weeks had made the completion of negotiations within a year impossible. Fortunately, Ramon assured reporters, this modification in the schedule had been acceptable to Bush all along. Here

again we can observe the same pattern as before: the possibility of a peace settlement, feigned compliance, an unpublicized military assault that provokes Palestinian retaliation, and finally the abandonment of negotiations with the excuse that Palestinian violence has made them impossible for the time being. As usual, a supportive news media clouds the responsibility for this outcome as well as possible by emphasizing Hamas violence and Israel's reluctant but necessary defense of its rights. In this particular instance the entire wash cycle was completed in 75 days, postponing negotiations until the next U.S. president, or the president after that. More than 200 Palestinians are estimated to have been killed over this two and a half month period.

It cannot be sufficiently emphasized the extent to which this strategy against Palestinians for the past sixty years has depended on the enthusiastic support of the U.S. media, think tanks, Zionist organizations such as AIPAC and the Anti-Defamation League, and politicians in need of pro-Zionist financial aid. It cannot be ignored that the Democratic Party receives approximately 60% of its campaign donations from Jewish sources, and that the Republican Party receives approximately 35% of its campaign donations from Jewish sources [Petras, pp. 13, 36]. For Congress alone, from \$5 to 8 million dollars has been spent annually by pro-Israel lobbies [Petras, pp. 128-29], and this amount has probably increased to a large extent in the last couple of years. It is estimated that for every dollar spent in campaign donations supportive of Israel as much as fifty dollars has been spent by the U.S. government supportive of Israel, and again it is to be assumed that, if anything, this ratio is now even higher. Moreover, it is political suicide for any candidate for almost any office in the United States to betray the slightest doubt about the Zionist cause. He/she is almost immediately defeated by an opponent amply funded by Zionist money.

All in all, however, our nation's generosity to Israel has been far too expensive for the American taxpayer. The total financial burden to our nation for the three decades between 1973 and 2002 as calculated by Harvard economist Thomas Stauffer has been in the range of \$3 trillion--just about \$100 billion per year, approximately half of Israel's current annual GDP, not that all this money reaches Israel [Stauffer, p. 20]. But the money spent is even more than this. Israel's overall cost to the U.S. since 2002, taking into account inflation, the generosity of the Bush administration, and the intensification of hostilities, would seem to justify the addition of another trillion to the total. And if money spent on the Iraq war is included in the tally, the cost would be higher yet. If, in fact, Joseph Stiglitz and Linda Bilmes' estimate is correct in their just released book, *The \$3 Trillion War*, the total cost of Israel to the U.S. taxpayer would be in the range of \$7 trillion, roughly half of our current annual \$14 trillion GDP. Not bad for a population less than 6 million, roughly two percent of the total population of the United States.

The arithmetic combining the cost of the war in Iraq with foreign aid to Israel might seem excessive, but it can be fully justified, since this war began as the brainchild of neoconservatives who sought to neutralize Iraq as a potential threat to Israel. If neoconservatives in President Bush's administration such as Perle, Wolfowitz, Feith, Libby, and Abrams had not devoted themselves to this remarkable effort, it is doubtful that the war would have happened. Now that the entire venture has "gone bad," neoconservatives try to shake off their disproportionate responsibility, but there is too much evidence to the contrary, including more than 2,000 press releases, statements, conferences, interviews, op ed articles, and documents by Zionists that advocated the invasion in the first place {Petras, p. 178}. Mearsheimer and Walt devote a heavily footnoted chapter to documenting the connection [chap. 8, pp.229-62, with 175 footnotes]. So add it all up: total expenditures helpful to Israel since 1973, with the Iraq debacle included, are unprecedented in the history of western civilization.

But the story also has a tragic aspect. Resulting from its perpetual conflict with the Palestinians, Israel has acquired a permanent wartime economy even more lucrative proportional to its size than that of the United States. This has been the result of a relentless flow of U.S. military aid that has predictably crested in response to increased hostilities. All that has been needed to perk up aid levels has been to foment a new crisis supposedly caused by the Palestinians. As a result, war itself has become a major source of income in Israel. Moreover, its pursuit has been relatively painless, since the sacrifice in Jewish lives has been kept low by elevated kill ratios (usually between 6-1 and 25-1) made possible by the use of sophisticated weapons systems from the U.S. So the unthinkable "positive" correlation cannot be overlooked, whether intended or not, that the bigger and more destructive the operations undertaken against Palestinians, the greater the financial benefit to Israel--also the better its prospect of ultimately acquiring more of the West Bank than might otherwise have been possible. The original success since 1948 in thwarting negotiations is accordingly compounded by a second and more hubristic objective, the maximization of aid from the United States through sustained military success against a supposedly intractable enemy. Both sources of income are profitable, but their combination is finally the most lucrative: a gainful struggle toward gainful ends.

Of course this state of affairs is not desirable, not even to Israel. Despite its prosperity and democratic pretensions, Israel hardly provides a healthy political climate conducive to the social and intellectual achievement that might once have been anticipated in light of the progressive accomplishment of Jewish intellectuals throughout the twentieth century. Herzl's benevolent dream over a hundred years ago is now verging on nightmare. The hostility of Muslim nations in the Near East has intensified, and this attitude is now widely held elsewhere

as indicated by the repeated use of the veto by U.S. delegates in the UN Security Council (at least 43 times since 1970) to protect Israel from near-unanimous votes of condemnation by most other nations in the world. To offset its diplomatic isolation, Israel has developed world-class military capabilities (inclusive of atomic weapons) that dwarf those of its Middle East neighbors. And almost its entire society has been mobilized as a military juggernaut for three generations now, self-righteous soldiers of Zion who take for granted their asymmetrical advantage against the “bad guys”--all the Palestinian men, women, and children whom almost everybody outside Israel and the U.S. considers to be the victims of blatant expansionism. But Israel suffers too, and this is where tragedy becomes evident. The sacrifice in integrity and economic self-sufficiency that this nation of six million has incurred by its assault against Palestinians for six decades now seems unfortunate if it expects to establish itself as a modern post-industrial nation able to sustain itself on equal footing with everybody else. Having won its prize, it just might find it has ruined itself in the effort to do so.

Here, then, is a brief chronology of what has happened to date in this extraordinary chapter in the history of the Jewish people.

### **VITAL STATISTICS**

Israel's area: 8,019 sq. mi. (slightly larger than New Jersey).

Population: 6,352,117 (roughly three-fourths that of New York City).

Ethnic groups: 80% Jewish; 20% Arab and others.

Religions: 77% Jewish; 15% Sunni; 2% Christian.

Foreign Aid: approximately \$3 billion per year from the U.S. (\$500 per capita).

However, the total cost is much higher once additional expenses are taken into account. These include commercial loans, waived loans, Israeli bonds, trade advantages, preferential contracts, aid buried in other accounts, reverse defense expenditures, the cost of American jobs because of contracts awarded to Israel, Jewish charities, untaxed transfers from American Jews, aid to Egypt and Jordan to obtain their neutrality, blocked arms sales to the Near East, the higher cost of oil, reduced exports to hostile Arab nations, and the interest lost in early aid disbursements. Altogether it is estimated that Israel cost the U.S. \$3 trillion over the 30 years that elapsed from 1973 to 2002. This amounted to \$100 billion per year, or \$16,000 apiece for the citizens of Israel. If anything, the expenses incurred since 2002 have significantly increased this amount.

Today Israel has a 200 billion GDP, only twice the total annual cost for the United States to prevent its collapse. Not surprisingly, the 2007 GDP growth rate for Israel is 5.2%, one of the highest in the industrialized world.

It is estimated that there are more than 13 million Jews throughout the world. Slightly more than 6 million live in the United States, slightly less in Israel, 1.5 million in Europe, and with the rest scattered elsewhere. On the other hand, approximately 10 million Palestinians live across the Near East: one million in Israel, 3.8 million in Gaza and the West Bank (1.4 million in Gaza alone), and approximately 3 million live as refugees in Jordan, ½ million in Lebanon, ½ million in Syria, etc.

## **HISTORICAL CHRONOLOGY**

**586-538 B.C.** Babylonian captivity initiates the **Diaspora** as a dispersion of Israel's Jewish population throughout the Mideast and beyond. This vast exodus culminates when the Roman emperor Hadrian bars Jews from living in Palestine in 135 A.D. after conflict in which as many as 580,000 Jews are killed. **Sephardic** Jews migrate across Africa into Spain and Portugal, and ultimately the rest of Europe. **Ashkenazi** Jews first migrate to the Rhineland between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries, A.D., then disperse, many of them eastward into Poland and Russia. **Oriental** Jews remain in Arab lands, migrating to Iraq, Iran and even India.

**1290 A.D.** Jews are expelled from England, and in 1306 from France.

**1492** In 1391 enforced conversions begin in Spain, and in 1492 Ferdinand and Isabella expel all Jews from Spain.

**1878** The **Ottoman's census** of the Jerusalem, Nablus, and Acre districts (including area beyond the present border of Israel) shows a population of 403,795 Muslims (87.3 percent of the total) as well as an equal population of Jews and Christians--less than 44,000 apiece (9.4 percent of the population in each instance). Also present are 10,000 Jews with foreign citizenship and a relatively small population of Bedouins. By 1922, the Muslim population slips to 78 percent of the total, whereas the Jewish population has risen to 83,790 (11 percent of the total). A decade later, in 1932, the Jewish population has risen to 192,137 (18 percent of the total), and by 1942 it has risen to 484,408 (30 percent of the total).

**1881,1905** The two peak years of **pogroms** (organized massacres) in Russia, the first of them after a female terrorist, Gesya Gelfman, is implicated in the

assassination of the Tsar Alexander II. In response to the pogroms there is heavy Russian Jewish migration into central Europe as well as the United States starting in the early 1880s.

**1894 Dreyfus Affair** in France. Falsely accused of being a traitor, the Jewish military officer Dreyfus is finally (and fully) exonerated in 1906. Extreme anti-Semitism mounts in France at the time, largely fueled by publicity about the Dreyfus case.

**1896** *Der Judenstaat*, by **Theodor Herzl** (1860-1904), advocates the creation of a Jewish state in response to hostile public opinion in France provoked by the Dreyfus Affair.

**1897** Herzl organizes the First **Zionist World Congress**, which in turn creates the World Zionist Organization (**WZO**). The primary issue under consideration is the best location for an exclusively Jewish state in which anti-Semitism would no longer play a role. Several locations are considered, including Uganda, but the decision is finally made to return to Israel.

**1917** Great Britain's **Balfour Declaration** promises a Jewish homeland in Palestine. This is primarily advocated by **Chaim Weizmann** (1874-1952), a chemist who has developed a synthetic acetone used in the manufacture of explosives. He is said to have provided his invention to England during World War I in exchange for its future support of Israel. He later serves as director of the WZO from 1920 to 1946 and becomes the first president of Israel in 1948.

**1918** At the end of World War I the allies carve up the remains of the Ottoman Empire, giving Palestine and Iraq to Britain.

**1920** In early July Britain appoints Sir Herbert Samuel as High Commissioner of Palestine with the task of overseeing the immigration of Jews into the country.

On July 24, the Zionist Conference meets in London to create a Jewish National Fund for purchasing lands for kibbutzim and the formation of Jewish villages in Palestine. This concerted effort to bring Jews to Palestine leads to Arab riots in 1921, 1929, and 1936-39.

After the 1920 Arab riots and 1921 Jaffa riots, **Hagana**, a Jewish paramilitary organization, is created to defend Jews in Palestine. In response to the Arab massacres of 1929, it enlarges to include almost all the men in Jewish settlements. In 1936, the Haganah fields 10,000 combatants as well as 40,000 reservists to help British troops to defeat the 1936-39 Arab revolt.

**1929** Palestinian extremists massacre 60 Jews in **Hebron**, driving the Jewish population from the city, Judaism's second holiest site.

**1939** Britain issues the **White Paper** promising the independence of Palestine as an Arab nation within ten years.

**1940** Zionists sink the **Patria**, killing 267 passengers, 250 of whom are central European Jews deported to Palestine. They have been rerouted by the British to Mauritius and Trinidad, and Zionists want to prevent this from happening. They later claim their intention was to disable the ship, not sink it.

**1941-1945** The **Holocaust** is undertaken by the Nazis during World War II. Estimates vary, but as later confessed by **Adolph Eichmann**, chief of the Jewish Office of the Gestapo, roughly six million Jews are killed, two-thirds the total number of Jews living in Europe. Inspired by Houston Chamberlain's prediction of a "struggle for life or death" between Jews and Aryans [vol. 1, p. 578], Hitler apparently seeks to "liberate" Europe from the Jews. When deportation is no longer possible to Israel and elsewhere because of the war, he resorts to organized slaughter in concentration camps as a "final solution." Paradoxically, Hitler himself might be partly Jewish by an unidentified paternal grandfather.

**1944** The **Irgun** (sometimes described as the **Etzel**), an offshoot of Hagana in 1939, initiates an anti-colonial revolt against the British. Among its earliest feats is the assassination of **Lord Moyne**, the British Minister of State for the Middle East, who is considered hostile to the Zionist cause.

**1946** Zionist terrorists identified with the **Irgun**, led by **Menachem Begin**, destroy the **King David Hotel**, killing 91 people. Their attempt to pin the blame on Palestinians fails, and five members of the **Irgun** are executed.

**1947** **President Truman** promotes the creation of the **State of Israel** with the help and encouragement of **Clark Clifford, Ed Jacobson, and David Niles** despite the objections of **Kermit Roosevelt** as well as **George Marshall, Robert Lovett, and George Kennan** of the State Department. Encouraged by Truman, the UN votes to partition Palestine into Jewish, Arab, and international areas. Fifty-six percent of the territory is given to the Jews to provide them with their own homeland, though 1,350,000 Palestinians inhabit the territory at the time, almost twice the Jewish population of 650,000. Truman's choice to promote the creation of Israel seems partly the result of his upcoming campaign strategy in the 1948 election against Thomas Dewey, the governor of New York. This tactic would be suggested by Truman's speech supportive of the Zionist plan for Israeli

partition in New York City on October 28, 1958, just ten days before the election. Truman loses the state of New York, but wins 75% of the Jewish vote nationwide as well as the election itself by a narrow margin. [see Ball, p. 22]

**1948 Deir Yassin Massacre.** On April 1, Zionists identified as the **Stern Gang**, led by **Yitzhak Shamir**, invade the village of Deir Yassin and kill more than 250 Palestinians. Soon afterwards Jacques de Ruyner of the Swiss Red Cross counts 254 dead, including 145 women, 35 of them obviously pregnant. Later, Israeli scholars later claim that only 110 have been killed. Zionist sound trucks actually publicize this massacre to induce the flight of refugees from Palestine. At least 250 towns and villages are abandoned, and the final number of Palestinians who flee the region totals roughly 780,000, over half the original population. Through what amounts to a terrorist version of **compulsory transfer**, as recommended by David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first Prime Minister, Israel is thus able to gain control of 77% of the Palestine territory.

On May 14, Israel declares its independence as a sovereign state, thus preempting the UN Security council resolution planned for the following day that would request the General Assembly to consider further the question of future government of Palestine. British troops complete their withdraw from Palestine on May 15. Weizmann becomes President and David Ben Gurion becomes the Prime Minister. Truman immediately gives Israel diplomatic recognition, followed by the Soviet Union.

Also on May 14 the armies of five Arab states invade Palestine supposedly to protect the Palestinian population from the Zionist invaders. Later most historians and journalists claim that Israeli troops are vastly outnumbered and outgunned by the invading troops. However, reports at the time by diplomats such as Harold Beeley, Pinckney Tuck, and George Marshall, among many others, indicate exactly the opposite, that Israeli forces enjoy an overwhelming 4-to-1 military superiority from the very beginning of hostilities [Ball, pp. 23-26]. Moreover, unlike their opponents, the Israeli substantially augment their supply of military equipment during the first cease-fire imposed by the UN Security Council, between June 11 and July 9, enabling them to defeat the Arab forces without difficulty afterwards.

On September 17, the Stern Gang assassinates **Count Bernadotte**, the official UN mediator in Palestine, just a day after he submits a progress report on the conflict that recommends granting Palestinians the right to return to Israel.

**1949-1956** Palestinian **Fedayin** ("redeemers," or "freedom fighters") organize in Arab refugee camps and mount attacks on Israeli targets across the border, causing a steady escalation of Israeli reprisals.

**1953** The **Qibya Massacre**. Israeli troops led by Sharon attack the village of Qibya, destroying 42 houses and killing at least 66 Palestinians. Three-quarters of the victims are women and children.

**1954** The **Lavon Affair**. In Operation Suzannah organized by Colonel Binyamin Gibli, the chief of Israel's military intelligence, Israeli agents carry out bombings and other acts of sabotage in Egypt in order to discredit Egypt with both Britain and the U.S. On July 2, these agents bomb a post office in Alexandria, followed within two weeks by a British-owned theater and U.S. Information Agency libraries in Alexandria and Cairo. The operation is soon exposed by an Israeli double agent Avraham Seidenberg. Secretary of Defense Lavon correctly denies any knowledge of it, but is forced to resign from his position. Before the investigation is over many months later, Moshe Sharrett and David Ben-Burion are forced to resign as prime ministers.

**1956 Suez War**. Israel combines forces with England and France to capture the Suez Canal in a surprise attack that is unanticipated by the U.S. government. However, President Eisenhower forces them to withdraw their armies.

The **Kafr Qasim massacre**. Israeli border police set a new curfew for Palestinian farm workers at the time of the Suez attack, but do not inform them of it. When these workers unwittingly break the new curfew, Israeli police kill 48 of them, including 6 women and 23 children.

**1959 Yasser Arafat** founds the **Fatah movement** in Kuwait. It begins its first armed attacks in 1965.

**1964** Palestinians establish the **Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)** both to defend themselves and restore the homeland of the Palestinian people. **Arafat** becomes the chairman when **Fatah** gains control in 1969.

**1967** The **Six-Day War** takes place in which Israel launches supposedly pre-emptive invasions of the **Golan Heights**, **Gaza**, the **Sinai**, and the **West Bank**, including **Jerusalem**. This three-pronged attack substantially increases the territory under Israeli control. Israeli apologists insist the attack has been a pre-emptive strike to thwart Israel's invasion by surrounding nations. Actually, Soviet diplomats have tried to broker a ceasefire, assuring Nasser and his allies that U.S. diplomats working in conjunction with this effort have obtained the guarantee of the Israeli government that it would not attack as long as it is not attacked. Informed that the Arab states have accepted this *modus vivendi*, Israel is

able to launch a surprise attack against surrounding armies with devastating effectiveness.

Destruction of **The Liberty**. Apparently to thwart U.S. intelligence of the war in progress, Israeli air attacks kill 34 American sailors and wound 170 more aboard the **Liberty**, a U.S. intelligence-gathering ship. It seems the strategy of the attack is to strafe the ship's deck, forcing the crew inside, then to sink it with all aboard. Specifically, this seems intended to prevent the disclosure of an impending Israeli attack on the West Bank, the final stage of Israel's multiple invasion.

Once victorious, Israel seeks negotiations with specific states, especially Jordan, probably to legalize its occupation of Jerusalem and revise boundaries on the West Bank. In reaction the Arab League meets on August 29 in Khartoum and passes a resolution that features **Three Noes**: no negotiations, no recognition, and no peace. After tortuous negotiations led by Arthur Goldberg, the U.N. Security Council's **Resolution 242** calls for Israel's withdrawal from occupied territories and a just solution to the refugee problem. Nevertheless, Israel later begins establishing **Jewish settlements** in captured territory, and these become a growing problem over the years. In 1980 Israel gives them top national priority, and by 2000 there are 225,000 settlers occupying about 10 percent of the occupied West Bank.

In December, **George Habash**, a 1948 Palestine refugee, founds the **Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine**. In June, 1968, the Front hijacks an Israeli El Al airline, then undertakes a series of bombings and hijackings of civilian targets. The Front might also be responsible for helping to organize a machine-gun attack at the Tel Aviv International Airport in May, 1972, by Japanese Red Army terrorists, killing 26 civilians. And the Front hijacks an Air France airliner in June, 1976, flying it to **Entebbe**, Uganda, where it is recovered by Israeli troops in a dramatic rescue mission with the loss of lives limited to four civilians. Habash steps down as the leader of the Front in 2000 and spends the rest of his life as an invalid in Jordan.

**1968** Israel begins full-scale **nuclear production** at **Dimona**, producing more than twenty-five bombs by 1973. Israeli officials have insisted earlier that they had no intention of producing the atomic bomb. However, a variety of nuclear physicists, most notably **Zalman Shapiro**, the president of a small U.S. Nuclear Services corporation, provide it with needed help. In 1986, **Mordechai Vanunu**, an engineer at Dimona, reveals to the *Sunday Times* the existence of the secret Israeli nuclear program. He is lured to Italy by a female agent, then kidnapped, brought back to Israel, tried and convicted for disclosing the information, and imprisoned for 18 years. He is released from prison in 2004, then imprisoned

once again because he breaks his agreement with Israeli authorities to avoid interviews.

**1969** Israeli war planes raid an Egyptian school **Bahr al Baker** in southern Egypt, killing 75 children and wounding over 100.

**1970 The Black September.** Armed conflict between Palestinian organizations and Jordanian troops lasts from September, 1970, to July, 1971, resulting in the expulsion of the PLO as well as thousands of Palestinian civilians from Jordan. Starting in 1968 there are frequent clashes between Jordanian security officers and Palestinian guerrillas. In June, 1970, Habash's Popular Front captures 60 foreigners as hostages in two downtown hotels, and in September it hijacks three Western jet airliners, taking them to an airstrip outside Amman. Several hundred passengers and crew members are eventually released, but all three planes are blown up. Assassination attempts against King Hussein fail in September, and in order to restore his sovereign authority he declares martial law. During the ten days or so of combat starting September 16, from 3 to 5 thousand combatants are estimated to die. In the entire conflict that follows, which costs from 7 to 8 thousand lives, King Hussein drives the guerrillas as well as numerous Palestinian civilians into Lebanon and Syria.

**1972** In an operation also described as **Black September**, Palestinian terrorists kill eleven Israeli athletes and coaches at the **Munich Olympics**. The terrorists demand the release of 234 Arab prisoners in Israeli jails, but Golda Meir, Israel's Prime Minister, refuses to cooperate and orders a rescue attack on an airport runway. The attack fails, and the athletes and all but three of the terrorists are killed. The next day Israel retaliates with **Operation Spring of Youth** whereby F-4 Phantom jets kill approximately 100 Palestinians and Lebanese. Also in retaliation, **Operation Wrath of God** involves an ongoing effort over a couple decades to assassinate eleven Palestinians involved in the Munich attack.

**1973** On February 21, Israeli commandos attack two Palestinian refugee camps near the Lebanese city of Tripoli, killing 35. The same day Israeli war planes shoot down a Libyan airliner that accidentally passes over the Sinai Peninsula during a sand storm, killing 113 passengers.

On April 10, Israeli commando units invade East Beirut to kill three PLO leaders, **Yusef Al Najjar**, **Kamal Adwan**, and **Kamal Nasser** along with several dozen others.

The October 6 **Yom Kippur War**. Egypt and Syria launch surprise attacks against Israel in the Sinai and Golan Heights, but hostilities are suddenly brought to a

close after a successful counterattack by Israeli troops, some of whom, under the command of Major General Sharon, penetrate Egypt within a hundred kilometers of Cairo. On October 22, **UN Resolution 338** calls for an immediate cease-fire negotiated by the U.S. and U.S.S.R. However, with the excuse that Egyptians continue to attack Israeli tanks, Israeli troops finish their drive south, trapping the Egyptian Third Army east of the Suez Canal. Accused of betrayal by the U.S.S.R. and aware of possibilities for forcing peace negotiations among all parties involved, U.S. Secretary of State Kissinger insists the Israeli pull back their troops without destroying the Egyptian Third Army. On October 23, Syria also accepts the terms of the ceasefire, and Israeli troops can be withdraw.,

**1978** Arranged and hosted by President Carter, The **Camp David Accords** between Egypt's President **Sadat** and Israel's Prime Minister **Begin** result in Israel's withdrawal from Gaza as well as increased U.S. financial support to both nations -- more for the two combined than for all other foreign nations combined. Israel is thus compensated for the loss of Gaza and Egypt for abandoning the coalition of Arab nations opposed to Israel.

**1981** Israel bombs an **Iraq nuclear reactor** 18 miles south of Baghdad in a surprise air attack. The reactor is near completion but has not yet been stocked with nuclear fuel.

**1982 Invasion of Lebanon.** On June 6, 60,000 Israeli troops led by General **Sharon**, Israel's Defense Minister, mount **Operation Pines** (or "Peace for Galilee"), invading Lebanon supposedly in order to drive the PLO 40 kilometers from the border, thereby terminating its rocket attacks into Israel. Instead, however, Israeli troops continue their drive northward toward the city of Beirut. Apparently Sharon's intention is to expel both Syrian and Palestinian combatants from Lebanon and install Bashir **Gemayel** of the Christian Phalange party as president of Lebanon sympathetic with Israel.

From July 3 to August 21, Sharon conducts a **Siege of Beirut**, Beirut having become the *de facto* Palestinian capital in exile. Israeli troops cut off the city's electricity and conduct seven-weeks of intensive shelling by tanks, artillery, fighter planes, and warships anchored offshore. On August 12 alone ("Black Thursday"), air attacks kill 128 inhabitants. Over 250,000 flee the city in response to this siege. After 70 days, Arafat accepts defeat, and beginning August 21, he, the PLO leadership, and 7,000 PLO fighters are shipped into exile abroad. Casualty estimates widely vary, but as many as 6,776 are killed in Beirut and as many as 18,000 altogether in Lebanon, not counting the Sabra and Shatila massacres. Israeli troops killed in action are 344, suggesting roughly a 20-1 kill ratio.

On August 23, Gemayel is elected President of Lebanon, but he is assassinated by Syrian agents on September 14. One day later, Israeli troops encircle the **Sabra** and **Shatila** Palestinian refugee camps to permit a four-day massacre by 1,500 Christian militiamen identified as **Falangists**. All Palestinian refugees are killed, including women and children, with estimates ranging from 700 to 3,500 victims. Palestinians who try to escape during this period are forced by Israeli troops to return to the camps in order to be with the rest. Sharon is later found personally responsible and forced to resign as Israel's defense minister, but he is permitted to remain in parliament.

The militant Lebanese organization known as the **Hezbollah** is established by Shi'ites in response to the invasion. Its purpose is to provide self-defense against future attacks by Christian Falangists as well as Israeli troops. The Hezbollah also promotes an Islamic government of Lebanon, and it is organized to provide a variety of social services to its constituency, the Shi'ite population.

**1983** President Reagan sends U.S. troops to Lebanon to help impose order on Beirut after the withdrawal of Israeli troops, but he withdraws U.S. troops after 241 American servicemen are killed by a suicide bomber on October 23. Israel mostly completes the withdrawal of its troops by mid-1985, retaining a 10 km. security zone it can patrol on the Lebanese side of the border.

**1985 Jonathan Pollard**, a civilian naval intelligence analyst from an American Jewish family is arrested after three years of spying for Israel. He has acquired for Israel many thousands of pages of sensitive intelligence--estimated to be as much as 6 cubic feet of records. In 1986, he is sentenced to prison for life, but there is a substantial effort by the American-Zionist community since then to obtain his release and give him sanctuary in Israel.

Led by **Abu Abbas**, Palestinian terrorists seize the Italian cruise ship **Achille Lauro** and shoot and throw overboard a 69-year old Jewish passenger, **Leon Klinghoffer**, who is confined in a wheelchair. The excuse for doing this is that he has been trying to incite other passengers against the terrorists. The other 15 passengers are freed unharmed.

**1987** In December Palestine's so-called "**First Intifada**" (uprising) erupts in the occupied territory and continues until March, 1993, six years later. Its activities include civil disobedience, strikes, boycotts, graffiti, and, most effectively, stone throwing by teenagers. The kill ratio for this period has been estimated in the range of 7-1, with 1,162 Palestinians (including 241 children under 16 years of age) killed by the Israelis and 162 Israelis killed by Palestinians.

The militant Palestinian organizations **Hamas** and **Islamic Jihad** take root and quickly gain popularity in providing leadership for the Intifada. The **Palestinian Jihad** has been formed in the Gaza Strip during the early 1970s as a militant branch of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad. Like Hezbollah, **Hamas** provides social services additional to military protection. Its founder, **Ahmed Yassin**, has had a checkered life. During the seventies and early eighties, Israel's government tolerates him as a devout Islamic leader hostile to the secular agenda of the PLO. In 1984, he is sent to prison for a minor offense, then released in 1985, and in 1987, possibly with help and support of the Israeli government, he creates Hamas as an Islamist movement competitive with the Fatah. However, when the Hamas charter is drafted, calling for the destruction of Israel as a Jewish state, Israel outlaws the organization and once again imprisons Yassin in 1989, this time with a life sentence.

**1990-92** Serving as Israel's Minister of Housing, Sharon gives the highest priority to the creating of Jewish **settlements** in the west bank in order to enlarge Israel's control of the territory, if not its total ownership. Sharon's emphasis on the creation of settlements continues in 1996, when he becomes Minister of National Infrastructure, and it becomes a top priority in 1999, when he assumes leadership of the **Likud** Party.

**1991** The three-day **Madrid Peace Conference** is held including Israelis, Palestinians, Americans, Russians, and representatives of the border states. This conference initiates the diplomatic effort to forge a peace treaty that might finally reconcile the differences between the Israeli and Palestinians.

**1993** In April, 1993, Palestinian militants begin resorting to the use of **suicide bombers**. By March, 2004, slightly more than a decade later, 139 suicidal attacks occur against Israeli targets, accounting for 474 of 918 Israeli deaths, roughly half the total, though the suicide bombers account for only 1% of the total number of attacks. Over this decade, 46 percent of the attacks by suicide bombers are carried out by Hamas, 29 percent by the Islamic Jihad, 22 percent by Fatah.

Signed in Washington, D.C. on September 13, the **Oslo Peace Agreement** culminates with an agreement between Israel and the PLO for mutual recognition and a five-year plan to resolve all remaining differences according to guidelines already established. Unfortunately the Agreement is never carried out. The expansion of Israeli settlements soon increases to five times its earlier rate, and hostilities persist. 405 Palestinians are killed as opposed to 256 Israelis in the five years that follow.

**1995** Israel's Prime Minister **Rabin** is assassinated by an Israeli right-wing fanatic opposed to any compromise with Palestinians.

**1996** Arafat wins presidential elections in January, and conflict intensifies with Israel. Israel manages to assassinate **Yahya Ayyash**, who has perfected the use of the suicide bomb, and Hamas and Islamic Jihad retaliate with new bombings through February and March.

In April Israeli army bombards South Lebanon in response to Katyusha rocket attacks. Its shelling of **Qana** on April 18 kills 106 Lebanese civilians who have taken refuge in a UN compound to escape the fighting. Israeli apologists argue that Hezbollah troops have been located as close as possible to this site, so the hits were accidental, but a later UN investigation indicates that the shelling was intentional. In 2006, ten years later, a single three-story building is destroyed in the same Lebanese town, killing 28 civilians, half of them children.

**1997** In January, Israel's Prime Minister **Netanyahu** agrees to withdraw from four-fifths of Hebron, retaining a corridor of Israeli-held territory to give access to 500 settlers in the center of the city. The following month he initiates construction of a new Jewish neighborhood in East Jerusalem, provoking riots and international criticism.

**Ahmed Yassin**, the founder of Hamas, is released from prison and exiled to Jordan. However, he is permitted to return to Israel as one of Israel's concessions to Jordan in a brokered deal. This becomes possible after a botched attempt by Mossad, the Israeli secret service, to assassinate **Khalid Mishal**, the *de facto* leader of Hamas, by having a Mossad agent disguised as a Canadian spray poison in his ear while standing outside his house.

**2000** President Clinton convenes the **Camp David Summit** to obtain a peace treaty between Israel and Palestine. This time negotiations are held between **Arafat** of the PLO and Israel's Prime Minister **Barak**. Despite intense effort by Clinton, the summit turns out to be unsuccessful. Subsequently, scrutiny of the terms offered by Barak discloses such demands as the lack of full sovereignty in East Jerusalem for the Palestinians, the absence of control over borders, air space, and water resources, the retention of some Israeli settlements, and Israel's continuing control over a wedge-shaped territory from Jerusalem to the Jordan River Valley, dividing Palestinian territory into two or three "**cantons**" isolated from each other.

**Ariel Sharon** visits the Palestinian zone of the **Temple Mount** surrounded by more than 1000 Israeli police. This sets the stage for Sharon's election campaign

to become Israel's next Prime Minister, but it also intensifies hostilities between Palestinians and Israelis.

The **Second Intifada** begins in response to Sharon's visit to Temple Mount, and it persists through 2007. Its primary cause seems to be Arab dissatisfaction with the outcome of the 1993 Oslo Accords. Palestinians once again resort to suicide bombings, most notably of a crowded bus in Jerusalem on August, 19, 2003, killing 23 Israeli, including 7 children. The overall kill ratio is nevertheless more than 4-1, with 4,300 Palestinians killed as opposed to 1,000 Israeli.

Negotiations between Israel and Palestinians shift to a new site, **Taba**, on the coast of Egypt, and many new compromises are forged, for the first time making an acceptable resolution seem possible. However, Barak ceases participating in the talks because they obviously stir a public reaction supportive of Sharon's election campaign in Israel.

**2001 George W. Bush** becomes President of the United States, and just a couple weeks later **Ariel Sharon** becomes Israel's Prime Minister after having won a 62% landslide victory as opposed to 37% support for Barak. Sharon does not bother to resume Taba peace negotiations (he actually says in a radio interview that he appreciates their accomplishment but feels more can be obtained from the situation before imposing a final settlement). His intention to resume hostilities against Palestinians is signaled by an unprovoked air strike of Israeli helicopter gunships against a vehicle containing **Massoud Ayyad**, a major in a Palestinian security service.

On March 16, for the second time in three months, Palestinians press the UN Security Council to send troops into the occupied territories in order to keep the peace between Israeli and Palestinian combatants. The U.S. lobbies heavily against this resolution, and the 9 votes needed for its passage by the 15 member Council cannot be mustered.

Bush makes it plain that unlike previous U.S. administrations he intends not to intervene in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict except in the expansion of foreign aid to Israel. He also brings many **Neoconservatives** into his foreign policy establishment, including Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, Scooter Libby, Douglas Feith, Elliot Abrams, James Woolsey, John Bolton, Abram Shulsky, and David Wurmser. All of these are dedicated to close ties between Israel and the U.S. on the assumption that Israel is our nation's closest ally in the Near East.

On September 11, **al-Qaeda** terrorists attack the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, killing 3,000 Americans. The FBI captures five Zionists led by Sivan Kurzberg, who have been seen doing high-fives and photographing the burning

World Trade Center buildings at the edge of a New Jersey highway on the other side of the Hudson River. When accosted by police officers, Kurzberg exclaims, "We are Israelis. We are not your problem. Your problems are our problems. The Palestinians are your problem." All five are held in custody for 71 days before being returned to Israel. Each is found to have two passports, Israeli and European, and two of them can be identified as Mossad agents. Their vehicle has been obtained from a front business for Mossad in New York City, whose owner, Dominick Suter, takes flight to Israel just a day or two after 9-11, suggesting the likelihood that Israeli intelligence has been aware of the attack before it was planned, letting it happen in order to increase U.S. support for Israel.

In his October 7 public statement on TV, **Osama bin Laden** features Palestinians among the Arab victims of western nations he claims to have revenged by means of the **9-11** operation: "As I speak, Israeli tanks and bulldozers are going in and wreaking havoc and sin in Palestine--in Jenin, in Ramallah, in Rafah, in Beit Jala--and other parts of the domain of Islam, and we do not hear anyone protesting or even lifting a finger to stop it. But when after eighty years the sword comes down on America [the 9-11 attack], the hypocrites rise up to lament these killers who have scorned the blood, honor, and holy places of Muslims." [*Messages to the World*, ed. by Bruce Lawrence, p. 104].

Hostilities mount between Palestinians and the Israeli army in the Occupied Palestinian Territory on the West Bank. Palestinian **suicide bombers** resume their activities, and in December Israeli troops react by besieging Chairman Arafat's Ramallah compound with troops and tanks. Isolated in his headquarters, Arafat remains unhurt, but an Israeli sniper kills a Palestinian security officer standing in his dining room through a window. Israeli troops destroy all other buildings and offices in the compound, and Arafat remains a virtual prisoner surrounded by rubble until his death three years later.

**2002** An Arab League summit meeting endorses a **Saudi Peace Plan**. Largely based on earlier negotiations at Madrid, Oslo, Camp David, and Taba, the Saudi plan guarantees full trade and diplomatic acceptance of all Muslim states in the region in exchange for Israel's compliance with UN Resolution 242 toward the restoration of the pre-1967 border between Israel and adjacent territories with minor adjustments. Both Israel and the U.S. ignore the proposal.

Israel begins building a **Security Fence** (otherwise described as a separation barrier or wall) that separates Israel from the West Bank. As much as 8 meters high and with a 60 meter exclusion zone at its edge, it is scheduled to be completed by 2010 more or less along the 1949 "Green Line." It turns out to reduce Palestinian attacks on Israeli citizens by from 70 to 85 percent, but its construction also enlarges Israeli territory wherever this is found convenient,

often by separating Palestinian farmers from their crops and hampering Palestinians in their travel on the traditional roads.

In early April Israeli troops attack the town of **Jenin** for having been a hotbed of terrorism. Israeli sources claim that not more than 50 Palestinians have been killed, but according to Palestinian sources the conflict has been a massacre (described as the **Massacre of Jenin**), in which more than 500 Palestinians have been killed, then either buried by bulldozers or trucked away to be disposed of elsewhere.

On July 22, a missile strike by an Israeli F-16 scuttles a proposed Palestinian cease fire by killing **Sheikh Salah Shehadeh** as well as 20 others including 13 children. The leader of the military wing of Hamas, Shehadeh has been held responsible by Israeli authorities for hundreds of terrorist attacks within the previous two years.

**2003** On March 16, the 23-year old peace activist **Rachel Corrie** is killed by an Israeli bulldozer while trying to block it from destroying a Palestinian home on the Gaza strip. Her notebooks are later compiled to write a controversial play, "My Name is Rachel Corrie," which is successful in London, New York City, and wherever else the pro-Zionist effort to suppress it can be surmounted.

On March 19, the U.S. launches its **invasion of Iraq** without the support of the Security Council as specified by Article 42 of the UN Charter. The Bush administration tries to justify the invasion with the argument that Iraq is trying to develop the atomic bomb and gas and chemical weapons of mass destruction (**WMD**), and that Saddam Hussein has close ties with al Qaeda. The real reasons probably involve taking control of Iraq's huge oil reserves and, perhaps most important of all, the effort to eliminate Iraq as a potential military threat to Israel. With convincing documentation, Mearsheimer and Walt emphasize the latter as having been the single most compelling reason [pp. 229-53]. Israeli public figures such as **Avineri**, **Barak** and **Netanyahu** actually publish editorials in the U.S. press advocating the invasion, as do American **Neoconservatives** such as Krautheimer, Zuckerman, David Saperstein, Gary Rosenblatt, and Michelle Goldberg. Other neoconservatives such as Abram Shulsky, Michael Rubin, David Schenker, and Michael Makovsky serve on the Pentagon's Office of Special Plans (**OSP**) under the leadership of **Paul Wolfowitz** and **Douglas Feith**. Apparently their purpose is to help justify the invasion by processing the misinformation provided by **Chalabi**, others of the Iraqi National Congress (**INC**), and the notorious liar "**Curve Ball**" in order to enhance its credibility with the State Department, the White House, and various international bodies, most notably the UN.

On April 30, the U.S. State Department announces the agreement of the **Quartet Group** (the United States, United Nations, European Union, and Russia) to promote a three-stage **Road Map** toward a peace settlement between Israel and the Palestinians. As emphasized by England's Prime Minister Tony Blair, the elimination of Iraq as a military threat to Israel would finally justify the pursuit of a genuine final solution to hostilities between Israel and the Palestinians. Once again, Palestinians pledge full support, but Israel rejects key points. Sharon later undercuts the Road Map by proposing his own strategy of **Unilateral Disengagement**.

On May 1, one day after the Road Map has been proposed, Israeli troops begin a series of **targeted assassinations** against Palestinian leaders by surrounding the home of **Yusef Abu Ghin**, a top Hamas leader, and killing him, his two brothers, and ten others including two children in an extended exchange of gunfire with air support by helicopters. This is supposedly done in response to earlier rocket attacks from Gaza as well as three Israeli killed the day before at a bar in Tel Aviv. However, its significance as a hostile response to the Road Map cannot be ignored, and one week later, on May 8, an Israeli attack helicopter kills another top Hamas leader, **Eyad Al Beik**.

On June 2, President Bush attends an Arab summit meeting in Cairo and consults with Palestinian Prime Minister **Mahmoud Abbas** among others about the possibility of a peace settlement. Shortly after Bush's return to the U.S., Israel assassinates seven Hamas leaders within five days. Its first assassination attempt, against **Abdel Aziz Rantisi**, one of the founders of Hamas, fails, but its significance in response to Bush's diplomatic gesture is obvious to all.

**2004** On March 22, an Israeli helicopter gunship assassinates **Sheikh Ahmedd Yassin**, the co-founder and spiritual leader of Hamas, along with six worshippers while they leave a mosque after early morning prayer. Yassin is 68 years old, a blind paraplegic who has been confined to a wheelchair since he was 12 years old. He is replaced by his co-founder, **Abdel Aziz Rantisi**, who is in turn assassinated by a helicopter attack on April 17.

**Arafat** dies on November 11.

**2005** On January 9, **Abbas** is elected the new president of the Palestinian Authority with 62 percent of the vote. His primary agenda is to end violence and work toward a peaceful settlement. Hamas boycotts the election, and on January 12 it launches an attack killing one Israeli. On January 13 it launches a suicide attack killing another 6 Israelis. Sharon himself refuses to negotiate with Abbas, making it impossible for him to take credit for any benefits to the Palestinian

people. The Bush administration pays lip service to Abbas, but without taking any steps supportive of his peace efforts.

On January 23, Abbas is able to announce that Hamas and Islamic Jihad agree upon the imposition of a 30-day ceasefire, but nothing comes of it.

During a February 8 conference with Sharon, Abbas proclaims a formal end of fighting with Israel. However, Israeli and Palestinian militants still engage in skirmishes. On June 21 Israeli forces round up dozens of suspected West Bank militants, and on July 15 Israeli helicopters attack Gaza, killing four Palestinians after a Palestinian rocket attack on Israel killing one. The Israeli counterattack provokes fighting between militants and Palestinian police about the most appropriate response to Israeli aggression.

From August 17 to 24, Israel implements Sharon's policy of **Unilateral Disengagement** by removing all Jewish residents from Gaza as well as four settlements on the West Bank. There is desperate resistance of Jewish settlers that is heavily publicized by the U.S. press. Israel also withdraws its troops from Gaza and terminates its control except for airspace, borders and ports. Sharon's purpose is generally interpreted to fulfill his promise to Bush and Tony Blair, thus neutralizing the Roadmap plan that would have ultimately necessitated the creation of a separate state for the Palestinians.

On Sept. 26 Israel resumes missile attacks on Gaza in response to rocket fire from Palestinian militants. The next day Palestinian militants announce their renewed commitment to a truce, but Israel launches several air raids that knock out electricity in Gaza City, and it initiates cross-border raids to halt rocket attacks. Hostilities resume on the same scale as before.

In summer, 2005, **Larry Franklin**, a top Pentagon analyst on Iran, who works in **Douglas Feith's** Office of Special Plans (**OSP**), is arrested by the FBI in a Washington restaurant while in the act of passing classified information to two officials of **AIPAC** (the Israel Public Affairs Committee), Steve Rosen, its foreign policy director, and Keith Weissman, its top Iranian specialist. These prominent figures in the American Zionist cause apparently intend to send this intelligence about Iran to Israeli intelligence. Eighty-three other such documents have been found in Franklin's possession, apparently for the same purpose. It seems, however, that Franklin has already been caught and is cooperating with the FBI in a sting operation at the expense of Rosen and Weissman, who claim that the sharing of information in this manner is typical in Washington. Many other government employees also seem to be implicated, including **Michael Ledeen**, **Richard Perle**, and **David Satterfield**, the second ranking Middle East officer in the State Department. The resignation of Wolfowitz and Douglas Feith from the

Defense Department soon afterwards is probably connected with the case. Unfortunately, CBS's public disclosure of the arrest thwarts further secretive inquiry, but the case will eventually be taken to court, and after several postponements it finally does in early March, 2008.

**2006** On January 5, Sharon suffers a massive stroke and remains comatose through the end of 2007. **Ehud Olmert** becomes acting Prime Minister, and after 100 days, on April 16, 2006, becomes Interim Prime Minister.

On January 25, Palestinians hold their first parliamentary election in a decade. Despite millions of dollars spent on the election by the U.S. government, Hamas gains a surprise victory over Fatah, taking 76 of 132 seats in its Legislative Council by campaigning on the twin issues of security and corruption. **Ismail Haniya**, probably the most flexible Hamas leader, becomes the new Prime Minister. Contrary to hostile news reports, Hamas declares a unilateral cease-fire with Israel and calls for a temporary truce. It also advocates the establishment of an independent state with its capital in Jerusalem and offers a 10-year truce in exchange for Israel's withdrawal from occupied Palestinian territories. In response, however, Israel continues to denounce Hamas as a terrorist group and demands that it renounce armed resistance and recognize the full sovereignty of Israel as a Jewish state. Israel also confiscates Palestinian tax revenues and, along with the U.S. and UK, imposes an embargo on Gaza and the West Bank.

Hostilities intensify. Between January and May 30 there are eighteen **targeted assassinations** of various members of the Hamas leadership by Israeli forces. Altogether, 29 Palestinians are killed during February, 31 Palestinians are killed during April, 42 are killed during May, and 34 during the first two weeks of June. Between March 29 and May 30 there are 77 Israeli air strikes on infrastructure, government offices, and population centers.

On June 8, **Jamal Abu Samhadana**, the general director of the Palestinian Ministry of Interior, is assassinated despite (or perhaps because of) his ability and willingness to serve in the negotiation of a ceasefire with Israel.

On June 9, Israeli artillery makes a direct hit on a Gaza beach party far from any significant military target, killing eight Palestinian bathers, all of them members of the **Ghalia family**. A day later, Hamas withdraws from its official cease fire, and initiates Qassam rocket attacks from Gaza into Israel. On June 13, the Israeli air force thereupon escalates the conflict by attacking Gaza City.

On June 24, for the first time since their 2005 withdrawal from Gaza, Israeli commandos penetrate Gaza and break into a house, taking into custody two brothers, **Osama** and **Mustafa Abu Muamar**, as suspected terrorists. In

retaliation Palestinian militants attack an Israeli defense post the next day. Two Palestinians and two Israeli troops are killed in the gunfire, and a third Israeli soldier, **Gilad Shalit**, is captured and brought back to Gaza to be held in captivity ( Hamas's single prisoner of war, as opposed to approximately 10,000 POWs held by Israel). The western press focuses on the kidnapping of Shalit, totally ignoring the kidnapping of two Palestinian students just the day before.

On June 28, Israel launches **Operation Summer Rains**, an attack on Gaza to secure the release of Shalit. Israeli aircraft destroy several bridges and bomb a power station, cutting off electricity to more than half of Gaza's 1.4 million residents. Altogether, 249 Palestinians are killed, many of them by the use of rockets and artillery shells that probably contain phosphorus. On June 29, Israeli forces arrest 64 Hamas officials, including eight Palestinian Authority cabinet ministers and up to twenty Legislative Council representatives. On June 30, the Israeli army begins to bombard Gaza more fully with missiles, air strikes, and naval gunfire. More kidnappings and killings follow on both sides. At least 50 Palestinians are killed in the operation as opposed to one Israeli soldier.

On July 12, **Hezbollah** guerrillas in Lebanon who are sympathetic with Hamas create a second front with Israel by capturing two Israeli soldiers and killing three others in an operation on the border between Israel and Lebanon. In an immediate counterattack generally recognized to have been planned beforehand on a contingency basis, Israeli planes destroy much of Lebanon's infrastructure (roads, bridges, electric power plants, etc.). They also saturate populated areas with a variety of bombs, including **cluster bombs**, despite restrictions imposed by the U.S. to prevent their use in populated areas. Cluster bombs are also dropped in great numbers within seventy-two hours before the ceasefire. More than a million **bomblets** are dispersed, and a significant number of them remain unexploded, easily detonated by accidental contact. By the end of 2007, eighteen months after hostilities have ended, more than 30 Lebanese have been killed by them.

Over 900 Lebanese are killed during the two-war as opposed to 36 Israeli soldiers and 18 Israeli civilians, the latter by means of rocket attacks across the border. In all, the kill ratio is between 18-1 and 20-1. Despite its disproportionate losses, Hezbollah is conceded to have conducted effective tactics and is considered the victor simply by having avoided defeat at the hands of the Israeli.

In late summer Olmert abandons unilateral disengagement, arguing that it would be more effective to pursue a **two-state solution** through negotiations.

On October 4, 2006, Condoleezza Rice visits Abbas and demands that he dissolve the Hamas government as soon as possible and hold new elections. Abbas

procrastinates, so U.S. diplomats bypass him by turning to **Muhammad Dahlan** (“our guy”), who has served as Abbas’s national-security adviser [Rose].

On November 1 a large force of Israeli tanks and troops invade the Gaza town of **Beit Hanoun** in retaliation for a single Israeli woman killed by a rocket attack. Hundreds of men are rounded up and imprisoned in Israel. Israeli troops occupy the town until November 7, and their heavy shelling the following day kills 18 Palestinians. Thirteen are from the same family, 6 of them children. Altogether perhaps 350 residents of Beit Hanoun are killed, and virtually every house is destroyed.

On December 16, Abbas calls for new legislative elections to end the parliamentary stalemate between Fatah and Hamas in forming a national unity government. However, relations are tentative at best.

In late December, four Egyptian trucks pass into Gaza through an Israeli crossing, bringing weapons to Fatah for combat against Hamas. These include 2,000 automatic rifles, 20,000 ammunition clips, and two million bullets. Hamas learns of this shipment to Fatah militants and claims to have ambushed the convoy and confiscated the weapons for itself.

**2007** On February 1, Fatah forces led by Dahlan raid the Islamic University of Gaza, a Hamas stronghold, and set several buildings on fire. Hamas responds the next day by attacking several police stations.

On February 6, just five days later, Abbas brings Dahlan with him to Saudi Arabia to consult with Hamas about establishing a national unity government. A compromise agreement is obtained, but the U.S. State Department responds by calling for Abbas to “collapse the government” inclusive of Hamas, unless, of course, Hamas changes its attitude toward Israel. The State Department also formulates “Plan B” as explained in “An Action Plan for the Palestinian Presidency,” calling for an enlargement of Fatah forces (15,000 troops, all of whom are to be trained abroad) in order to “deter” Hamas [Rose].

On February 8, Hamas and Fatah agree to end their factional warfare that has already caused the deaths of nearly 200 Palestinians. They form a coalition with the expectation that this step might encourage western powers to lift sanctions imposed on the Hamas-led government

On March 17, a **Palestinian National Unity Government** is created combining Hamas and Fatah under the leadership of Haniyeh as the Hamas Prime Minister additional to the authority of Abbas as the Fatah President.

On March 29, the **Riyadh Summit** for the **Arab League** reissues its 2002 peace plan that couples Israel's withdrawal from all territory occupied in the 1967 war with open trade relations and full recognition of Israel by all 22 members of the League. A just settlement for Palestinian refugees who seek a **right to return** is also called for but without imposing any specific demands. Olmert does not take interest in the plan, and specifically rejects the right to return for 3.7 million refugees who live in surrounding Arab nations.

On April 30, a section of the "Action Plan" of the U.S. State Department, now identified with the Fatah leadership, is leaked by a Jordanian newspaper, and this is treated by the Hamas leadership as a blueprint for a U.S. led Fatah coup against Hamas to eliminate it from the National Unity Government.

In mid-May five hundred fully equipped Fatah troops arrive from training in Egypt, and on June 7 there was another press leak, this time about armored cars, rockets, hand grenades, etc. being brought in to help Fatah defeat Hamas.

**The Battle of Gaza.** Between June 7 and June 16 fighting occurs between Hamas and Fatah that results in Hamas winning control of the Gaza Strip. At least 116 are killed. On June 14, when Fatah is obviously losing, Abbas fires Haniya as the Prime Minister and dissolves the unity government created only three months earlier. Soon afterwards he and other Fatah official flee Gaza to the West Bank. Palestinian territory divides into two separate entities--the government of Gaza led by Hamas and the government of the West Bank led by the Palestinian National authority. Abbas remains president of the West Bank and appoints Salam Fayyad as Prime Minister.

On June 18, Israel, the U.S., and EU declare their support for the West Bank under the leadership of the **Palestinian National Authority** and resume direct aid. Israel announces it will release \$562 in tax revenue for this purpose, and the U.S. similarly promises to release tens of billions of dollars it has withheld since the election three months earlier. On June 19, Fatah cuts off all ties with Hamas pending the return of Gaza under the authority of the Palestinian unity government minus Hamas participation.

**The Siege of Gaza.** Once the Fatah has fled Gaza, Israel imposes severe restrictions that amount to a siege. Once again it demands that Hamas recognize the right of Israel to exist as a Jewish nation, thus by implication reducing Arab inhabitants to second-class citizenship. Hamas refuses, and by October only one crossing (Karem Shalom) is open. Fishermen cannot leave the harbor. The supply of diesel fuel drops by 47 percent, and the amount of goods supplied from Israel decreases by 71%, from an average of 253 truckloads per day in April to an average of 74 in October. Ninety percent of the 400 factories and workshops at

the start of 2007 have closed or moved elsewhere. Food is running out, and the supply of electricity has been reduced by half, preventing water and sewage from being processed at acceptable levels. Per capita income has decreased by 40 percent over the last three years, and the poverty rate (less than \$2 per day) has reached 70 percent. There is insufficient medicine and hospitals are overflowing, a hardship worsened by mounting casualties, mostly the result of Israeli air and artillery strikes. On the average eight Palestinians are now estimated to be killed daily by these attacks.

Meanwhile, the West Bank is not much better off. There continue to be 133 Israeli settlements almost all of which are illegal according to UN Security Council Resolution 242. Travel among Palestinian towns is impeded by 562 military checkpoints and an additional 610 "flying checkpoints." On average, Palestinian s are allowed to use no more than 50 cubic meters of water per year, while an occupant of an illegal settlement can use up to 2,400 cubic meters, almost fifty times as much. Palestinians also pay double the price for water as well as electricity. All in all, Israel takes possession of 800 million cubic meters of water out of 936 million cubic meters available to the West Bank. Moreover, the depth of Palestinian wells is limited, permitting Israeli wells to exhaust the water table at deeper levels. As an additional aggravation, the Palestinian government must continue to its tax income to Israel for its determination as to what can be spent on such services as health and education.

On November 27, a hastily convened **Annapolis Conference** is held so delegates from 40 nations can listen while President Bush declares that negotiations will be conducted for up to a full year in order to settle the Israeli/Palestinian dispute once and for all under the exclusive sponsorship of the U.S. government. Abbas and Olmert are both present, but conspicuously uninvited are representatives of Hamas, Hezbollah, and the state of Iran. Conveniently, deliberations would end just after the November, 2008, election, thus neutralizing the stigma of failure for the Bush administration if nothing comes of the effort once again. Also expedient is the limitation of sponsorship to the U.S. alone, replacing the Quartet Group that also includes the UN, EU, and Russia.

On November 28, a day after the Annapolis Conference, Israeli troops accompanied by approximately a dozen tanks invade southern Gaza, penetrating about two miles and killing at least 6 Palestinians. The signal seems plain that Israel is only willing to negotiate with Abbas, of the Palestinian National Authority, and will continue to deal with Hamas and the Gaza population as enemies. Israel's announcement just days after the conference that a couple hundred new homes are soon to be added to one particular west bank settlement can also be interpreted as a willful disregard of the agreement almost as soon as it has been made.

**2008** On January 8, President Bush arrives in Israel to spend two days in separate conferences with both Abbas and Olmert in order to initiate negotiations toward a diplomatic settlement, supposedly one of his top priorities in the final year of his presidency. Bush offers extravagant financial incentives to both the Israeli and the Abbas governments: a \$30 billion package of military aid to Israel over the next decade plus a \$400 million package to the Palestinians for a variety of social programs.

On January 15, negotiations begin as requested by Bush, but before dawn the very next morning the Israeli army enters the Gaza strip to launch an unprovoked “routine operation” in which at least 18 Palestinians are killed, including Hussam Zahar, son of Mahmoud Zahar, a senior leader of Hamas. Hussam is apparently killed by an air strike while driving his vehicle toward the conflict. Palestinians quickly initiate a rocket attack in response to this raid, killing a foreign laborer on an Israeli kibbutz. The entire NYT story of Jan. 16, buried on p. 8 in the next day’s paper, effectively obscures the sequence of events, thus minimizing Israel’s responsibility for the attack. The article ends with an Israeli spokesperson’s suggestion that the operation has been justified as a means of preventing future such “tragedies” as the death of the foreign laborer by rocket fire. The broader relevance of the attack to the prospect of successful peace negotiations is totally ignored.

By January 16, it is obvious that sustained rocket fire has resumed between Israel and Gaza resulting from the January 15 attack. Over the next couple of days as many as 40 Palestinians are killed by Israeli fire power, compared to the single farm laborer killed on January 15. In fact, as disclosed in a NYT story the next day (and repeated on February 18), not more than 13 Israelis have been killed by Palestinian rocket fire from Gaza since 2001, seven years earlier, an insignificant number compared to the dozens of Palestinians killed by Israel for this recent period of time alone.

On January 18, Israel closes all border crossings to Gaza, totally barring its one and a half million residents from access to all necessities beyond those they themselves can provide. This radical measure is repeatedly justified in the media, even on the floor of the UN, as a necessary step in order to terminate rocket fire from Gaza and force Hamas to accept Israel’s right to exist as a Jewish state. At least the first of these objectives seems contrived. As indicated by the February 18 NYT article by Isabel Kershner, “Clashes with Israeli Troops Kill 4 Militants in Gaza,” Palestinians have fired as many as 700 rockets and mortar shells against Israel since the beginning of 2008, but apparently having caused only one fatality. The rockets provide little more than a nuisance that gives Israel the

excuse to do as it pleases against the Palestinians supposedly to terminate the threat.

On January 22, Hamas destroys the wall constructed by Israel to separate Gaza from Egypt at the Rafah crossing, and as many as 350,000 Gaza resident (a fifth of its total population) flood into Egyptian territory within the next two days, desperate for food, fuel, medical supplies, and other necessities. Both Israel and the U.S. demand that Egypt restore the border, thus sustaining the siege. As quoted by the NYT, Olmert declares, "As far as I'm concerned, the residents of Gaza can walk if they don't have gasoline for their cars, because they have a murderous terrorist regime that won't let people in the south of Israel live in safety." But a day later Israel promises to open the border crossings. As the Zionist spokesperson Sari Bashi explains in the January 28 NYT, "This is part of a stop-start game that continually pushes Gazan residents to the brink, pushing them over, then pulling back temporarily. . . . For the last seven months, Israel has been slowly reducing Gaza residents to desperation."

In a February 12 NYT article by Steven Erlanger, "Israeli Casts Doubt on Full Treaty This Year," Haim Ramon, a vice prime minister of Israel announces that Israel hopes at best to reach an agreement with Palestinians on a "declaration of principles" for peace by the end of the year, since it would not be possible to come up with a full-fledged peace treaty by then. On one hand, Ramon says, Abbas would not enjoy sufficient authority among Palestinians, and on the other a detailed treaty that for example spells out the division of Jerusalem would very likely bring down Olmert's government. Fortunately, Ramon explains, Bush's expectations are "in line with Israel's," so the Peace Treaty he seems to have demanded the previous month can be postponed until later, after Bush leaves office. At that time Israelis can exert more impact on a new U.S. government presumably less effective in coping with Zionist demands.

On February 13, a day later, Isabel Kershner's four-column 25-inch NYT article, with two 4x5 inch photographs, "2 Boys, 2 Sides, 2 Beds in an Israeli Hospital Ward," features the equal treatment of two boys, Israeli and Palestinian, who have been injured in separate military operations, the Israeli boy by rocket fire, the Palestinian boy by an air attack. Emphasized is the humanitarian generosity of the hospital to both boys, but also the threat of Palestinian rocket attacks as finally demonstrated by the injury of the Jewish boy, Osher Twito, an aspiring soccer player whose leg must be amputated. Also featured is his parents' angry complaint, "The Palestinians aim to hurt our sons and rejoice at their injuries, while neither we nor our army intended to hurt them." This is quoted without mentioning the many hundreds of Palestinians killed since the siege of Gaza began nine months ago.

On February 27, an Israeli air strike in southern Gaza kills five Palestinian militants who might have been carrying out a special operation against Israel. Once again Israeli troops invade Gaza and an exchange of rockets and bombs kills 116 Palestinians by March 3, six days later. Israel claims that 90 percent of those killed were militants, but Palestinian officials say that more than half were civilians, including several children. Throughout the 6-day period, Palestinians have fired more than 200 rockets at Israel, but only two Israeli soldiers and one Israeli civilian have been killed. Israeli spokesmen insist (a wonderful example of the Big Lie) that this attack against Hamas is essential for sustaining peace talks with the Palestinian National Authority. Not surprisingly, Abbas, the President of the Authority, terminates negotiations until hostilities are brought to a close. Condoleezza Rice quickly arrives to force him to change his mind, and after much argument Abbas reopens negotiations without any indication when they are to begin. Zionist spokesmen continue to deride Hamas for its despicable effort to terminate negotiations, but, as before, Israel itself seems the principal party eager and willing to sabotage the possibility of a negotiated settlement. Once again Israel claims self-defense in order to justify its offense despite the brutal asymmetrical kill ratio of 116-3, almost as stark as when the American West was won from savage Indians back in the nineteenth century.

And what do Israeli strategists now emphasize in addition to the avoidance of negotiations? As perhaps to be expected, their primary concern has shifted to the nuclear threat posed by Iran now that Iraq has been demolished as a potential enemy. Just as Israel's insistence on a nuclear threat helped to initiate the 2003 invasion of Iraq, its similar concern about Iran focuses on the need for an air attack regardless of whether it might generate a full-scale escalation of warfare in the region. Zionists repeatedly demand such an attack despite no less repeated assurances by Mohammed ElBaradei, the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (**IAEA**), that Iran has no active program today to develop an atomic bomb. Prime Minister Olmert himself actually warns before a joint session of U.S. Congress on May 24, 2006, of the future crisis in the region if and when Iran possesses the atomic bomb. AIPAC lobbyists continue to press this argument with members of Congress, and Israeli officials warn that they might take preemptive action themselves if the U.S. does not launch the needed attack on Iran.

On December 3, a *New York Times* front-page article discloses that the U.S. National Intelligence Estimate (NIE), a consensus of 16 U.S. intelligence agencies, is in agreement that Iran very probably suspended its nuclear weapons program as early as 2003, four years ago, and that it cannot produce enough uranium for an atomic bomb until 2010 at the earliest. This conclusion is heatedly denied by Zionist intelligence experts as well as journalists friendly to Israel, for example Thomas Friedman in his December 12 *New York Times* column. In an apparently

hasty meeting scheduled in Israel on December 10, just a week after the NIE disclosure, Israeli defense minister Ehud Barak tells Admiral Mike Mullen, the chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, that Israeli intelligence indicates Iran probably resumed its effort to produce an atom bomb in 2005 and continues to enrich uranium to such an extent that this might be possible earlier than 2010. As reported in *The New York Times*, Mullen expresses his sympathy with Israel's concerns, so a military venture might still be launched against Iran in the near future. As a perhaps useful precedent, Israel's September 6, 2007, air attack on a potential nuclear facility in Syria has provoked little outrage in the international community. So perhaps a similar strike can still be launched against Iran within the next year or so.

\* \* \* \* \*

It is again to be emphasized that the cost of sixty years of warfare has been too high for everybody involved. Most obviously, Palestinians have been racked by their ordeal, perhaps never to recover their full potential as a modern self-sufficient society. Likewise, Israel's various frontier nations have been beset with serious problems that would undoubtedly have been easier to resolve if they had not been drawn into the recurring Israeli-Palestinian hostilities. And of course the United States has paid an enormous price both in subsidizing this endless battle and in having antagonized an entire Muslim population stretching from Casablanca to Bali. Some of the world's most productive oil fields are located across this region, and many of our nation's difficulties with its oil supply can be traced to its lack of a consistent foreign policy because of its alliance with Israel. As already indicated, the total financial cost to the U.S. between 1973 and 2002 has been estimated in excess of \$3 trillion, and today the total cost can only be far higher, as much as \$7 trillion if the cost of Iraq is added to the tally. Zionist apologists repeatedly emphasize the productive interdependence between Israel and the United States, but the relationship has been far more lopsided, dare one suggest parasitic.

In the long run, however, the biggest loser is Israel itself. Granted, its population has shaken off its history of ghetto survival preceding World War II, but this has only been to create a new and bigger version of ghetto existence as a small nation with a very uncertain future, given the mounting animosity of most other nations in the region. Having been created to end Jewish vulnerability in the past, Israel has actually become a ghetto nation--arguably the only one of its kind in the world today. Moreover, having served as scapegoats for Nazis resentful of Germany's defeat in World War I, the people of Israel seem to have victimized Palestinians to redress their own history of grievances, thereby intensifying their isolation that much further. As already indicated, most of the American public continues to support Israel's agenda, but few share this attitude

elsewhere in the world. Moreover, Israel's relentless crisis mentality is even beginning to disturb a large portion of its population, with more than 50 percent opposed to the current siege of Gaza, not to discount the response of roughly 20 percent of the total Jewish population in the U.S., the so-called "self-haters" who keep abreast of what happens beyond the predictable story line told by Zionists [Petras, pp. 109, 128]. Yet the nightmarish aspect of ghetto existence continues after decades of conflict, and as much through choice as necessity. The question is how such a gifted population can extricate itself from its present role with the least damage to everybody involved.

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Useful website chronologies that are critical of Israel include--

- (1) [palestinehistory.com](http://palestinehistory.com),
- (2) "Who Invented Modern Day Terrorism"
- (3) "Encyclopedia of the Palestinian Problem," by Issla Nakhleh

Livia Rokach's book, *Israel's Sacred Terrorism*, with an introduction by Noam Chomsky (Association of Arab-American Graduates, 1980, 1982, 1986), is also available on the Internet in its entirety.

Names and dates are emphasized as much as possible to simplify the use of popular search engines such as Google, and websites such as Wikipedia to submit the data presented here to further investigation.