

THE ISRAELI- PALESTINIAN CONFLICT



**Frank Munley
Salem Democratic Club
7 March 2011**

From Tony Judt, “Israel: the Alternative,” in the *NY Rev of Books*, October 23, 2003:

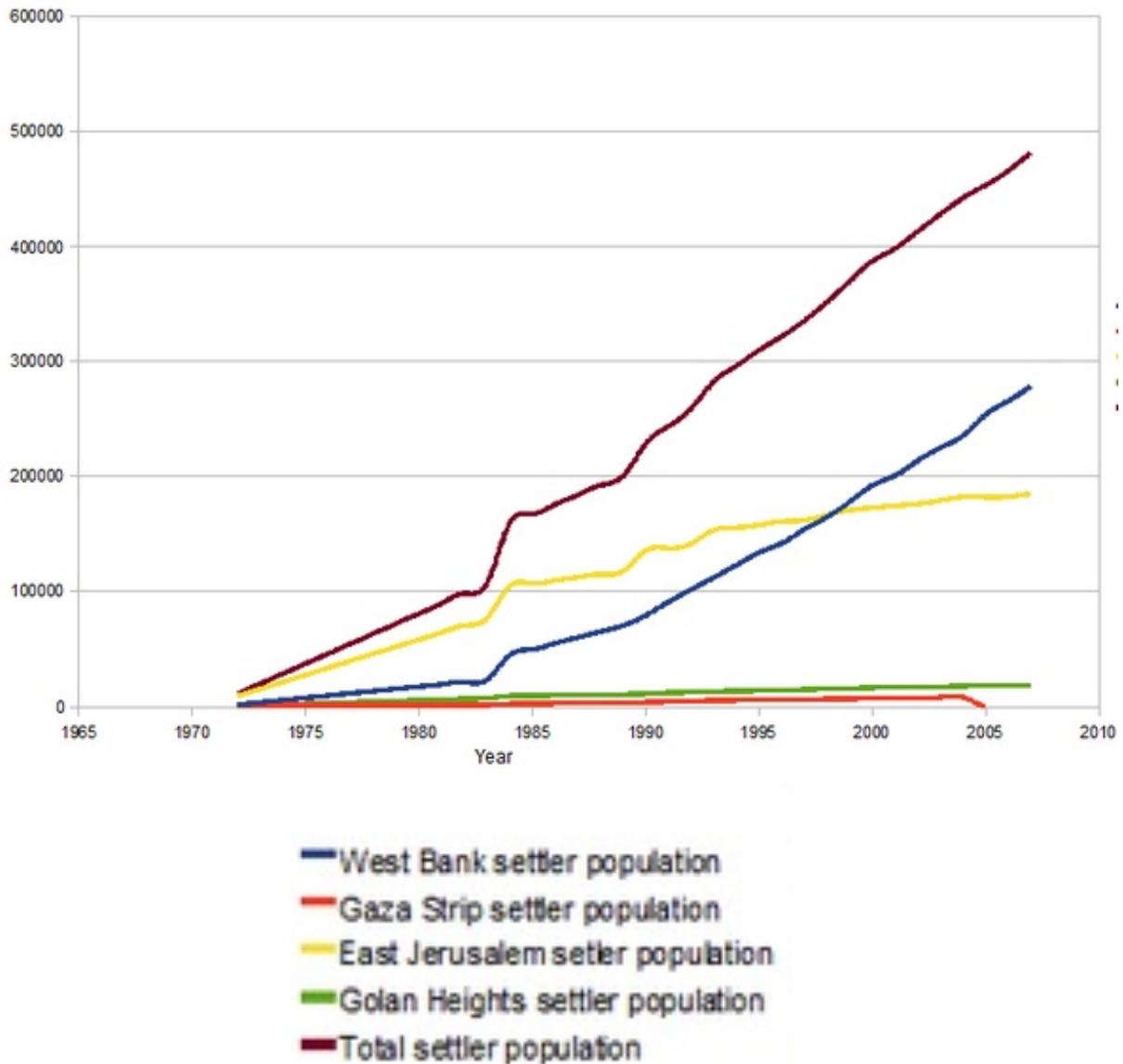
The problem with Israel, in short, is not—as is sometimes suggested—that it is a European “enclave” in the Arab world; but rather that it arrived too late. It has imported a characteristically late-nineteenth-century separatist project into a world that has moved on, a world of individual rights, open frontiers, and international law. The very idea of a “Jewish state”—a state in which Jews and the Jewish religion have exclusive privileges from which non-Jewish citizens are forever excluded—is rooted in another time and place. Israel, in short, is an anachronism.

THE ISSUE AT HAND: Palestinian territories occupied since 1967



SETTLEMENTS: THE ENGINE OF OCCUPATION

Israeli Settlement Population Growth



**MOTIVATION: LAND FOR JEWS
WORLD-WIDE; *WATER***

SETTLEMENTS ARE ILLEGAL:

UNSC Resolution 242 (22 Nov 1967)

emphasizes:

- (a) The inadmissibility of acquiring territory by force;**
- (b) A resolution to the conflict should be based on the pre-1967 *boundaries* (not “borders”!).**

OCCUPATION AND SETTLEMENT POLICIES ARE BRUTAL:

- Israeli-only roads;**
- Collective punishment, e.g., destruction of homes, embargo (violations of 4th Geneva Conventions);**
- Destruction of olive groves;**
- Control/restriction of water to Palestinians;**
- About 600 checkpoints making travel very difficult.**

ISRAEL'S ARGUMENTS FOR SETTLEMENTS IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

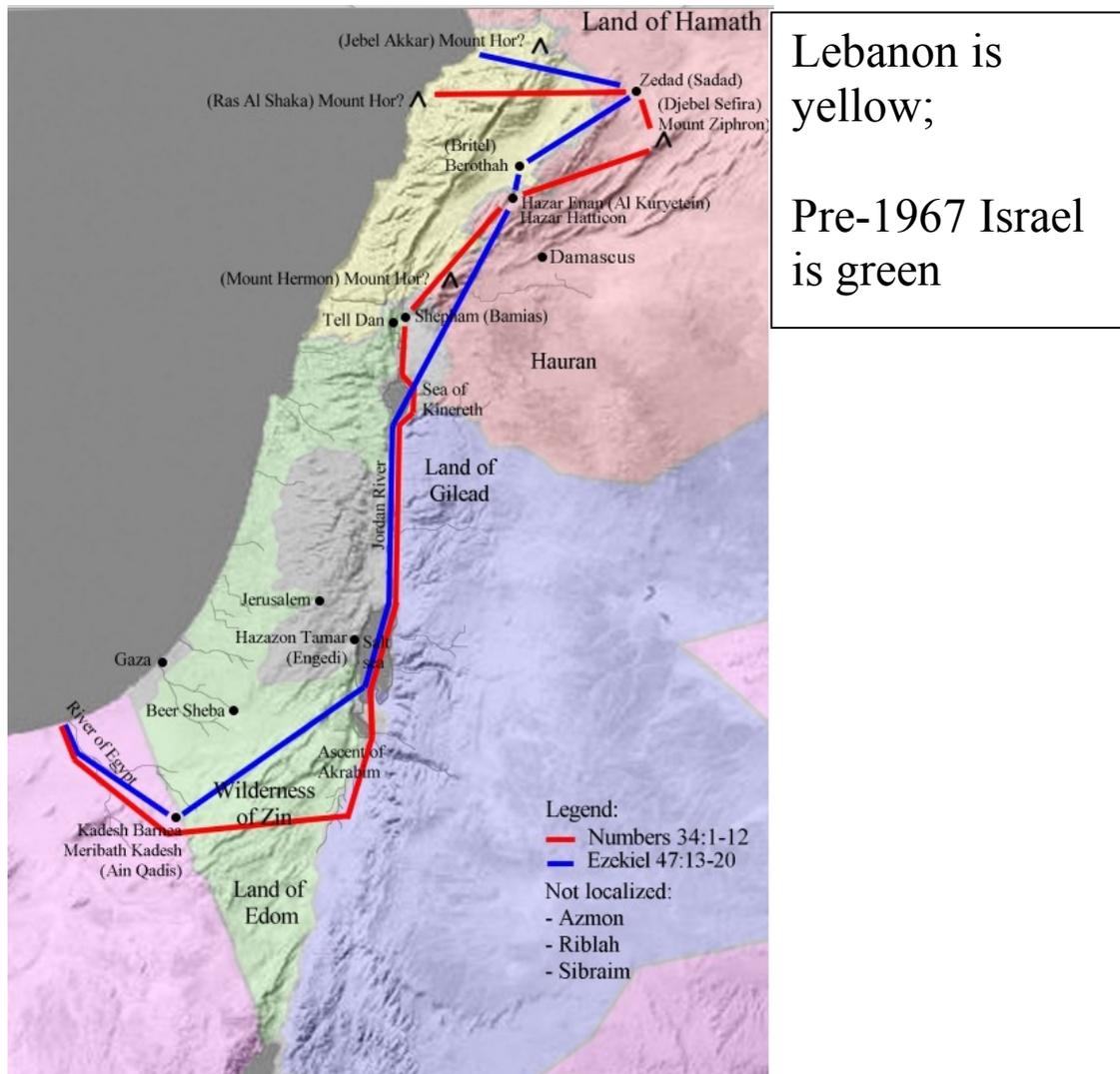
- **GOD GAVE US THIS LAND IN BIBLICAL TIMES;**
- **THE BRITISH GAVE US THIS LAND IN 1917.**

A BIT OF ANCIENT HISTORY

Where is “this land”?

ONE VIEW:

Exodus (led by Moses) to **THE LAND OF CANAAN WHICH BELONGS TO THE JEWISH PEOPLE.**

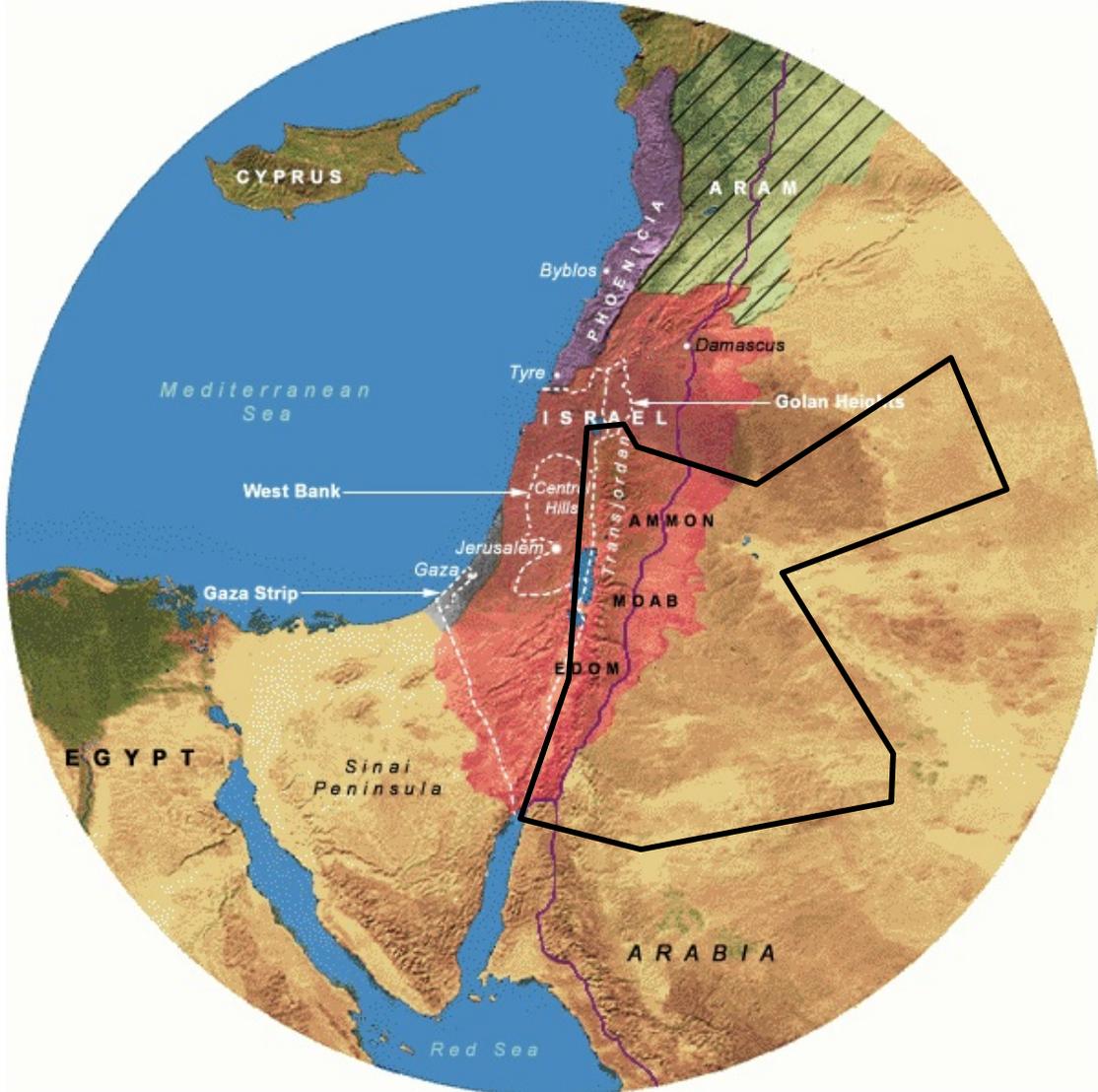


SOURCE: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Land_of_Canaan

ANOTHER VIEW: THE LAND IN THE KINGDOMS OF DAVID AND SOLOMON BELONGS TO THE JEWISH PEOPLE. (A RECIPE FOR MORE WAR).

Map (enlarged) - Israel 1020 - 923 BCE - 300

350 Mile Radius from Jerusalem / 1020 - 923 BCE



350 Mile Radius from Jerusalem / 1020 - 923 BCE

SOURCE: ProCon.org,
<http://israelipalestinian.procon.org/view.resource.php?resourceID=1058>

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE KINGDOM

ISRAELI ARCHEOLOGISTS SPLIT.

Liberal “Revisionists” Finkelstein, Schlaim, Silberman, Goren, et al.:

“[T]he Israelites were never in Egypt, did not wander in the desert, did not conquer the land [of Canaan] in a military campaign and did not pass it on to the twelve tribes of Israel. Perhaps even harder to swallow is the fact that the united kingdom of David and Solomon, described in the Bible as a regional power, was at most a small tribal kingdom.”

SOURCE: “King David was a nebbish,” Laura Miller, Salon EB 7, 2001 14:46 ET, <http://www.salon.com/books/feature/2001/02/07/solomon/index3.html>

SOURCE: <http://www.johnsanidopoulos.com/2010/07/philistine-temple-uncovered-in-goliaths.html>

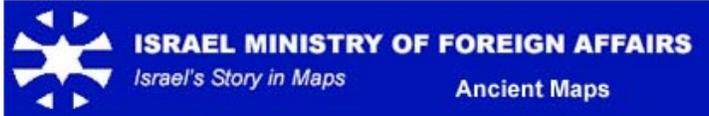
YIKES! “NEVER IN EGYPT”?!!

Israeli historian Shlomo Sand: How could the Israelites rise up against Egypt, abandon it, and occupy a territory controlled by Egypt?

SOURCE: Shlomo Sand, *The Invention of the Jewish People* (Verso, Brooklyn, NY, 2009), pp. 92-93.

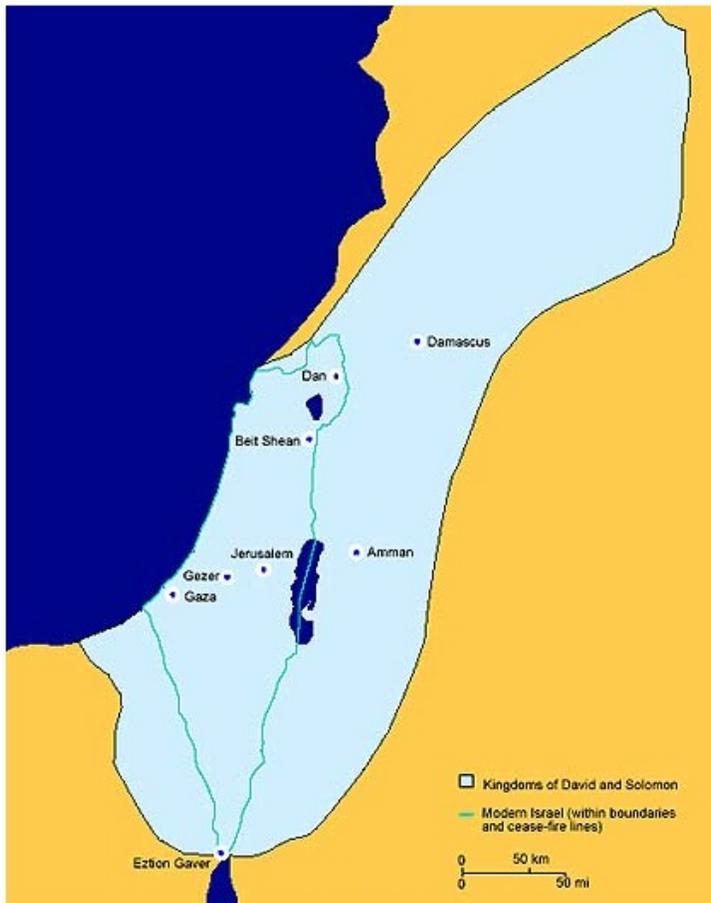
A DANGEROUS CURRENT VIEW

The Kingdom of David and Solomon: 1077 - 997 BCE



The maps contained in this publication are for illustrative purposes only and should not be considered authoritative.

King David ruled Israel from 990 BCE to 968 BCE; and his son Solomon ruled after him until 928 BCE. David enlarged his kingdom and brought it to the peak of political and military power. Solomon "ruled over all the kingdoms west of the Euphrates River from Tiphseh to Gaza; he was at peace with all his neighbors" (1 Kings, 4:24).



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Israel's official view of the "Kingdom"

NOTE: Green line is Israel's view of current boundaries.

MODERN TIMES

ZIONISM : The modern Jewish movement to return to “Palestine.”

1896, Herzl’s *Der Judenstadt* (“The Jewish State”), a call for emigration of Europe’s Jews to Palestine in response to repeated pogroms against Jews in Europe.



**Population in Palestine, 1914
(when World War I broke out):**

Jews: 13%

Arabs: 87%

“MODERN” JUSTIFICATION FOR A JEWISH STATE

MANY ZIONISTS FOCUS ON:

Britain’s Balfour Declaration (1917)

Widely trumpeted by Israel and its supporters as proof of Israel’s legitimacy. In other words: Israel is founded on a colonialist empire’s promise.

BUT the Declaration says:

(1) “*His Majesty’s Government view [sic] with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national **home for the Jewish people,*”**

and continues:

It is “*clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.*”

COLONIALIST BRITAIN'S ZIGS AND ZAGS DURING WWI:

- 1. Suggest independence for Turks and Arabs (1915 McMahon-Hussein agreements); BUT:**
- 2. Keep effective control after the war (1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement); THEREFORE:**
- 3. Encourage European Jews to immigrate into the area to retain European influence (1917 Balfour Declaration); BUT:**
- 4. Limit the number of Jewish immigrants and right to immigrate.**

POST-WWI DEVELOPMENTS

**LEAGUE OF NATIONS (est. 1919)
ESTABLISHED THE “MANDATE”
SYSTEM (1922):**

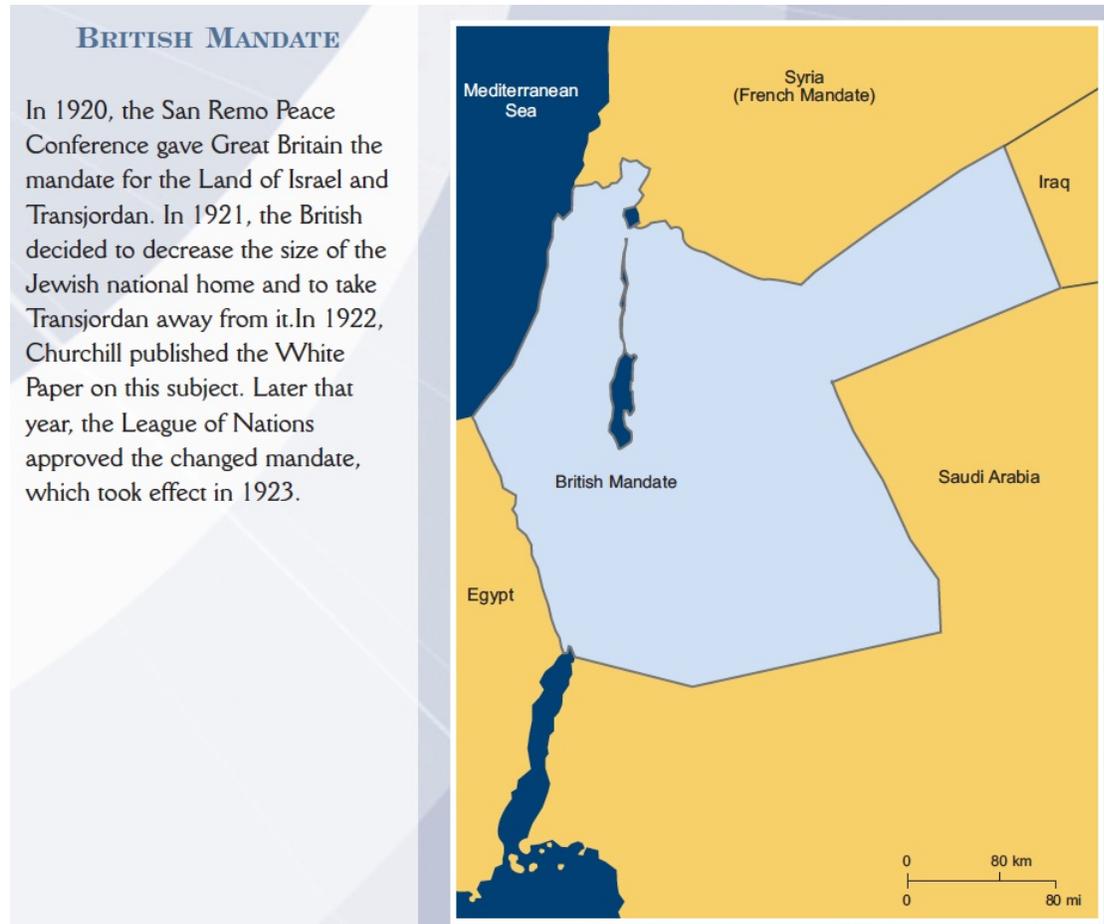


SOURCE: <http://israelipalestinian.procon.org/viewresource.asp?resourceID=1116>

Colonial powers will lead their colonies to self-government.

Britain is assigned the “Palestine Mandate” and implementation of the Balfour Declaration.

Israel's **current** view of the Palestine Mandate:



FACT: Contrary to the sidebar on the map, San Remo did *not* set borders, but stated: “The boundaries of the said States will be determined, and the selection of the Mandatories made, by the Principal Allied Powers.”

SOURCE: <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Facts+About+Israel/Israel+in+Maps/>

A DANGEROUS ISRAELI INTERPRETATION THAT THREATENS FUTURE WARS



Israel's view of "closed" and "ceded" areas following League of Nations granting of Palestine Mandate ("only 30% of the 'original' Mandate")

SOURCE: <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Facts+About+Israel/Israel+in+Maps/>

MORE BRITISH POSITIONS:

- **The King-Crane Commission (1919):**

“...it can hardly be doubted that the extreme Zionist Program must be greatly modified. For ‘a national home for the Jewish people’ is not equivalent to making Palestine into a Jewish State;...”

- **Churchill’s “White Paper” (1922):**

“...the terms of the [Balfour] Declaration referred to do not contemplate that Palestine as a whole should be converted into a Jewish National Home, but that such a Home should be founded in Palestine...”

- **Peel Commission for **partition** (1937):**

“Neither Arab nor Jew has any sense of service to a single State.”

(But partition was quickly deemed “impractical” by Britain.)

- **British White Paper (1939):**

“The independent [Palestine] State should be one in which Arabs and Jews share in the government in such a way as to ensure that the essential interests of each community are safeguarded.”

**(N.B.: the Paper refers to “the” state—
one state.)**

POST-WWII DEVELOPMENTS

Palestinian and Jewish land 1946



Palestine in
1946
SOURCE for
map:
<http://www.juancole.com/2010/03/lord-curzon-on-palestine-as-class.html#comments>

POPULATIONS

**Just before
WWII:**

**ARABS,
1 million, 65%**

**JEWS,
400,000, 29%
(mostly European)**

SOURCE: The 1937 "Peel Commission" in Bickerton, Ian J. and Carla L. Klausner, *A Concise History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 276 pp. (Prentice Hall, N.J., 1991), p. 63.

In 1946:

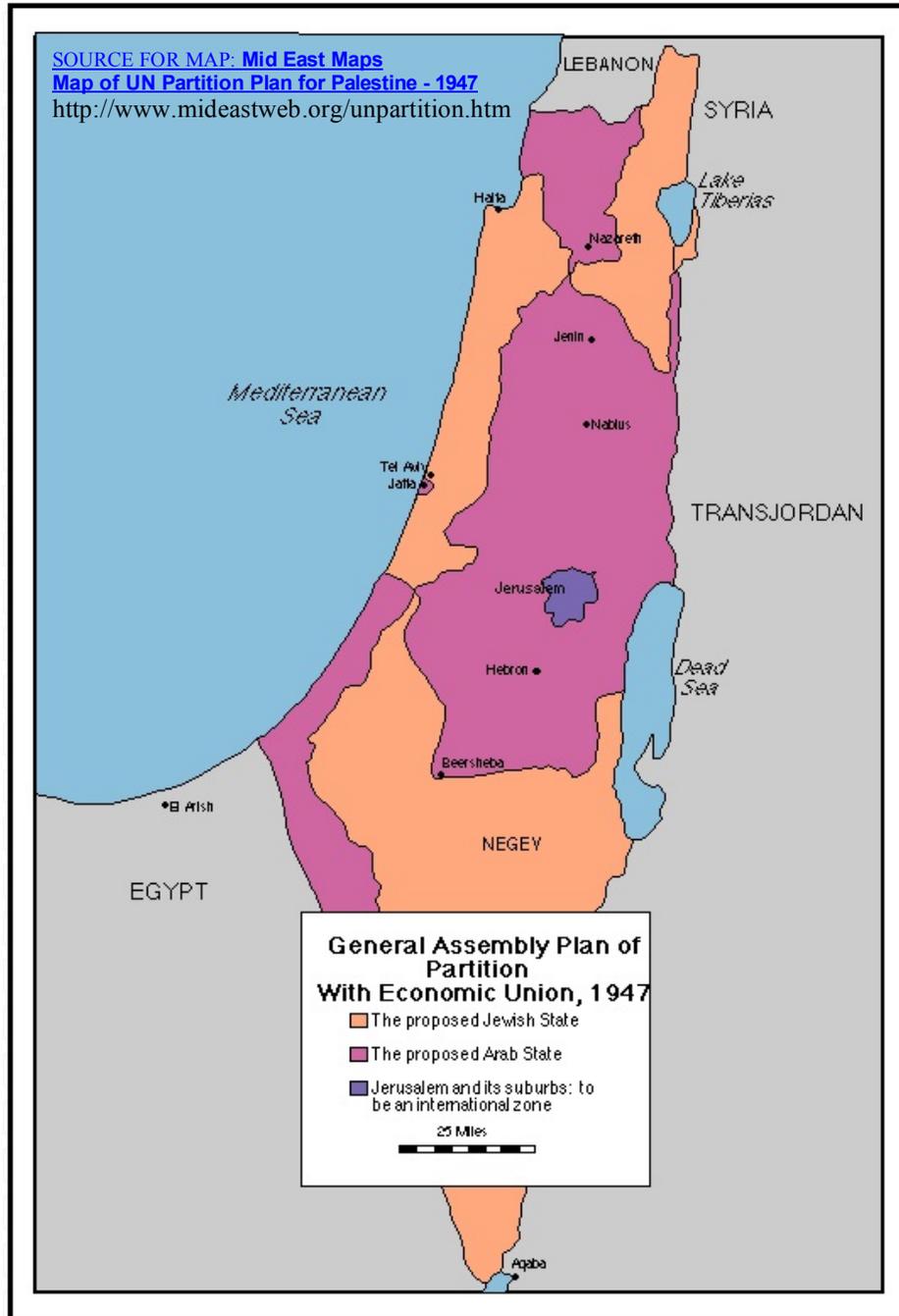
**Arabs,
1.2 million, 68%**

**Jews, 560,000,
32%**

SOURCE: *Ibid.*, p. 77.

UN PARTITION PLAN FOR BRITAIN'S PALESTINE MANDATE

**(UNILATERAL WITHOUT CONSULTATION
WITH ARABS OR JEWS)**



European Jews fight British attempts to limit migration to Palestine, and successfully establish the *Jewish* state of Israel in 1948 over 70% of the original Palestine Mandate:



SOURCE: Middle East Facts,
http://www.mefacts.com/cached.asp?x_id=10929

THE GREAT COMPROMISE **OF 1948:**

Israel was recognized by the US and many other western countries inside the 1948 cease-fire lines (or the “pre-1967 boundaries”)

Israel prospered inside the cease-fire lines.

There was no pressure for Israel to add to its land.

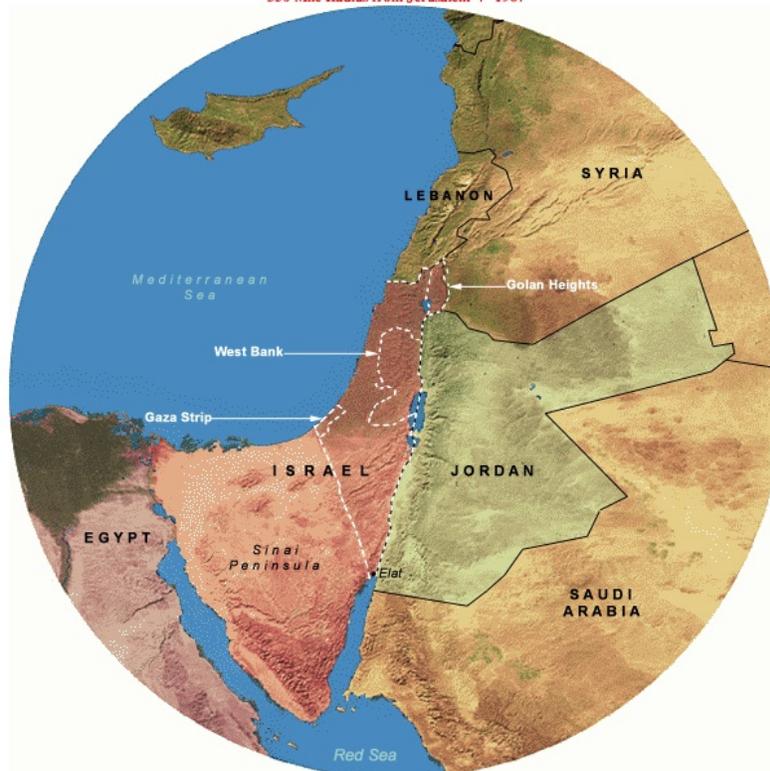
BUT UNFORTUNATELY:

THE 1967 “6-DAY WAR” BREAKS OUT:

ISRAEL OCCUPIES SYRIA’S GOLAN HEIGHTS, JORDAN’S WEST BANK, AND EGYPT’S GAZA STRIP AND SINAI PENINSULA.

Map (enlarged) - War of 1967 1967 - 1973 - 350

350 Mile Radius from Jerusalem / 1967



350 Mile Radius from Jerusalem / 1967

MAP KEY

-  = Israel & The Disputed Territories (Gaza Strip, West Bank and Golan Heights)
-  = Jordan
-  = Israel
-  = Egypt

SOURCE: <http://israelipalestinian.procon.org/view.background-resource.php?resourceID=1331>

CONVENTIONAL WISDOM: Israel had to attack pre-emptively since it was **existentially threatened by surrounding Arab countries.**

But listen to Israeli political and military leaders:

1. Menachem Begin, 1982: **The 1967 war was one of “choice”** and “we decided to attack [Egypt’s Nasser].”
2. Ezer Weizman (“Father” of Israel’s Air Force & defense minister, 1977) said in 1972: **There was “no threat of destruction” from the Arabs.**
3. General Matrityahu Peled, 1972: “To claim that the Egyptian forces concentrated on our borders were capable of threatening Israel’s existence **not only insults the intelligence of anyone capable of analyzing this kind of situation**, but is an insult to Zahal [the Israeli army].”
4. Chief of Staff Yitzhak Rabin (later, PM), 1968: **“I do not believe that Nasser wanted war.** The two divisions he sent into the Sinai on May 14 would not have been enough to unleash an offensive against Israel. He knew it and we knew it.”
5. David Ben-Gurion said he **“doubted very much whether Nasser wanted to go to war.”**

(All quotes from Paul Findley, *Deliberate Deceptions: Facing the FACTS about the U.S.-ISRAELI RELATIONSHIP*, 1993).

IMMEDIATE CONSEQUENCES OF THE SIX-DAY WAR

1. Arab acceptance of Israel

After the 1967 war, Arab states, however reluctantly, tacitly accepted the existence of Israel inside the pre-1967 boundaries (at least temporarily), **and became focused on retaking occupied territories.** There were no further attacks on Israel proper. (The “Yom Kippur” war of 1973 was waged by Egypt to retake the Sinai from Israel.)

2. The need for a resolution of Israeli occupation of the territories in the “Palestine Mandate.”

THE UN (AND US) POSITION

All FAIR proposals for resolution of the conflict are premised on UNSC Resolutions (242, 267, and others) which emphasize:

(a) The inadmissibility of acquiring territory by force;

(b) A resolution to the conflict based on the pre-1967 boundaries

ISRAEL'S FATEFUL POST- 1967-WAR DECISION:

ESTABLISH SETTLEMENTS IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES.

**Settlements vitiate Israel's
claim that occupation is
necessary for security.**

NEGOTIATIONS, ISRAEL'S DEMOCRACY, ETC.: A FEW OF MANY MYTHS BELIEVED BY THE AMERICAN PUBLIC AND PRESS

Myth 1: “Israel is being generous by offering to give land to Palestinians. Why don’t the Palestinians accept their offer?”

FACT: *Israel can’t generously “give” what never belonged to it.*

Myth 2: “Israelis and Palestinians are equal in the struggle—the Palestinians are stronger because of Arab support!”

FACT: *(a) Israel is the 6th largest nuclear power in the world,*

(b) Israel is the most technologically advanced country in the region,

(c) Israel has peace treaties with Egypt & Jordan and economic deals with other Arab countries, which has immeasurably increased its security.

(d) Whatever “existential” security problems Israel has, the Palestinians are not it.

Myth 3: “The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a marginal issue in world affairs; I’ll cast my vote on domestic and other foreign issues.”

FACT: *The 9/11 Commission Report (p. 147) says the US-Israel relationship was a motivation for the attack;*

the US is seen as extremely pro-Israel in all Arab countries;

Israel still occupies and has settlements in Syria’s Golan Heights and is a continuing source of friction between the US and the ever-ascendant Arab-Muslim world.

Myth 4: “Israel offered the Palestinians most of the West Bank and Gaza in 2000, and the offer was refused!!”

FACT: *As meticulously documented by Helmick, Clinton Mid-East advisor Robert Malley, and many others, there was no real offer made at Camp David. The talks never got to the point of an exchange of maps. Arafat and Barack never talked about a deal. Etc., etc., etc.*

The talks took up again in Taba, Egypt in 2000-2001. An agreement was close, but talks were called off for Israeli elections, extremist Ariel Sharon was elected, and immediately cut off talks.

Myth 5: “Israel has had no “partner for peace” in recent talks with Palestinians.”

FACT: *As proven by the recently-disclosed “Palestine Papers,” Palestinian negotiators gave just about everything Israel wanted, but as usual, it wasn’t enough for Israel which wants to retain large settlement blocs deep into the West Bank and carry out further settlement activity. Continued Palestinian uncertainty serves Israel’s interests.*

Myth 6: “Israel gave Gaza back to the Palestinians but the Palestinians there still continue to attack Israel.”

FACT: *Israel controls Gaza’s land borders, seacoast, and airspace, making economic viability impossible. Israel has carried out targeted extralegal assassinations of Palestinians in Gaza.*

Myth 7: “Israel is a democracy and grants democratic rights to its Arab citizens.”

FACT: Israeli Palestinians are discriminated in the “jewish state” much as blacks were discriminated in the US “white state”:

- *Speaking Arabic is discouraged in schools (prohibited in a Jaffa high school);*
- *Discrimination in housing (rabbis issue edicts against renting to Palestinians);*
- *A bill almost passed requiring Palestinian allegiance to the **Jewish** state;*
- *A bill did pass requiring new Palestinian citizens (e.g., who marry Israeli Jews or Palestinians) to swear allegiance to the **Jewish** state;*
- *Unequal funding for Arab schools and public services (e.g., sanitation and public transport);*
- *“Reception committees” in towns can decide who can live there;*
- *The Jewish National Fund is prohibited from leasing land to non-Jews.*

AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST:

Myth 8: “Israel’s concern is not “military defeat, it is annihilation.” (*Bard, quoted in http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel_lobby_in_the_United_States*) (Repeated by Dan Rather recently, promoting his show on the conflict.)

FACT: The US, former Soviet Union, and Europe lived for 44 years with the threat of nuclear annihilation, which would be more complete than anything any Israeli adversary could inflict. The threat was avoided by the dangerous game of mutual deterrence, coupled with serious arms control negotiations and inspections. Israel can deter any possible attack on it because mutual deterrence works here as well: Israel can wreak nuclear annihilation on any surrounding state because it is a nuclear power (but won’t declare it to avoid international negotiations on its nukes).

A FEW MANIFESTATIONS OF US COLLUSION WITH (AND SUBSERVIENCE TO) ISRAEL

- **Obama vetoed the UNSC resolution that re-affirmed international law **and the US's own policy** (Western allies voted for it):**

THE RESOLUTION

*Reaffirms that the **Israeli settlements** established in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, **are illegal** and constitute a major obstacle to the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace;*

*Reiterates its demand that Israel, the occupying Power, immediately and **completely ceases all settlement activities** in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, **including East Jerusalem**, and that it fully respect all of its legal obligations in this regard;...*

- **US is prejudiced and hypocritical posing as an “honest broker” in negotiations**
 - **Clinton, Bush, Obama administrations openly favor Israel’s retainment of large settlement blocs in West Bank, a deal breaker for the Palestinians.**
 - **The **Palestine Papers** prove that the US is steadfastly behind Israel’s unacceptable demands, making a mockery of the negotiations the US says wants.**

- **US “Divide-Conquer-Demonize” tactics:**
 - **The US encouraged Palestinian elections in 2006— Hamas moderates agreed to go the electoral route;**
 - **Demonized the winner (Hamas won in the West Bank and Gaza);**
 - **cut off all relations, funds to the Palestinian Authority;**
 - **Mounted coup against Hamas in Gaza (that backfired);**
 - **Result: Hamas’s extremists benefit, moderates lose ground.**

EXPLANATIONS FOR COLLUSION/ SUBSERVIENCE

STRATEGIC FACTORS

- **Intelligence**: The Israelis supply the US with valuable intelligence on doings in the Middle East;
- **Demoralize and humiliate Arabs**: Israel's dominance in the **1948, 1967**, and (to a lesser extent) in the **1973 Arab-Israeli wars**, its continuing **threat** to surrounding countries with the unfailing support of the US, its deals with their corrupt dictatorial Arab leaders, its arrogance and contempt in US-sponsored **negotiations**, and its brutal occupation policies largely unchallenged by the US and other influential Western countries, have tended (**without success**) to **psychologically demoralize and humiliate the Arab people**, thus making it easier for the US to make economic (oil, finance) and political deals with their corrupt leaders.
- **Israeli military research**: Israeli industries have developed important **military technologies of use to the US**, like the "Litening Pod" system for laser-targeting of targets from high altitudes. This Israeli system helped American fighter jets target Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, al-Qaeda's former leader in Iraq." This is just one part of the flow of military technology between the two strategic partners.
- **A last resort**: If the situation in the oil-rich Middle East really deteriorates, e.g., if Saudi Arabia is seriously threatened by al-Qaeda types and Iraq takes a sharp turn towards Iran, Israel is the US's main ground-based "**aircraft carrier**" in the region from which to stage military operations.

- **Anti-proliferation:** In 1981, Israel destroyed **Iraq's** nuclear reactor, thus thwarting Iraq's nuclear ambitions, a concern of the US as evidenced in the Gulf War of 1991 and the Iraq War of 2003. Israel bombed a suspected **Syrian** reactor under construction in September 2007. Israel is the US's "attack dog" against **Iran**, claiming a threat from an Iranian nuke. (But a serious problem could develop between the US and Israel if Israel's paranoids-in-power decide to attack Iran without US approval.)
- **War against militant Islamists (and other groups the US doesn't like):** Israel, along with some corrupt and dictatorial regimes like Egypt (??) and Saudi Arabia (!!), supposedly form **a front against militant fundamentalist Islamists** and anybody else in the Middle East that threaten US-Israeli hegemony in the region.
- **Re-cycling of military aid funds (a la Egypt, etc.):** **US military aid to Israel is recycled by Israel** to purchase arms from US manufacturers, more a political role for Israel than a strategic one, but important nonetheless because military readiness is of overall strategic importance. This keeps the weapons industries financially healthy and perking along, so they can rev up when even more is needed.
- **Money Launderer:** Israel played a crucial role in the "Iran-Contra Affair" during the mid-1980s: Israel sold arms given it by the US to moderate forces in the Iranian military and gave it back to the US which then illegally passed the money to the Contra terrorists in Nicaragua, i.e., **Israel operated as a money launderer.**

POLITICAL FACTORS

- **The Israel Lobby (AIPAC does the lobbying, implements fundraising by others):**

Christians United for Israel, is the "largest" pro-Israel lobby.

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) which directly lobbies the United States Congress

The Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations which *"the main contact between the Jewish community and the executive branch"* of the US government.

SOURCE: Wikipedia, "Israel Lobby in the United States"
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel_lobby_in_the_United_States

- **Western chauvinism/racism in US population at large facilitates the Israel Lobby's actions: Israelis are more European, white, and the "good guys" in the Bible!; Arabs are dark, militant, and the bad guys in the Bible. (These Arab stereotypes reinforced by 9/11.)**

A FINAL WORD

By acting like an outdated colonialist theocratic power and encouraging settlements which led to a **virulent and extremist settler movement dominating Israeli politics,**

- **Israel is now its own worst enemy,**
- **Israel has brought on itself the international “Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions” campaign, and**
- **Israel is encouraging nuclear deterrent capabilities in neighboring states by threatening them with nuclear weapons.**