2 THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

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M ANY ASSUME, QUITE MISTAKENLY, that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a centuries-old feud based on ancient religious antagonisms between Jews and Muslims. This is not correct. The circumstances of Jews in Muslim lands were for the most part proper; indeed, Muslim-Jewish relations were often cordial and friendly. There were instances of hostility or even violence directed at Jewish minorities, but these were the exception; in general, Jews fared much better in the Muslim world than they did in the Christian West. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict did not take shape until the end of the nineteenth century. Slow to emerge even then, it resulted from claims to the same territory by competing nationalist movements.

EMERGENCE OF THE CONFLICT

In making the case for a Jewish national home in Palestine, Zionists begin by pointing to the existence of Jewish kingdoms in the territory during biblical times. Biblical record and archaeological evidence indicate that the Jews conquered and began to settle Palestine, known in the Bible as the land of Canaan, during the thirteenth century before the Christian era (BCE). Moses had given the Israelites political organization and led them out of Egypt, bringing them to the country's borders. Thereafter, under Joshua, they initiated a prolonged military campaign in which they gradually took control of the territory and made it their home. By the twelfth century BCE, the period of Judges, the Jews were firmly established in ancient Palestine, and the area of their control included substantial tracts of territory on both sides of the Jordan River. This was the center of Hebrew life until the Jews were driven from the territory by the Romans in the first century of the Christian era (CE).

Religious Zionists add that their claim reflects not only the national history of the Jewish people but also a promise by God to one day return the Jews to Eretz Yisrael, the historic Land of Israel. This belief that an ingathering of the exiles is part of God's plan is the foundation of classical religious Zionism, which has animated the prayers and aspirations of believing Jews since the Romans destroyed the Second Jewish Temple in Jerusalem and drove the Jews from the country. As expressed by one modern-day Zionist, "The Jewish people has never ceased to assert its right, its title, to the Land of Israel. This continuous, uninterrupted insistence, an intimate ingredient of Jewish consciousness, is at the core of Jewish history."[2] Similarly, as another maintains,

Despite the loss of political independence and the dispersion of the Jewish people, the true home of the Jews remained Jerusalem and the Land of Israel; the idea of eventual return from the four corners of the earth was never abandoned.[3]

Zionists insist that this historic national consciousness and belief that Palestine was the Jewish homeland gives Jews political rights in present-day Palestine. According to one Zionist writer, "If ever a right has been maintained by unrelenting insistence on the claim, it was the Jewish right to Palestine."[4]

Palestinians, by contrast, insist that they are the indigenous population of the country and that their superior political rights to the territory derive, at least in part, from their uninterrupted residence in the disputed territory. They claim descent from the earliest-known inhabitants of the territory, the Canaanites and the Philistines, the latter having given Palestine its biblical name. It is believed that the Canaanites entered the area around 3000 BCE. Palestinians therefore assert that the country belongs to them, not to the Jews. They argue that the Jews, whatever might have been their experience in biblical times or the beliefs to which they clung "in exile" during the postbiblical period, cannot suddenly reappear after an absence of almost two thousand years and announce to the people who have been living in Palestine during all that time that they, the Jews, are the country's rightful owners. The following statement is a typical expression of this assertion of Palestinian rights. It was given by Palestinian officials to the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry established in 1946, prior to Israeli independence, in response to the escalating conflict between Arabs and Jews in Palestine:

> The whole Arab people is unalterably opposed to the attempt to impose Jewish immigration and settlement upon it, and ultimately to establish a Jewish state in Palestine. Its opposition is based primarily upon right. The Arabs of Palestine are descendants of the indigenous inhabitants of the country, who have been in occupation of it since the beginning of history; they cannot agree that it is right to subject an indigenous population against its will to alien immigration, whose claim is based upon a historical connection which ceased effectively many centuries ago.[5]

There was little conflict as long as Jewish political thought was animated by *classical religious* Zionism. Believing that their return to the Land of Israel would take place with the coming of the Messiah, Jews viewed themselves as needing only to wait patiently and faithfully for the unfolding of God's plan. The Jewish posture was thus one of passivity, or patient anticipation, the only requirement being that Jews keep the faith and reaffirm a conviction that they were a people living in exile and would eventually be reunited and restored to their land. Accordingly, prior to the modern period, most Jews did not believe it was appropriate to initiate steps toward the reconstruction of their national home in Palestine. On the contrary, such action would indicate a loss of faith and the absence of a willingness to wait for the Creator's plan to unfold in its own divinely ordained fashion, and this, as a consequence, would rupture the covenant between God and the Jewish people and make illogical and illegitimate any proclamations of Jewish nationhood or any assertion of a continuing tie between Diaspora Jewry and the Land of Israel. The most Jews might do would be to live in a fashion pleasing to the Creator in the hope that this might hasten the onset of the Messianic age, if in fact the Day of Redemption was not preordained and was thus amenable to modification. Thus, as notes a prominent Israeli scholar, the Jews' link to Palestine, for all its emotional and religious ardor,

did not change the praxis of Jewish life in the Diaspora. . . . The belief in the Return to Zion never disappeared, but the historical record shows that on the whole Jews did not relate to the vision of the Return in a more active way than most Christians viewed the Second Coming.[6]

These classical Zionist conceptions provided little motivation for a Jewish return to Palestine. As explained, it would have been heretical for Jews to arrogate unto themselves the work of God, to believe that they need not await the unfolding of the divine plan but rather could take into their own hands the fulfillment of a destiny for which they considered themselves chosen by the Creator. Thus, although there was an unbroken Jewish presence in Palestine from the destruction of the Second Commonwealth until the modern era, and although there were also periods of renaissance among the Jews in Palestine, during the early years of Ottoman rule in the sixteenth century, for example, the number of Jews residing in Palestine after the second century never constituted more than a small proportion either of the country's overall population or of world Jewry. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, there were roughly five thousand Jews in the territory of present-day Palestine, which had a total population of perhaps 250,000. Most of these Jews lived in Jerusalem, with smaller numbers in Safed, Tiberius, and Hebron. These communities were populated by religious Jews who viewed their presence in the Holy Land as having spiritual but not political significance; most had no thought of contributing to the realization of political or nationalist objectives. Nor were these communities self-sufficient. They were supported in substantial measure by donations from Jews in the Diaspora.

Given their small numbers and apolitical character, there was little conflict between these Jews and the larger Muslim and Christian Arab populations of Palestine. This quietism was also a reflection of the traditional character of Palestinian society. From the rise of Islam in the seventh century and for the next five hundred years, Palestine was incorporated sequentially into the Umayyad, Abbasid, and Fatimid empires, which ruled their vast territories from Baghdad, Damascus, and Cairo, respectively. Palestine was a peripheral region in these larger structures, without a unified administration or a clear and overarching political identity. This continued to be the situation following the fall of the Fatimid Empire in the late twelfth century. First under the Ayyubis and then the Mamluks, Egypt and the Fertile Crescent were governed from Cairo until the Ottoman Turks took control of most of the Arab world, including Palestine, early in the sixteenth century. Palestine remained part of the Ottoman Empire, ruled from Constantinople, until the end of World War I.

During all of this period, or at least until the late nineteenth century, Palestinian society was largely immobilized; it was on the political, economic, and intellectual periphery of larger empires, by which it was for the most part neglected, and thus, overall, a relative backwater. Moreover, the country suffered not only from the neglect of its absentee governors but also from the absence of progressive local leadership and an indigenous reform movement. As discussed in Chapter 1, modernist and protonationalist movements did emerge in a number of Arab countries, the most important of which was Egypt, early in the nineteenth century. Moreover, the development that these movements introduced involved changes in many fields, including military affairs, government, taxation, agriculture, industry, and, above all, education. As a British journalist in Alexandria wrote in 1876, "Egypt is a marvelous instance of progress. She has advanced as much in seventy years as many other countries have done in five hundred."[7] But many Arab societies were largely untouched by these

developments, and Palestine was among these. In contrast with Egypt, Tunisia, and western Syria, where these modernist currents were most pronounced, Palestine, like many other Arab lands, did not until much later witness the emergence of significant indigenous efforts at economic development, educational innovation, or administrative reform.

The situation began to change during the latter years of the nineteenth century and the first years of the twentieth century. Although slowly at first, relations between Jews and Arabs in Palestine became more complex during this period, and they eventually became much more difficult. In part, this reflected the diffusion of political and social currents from neighboring Arab countries, which in turn contributed to the gradual emergence among Palestine's Arab population of new social classes, of institutions dedicated to development and reform, and, a few years later, of debates about the country's political identity and future. Of even greater significance, however, was the emergence of *modern political* Zionism, which slowly displaced classical religious Zionist thought with the view that the Jewish people need not wait for the Creator to act but should themselves organize the return to the Holy Land and establish the Jewish national home in Palestine.

Modern political Zionism began as an intellectual movement in Europe, stimulated by the broader currents of emancipation and reform that emerged first in western Europe and later in Russia and eastern Europe during the course of the nineteenth century. As a result of these developments, many European countries extended to Jews political rights and economic opportunities that had previously been denied, and this in turn produced new intellectual currents and passionate debates among Jews themselves. Some traditional Jews, fearing assimilation and a loss of faith, called on their coreligionists to reject the new opportunities and remain apart from mainstream European society. At the other end of the ideological spectrum were those who called for an unreserved embrace of the new currents, while still others, taking an intermediate position, sought compartmentalization, what some described as being a Jew inside the home and a European outside. The latter two trends welcomed the changing situation and sought to embrace, admittedly to varying degrees and in different ways, the political reforms they brought. The broader intellectual movement of which they were a part was known as the *haskalah,* or Jewish Enlightenment.

In this intellectual climate, there emerged a number of writers who placed emphasis on the national and political aspects of Jewish peoplehood and who thus became the ideological precursors of modern political Zionism. It is not always possible to associate *maskalim,* as adherents of the *haskalah* were known, with a particular normative position. The movement had no unifying organization or structure, and it incorporated different schools of thought and varying points of view about the issues of the day. As one scholar notes, "The ideas current among, and promoted by, adherents [of the *haskalah*] were rarely formulated with consistency and were often mutually exclusive."[8] Nevertheless, there were Jewish intellectuals who clearly articulated modern Zionist themes during this period. These men for some time remained a small minority among the educated and middle-class Jews who addressed themselves to the concerns of a new age. Furthermore, they reaped scorn from more orthodox and traditional Jewish leaders, who condemned their political brand of Zionism as heresy and who insisted upon the Jews' historical understanding that the return to Zion was a destiny to be fulfilled by God and not by man. But there were, nonetheless, Jewish writers of prominence who proclaimed that the Jews were a nation in the modern sense, who called on the Jewish people to assert their national rights, and who saw the reconstruction of Jewish society in Palestine as the key element in a nationalist program of action. Articulating these themes,

they added modern political Zionism to the expanding range of Jewish responses that were called up by the revolutionary character of the times.

The first wave of Jewish immigration to Palestine began in 1882. It was organized by a student group in Kharkov, Russia, that took the name *Bilu*, derived from the passage in Isaiah that reads, "Bet Yaakov lechu ve nelcha" [O House of Jacob, come ye, and let us go]. The group was motivated not only by the intellectual currents of the day but equally, if not more so, by the anti-Semitism that reappeared in eastern Europe during the latter part of the nineteenth century. Virulent anti-Jewish pogroms broke out in 1881, bringing disaster to hundreds of thousands of Jews and dashing the illusions of Jewish intellectuals who had been inclined to view anti-Semitism as a vestige of an earlier era, grounded in a lack of education and in religious fanaticism and destined to slowly fade away as European society continued to evolve. The impact of the pogroms and the devastation they brought as well as the positive attraction of the modern Zionist idea, and the connection between the two, are reflected in the manifesto issued by the Bilu group:

> Sleepest thou, O our nation? What hast thou been doing until 1882? Sleeping and dreaming the false dream of assimilation. . . . Now, thank God, thou art awakened from thy slothful slumber. The pogroms have awakened thee from thy charmed sleep. . . . What do we want . . . a home in our country. It was given to us by the mercy of God; it is ours as registered in the archives of history.

A key event during this period was the publication by Theodor Herzl of *The Jewish State,* which set forth the case for modern political Zionism and called upon Jews to work for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Herzl, a highly assimilated Jew from Vienna, was a journalist stationed in Paris, and he became increasingly disturbed about the growth of anti-Semitism in France toward the end of the century. The critical episode in Herzl's conversion to Zionism was the trial and conviction of Alfred Dreyfus, a Jew who had risen to a position of importance in the French army and who, in 1894, was falsely accused of spying for Germany. This event, and the angry mob that greeted Dreyfus's conviction with shouts of "Down with the Jews," confirmed Herzl's growing belief that if anti-Semitism could rear its head even in France, the center of European progress and enlightenment, it would never fully disappear, and, therefore, assimilation was never truly an option for the Jews.

Following publication of *The Jewish State* in 1896, Herzl worked to pull together disparate Zionist groups and create an international structure to support Jewish colonization in Palestine. The First Zionist Congress, convened at Herzl's urging and held in Basel, Switzerland, in 1897, was attended by more than two hundred individuals, some representing local Jewish communities and Zionist societies in various countries. The meeting resulted both in the adoption of a formal program and in the establishment of the Zionist Organization, thereby initiating the transformation of modern political Zionism from a diffuse and disorganized ideological tendency into an international movement with a coherent platform and institutional structure. As explained by one Zionist historian,

> Prior to the Congress the spectacle is largely one of disunity, incoherence, painfully slow progress—or none at all—confusion of ideas, dearth of leadership, and, above all, no set policy and no forum in which a set policy can be hammered out and formally adopted. Before the Congress there is, as it were, proto-Zionism.

By contrast, after the Basel meeting, "there is Zionism proper."[9] Other Zionist congresses followed, held at regular one- or two-year intervals. Among the other Zionist institutions created during this period were the Jewish Colonial Trust and the Jewish National Fund. The former, established in London in 1899, became the first bank of the Zionist Organization. The latter, created in 1901 at the Fifth Congress of the Zionist Organization, was devoted to purchasing and developing land for Jewish settlement in Palestine.

Waves of Jewish immigration to Palestine, known as *aliyot* from the Hebrew word for ascent, continued during the ensuing decades. At the turn of the century, there were almost fifty thousand Jews in Palestine, most of whom came from Russia and eastern Europe; by the outbreak of World War I in 1914, the number had increased to roughly eighty-five thousand; and by 1931, according to the census of that year, the population of Palestine was about one million, including 175,000 Jews, 760,000 Muslims, and 89,000 Christians.[10] Agriculture was the backbone of the new community, partly reflecting a drive for Zionist self-sufficiency, but there were also efforts to create a modern urban population and an industrial base. The city of Tel Aviv was founded in 1909 as a garden suburb of Jaffa, and by 1931, only 27 percent of Palestine's Jews lived in communities classified as rural.

The Jewish community in Palestine, known as the *yishuv*, also established a wide range of institutions designed not only to serve but also to unite its expanding population. In 1904, for example, a Hebrew-language teacher-training institute was opened in Jerusalem, and in the same year, the Jewish Telegraph Agency and the Habimah Theater were established. Bezalel School of Art opened in Jerusalem two years later; several Hebrew-language daily newspapers began publication in 1908; and construction began on a technical university in Haifa, to become the Technion in 1912. At a meeting of Palestine Jews in Jaffa in 1918, agreement was reached on governing the *yishuv*. There would be an elected assembly of delegates, Asefat Hanivharim, and a national council, Va'ad Leumi. In 1920, the general union of Jewish workers in Palestine, the Histraduth, was established; and within a decade, the union's sick fund was maintaining clinics in five cities and thirty-three rural centers and operating two hospitals and two nursing homes. In 1925, Hebrew University was founded in Jerusalem. As a result of these developments, the *yishuv* soon possessed virtually all of the institutions and agencies that would later provide the infrastructure for the Israeli state. And with its growing population and increasing complexity and sophistication, the *yishuv* gradually displaced Europe as the center of Zionist activity.

Although the proportion of Jews among Palestine's population rose steadily during the first half of the twentieth century, the Arabs remained the overwhelming majority. In 1930, they still constituted over 80 percent of the country's inhabitants, and as late as 1940, they accounted for almost 70 percent. Moreover, the absolute size of the Arab population grew steadily during this period. In part as a result of improvements in health care, the Palestinian Arab population grew at an annual rate that averaged almost 3 percent between 1922 and 1945, enabling it to nearly double during these years. In many respects, especially during the first part of this period, Palestinian Arab society remained traditional. Residing in approximately 850 small villages, peasants made up nearly two-thirds of the population. At the other end of the socioeconomic spectrum was a small corps of wealthy, extended Muslim families. These powerful clans dominated the country's political economy and constituted a kind of Palestinian aristocracy; based in the major towns but with extensive landholdings, they sat atop a national pyramid of patron-client relationships. It is estimated that in 1920 the estates of these upper-class urban families occupied nearly one-quarter of the total land in Palestine.

Palestinian society nevertheless experienced important changes during the first decades of the twentieth century. New newspapers, journals, and political associations appeared in the years before World War I, showing that Palestine was to at least some degree affected by the same intellectual and political forces that were associated with the Arab awakening elsewhere. While the country continued to lag far behind Egypt and a few other centers of modernization and nationalist agitation, there was a clearly visible rise in political consciousness and concern about the future. Between 1908 and 1914, five new Arabic-language newspapers appeared, including *al-Quds,* published in Jerusalem, and *al-Asma'i,* published in Jaffa. The latter frequently criticized Zionist settlers, resentful, in particular, of the privileges that foreign immigrants enjoyed under the legal capitulations granted by the Ottoman Empire. Among the organizations that sprang up during the same period were the Orthodox Renaissance Society, the Ottoman Patriotic Society, and the Economic and Commercial Company. Few of these associations possessed more than limited institutional strength. They met only intermittently, had a short radius of influence, and ultimately proved to be short-lived. Nevertheless, the presence of these organizations was another indication of the Arab awakening inside Palestine. In addition to concerning themselves with business matters or sectarian affairs, their programs represented, as did articles in the new newspapers, early expressions both of local Arab patriotism and nationalist sentiment and of a growing anti-Zionist orientation. Indeed, although Palestinian opposition to the expanding Jewish presence did not emerge as a full-blown phenomenon but, instead, grew incrementally during this period, almost all of the Arab arguments against Zionism that were later to become familiar were expressed in Palestine in the years before World War I.

Developments of this sort accelerated in the years following World War I. The first Western-style union, the Palestine Arab Workers Society, was founded in Haifa in 1925, and a few years later, it opened branches in Jaffa and Jerusalem. New middle-class organizations were established as well, including various Arab chambers of commerce and the Palestine Arab Bar Association. There were also Arab women's societies in Jerusalem, Jaffa, Haifa, and a few other cities. Led by the wives of prominent political figures, these societies' programs and activities sought to help the needy, to promote educational and cultural advancement, and to build support for Palestinian political causes. The first Palestine Arab Women's Congress was convened in Jerusalem in 1929. All in all, thirty to forty clubs sprang up in Palestine after World War I, two of which were of particular political importance. One was the Muslim-Christian Association, which was led by older politicians associated with the most notable families of Arab Palestine and had branches in a number of cities. Among the planks in its political platform was firm opposition to Zionist immigration and to the creation of a Jewish national home in Palestine. The other was the Supreme Muslim Council. Led by al-Hajj Amin al-Husayni, the mufti of Jerusalem, the council's declared purpose was the supervision of Muslim affairs, especially in matters pertaining to the administration of religious trusts and shari'a courts. In addition, however, it soon became an important vehicle for the articulation of Palestinian opposition to the Zionist project.

The political map of Palestine changed after World War I. The Ottoman Empire was dismantled following the Turkish defeat in the war, with most of its provinces in the Arab Middle East divided between the British and the French; this involved three significant and interrelated developments concerning Palestine. First, despite Arab objections, Britain established itself as the colonial power in the country and was granted a "mandate" in Palestine by the League of Nations in 1922. Palestinians had hoped that independence

would follow the end of Ottoman rule, even as they debated among themselves whether or not this should be as a province in an independent Syrian Arab state. In November 1918, for example, six patriotic and religious societies and more than one hundred prominent individuals addressed a petition to British military authorities in which they proclaimed their affinity with Syria.[11] In February 1919, delegates at a meeting of the Jerusalem and Jaffa Muslim-Christian societies adopted a platform that not only expressed opposition to Zionism but also called for unity with Syria, stating, "We consider Palestine as part of Arab Syria as it has never been separated from it at any time."[12] But postwar diplomacy produced neither Palestinian independence nor unity with Syria nor even Syrian independence as the French became the colonial power in that country. Mandatory arrangements were nonetheless conceived as transitional, to be in place while the country prepared, presumably with British assistance, for its eventual independence. The relevant provision from the league's resolution, adopted in July 1922, stated,

> Certain communities formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire have reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognized subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a Mandatory power until such time as they are able to stand alone.

The second significant development was the incorporation of the Balfour Declaration into the mandatory instrument. The declaration was issued in 1917 by Lord Balfour, the British foreign secretary, and its key provision stated,

> His Majesty's Government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being 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.

Issued in response both to Zionist lobbying in Britain and to Britain's own war needs and strategic calculations, the declaration was strongly denounced by Palestinians and other Arabs. Not only did it indicate British support for Zionism; it also contravened a promise to support Arab independence after the war that the British had made two years earlier. This promise was recorded in an exchange of letters in 1915 between Hussein, the sharif of Mecca and an important British ally during the war, and Sir Henry McMahon, the British high commissioner in Egypt. In this correspondence, McMahon stated that "Great Britain is prepared to recognize and support the independence of the Arabs in all the regions within all the limits demanded by the Sharif of Mecca." Although Britain attempted to explain away the contradictions between its various statements, the situation was clarified after the war, and Palestinians were disturbed not only that the promise of independence had not been honored but also that the Balfour Declaration, reflecting Britain's sympathy for the Zionist project, had been reaffirmed through its inclusion in the preamble of the mandatory instrument for Palestine. The preamble also contained language giving explicit recognition "to the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine and to the grounds for reconstituting their national home in that country." Among the various articles of the mandatory instrument was a provision declaring that "the Administration of Palestine . . . shall facilitate

Jewish immigration under suitable conditions and shall encourage . . . close settlement by Jews on the land, including State lands and waste lands not required for public purposes."[13]

The third development was the fixing of Palestine's borders and, specifically, the creation of separate mandates for Palestine and Transjordan (see Chapter 1, Map 1.4). Under its general mandatory authority and with approval from the League of Nations, Great Britain established Transjordan as a semiautonomous state on the east side of the Jordan River. The British hoped by this action to reduce opposition from the Arabs, and for this purpose, too, they recognized Abdallah ibn Hussein, a son of the sharif of Mecca, as leader of this state. This established the Hashemite dynasty in Transjordan, later to become Jordan. Unlike other British policies, these actions were bitterly denounced by the Zionists, whose territorial aspirations included land to the east of the river, and the Jews were particularly angry when Britain closed Transjordan to Jewish immigration and settlement. Although the Zionists claimed that the Balfour Declaration recognized their right to construct a national home on both sides of the Jordan River, the terms of the mandate specified that the provisions of the Balfour Declaration, and of other clauses supportive of Zionism, need not apply in the territory east of the river. These developments led to the creation in 1925 of a new Zionist party, the Revisionist Party, which took its name from the party's demand that the mandate be revised to recognize Jewish rights on both sides of the Jordan River. Labor Zionists had been and remained the dominant political faction in Zionist politics. But the emergence of the Revisionist Party, led by Vladimir Jabotinsky, added a new and more militant element to the Zionist political map.

CONSOLIDATION OF THE CONFLICT

Against this background, conflict between Palestinian Arabs and the country's growing Jewish population was probably inevitable, and not long after the war, there were indeed significant confrontations and disturbances. Clashes between the two communities resulted in violence as early as 1920. In April of that year, there was an Arab assault on Jews in Jerusalem. After two days of rioting, five Jews had been killed and more than two hundred had been injured, while four Arabs had been killed and twenty-one had been injured. In May 1921, much more serious and widespread disturbances took place. Anti-Jewish riots began in Jaffa and were followed by attacks in Rehovoth, Petach Tikva, Hadera, and other Jewish towns. Forty-seven Jews were killed and 140 wounded; Arab casualties were forty-eight dead and seventy-three wounded, mostly caused by British action to suppress the rioting. After a period of relative calm, there was new violence in August 1929, beginning with an Arab attack on Jews shouting nationalist slogans at the Western Wall in Jerusalem and followed by clashes elsewhere in the city and in other Palestinian towns. The worst violence took place in Hebron and Safed, with sixty-seven Jews killed in Hebron and eighteen killed in Safed. Overall, these events resulted in the deaths of 133 Jews and 116 Arabs, with 339 Jews and 232 Arabs wounded. Most Jews were killed by Arabs, while most Arabs were killed by security forces under British command. In each case, Jews pointed out, correctly, that the violence had begun with unprovoked attacks by Arabs. Arabs responded, understandably from their perspective, that the focus should not be on the immediate episodes but rather on the root causes of the disturbances and that these involved the steadily expanding and increasingly unwelcome Jewish presence in Palestine.

The most important issue fueling Arab anger at this time was Jewish immigration. Zionists point to five identifiable waves of immigration, beginning, as noted, with that of the

MAP 2.1 ■ Jewish Land Ownership in Palestine, 1947
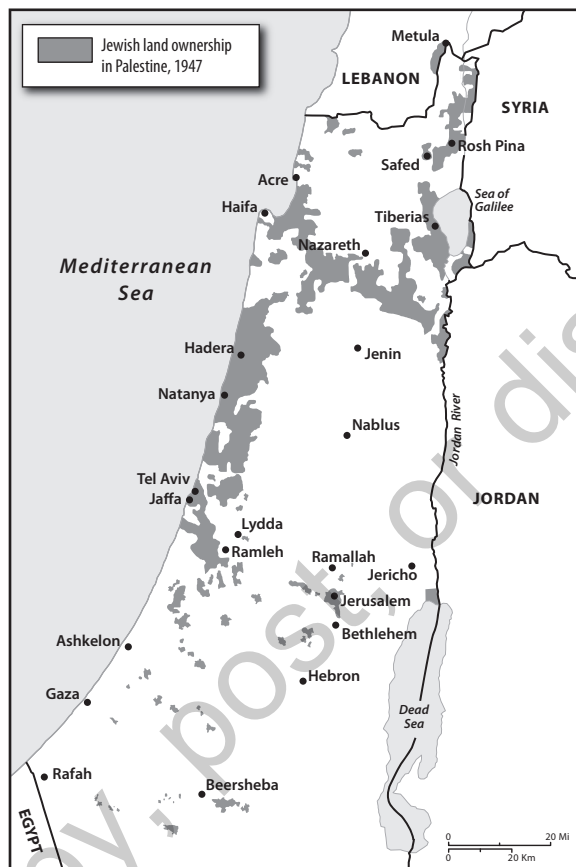
Bilu group in 1882. Each wave was larger than the preceding one, with the last beginning in the 1930s and composed primarily of those who were able to escape the growing Nazi menace in Europe. By 1945, approximately 550,000 Jews lived in Palestine, constituting roughly 31 percent of the country's population. Jewish land purchases were a related Arab complaint. The total amount of land acquired by the Jews was limited. It constituted no more than 7 percent of mandatory Palestine on the eve of Israeli independence in 1948. Furthermore, much of the land, often of poor quality, was purchased from willing absentee Arab landlords, sometimes at inflated prices. Nevertheless, some of these sales resulted in the displacement of Arab tenant farmers and contributed to a growing class of landless and embittered Palestinian peasants. Land acquisition thus reinforced the Arab concerns about Jewish immigration, leading many to conclude that their country was in danger of being taken over by the newly arrived Jews.

The contribution of these concerns to the violence in Palestine was documented by a British commission of inquiry following the disturbances of May 1921. Directed by Sir Thomas Haycraft, the chief justice of Palestine, the commission placed the blame

on anti-Zionist sentiment among the Arabs and also on a widespread belief among the Palestinians that Great Britain was favoring the Jews and according them too much authority. The report did denounce the Arabs as the aggressors. It also strongly criticized the police for failing to contain the violence. Nevertheless, the underlying problem on which the Haycraft Commission placed emphasis was of a different character. It concluded that "the fundamental cause of the Jaffa riots and the subsequent acts of violence was a feeling among the Arabs of discontent with, and hostility to, the Jews, due to political and economic causes, and connected with Jewish immigration."[14]

The Zionists, as expected, rejected these conclusions. They insisted Arab anti-Zionism, at least among ordinary Palestinians, was being deliberately fostered and manipulated by self-serving Palestinian leaders. The latter, they charged, were fearful that the introduction of modern and Western ideas would undermine the feudal social and political structure that supported their privileged positions. Although there may well have been a measure of accuracy in these contentions, the Haycraft Commission refused to draw from them any suggestion that the riots would not have occurred "had it not been for incitement by the notables, effendis and sheikhs." According to the commission's report, "the people participate with the leaders, because they feel that their political and material interests are identical."[15]

Despite the deteriorating situation, interpersonal relations between Arabs and Jews in Palestine were not uniformly hostile during this period. Some leaders and intellectuals in the two communities carried on personal friendships. It was also common for Arabs and Jews in rural communities to visit one another and attend weddings, circumcisions, and so forth in each other's villages; and even after the violence of 1929, such relationships did not entirely disappear. A British commission investigating these disturbances observed in 1930, for example, that "it . . . is very noticeable in traveling through the villages to see the friendliness of the relations which exist between Arab and Jew. It is quite a common sight to see an Arab sitting on the veranda of a Jewish house."[16] Nevertheless, such relationships became increasingly rare over the course of the interwar period as the incompatibility of Arab and Zionist objectives in Palestine, and the fact that the two peoples were on an apparently unavoidable collision course, became steadily more evident and eroded any possibility of compromise.

As institutions and enterprises that brought Jews and Arabs together became increasingly rare and for the most part marginal within both communities, two essentially separate societies emerged in Palestine. Both developed and became more complex, with the *yishuv* continuing to grow in numbers and becoming increasingly modern and self-sufficient, and Palestinian society, despite the persistence of traditional leadership patterns, becoming more mobilized, integrated, and politically conscious. But with each community evolving according to its distinct dynamic and rhythm, all of the momentum pushed toward continuing confrontation and violence.

A new and more sustained round of disturbances began in 1936, starting with a call by Arab leaders for a general strike "until the British Government introduces a basic change in its present policy which will manifest itself in the stoppage of Jewish immigration."[17] Six Palestinian political factions formed the Higher Arab Committee at this time to coordinate strike activities, and this in turn brought endorsements from the Arab mayors of eighteen towns and petitions of support signed by hundreds of senior- and middle-level civil servants. Thousands of workers subsequently left their jobs, and numerous businesses were shut down. There was also considerable violence associated with these events. A demonstration in Haifa in May turned into a riot, for example, with demonstrators attacking police

and security forces firing into the crowd and killing several persons. By the middle of June, the British reported that they had arrested more than 2,500 persons in connection with various disturbances. The general strike formally ended in October, but the country had by this time entered a period of prolonged disorder. Commonly known as the "Arab Revolt," clashes continued intermittently until 1939, when interrupted by World War II. After the war, the pattern of civil conflict resumed.

These events brought increased visibility to the Palestinian cause. Despite the Zionist contention that popular anti-Jewish sentiment was for the most part manufactured and manipulated by Arab leaders, the Arab Revolt left little doubt that there was widespread opposition to Zionism among the indigenous inhabitants of Palestine. The cost-benefit ratio was not entirely favorable to the Palestinians, however. The disturbances were highly disruptive to the Palestinian economy and social order, and they succeeded neither in slowing Jewish immigration nor in bringing a change in British policy.

These disturbances led the British to establish another commission of inquiry—the Peel Commission, which submitted a comprehensive and balanced report in 1937. Among its major findings was the conclusion that the unrest of 1936 had been caused by "the desire of the Arabs for national independence" and by "their hatred and fear of the establishment of the Jewish National Home." The report added, moreover, that these were "the same underlying causes as those which brought about the disturbances of 1920, 1921, 1929 and 1933," and also that they were the *only* underlying causes, all other factors being "complementary or subsidiary." The commission then offered a bold proposal for the future of Palestine. "An irrepressible conflict has arisen between two national communities within the bounds of one small country," the commission report stated. "About 1,000,000 Arabs are in strife, open or latent, with some 400,000 Jews. There is no common ground between them."[18] Therefore, the mandate should be terminated and, in order that each national community might govern itself, the territory of Palestine should be partitioned. More specifically, the Peel Commission proposed creation of a small Jewish state. The territory suggested for this state included the coastal plain, though not the port cities of Jaffa, Haifa, and Acre, and most of the Galilee. The remaining territory, with the exception of a corridor from Jaffa to Jerusalem, which was to remain under British control, would be given over to the Palestinians. The commission also envisioned an exchange of populations in connection with partition, which for the most part would involve the resettlement of Arabs living within territory proposed for the Jewish state.

Although partition was a logical response to the deepening conflict, the Peel Commission's report was rejected by the protagonists. Zionists judged that their state would possess an inadequate amount of territory, and they also refused to accept the loss of Palestine's most important cities. The Twentieth Zionist Congress, held in Zurich in August 1937, thus passed a resolution declaring that "the scheme of partition put forward . . . is unacceptable." The congress did not reject the principle of partition, however, and in fact welcomed the Peel Commission's recognition that creation of a Jewish state was desirable. Wisely choosing to regard this critical aspect of the commission's recommendations as an important opportunity, it empowered the Zionist executive "to enter into negotiations with a view to ascertaining the precise terms of His Majesty's Government for the proposed establishment of a Jewish State."[19] In contrast to the careful and politically calculated response of the Zionists, the Arab Higher Committee rejected the Peel Commission's proposal totally and unequivocally. Al-Hajj Amin, head of the committee, as well as other Palestinian spokesmen

proclaimed that Britain had neither the authority nor the right to partition Palestinian territory. Faced with this opposition, Britain allowed the Peel Commission proposal to die after a year of unproductive negotiations.

Communal conflict diminished during the war but thereafter resumed with more intensity than ever, leading the British, who were increasingly unable to keep order, to formally and publicly acknowledge in February 1947 what had long been evident: that it was not within London's power to impose a settlement in Palestine. The British government then announced that it would turn the matter over to the United Nations, the successor to the League of Nations on whose behalf Britain was, in theory at least, exercising the mandate. The UN accepted the return of the mandate, and in May, the world body established an eleven-member Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) to assess the situation and make recommendations.

The UNSCOP submitted its report at the end of August. It contained both a majority and a minority proposal. The majority endorsed the idea of partition but added several new features. First, the division of territory differed from that proposed by the Peel Commission, giving more territory to the Jews but with each state having three noncontiguous regions that many considered impractical. Second, the majority proposed that the two states establish by treaty a formal economic union and then added that the independence of neither state should be recognized until such a treaty had been signed. Finally, this proposal envisioned the establishment of an international enclave surrounding Jerusalem and extending as far south as Bethlehem. The minority proposal derived its inspiration from the idea of binationalism and called for the Arab and Jewish political communities to be united within a federal political structure. Under this proposal, the federal government would have full powers in such areas as defense, foreign relations, finance, and immigration.

The Arabs rejected both of these proposals. They adhered to their long-held position that Palestine was an integral part of the Arab world and that from the beginning its indigenous inhabitants had opposed the creation in their country of a Jewish national home. An image often presented by Palestinian spokesmen was that of an occupied house. Arguing that the Jews had entered and then occupied the house of the Palestinians, as it were, against the will of the Palestinians and with the aid of European colonial powers, they asked, rhetorically, how can someone pretend that he is reasonable because he is content to steal only half of another person's house, or label as *fanatic* the owner of the house who resists this theft? The Palestinians and other Arabs also insisted that the United Nations, a body created and controlled by the United States and Europe, had no right to grant the Zionists any portion of their territory. In what was to become a familiar Arab charge, they insisted that the Western world was seeking to salve its conscience for the atrocities of the war and was paying its own debt to the Jewish people with someone else's land.

The Zionists, by contrast, after initial hesitation declared their willingness to accept the recommendations of the majority. The Jewish Agency, which represented world Jewry in the effort to establish a Jewish national home in Palestine, termed the Zionist state that would be created by implementation of the UNSCOP proposals "an indispensable minimum," on the basis of which the Jews were prepared to surrender their claims to the rest of Palestine. In responding to Arab charges, Zionists insisted that Jews as well as Arabs had legitimate rights in Palestine, rights that derived from the Jewish people's historic ties to the land and that had in fact been recognized by the international community at least since the time of the Balfour Declaration. They also pointed out that their movement and its program neither began with

MAP 2.2 ■ United Nations General Assembly Partition Plan, 1947
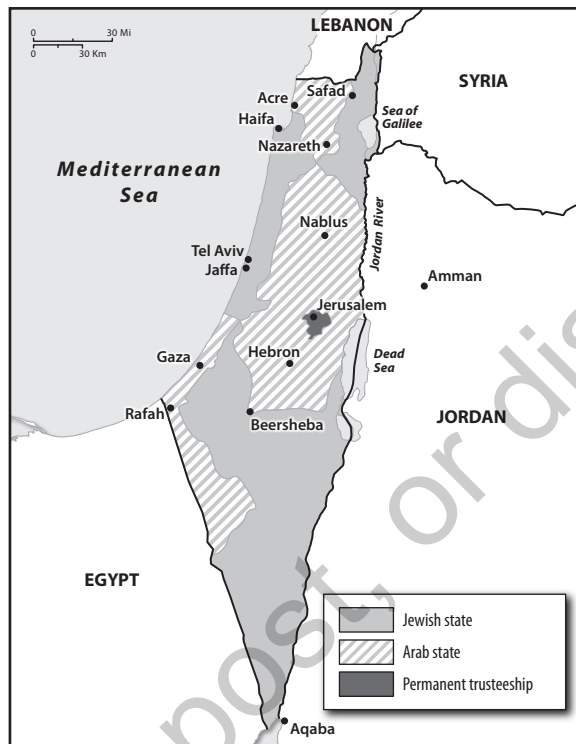
the war nor derived their legitimacy from the Holocaust. Thus, they insisted, partition was a reasonable and fair solution—indeed, the only logical solution—to the conflict in Palestine. Adding that the conflict, whatever its history, had reached the point when compromise was essential and that there was no body more capable of taking the lead in this matter than the United Nations, the Zionist Organization deployed what political influence it possessed in support of the partition plan recommended by the UNSCOP majority. The UN General Assembly endorsed the partition resolution, Resolution 181, on November 29, 1947.

War broke out in Palestine almost as soon as the UN passed the partition resolution. Arab leaders declared that they considered the partition resolution to be "null and void" and that it would not be respected by the Palestinian people. Thus, with Britain preparing to withdraw its military forces from Palestine, the Palestinians raised a guerrilla army, which was soon augmented by the arrival of six thousand to seven thousand volunteers from neighboring Arab countries. The Arab forces achieved a number of early successes, but the tide of the war had turned by April 1948, with the Zionist military force, the Haganah, scoring a succession of victories and gaining control of most of the territory allocated to the Jewish state by the United Nations. In accordance with the Haganah's master plan, *Tochnit Dalet* (Plan D), Jewish forces also launched operations that eventually brought control of some of the areas the UN had allocated for an Arab state in Palestine.[20]

MAP 2.3 ■ The Armistice Lines of 1949

The mandate was to be terminated on May 15, and as the date approached, the Zionists assembled the provisional National Council. This body in turn elected a thirteen-member provisional government, with David Ben-Gurion as its prime minister and defense minister. On May 14, the council assembled in Tel Aviv and proclaimed the establishment of the state of Israel in that portion of Palestine that the United Nations had allocated for a Jewish state. The new country was immediately recognized by the United States, the Soviet Union, and others. With these events, the state of Israel came into existence.

The war nonetheless continued for another eight months, and by the time it ended, both the political map and the demographic character of Palestine had changed dramatically. First, the Palestine Arab state envisioned by the United Nations partition resolution did not come into existence. Much of the territory envisioned for the Palestinian state was occupied by Zionist forces and became a permanent part of the state of Israel. The largest remaining block, the West Bank, was held by Transjordanian forces at the end of the war and was formally annexed in 1950, at which point Transjordan became the kingdom of Jordan. What remained was the small Gaza Strip, which Egypt continued to occupy as a military district. These territorial arrangements became the permanent borders of the new Jewish state, on the bases of which Israel signed armistice agreements with its Arab neighbors in 1949. The division of Jerusalem was also part of the new territorial status quo. With

Zionist and Transjordanian forces occupying different areas of the city at the end of the war, and thereafter separated by a strip of no-man's-land running north to south, East Jerusalem became part of Jordan, and West Jerusalem became part of Israel.

Second, the bulk of the Palestinian population left the country. Approximately 750,000 Arab men, women, and children either fled or were expelled from the country, making Jews the majority and transforming the Palestinians into stateless refugees. Although Jews and Arabs have long disagreed strenuously about the reasons for this exodus, which Palestinians call the *nakba*, or catastrophe, there is little doubt that many Palestinians were deliberately removed by Zionist forces from areas that became part of the state of Israel, including those originally intended for the Palestinian state. The best evidence suggests that three phases may be used to describe this exodus.[21] During the early months of the conflict, from the partition resolution through March or early April of 1948, it appears that Palestinians fled primarily in response to the fighting itself. Most were middle- and upper-class Palestinians who possessed the resources to support themselves while away from home and who almost certainly believed their absence would be temporary. They were not, for the most part, motivated either by Zionist intimidation or by Arab calls for them to leave but rather by a straightforward desire to distance themselves from wartime perils.

The refugee story became more complex after this period. Atrocities committed by Jewish forces, including a massacre at Deir Yassin in April, were an important stimulus to the intensifying Palestinian exodus. Although such episodes were relatively few in number, they contributed to Palestinian fears, especially as accounts of them were often embellished and then disseminated by the Arabs themselves. The Palestinian departure during this phase was also a consequence of Zionist military offensives. The first goal of these operations was to block the advance of armies from neighboring Arab states. Yet the Israeli military's Plan D also provided for the expulsion of civilian Arab populations in areas deemed to have strategic significance. This was not a consistent and coordinated Zionist policy. By summer 1948, however, Israeli leaders seem to have become consciously aware of the benefits that would result from the departure of the Palestinians, and, accordingly, decisions and actions by mainstream Zionist leaders were sometimes taken with the explicit intent of driving Palestinians from their towns and villages. This is illustrated by a campaign in July 1948 to expel the Arabs of Lydda and Ramleh.

During the concluding phase of the conflict in the fall of 1948, there appears to have been a more widespread and explicit understanding that it was in Israel's interest to facilitate the Arabs' departure. Thus, military operations in the southern part of the country, conducted in October and November, left almost no Palestinian communities in place behind the advancing Israeli lines. This was not always the case, even at this late date. For example, Arab villages in the Galilee, conquered in late October, were left intact. In addition, more generally, the Palestinian exodus had by this time assumed its own dynamic, and strong-arm tactics were often unnecessary; the mere arrival of Jewish forces was sometimes sufficient to provoke Arab flight. In any event, as a result of these developments during 1947 and 1948, celebrated by Jews but described by Palestinians as *al-naqba,* the catastrophe, Palestinians emerged from the war as stateless refugees. Most took up residence, usually in refugee camps, in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Lebanon, Transjordan, and Syria. Only about 160,000 remained in Israel, becoming non-Jewish citizens of the new Jewish state.

THE ARAB STATE DIMENSION

The situation that prevailed following Israeli independence in 1948 defined the character of the Arab-Israeli conflict for the next two decades. Having no state and dispersed among neighboring Arab countries, the Palestinians were no longer a significant political force. Opposition to Israel was thus spearheaded by the Arab states, for a time transforming the Zionist-Palestinian conflict inside Palestine into a regional, interstate Israel-Arab conflict. With leadership provided by Egypt, the Arabs refused to recognize Israel and continued to deny its legitimacy, proclaiming that only Palestinian Arabs have national rights in Palestine. They also demanded that Palestinian refugees be allowed to return to their homes in the territory from which they had been evicted. Israelis rejected these arguments and demands, of course. They reaffirmed the right of the Jews to a homeland in Palestine, emphasizing their historic and religious ties to the land. With respect to the refugee question, they argued that they bore little responsibility for the Palestinian exodus, especially since, they insisted, there would have been no exodus had the Palestinians accepted UN General Assembly Resolution 181 instead of going to war. Their contention, understandable from the Zionist perspective, was that the return of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians to what was now Israel would undermine and perhaps destroy the Jewish character of the state. Compensation and resettlement was the only realistic solution to the refugee problem, they insisted.

With no agreement on these two basic issues—Israel's right to exist and the Palestinian refugee problem—the Arab-Israeli conflict settled into a familiar pattern of charge and counter-charge during the 1950s and 1960s. There were also armed confrontations during this period. In 1956, following an Egyptian blockade of Eilat, Israel's port city on the Red Sea, Israel, with help from Britain and France, attacked Egypt and scored a military if not a political victory in what became known as the Sinai-Suez War. It is notable that the Egyptian president, Gamal Abdel Nasser, had initially sought to explore the possibilities for peace with Israel in order that the energy and resources of his government might be devoted without distraction to domestic development.[22] Indeed, there were private contacts between Egyptian and Israeli officials during the first part of 1954. Any possibility that these contacts might have led to a breakthrough soon disappeared, however, as a result of events in Israel, in Egypt, and in the Egyptian-controlled Gaza Strip.

The Israeli action that did the greatest damage to hopes for an accommodation was a sabotage scheme planned in secret by Defense Ministry operatives and put into operation in July 1954. The plan was to use Israeli agents and about a dozen locally recruited Egyptian Jews to plant bombs and set fires at various public buildings in Cairo and Alexandria, including libraries of the United States Information Service. The purpose was to create anti-Egyptian sentiment in the United States at a time when Nasser's government was seeking arms and assistance from Washington and was also hoping to enlist US support in negotiations with Great Britain over military bases in the Suez Canal Zone. The plot was uncovered, however, and the majority of the participants were captured and tried. Surprised and angered by this Israeli action, Egypt immediately terminated its contacts with the Jewish state. In Israel, the episode was known as the "Lavon Affair," after the name of the defense minister, Pinhas Lavon, and it was followed by a bitter and politically disruptive argument about responsibility for the operation in Egypt.

Other events heightened tension between Israel and Egypt. Britain had long maintained troops along the Suez Canal, but in October 1954, Cairo and London reached agreement that these British forces would be withdrawn by the summer of 1956. Israeli ships had not been

permitted to pass through the canal; but Israeli officials, who had been insisting on their country's right to use the waterway, worried that Egypt would oppose this more vehemently than ever and also that the British evacuation might bring new restrictions on the passage of non-Israeli ships bound for the Jewish state. Thus, in September, the Israeli government decided to test Egypt's intentions by sending a ship, the *Bat Galim,* into the Suez Canal, whereupon it was seized by Egyptian authorities. Coming in the wake of the Israeli-sponsored sabotage operation in Egypt, this pushed Egypt and Israel further along the road toward armed confrontation.

The Gaza Strip provided the arena for a third set of developments leading to the Sinai-Suez War. Palestinian guerrillas had for several years occasionally crossed into Israel from refugee camps in Gaza in order to commit acts of sabotage and harassment. Pipelines were cut and roads were mined in typical operations. Israelis blamed Palestinians for these attacks, but some also argued that Egypt's control of Gaza made Cairo at least partly responsible. There was disagreement at the time, even in Israel, about both the extent of these guerrilla raids and the degree to which they were abetted by Egypt. Nevertheless, insisting that the pattern of infiltration was intolerable, the government in Jerusalem adopted a deterrent strategy based on retaliatory strikes that were far more severe than the original provocations. The most massive Israeli strike occurred in February 1955; during the operation, Israeli forces ambushed an Egyptian military convoy and, according to Cairo, killed thirty-eight Egyptians and wounded sixty-two others. This brought to a definitive end whatever remained of the possibility for a rapprochement between Nasser's government and leaders of the Jewish state.

Determined to resist what it considered to be extremism and provocation on Israel's part, Cairo undertook to respond in kind. In the summer of 1955, it began to organize and equip squads of Palestinian commandos, known as *fedayeen*, and to send these units across the Gaza border into Israel. Guerrilla raids were often aimed at civilian targets. In addition, in September 1955 Egypt used its control of Sharm al-Shaykh at the southern tip of the Sinai Peninsula to close the Strait of Tiran, which leads into the Red Sea, to all shipping in and out of the southern Israeli port of Eilat. This was a casus belli as far as Israel was concerned, and in response, the government in Jerusalem prepared for war. Israel found willing allies in Britain and France, each of which had its own reasons for opposing some of Nasser's policies. On October 29, 1956, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) invaded Sinai and attacked positions of the Egyptian army. The next day, France and Britain vetoed Security Council resolutions calling upon Israel to leave Egypt without delay, and the day after that, French and British planes dropped bombs on Egyptian airfields. By early November, Israel had occupied the Gaza Strip and strategic locations throughout the Sinai Peninsula, including Sharm al-Shaykh, while France and Britain landed paratroopers and occupied the Suez Canal Zone. The confrontation, usually known as the Sinai-Suez War, ended in a complete military victory for Israel and its allies. For Egypt, which was forced to accept a ceasefire with foreign troops occupying large portions of its territory, the war was a humiliating military defeat.

Despite its military victory, Israel's political situation after the war was far from advantageous. On the one hand, the terms under which Israel withdrew its forces from the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip were skewed in favor of Egypt. The United Nations established an international peacekeeping force, the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF), to take up positions in the territory from which Israel withdrew and to act as a buffer between Israel and Egypt. But the arrangement specified that the UNEF could remain in place only as long as Egypt agreed and that it must be composed of troops from countries acceptable to Cairo. Furthermore, the Israeli withdrawal was not accompanied by a nonbelligerency agreement, as

Israel had sought. Israeli calls for assurances that the withdrawal of its troops would not be followed by new Egyptian provocations were for the most part brushed aside by UN officials. On the other hand, the Suez Canal remained closed to Israeli shipping. Egypt's nationalization of the canal also enabled Nasser to claim that he stood up to British and French imperialism and brought an end to the last vestiges of colonialism in Egypt, thereby increasing his prominence and influence in inter-Arab and third-world circles. All of this left Jerusalem with little to show for its military victory, whereas significant political gains had been realized by Egypt and Nasser.

Another legacy of the war was Egypt's determination to rebuild its army in order to confront Israel from a position of strength should there be military conflict in the future. Despite the Israeli withdrawal, Egyptian officials worried after the war that Jerusalem might have expansionist impulses. They noted with concern, for example, that Ben-Gurion had declared after the invasion of Sinai that "our forces did not infringe upon the territory of the land of Egypt" and that the Sinai Peninsula "has been liberated by the Israeli army."[23] The Egyptians were therefore eager to prepare for whatever confrontations the future might bring, and in this, Cairo found a willing ally in the Soviet Union. The delivery of Soviet arms soon brought a considerable increase in the strength of Egypt's military forces. These developments, too, helped to shape the political order that emerged in the Middle East after the Sinai-Suez War—an order, as it turned out, that a decade later brought a new war between Israel and its Arab neighbors: the June 1967 War.

The decade between 1957 and 1967 saw Syria emerge as another important element in the Arab-Israeli equation. Syria joined with Egypt in February 1958 to form the United Arab Republic; and although the experiment in political unification lasted only until September 1961, Damascus became an increasingly important player in inter-Arab politics and in the Arab-Israeli conflict. In contrast to the border between Israel and Egypt, where 3,400 UNEF troops were assigned to keep peace, the frontier between Syria and Israel was the scene of frequent clashes. Syria sometimes fired on Israeli farmers working land claimed by the Arabs, for example, and Jerusalem periodically launched retaliatory strikes. Israeli and Syrian forces also sometimes traded fire directly across the demilitarized zone.

The regime in Damascus became increasingly militant and ideologically opposed to compromise with Zionism during this period, and from the Israeli point of view, this was the major cause of the tension along the Israeli-Syrian border. From the Syrian perspective, however, Israeli provocations were the source of the problem. Damascus charged that while Israel cultivated land in the demilitarized zone between the two countries, it frequently employed border police to prevent Arabs from doing the same. Syria also charged that Israel was illegally denying use of the Sea of Galilee to Syrians and Palestinians. Although the lake lies wholly within the Jewish state, its northeastern shore defines the border between Israel and Syria; and Damascus claimed that Arabs living along the sea were therefore entitled to fish in the lake without interference from Jerusalem. Finally, in what eventually became the most important source of tension, Syria objected vehemently to an Israeli plan to draw large quantities of water from the Sea of Galilee for irrigation and industrial development inside the Jewish state. This plan was of concern not only to Syria but to other Arab states as well, and in 1960, the Arab League called it "an act of aggression against the Arabs, which justifies collective Arab defense."[24]

Various Palestinian organizations also appeared on the scene about this time and involved themselves in both inter-Arab politics and the conflict between the Arab states and Israel. There were a number of clandestine and small-scale guerrilla movements, the most important of which was Fatah, led by Yasir Arafat. Fatah is an acronym for the Palestinian National

Liberation Movement [*Harakat al-Tahrir al-Filastini*], the order of the initials being reversed. In addition, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was established during this period. The PLO was actually a creation of the Arab states, established at the January 1964 Arab summit meeting in Cairo in order not only to demonstrate support for the Palestinians but also, and equally, to co-opt the Palestinian resistance movement and prevent the guerrilla organizations from drawing the Arab states into a war with Israel. Fatah and other Palestinian groups were thus extremely cautious in their dealings with the PLO, rightly regarding it as an agent of Nasser and other Arab leaders rather than an independent voice for the Palestinian cause.

Although it would play a critical role after 1967 when the Palestinian dimension returned to center stage in the Arab-Israeli conflict, the PLO was not an important participant in the Arab struggle against Israel during the first years of its existence. It did establish a Palestine Liberation Army, with units based in Egypt, Syria, and Iraq, but the force was kept under tight control and was not a major factor in the escalating tension. By contrast, Fatah and other Palestinian guerrilla groups began to carry out raids against Israeli targets. By the end of 1964, they had decided to break with the PLO; and during 1966 and the first months of 1967, operating primarily from Jordan but with active Syrian support, Fatah carried out commando operations against the Jewish state. Damascus also sponsored guerrilla raids against Israel by other Palestinian commando groups.

By themselves, these raids were no more than a minor irritant for Israel. But reinforced by occasional Syrian military actions and a steady barrage of propaganda emanating from Damascus, guerrilla raids fostered a climate of uncertainty in the Jewish state. Many Israelis became convinced that Syria was laying the foundation for a full-scale guerrilla war, and as public concern mounted, the government in Jerusalem debated the pros and cons of a major attack against Syria. In the meantime, driven by what one analyst called "a nearly irresistible determination to react,"[25] Israel carried out a number of strikes in response to Fatah raids launched from Jordan. In November 1966, for example, Israeli forces invaded the West Bank in the region south of Hebron and carried out a major attack on the towns of as-Samu, Jimba, and Khirbet Karkay. This large-scale military operation, the most extensive since the Sinai-Suez War, resulted in the deaths of several Jordanian civilians and a larger number of Jordanian military personnel, as well as extensive property damage.

Against this background, Egypt signed a mutual defense pact with Syria in November 1966. Cairo entered into the agreement largely in hopes of restraining Damascus and reducing the chances of a major Arab-Israeli confrontation. But the Syrians would not permit Egyptian troops to be stationed on their soil, thus leaving Cairo with only limited ability to control Syrian behavior. Moreover, the agreement gave Damascus the ability to control Egyptian behavior. By sufficiently provoking Israel, the Syrians could elicit a military response from Jerusalem, and this in turn would drag Egypt into a war with the Jewish state.

Continuing Fatah raids against Israel added to the tension in early 1967, as did clashes between Israel and Syria. In April, for example, a conflict over the cultivation of disputed lands in the Israeli-Syrian demilitarized zone led to a major engagement. Following an exchange of fire between forces on the ground, Israel and Syria both sent planes into the air, and six Syrian MIG aircraft were shot down in a dogfight over Mount Hermon. Each side blamed the other for initiating the incident, and Syria also condemned Egypt for failing to come to its aid.

In another critical development, the Soviet Union informed Syria and Egypt on May 13 that its intelligence assessments indicated the presence of Israeli troops massing near the Syrian frontier. This information turned out to be false, raising questions about Soviet

motivation.[26] A common view is that the Russians knowingly and deliberately passed false information to the Arabs. According to one assessment, the Soviets wanted Nasser to commit his forces in Sinai in order to deter the Israelis from attacking the regime in Damascus.[27] Alternatively, some analysts suggest that the Russians may have believed the reports they delivered. In any event, the reports were taken seriously by the Arabs and helped to solidify their conviction that an invasion of Syria was imminent.

The final act in the drift toward war opened on May 16, when Egyptian authorities declared a state of emergency and instructed the UNEF to withdraw from Sinai in order that its positions might be occupied by the armed forces of Egypt. Because Cairo was fully within its rights in ordering the UN force out of Egyptian territory, the UN complied three days later, removing the buffer that had separated Egypt and Israel since 1956 and instantly transforming the Israeli-Egyptian border into a second focus of concern. Regardless of what may or may not have been Jerusalem's prior intentions, the prospects for an armed conflict between Israel and Egypt, as well as between Israel and Syria, increased significantly with the departure of the UNEF.

There was little disagreement that Nasser's government was acting with proper authority; the UNEF's presence in Egypt had from the beginning been subject to the approval of the government in Cairo. But many, especially in Israel, argued that the UN secretary-general, U Thant, should not have so speedily complied with the demand and should rather have temporized in order to provide time for a diplomatic intervention. Some argued, for example, that he might have insisted that he needed time to consult the Security Council about a possible threat to international peace.

There were also differing opinions about the intentions of Nasser himself. Pro-Israeli and some other sources assert that the Egyptian leader was eager to confront Israel, both to avenge the military defeat his country had sustained in 1956 and also to solidify his claims to leadership in the Arab world. Others, including many neutral as well as pro-Arab analysts, argue that the Egyptian president was for the most part overtaken by events and perhaps to a degree by his own rhetoric; he thus found himself moving inexorably toward a confrontation he in fact would have preferred to avoid. As one student of Egypt suggests, "It is very probable that Nasser himself believed he would have more time to think out his next move and was surprised by U Thant's quick compliance."[28]

After the UNEF departed, Egyptian troops moved up to the frontier. They were also now in unrestricted control of Sharm al-Shaykh at the southern tip of the Sinai Peninsula, and Nasser on May 23 used his forces there to close the Strait of Tiran to Israeli shipping. Those who believe Cairo was not seeking war assert that Nasser took this step without the guidance of a master plan, or even careful premeditation, having in effect been pressured to do so by the escalating tension in the region more generally. As leader of the most powerful Arab state, however, he could hardly refrain from imposing a blockade on Israel at a time when Jerusalem was thought to be planning an attack on his Syrian allies, to whose defense he was committed by formal treaty obligations. Yet in taking this step, Nasser and other Egyptian leaders understood that it would be considered a casus belli by Israel. Indeed, a number of senior Egyptian officials rightly concluded at the time that closing the strait to Israel made war inevitable.

The Israeli cabinet met in emergency session in response to these developments, agreeing that closure of the Strait of Tiran could not be tolerated but initially considering diplomatic as well as military options for reopening the waterway. Then, on June 5 Israel carried out a devastating strike against its Arab neighbors. With awesome precision, Israeli planes attacked the airfields of Egypt and other Arab states. More than 350 Arab bombers and

fighter planes were knocked out within the first two days of the war, along with several dozen transport aircraft. On the ground, Israeli forces pushed into Sinai and Gaza on the Egyptian front and into East Jerusalem and the West Bank on the Jordanian front. The main battles with the Syrians were fought on the Golan Heights, overlooking the Upper Galilee. Despite stiff resistance in some areas, the Israelis pushed forward on all fronts and were soon in control of large stretches of Arab territory.

The war was a crushing defeat for the Arabs, and by June 10, Egypt, Syria, and Jordan had all agreed to ceasefire arrangements. Some sources put the number of Arab soldiers killed as high as twenty thousand, although estimates vary widely. There were 766 soldiers killed on the Israeli side.

The impact of the June 1967 War cannot be overstated. It introduced critical new elements into the Arab-Israeli conflict, including a revival of concern with its central Palestinian dimension. Since Israel's victory left it in possession of land that had previously been part of Egypt, Jordan, or Syria, or controlled by Egypt in the case of the Gaza Strip, the most immediate result of the June 1967 War was a change in the territorial status quo.

The area under Israeli control at the end of the fighting included five Arab territories: the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights. Two of these territories, the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip, were captured from Egypt. The Sinai is a vast region but is sparsely populated, owing primarily to its inhospitable mountainous and desert terrain. Unlike Sinai, Gaza was not an integral part of Egypt but rather a portion of Palestine that had come under Cairo's administrative control as a result of the 1947 to 1948 war. Small and densely populated, the precise opposite of Sinai, its landmass is only 140 square miles, but in 1967, the tiny territory was home to a population of about 360,000, almost 90 percent of whom were Palestinian refugees from the 1947 to 1948 war.

Another territory that came under Israeli control as a result of the June 1967 War was the West Bank, which some Israelis prefer to call by the biblical names of Judea and Samaria. The West Bank, which is about one-quarter as large as pre-1967 Israel, was left in Jordanian hands at the conclusion of the 1947 to 1948 war. It was formally annexed by the Hashemite kingdom in 1950, and Israeli officials insist that it would have remained a part of Jordan had King Hussein not entered the June 1967 War in support of Egypt and Syria. Capture of the West Bank, along with Gaza, gave Israel control over all of the territory that had been allocated for Jewish and Palestinian states under the United Nations partition resolution of 1947—the territory between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River from which the international community had once sought to carve both a state for Jews and a state for Palestinian Arabs.

As in the case of the Gaza Strip, Israel's capture of the West Bank had demographic as well as territorial implications. It not only extended the Jewish state's control over the land of Palestine; it also placed hundreds of thousands of additional Palestinian Arabs under Israeli military administration. In 1950, the population of the West Bank was composed of about 400,000 indigenous Palestinians who had not left their homes as a result of the 1947 to 1948 war and approximately 250,000 more who were refugees from other parts of Palestine. By June 1967, the West Bank's population had grown to approximately 900,000, but about one-quarter of this number fled eastward across the Jordan River during and shortly after the fighting, many becoming refugees for the second time. This meant that after the war not only did Israel control all of the land that had been allocated for a Palestinian state but also that more than one million Palestinians were living in the territories Israel had recently captured and now occupied.

MAP 2.4 ■ Israel and Occupied Territories

Legend:
- Israel before 1967
- Occupied territory

Map labels: Beirut, LEBANON, Damascus, SYRIA, Golan Heights, Haifa, Jordan River, Nablus, West Bank, Tel Aviv, Amman, Jerusalem, Gaza Strip, Hebron, Dead Sea, Gaza, Beersheba, Port Said, al-Arish, ISRAEL, Ismailia, JORDAN, Suez, Sinai, Eilat, Aqaba, Gulf of Suez, Gulf of Aqaba, EGYPT, SAUDI ARABIA, Sharm al-Sheikh, Red Sea, Mediterranean Sea

0 — 60 Mi
0 — 60 Km

East Jerusalem was an integral part of the West Bank prior to 1967, but Israel almost immediately gave the city a legal status different from that of other occupied territories and took action to separate it from the rest of the West Bank. Although a number of foreign powers, including the United States, spoke out against any permanent change in the legal and political circumstances of the occupied territories, Israel was determined that there should be no return to the status quo ante in East Jerusalem. Thus, without debate, the Knesset (parliament) empowered the minister of the interior to apply Israeli law and administration "in any area of Palestine to be determined by decree," and the next day, the government used this power to proclaim the unification of Jerusalem. The Israeli and Jordanian sections of the city were merged into a single municipality under Israeli control, and the borders of the new municipality were enlarged to include Mount Scopus, the Mount of Olives, and several adjacent Arab villages. All of the barriers and military installations that had separated the two halves of the city since 1948 were thereafter removed.

The Golan Heights, captured from Syria, is the final piece of territory that Israel occupied as a result of the war. The Golan is a forty-five-mile-long plateau that lies immediately to the east and rises sharply above Israel's Upper Galilee. An integral part of Syria, the Golan had a population of about 120,000 before the war, the vast majority of whom were Syrian citizens. Not being a part of Palestine, the Golan Heights, like the Sinai Peninsula, derives much of its significance for the Arab-Israeli conflict from its potential strategic value in any future armed conflict. From an elevation averaging two thousand feet, the Golan dominates the entire northern "finger" of Israel stretching up to the border with Lebanon.

The June 1967 War gave the world community new determination to address the Arab-Israeli conflict, and international efforts at mediation, centered principally at the United Nations, began within days of the cessation of hostilities. On July 4, responding to Israel's annexation of Jerusalem, the General Assembly passed a resolution declaring any alteration of the city's status to be without validity and calling on the Jewish state to rescind the measures it had already taken. On June 30, a draft resolution was circulated by a group of Latin American countries. It called for Israeli withdrawal from Arab territories captured in the war, an end to the state of belligerence, freedom of navigation in international waterways, and a full solution to the Palestinian refugee problem. Both Israel and the United States opposed the resolution because it did not call for Arab recognition of the Jewish state.

Diplomatic activity resumed in the fall, with the United Nations Security Council becoming the principal arena. Slow to start, the political bargaining became increasingly intense and complicated in October and November, with various draft resolutions presented and debated. The compromise resolution that was finally adopted on November 22, 1967, was UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 242; and despite the important disagreements it papered over, reflecting what is sometimes described as "constructive ambiguity," it became and has remained the most significant UN resolution pertaining to the conflict after the UN partition resolution of 1947. Emphasizing the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war, the key provisions of UNSCR 242 call for (1) the withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict; (2) the termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgment of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence of every state in the area; (3) the guarantee of freedom of navigation through international waterways in the area; and (4) a just settlement of the refugee problem.

Although UNSCR 242 was endorsed by Israel, Egypt, and Jordan, and eventually by Syria as well, the parties had different interpretations of what had been agreed to and how the resolution should be implemented. The Arab states believed that implementation must begin with Israel's withdrawal from the territory it had captured, whereas Israel said it could not be expected to relinquish territory until the Arabs had ended the state of belligerency and recognized Israel. Distrustful of each other, each side argued that it would not be the first to surrender the elements that gave it leverage since its adversary would then have little incentive to fulfill, or to fulfill completely, its part of the bargain.

Even more important were the competing interpretations of the provision calling for Israel to withdraw from "territories" occupied in the recent conflict. The Arabs pressed, unsuccessfully, for language stating that Israel should withdraw from "all territories," or at least "the territories," which would have made it clear that the UN was calling for a full withdrawal—a withdrawal to the borders prevailing before the war. The United States would not agree to this, however, and so the Security Council resolution spoke only, and ambiguously, of "territories." The Arabs and many other observers claimed that the intent of the resolution was nonetheless

clear: that Israel was indeed expected to surrender all of the Arab territory it had captured in the June 1967 War—that this was the price, and a fair price, for peace with the Arabs. Yet as Israeli spokespersons pointed out, the Arabs had sought to have this made explicit in the resolution and, having failed, agreed to endorse it nevertheless. As expressed by Abba Eban, at the time the Israeli foreign minister, "For us, the resolution says what it says; it does not say that which it has specifically and consciously avoided saying."[29]

Subsequent diplomatic efforts aimed to break the impasse, including efforts that focused on a step-by-step approach and reciprocal confidence-building measures. The thought was that despite their differing interpretations, both sides had agreed on the principles; therefore, the constructive ambiguity of UNSCR 242 might be the basis for productive negotiations. The most important of these efforts was the mission of Gunnar Jarring, a seasoned Swedish diplomat with prior experience in the Middle East, and Jarring's efforts did narrow the political distance between Israel and its Arab neighbors. For example, Egypt and Jordan abandoned their insistence that Israel withdraw from captured Arab territory before peace talks could begin, and they accepted the idea that the exchange of peace for land envisioned in UNSCR 242 could be carried out simultaneously, rather than in stages that had to begin with an Israeli withdrawal.[30] The Jarring mission nevertheless did not achieve a breakthrough, and it came to an end in April 1969, having made no real progress. Although constructive ambiguity had temporarily papered over the gap between the positions of Jerusalem on the one hand and those of Cairo and Amman on the other, thus enabling the passage of UNSCR 242, critical differences between the parties came to the fore as soon as negotiations began.

REEMERGENCE OF THE PALESTINIAN DIMENSION

The Palestinian question in the late 1960s was generally perceived as a refugee issue, as a problem involving displaced individuals in need of relief and rehabilitation; thus, consistent with its reliance on constructive ambiguity, UNSCR 242 had contented itself to call in the vaguest possible terms for a just settlement of the refugee problem. To the Arabs, however, and especially to the Palestinians themselves, the problem was one of statelessness. Even those who supported other aspects of UNSCR 242, as they interpreted these provisions, called this the "greatest fallacy" of the resolution.

The absence of help from the international community notwithstanding, Arafat and other Fatah activists continued their grassroots organizational efforts. They made little headway in the West Bank, thwarted in part by a local leadership class with ties to the Hashemite regime in Amman and, even more, by Israel's tough and effective security apparatus. By contrast, they were able to establish a political presence in the towns and especially in the refugee camps of the East Bank.[31] Swelled by new recruits attracted by the activism of the Palestinians in the wake of the crushing defeat of the Arabs in the June 1967 War, Fatah established a political department to coordinate its activities and to produce newspapers and booklets for distribution through its growing network of local committees. The movement also undertook to provide an expanding range of social services, establishing, for example, a number of clinics and health care projects. Although their scope and effectiveness should not be overstated, these activities helped to mobilize the Palestinian population and gave substance to the guerrillas' claim that they alone were working on behalf of the Palestinian cause.

Led by Fatah, the guerrilla organizations were now in a position to challenge the existing leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization. They charged, correctly, that the PLO was the artificial creation of Arab governments seeking to prevent meaningful resistance and that its leadership had been selected not for their nationalist credentials but for their subservience to Nasser and other Arab heads of state. At the fourth Palestine National Council (PNC), held in Cairo in July 1968, Fatah and the other guerrilla movements obtained almost half of the 100 seats on the council. Fatah easily dominated the fifth PNC and emerged from the meeting with control of the PLO's key institutions, completing the guerrilla groups' capture of the organization. In effect, a new, more representative, and more authentic PLO had been created. The Executive Committee was dominated by Fatah and its sympathizers, as there remained only one holdover from the old PLO. Yasir Arafat was elected chairman of the committee.

The institutional development of the PLO was accompanied by an important evolution of the organization's ideology. Despairing of effective assistance from Arab governments and determined that the Palestinian people should in any event speak for themselves in international affairs, the PLO's immediate concern was to make clear that the Palestinians required more than "a just settlement of the refugee problem," as UNSCR 242 had stated, and that there could be no resolution of the conflict with Israel without an end to Palestinian statelessness.

Beyond this core principle, Palestinians aligned their ideology with that of radical Arab intellectuals who, in the wake of the defeat in the June 1967 War, were questioning religious, cultural, and political traditions and calling for far-reaching reform. These areas, they argued, were at the root of Arab weakness and Israeli strength. According to one prominent Arab scholar, the Arabs were defeated because they lacked "the enemy's social organization, his sense of individual freedom, his lack of subjugation, despite all appearances, to any form of finalism or absolutism."[32] According to another,

> We must realize that the societies that modernized did so only after they rebelled against their history, tradition and values. . . . We must ask our religious heritage what it can do for us in our present and future. . . . If it cannot do much for us we must abandon it.[33]

Secularism was a key plank in the revolutionary platform of these intellectuals, and the concept appealed to the Palestinians for several reasons. With a substantial Christian minority in its ranks, the conduct of politics without reference to religion would both promote the unity of the Palestinian people and encourage the emergence of political processes that were progressive and truly egalitarian. The notion might also have public relations value, especially in the secular West, while at the same time shining a light on what Palestinians regarded as the discrimination, if not indeed the racism, inherent in Israel's character as a Jewish state. Accordingly, the Palestinians advanced what is sometimes called the "de-Zionization" proposal: that the Jewish state of Israel be replaced by a secular and nondenominational state in which Jews and Palestinian Arabs would all be citizens and live together as equals.

In January 1969, the Central Committee of Fatah adopted a declaration proclaiming that "the final objective of its [Fatah's] struggle is the restoration of the independent, democratic State of Palestine, all of whose citizens will enjoy equal rights regardless of their religion." Several months later, Fatah's chairman, Yasir Arafat, repeated these points, saying that the PLO offered an enlightened alternative to the Jews in Palestine:

> The creation of a democratic Palestinian state for all those who wish to live in peace
> on the land of peace . . . an independent, progressive, democratic State of Palestine,
> which will guarantee equal rights to all its citizens, regardless of race or religion.

Israelis and supporters of the Jewish state responded to the PLO's de-Zionization proposal in a predictable manner. Many argued that the Palestinians were not sincerely committed to their vision of Arab-Jewish rapprochement but rather had deliberately devised a strategy of propaganda and public relations calculated to appeal to Western audiences. Many also asserted that the PLO vision was fraught with ambiguities and contradictions, making it, whether put forth with sincerity or not, an unsatisfactory foundation for thinking about peace. Among other things, supporters of Israel argued that it was for Jews, not Palestinians, to determine the character of their political community: If the PLO were sincere in its insistence that every people has a right to self-determination, which was the basis for its repeated claim that this right could not be denied to the Palestinians, then surely it was for Jews themselves to define the political requirements of the Jewish people and to answer any questions that might arise about the relationship between Judaism and Zionism. Palestinians might reasonably complain that as a consequence of Zionism their own political rights had been abridged, but many Israelis argued that Palestinians could not plausibly assert that they know better than the Jews how Jewish political life should be structured or that they, the enemies of Zionism, have the right to determine whether the concepts of Jewish nationalism and Jewish statehood are or are not legitimate. Such an assertion would run directly counter to the principle of self-determination, in whose name the PLO had rejected not only Israeli efforts to deny the legitimacy of Palestinian nationalism but even attempts by the United Nations to specify the just requirements of the Palestinian people.

These institutional and ideological developments within the ranks of the PLO did not move the Arab-Israeli conflict nearer to a solution or convince many Israelis that the road to peace lay in the creation of a democratic and secular state. They did, however, alter international perceptions of the conflict in significant ways. They returned the attention of diplomats and would-be peacemakers to the Palestinian dimension of the conflict and forced an awareness, and ultimately an acceptance, of the Palestinians' demand that they be represented by men and women of their own choosing. These developments also contributed to a modified perception of the Palestinians themselves, who, as the PLO intended, were now increasingly viewed as a stateless people with a legitimate political agenda rather than a collection of displaced individuals requiring humanitarian assistance. This important evolution in the way the world saw the Arab-Israeli conflict can be traced directly to the political and ideological transformations that took place in the Palestinian community after the June 1967 War.

Although the restructuring of the PLO and the organization's ideological evolution brought growing recognition that the Palestinian problem formed the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the confrontation between Israel and the Arab states remained a pressing concern in the aftermath of the June 1967 War. Particularly significant were the hostilities between Israel and Egypt during this period, with dozens of armed exchanges and Nasser publicly acknowledging that his country had initiated a "war of attrition" against Jerusalem.

Egypt's declared objective in the war of attrition was to destroy the defensive fortifications that Israel had built on the eastern side of the Suez Canal, at the edge of the occupied Sinai Peninsula. The war dragged on from fall 1968 through summer 1970 as Israel

responded with harsh retaliatory actions and Egypt then appealed to the Soviet Union for assistance. Early in 1970, approximately 1,500 Soviet personnel arrived in Egypt with advanced antiaircraft equipment, including new SAM-3 missiles, and the momentum of the conflict for a time shifted in favor of Egypt. In March, April, and May of 1970, sixty-four Israelis were killed, 155 more were wounded, and six were taken prisoner. Then in mid-June, the United States proposed to Israel, Egypt, and Jordan that they accept a cease-fire. The US administration hoped that a reduction in hostilities between Egypt and Israel would check the growing Soviet influence in the region, and by including Jordan, the United States hoped to commit King Hussein to putting an end to raids by Palestinian guerrillas who opposed any settlement based on UNSCR 242. President Nasser accepted the US proposal after consulting with the Russians, and shortly thereafter, Israel agreed to the plan as well, bringing an end to the costly and prolonged war of attrition.

Additional tension during this period resulted from Palestinian commando raids launched against Israel from the East Bank. According to one Israeli source, these raids represented almost half of all the hostile acts carried out against the Jewish state in 1968 and 1969.[34] Israel responded with retaliatory strikes, and this put pressure on Jordan to confront the Palestinians and put an end to the attacks, including attacks on Israeli targets abroad that were planned from Palestinian strongholds in Jordan. There was an even more important dimension to the growing conflict between the Jordanian government and the Palestinians, however. Many of the social and political institutions set up by the reorganized PLO had their headquarters in Jordan, and the Palestinian organization took control of many of the refugee camps in the country. In addition, not only did the PLO assume responsibility for organizing and administering life in the camps, but well-armed militia units patrolled the streets of Amman where, in order to demonstrate the power and independence of the guerrilla groups, they stopped pedestrians to examine identity papers and sometimes even directed traffic. Steadily encroaching on the prerogatives of the Jordanian state, the Palestinians were described by one analyst as "appealing to the people over the head of the government."[35]

King Hussein for a time seemed uncertain about how to respond to this challenge from the PLO. Throughout 1969 and the first half of 1970, his government avoided an all-out military confrontation with the Palestinians, but this came to an end in September. Led by the leftist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the Palestinians dramatically escalated the stakes in what had been a war of relatively low intensity. PFLP agents made two unsuccessful attempts to assassinate the king early in September. A few days later, the same organization carried out a spectacular series of four airline hijackings. In an act intended as a symbolic attack on Jordanian sovereignty, two of the planes, one American and one Swiss, were flown to a little-used airstrip in the Jordanian desert, where their crew and passengers were held for four days. The Jordanians then responded with an assault designed to put an end to the challenge from the PLO. With their light weapons, the Palestinians had no chance against the disciplined, tank-backed troops of the Jordanian army, and the result during eleven days of fighting was a bloody and disastrous rout for the Palestinians, thousands of whom were killed. The official Jordanian estimate was 1,500 killed, although this figure is almost certainly too low. The fighting finally came to an end on September 27, when, in response to the PLO's desperate situation, Nasser persuaded King Hussein to accept a ceasefire. Sometimes described as the civil war in Jordan, Palestinians often refer to this deadly month as "Black September."

The military defeat handed to the PLO by the Jordanian army left the Palestinian organization in disarray. Although it still had a solid base of operations in Lebanon, from which

it gradually rebuilt itself and eventually assumed a position of prominence on the international diplomatic stage, there was a possibility in the early 1970s that the resistance movement might disappear altogether. Palestinian leaders acknowledged that the PLO was on the verge of collapse during this period. "Not only were its military units defeated and fragmented," one of them wrote, but "the political and social work of the previous three years was practically destroyed."[36] This situation reduced Israeli concern about an external challenge from the PLO and allowed Jerusalem to focus its thinking about the Palestinians on the occupied West Bank and Gaza, territories that had been administered by Israel since the war of June 1967 and that in the early 1970s were inhabited by 700,000 and 350,000 Palestinians, respectively.

But even as Israel was formulating its policy toward the occupied territories and debating their future, the country received a severe shock from an unexpected quarter, one that indicated that the Palestinian dimension of the Arab-Israeli conflict had not yet made the attitudes and behavior of the Arab states a secondary consideration. On October 6, 1973, which was Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, the holiest day in the Jewish calendar, Egypt and Syria launched coordinated attacks on Israeli positions in the Sinai Peninsula and on the Golan Heights, taking the IDF completely by surprise and scoring important victories in the early days of the fighting. Thus began what Israelis call the Yom Kippur War, which is often called the Ramadan War by the Arabs because it occurred during Ramadan, the holiest month in the Islamic calendar and a month of fasting. The success of the Egyptian and Syrian attacks reflected careful and effective planning and coordination between the two Arab countries, as well as the skill and bravery with which both Egyptian and Syrian soldiers fought. Also, on both fronts, Arab fortunes were significantly enhanced by the failure of Israeli intelligence to give advance warning and, in some instances, by the complacency and inadequate organization that characterized Israel's forward bases.

Although these Arab military accomplishments were without parallel in any of the previous Arab-Israeli wars and were a justifiable source of pride to the Egyptians and the Syrians, the IDF was able to contain the threat on both fronts within several days and thereafter initiate a series of successful counterattacks. Many Israeli soldiers displayed bravery and even heroism during the difficult early days of the fighting. In addition, Israel was aided during the critical early stage of the war by Egypt's decision to consolidate its positions in western Sinai rather than to advance eastward, which enabled the IDF to use more of its resources against the Syrians on the Golan. The Syrian attack was accordingly broken on October 9, and thereafter, it was the Israelis who were moving forward. After this point, with Syria on the defensive, Israel was also able to concentrate more of its forces in the Sinai Peninsula, eventually knocking out hundreds of Egyptian tanks and routing the Egyptian army. Israel also received critical assistance from the United States in the form of a full-scale airlift of military equipment, and this, too, played a major role in the eventual outcome of the October 1973 War.

While the war left Israel in an advantageous military position, the country was nonetheless badly shaken. The intelligence failures of the IDF and associated battlefield losses during the first days of the fighting raised deep doubts about the country's military establishment. Furthermore, the somber mood in the Jewish state was greatly intensified by the heavy casualties that had been sustained. Much public anger was directed at Golda Meir and Moshe Dayan, prime minister and defense minister, respectively, and these sentiments were clearly visible during the Knesset elections that took place in December. The long-dominant Labor Party of Meir and Dayan was aggressively challenged by the right-wing Likud Union, which included in its platform the permanent retention of the West Bank

and Gaza. Likud and two smaller opposition factions increased their representation by 50 percent in the balloting, capturing 39 of the assembly's 120 seats.

The mood in the Arab states was different. Despite their military defeat, they—not the Israelis—reaped the political benefits of the war. Recognition of this apparent anomaly was yet another factor contributing to the gloom in Israel. Political gains were made in particular by Anwar al-Sadat, Nasser's vice president who had become president of his country following the Egyptian leader's death in 1970. Prior to the 1973 war, Sadat, like other Arab leaders, had been derided for inaction and charged with a failure to end the humiliation imposed on his country by its disastrous defeat in the war of June 1967. During and after the 1973 war, by contrast, the Egyptian president was hailed at home for taking action to end the lethargy and defeatism that had reigned in Arab capitals since 1967. In the months that followed, Sadat was also welcomed on the international scene as an effective political strategist who had designed and implemented a plan to break the deadlock in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

It also soon became apparent that Sadat had carefully related his military actions to political objectives and that, from the Egyptian point of view, the October 1973 War had been part of a more elaborate plan that at its core was political and diplomatic. The Egyptian president had never intended more than a limited military operation; he had sought only to recapture enough Egyptian territory to show the Israelis that their forces were not invincible and, accordingly, that the Jewish state's security lay not in maintaining a territorial buffer but in seeking good relations with its neighbors. It is for this reason that Egyptian troops had not sought to drive eastward after their successful invasion of Sinai. Sadat continued this strategy in the immediate postwar period by improving relations with the United States and by working with the Americans to secure a partial Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula, hoping to obtain through political action the breakthrough he had failed to achieve by military means. Having emerged from the war as a man of initiative and vision—a world statesman—he sought to consolidate and further enhance his new political status by demonstrating that his strategy would produce movement in the direction of an Israeli return to the pre-1967 borders.

The major international diplomatic initiative of the mid-1970s was undertaken by Henry Kissinger, at the time both the US secretary of state and President Richard Nixon's assistant for national security affairs. Having received signals that Egypt and Syria were now ready for compromise, and reasoning that Israel's postwar political troubles might lead Jerusalem to be more flexible on the issue of territorial withdrawal, Kissinger undertook an extended mission that subsequently came to be known as "shuttle diplomacy."

Tirelessly traveling back and forth between Jerusalem, Cairo, and Damascus, Kissinger eventually secured limited Israeli pullbacks in Sinai and the Golan Heights in return for a reduction in Egyptian and Syrian belligerency toward the Jewish state. Under agreements signed by Cairo and Jerusalem in January 1974 and September 1975, Israel relinquished a significant portion of Sinai. In return, the disengagement agreement specified that non-military cargoes destined for or coming from Israel would be permitted to pass through the Suez Canal. Israel also obtained from Kissinger a promise that the United States would not recognize or negotiate with the PLO unless that organization explicitly accepted UNSCR 242 and thereby recognized the Jewish state's right to exist. The agreement with Syria was signed in May 1974. In return for Israeli withdrawal from a portion of the Golan Heights, the Syrian president, Hafiz al-Asad, promised to prevent Palestinian guerrillas from using Syrian territory to attack Israel.

An even more significant development, and one that again had Anwar al-Sadat occupying center stage, occurred two years later. Moreover, this development brought a new relationship between Egypt and Israel and solidified the evolution of the conflict from one in which the Arab state dimension had become preeminent to one in which the relationship between Israel and the Palestinians was again recognized as the core issue. This evolution was already well underway, of course, notwithstanding the war of attrition and the war of October 1973; and during this period, it was also pushed forward by developments both among Palestinians and within Israel.

Following its defeat in the civil war in Jordan, the PLO rebuilt its base in Lebanon, and by the mid-1970s, it had established a strong political and institutional foundation and initiated an increasingly successful international diplomatic campaign. Both the Arab League and the Organization of the Islamic Conference recognized the PLO as the "sole legitimate representative" of the Palestine people at this time. This was significant, in part, because it meant that the PLO, rather than King Hussein, was held to represent Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, almost all of whom were Jordanian citizens. The Non-Aligned Movement also adopted a resolution recognizing the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians, indicating that the PLO's campaign was bearing fruit beyond Arab and Islamic circles, and the movement also called on members to break off diplomatic relations with Israel. Yet another important accomplishment was Arafat's official visit to the Soviet Union in August 1974, during which the Soviets, too, agreed that the PLO alone represented the Palestinians. The culmination of this diplomatic campaign came in November, when Arafat was invited to address the United Nations General Assembly. The decision to invite the PLO to participate in the assembly's deliberations of the Palestine question was approved by a 105 to 4 vote, with twenty abstentions.

There was also an evolution of the PLO's ideological orientation during this period. Although it did not formally renounce the democratic secular state proposal, the twelfth PNC meeting, held in Cairo in 1974, adopted a ten-point program calling for the Palestinian revolution to be implemented in stages, which was widely understood to mean the PLO would now set as its immediate objective the creation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This was the first official expression of a willingness to accept anything less than the liberation of all of Palestine, leading many to conclude that a basis for compromise had been established. Indeed, observers pointed out that the phrase "liberation of Palestine," so prominent in the PLO's National Charter, had been replaced in the text of the program by the much more ambiguous "liberation of Palestinian land." In addition, in another significant departure from earlier PLO thinking, the 1974 PNC meeting accepted the possibility of political dialogue between a Palestinian state in the liberated territories and progressive- and peace-oriented forces in Israel.

Most Israelis dismissed these changes as distinctions without differences. They insisted that the idea of stages showed the PLO to be as committed as ever to the destruction of the Jewish state, and some Palestinian leaders who had supported the ten-point program declared that the establishment of a democratic state over the whole of Palestine did indeed remain their long-term objective. The impression that a change in PLO thinking had taken place nonetheless persisted, with many Palestinians and others arguing that what was declared to be an intermediate stage today might well be accepted tomorrow as the basis for a permanent solution.

These moderating trends were more prominently in evidence at the thirteenth PNC meeting, convened in March 1977. Although the details were left unspecified, the program represented a clear victory for Fatah and its supporters, including mainstream nationalists

in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and a defeat for the more uncompromising factions of the Palestinian left. These moderate and nationalist elements favored the pursuit of Palestinian goals through political rather than military action, placed emphasis on the establishment of an independent state alongside Israel, and even suggested that this state might form political alliances with progressive elements in Israel. As for the idea of a democratic secular state in all of Palestine, the proposal was not repudiated but was increasingly understood by Palestinians as a distant objective that would only be achieved, if at all, through natural, historical evolution. Thus, as summarized by one analyst, the significance of the thirteenth PNC meeting is this:

> After a three-year struggle, it was the "moderates" who had won in the PLO. By agreeing to participate in the peace process and endorse the idea of a Palestinian state [alongside Israel], the PLO appeared to be taking its full place in an international search for a settlement of the conflict.[37]

Ideological developments and gains in the international diplomatic arena were matched by an evolution of the political situation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Despite Israeli and Jordanian efforts to limit its influence, the PLO was growing steadily more popular among the Palestinian inhabitants of the occupied territories. Moreover, in the West Bank a new generation of pro-PLO political leaders emerged to rival the class of notables tied to Jordan, who had been dominant before 1967.

These trends were encouraged by Israeli policies that restricted the activities of Palestinian officials in order to prevent the emergence of an all–West Bank leadership. They were also encouraged by the expansion of quasi-political associations, such as labor unions and student movements, outside the control of the traditional elite. Each of these developments provided opportunities for the emergence of new and more nationalist-oriented political forces. Finally, and equally important, the expansion of opportunities for Palestinians to work in Israel weakened the position of established notable families. By 1974, approximately one-third of the West Bank labor force was employed in Israel; and, whatever the balance of benefits and disadvantages of such employment for individual workers, an important consequence was a reduction in their dependence on West Bank landowners and businesspeople, the backbone of the traditional political class. The magnitude and significance of the political shift taking place among Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza were reflected in the West Bank municipal elections of April 1976, in which pro-PLO candidates defeated incumbents and gained control of the mayor's office and the Municipal Council in Nablus, Hebron, Ramallah, and eleven other towns.

As a result of these developments, the position of the PLO was radically different from what it had been only five or six years earlier. It had been possible to argue in 1970 and 1971, in the wake of the Jordanian civil war, that the revival of the Palestine resistance movement after June 1967 had run its course and that the PLO would now return to the periphery of the Arab-Israeli conflict. By 1976 or 1977, and probably as early as 1974 or 1975, it was evident that such assessments had been extremely premature. The PLO had achieved wide recognition in the international diplomatic arena, and a new generation of political leaders identified with the Palestinian organization had emerged in the West Bank and Gaza. The PLO had also built a formidable political infrastructure in Lebanon, effectively governing the large Palestinian population in that country and presiding over what some described as an autonomous ministate.

The evolution of the conflict was also shaped by Israel's policies toward the territories it had captured in the June 1967 War, particularly the West Bank and Gaza, which are part of

historic Palestine. Israel maintained that its acquisition of the West Bank, Gaza, and other territories had been the result of a war forced on it by Arab belligerency; it was not, Israel insisted, the consequence of any deliberate plan to expand the borders of the Jewish state. Yet the government took steps almost immediately to alter the territorial status quo. First and most important, there was a deliberate effort to divide East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank, of which it had been an integral part prior to the June 1967 War. The part of the city formerly belonging to Jordan was merged with West Jerusalem shortly after the war, creating a unified municipal administration governed by Israeli law, and the borders of the new municipality were then expanded to the north, east, and south. The government also began to construct Jewish neighborhoods in former Arab areas, some of which were explicitly designed to give newly acquired sections of the city a more Jewish character and some of which were intended to create a physical barrier between East Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank.

Israeli actions in the other captured territories were much more limited, and they were also the subject of disagreement among Israelis. Beginning in 1968, small Israeli paramilitary settlements were established in the Jordan Valley along the eastern perimeter of the West Bank. They were constructed for the purpose of preventing Palestinian commandos from infiltrating from the East Bank, and presumably, they could be dismantled should conditions later permit Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories in return for peace. Over time, however, the Jordan Valley settlements developed a solid economic foundation based on commercial agriculture, which provided a rationale for their maintenance and expansion that transcended the military objectives that had led to their creation.

Settlement activity after the June 1967 War was also undertaken by Israelis who were committed to permanent retention of the West Bank and Gaza. These Israelis referred to the former territory by the biblical designations of Judea and Samaria, terms chosen for the deliberate purpose of asserting that the territorial claims of the Jews predate those of the Arabs. In contrast with the Jordan Valley settlements, which were established for purposes relating to military security, these civilian communities were constructed by Israeli civilians with the intention that they would create a Jewish demographic presence in the occupied areas and lead eventually to the exercise of Israeli sovereignty over Judea, Samaria, and Gaza. The first initiative of these Israelis, who are often described as the "settler movement," was the construction of Qiryat Arba, a religious community adjacent to the West Bank city of Hebron.

These two sets of settlement activities reflect a division of opinion about the occupied territories, particularly about the West Bank and Gaza, that emerged after the June 1967 War and became one of the most important and contentious issues in Israeli politics during the 1970s. The centrist and politically dominant Labor Party endorsed the "land for peace" principle in UNSCR 242. There were debates within the party and among its supporters about whether Israel should relinquish all or simply most of the West Bank and Gaza, but the Labor-led government never argued that all or even most of the territory should be retained permanently by the Jewish state. The country's official position was that the UN resolution gave Israel international justification for maintaining its control of the territories, but only as long as the Arab governments persisted in their refusal to make peace. According to a report prepared by the Ministry of Defense, UNSCR 242 "confirmed Israel's right to administer the captured territories [but only] until the cease-fire was superseded by a 'just and lasting peace' arrived at between Israel and her neighbors."[38]

As noted, the Likud Union had become the most important opposition party in Israel, especially after the December 1973 election, and Likud and its supporters took a very different

approach to the West Bank and Gaza. Aligned with the settler movement and various factions on the political right, Likud argued that the West Bank and Gaza were part of the historic "Land of Israel" and should be permanently retained by the Jewish state, even if the Arabs offered the country peace in return. Likud's improving political fortunes in the mid-1970s were helped by the blame for losses in the 1973 war that much of the public placed on the Labor government and its leaders. Likud also benefited greatly from demographic changes taking place in Israel. Jews whose families had emigrated from Middle Eastern countries during the decade following Israeli independence had become an increasingly significant proportion of Israel's Jewish population, and these "Afro-Asian" Israeli Jews increasingly gave their votes to Likud. The partisan attachments of this segment of the population were shaped by a variety of factors, but prominent among these was a belief that they or their families had been poorly treated by the Labor government at the time of their arrival in Israel.[39] Accordingly, although predisposed in many cases to be sympathetic to Likud's foreign policy positions, these Israelis were often casting their votes against Labor as much as for Likud.

The culmination of Likud's ascent came in the Israeli election of May 1977. Likud won 43 seats to Labor's 32, and the party's leader, Menachem Begin, then formed a cabinet and assumed the premiership. This was the first time since the founding of the state that the government had not been under the control of Labor, leading some to describe the election results as a political earthquake. During the electoral campaign, Likud had issued a straightforward call for retention of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, whereas Labor, as in the past, had reaffirmed its commitment to UNSCR 242 and championed the principle of territorial compromise. Likud emphasized the strategic significance of the West Bank and Gaza, discussing the Sinai Peninsula and Golan Heights in this context as well and stating that its approach to all of the occupied territories was guided by Israel's need for secure and defensible borders. But its attitude toward the West Bank and Gaza also reflected other considerations—ones that were central to the party's ideology. Affirming that Judea and Samaria and the Gaza district were integral parts of the historic Land of Israel, Likud also justified its insistence on retaining these territories on historical and religious grounds and rejected returning to the Arabs even those regions with no military value. The party maintained that foreign (meaning "non-Jewish") sovereignty should not be reestablished over any part of the West Bank and Gaza, adding as a corollary that the right of Jews to live in any part of these territories was not a subject for negotiation.[40]

Consistent with this ideological commitment, the new Likud-led government set out almost immediately to establish a vastly expanded network of Jewish settlements and interests in the West Bank and other occupied territories. Critics of the policy often described this as "creating facts," meaning that the political and demographic situation in the territories was deliberately being transformed in order to establish a new set of realities, to create a situation that would reduce, and possibly eliminate, any chance of an Israeli withdrawal in the future. Prime Minister Begin proclaimed in this connection that there would never again be a political division between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea.

There had been settlement activity under previous Labor governments, of course, primarily in the Jordan Valley, but on a limited scale in other areas as well. At the time Likud came to power in May 1977, approximately four thousand Israeli Jews were living in the West Bank, excluding East Jerusalem. By the end of 1977, more than five thousand Jewish settlers lived in the West Bank, and the number rose to 7,500, 10,000, and 12,500 during the following three years, with the actual number of settlements more than doubling by the

end of 1980. The numbers also increased for the other occupied territories. By late 1980, there were twenty-six Jewish settlements on the Golan Heights, with about 6,500 people; thirteen settlements in northern Sinai, with approximately six thousand people; and seven hundred Israelis in three settlements in the Gaza Strip. In addition, the Begin government expanded the geographic locus of its settlement activities in the West Bank. Whereas Labor had deliberately discouraged the construction of Jewish communities in the central hilly areas where most Palestinians live, Likud made the heavily populated highlands the principal focus of its colonization efforts.

The Israeli election was not the only earthquake of 1977. In November of that year after several months of behind-the-scenes negotiations, Egypt's president, Anwar al-Sadat, traveled to Jerusalem and in a speech to the Knesset offered the Israelis a formula that he considered to be the basis for a fair and lasting end to the conflict. As president of the largest and most powerful Arab country, which only four years earlier had launched a surprise attack and inflicted heavy casualties on the Jewish state, al-Sadat was making a dramatic gesture and offering a potential breakthrough as he spoke to the most important political body in Israel. He told the Israelis that Egypt was ready for peace. He added, however, that his country did not seek a separate peace with Israel and that a resolution of the conflict would require complete withdrawal from Arab territories captured in 1967. Al-Sadat also emphasized the centrality of the Palestinian dimension of the conflict, stating that peace would be impossible without a solution to the Palestinian problem, even if peace between Israel and all the confrontation states were achieved. In one passage, he told the Israeli assembly that "it is no use to refrain from recognizing the Palestinian people and their right to statehood."

Al-Sadat's visit to Jerusalem set off a new round of diplomatic activity, in which the United States as well as Egypt and Israel were heavily involved, and that eventually led to the historic summit meeting at Camp David in September 1978. With continued prodding from the US president, Jimmy Carter, Anwar al-Sadat and Menachem Begin and their respective teams engaged in difficult and often-tense negotiations for almost two weeks. They eventually agreed on two "frameworks," which were then signed in a public ceremony. The first, the "Framework for the Conclusion of a Peace Treaty between Egypt and Israel," set forth a detailed formula for resolving bilateral issues and arriving at a peace treaty between the two countries. The second, the "Framework for Peace in the Middle East," dealt with the rights of the Palestinians and the future of the West Bank and Gaza. This framework offered only a general blueprint; it was characterized by broad guidelines, deferred decisions, and language amenable to differing interpretations, at best reflecting the kind of constructive ambiguity that in the past had failed to provide a basis for productive negotiations.

Despite some sticking points, bilateral relations between Egypt and Israel evolved satisfactorily following the Camp David summit. The two countries signed a formal peace treaty in March 1979, and during the next two years, Israel dismantled its settlements in northern Sinai and completed its withdrawal from the peninsula. There was also progress during this period on the normalization of relations. As early as the summer of 1979, Egypt was visited by delegations of Israeli business leaders, university professors, and others. The first group of Israeli tourists also traveled to Egypt at this time, and they were met upon their arrival by welcome signs in Hebrew. Travel in the other direction brought Egyptian businesspeople, industrialists, and senior government officials to Israel; in addition, the two countries coordinated tourist exchanges and made plans for several joint ventures. These were stunning accomplishments, and despite some continuing problems and misunderstandings between

Egypt and Israel, they constituted a significant, indeed revolutionary, development in the Arab-Israeli conflict, further reducing the importance of the Arab state dimension and focusing attention even more sharply on the conflict's core Palestinian dimension.

ISRAEL AND THE TERRITORIES

Unfortunately, the story of the Camp David framework dealing with the West Bank and Gaza is unlike that of the framework dealing with peace between Egypt and Israel. The framework called for negotiations about the final status of these territories to be based on the provisions and principles of UNSCR 242 and specified that the solution resulting from these talks must recognize the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and their just requirements. The framework also envisioned a transitional period, not to exceed five years, during which time the final status of the West Bank and Gaza would be determined. During this period, inhabitants of these territories were to have "full autonomy," with the Israeli military government and its civilian administration being withdrawn as soon as "a Self-Governing Authority (Administrative Council)" could be freely elected by the inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza. Jordan would be invited to join with Egypt and Israel in negotiating these arrangements, it being specified that the delegations of Jordan and Egypt could include Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza or other Palestinians as mutually agreed.

These "autonomy talks," as they were informally known, soon reached an impasse; and after waiting three months, consistent with Israel's interpretation of what had been promised at Camp David, the Begin government resumed the construction of new settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. In October 1978, the World Zionist Organization presented a plan, accepted by the government in Jerusalem as a guide to its own action, for raising the number of Jewish settlers in the West Bank to one hundred thousand by 1983. This would involve approximately twenty-seven thousand families, approximately ten thousand to be accommodated through the expansion of existing settlements and the remainder to be located in some fifty new settlements specifically proposed by the plan. In response to these developments, as well as the failure to reach agreement on any substantive or even procedural issues pertaining to the West Bank and Gaza, al-Sadat unilaterally suspended the autonomy talks in May 1980.

With Egypt's increasing disengagement from the conflict, the most important events of the 1980s involved the political and diplomatic competition and also the violent confrontations between Israel and the Palestinians. The PLO continued its diplomatic campaign from its base in Lebanon, where it had also become a key player in Lebanese domestic politics. Palestinian officials repeated their readiness for a political settlement based on compromise and, focusing on Israeli settlement activity, insisted that the Jewish state was the intransigent party. For their part, Israeli representatives insisted that the PLO remained a terrorist organization dedicated to the destruction of the Jewish state. They pointed to the 1968 PLO charter and other early hard-line documents that had not been formally repudiated, stating as well that Arafat and other Palestinian leaders often said different things to different audiences. There was validity to the arguments and interpretations advanced by both Israeli and PLO spokespersons, but international diplomatic opinion nonetheless increasingly lined up on the side of the Palestinian organization. In European diplomatic circles, for example, criticism of Israel's settlement drive increased, and many judged the evolution of PLO thinking to be more significant than a failure to remove all ambiguities and conditionalities from its recent declarations.

Also persuasive, apparently, were Palestinian claims that hard-line statements by Fatah and other mainstream PLO leaders were increasingly rare and, in any event, designed only to fend off extremist critics and create room to maneuver.

Developments among Palestinians in the occupied territories lent additional credibility to the PLO's claim to be ready for a political settlement and also to the PLO's insistence that it was the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza were now being led by a new generation of men with an explicitly nationalist orientation, men who openly identified with the PLO and who declared their opposition to both the Israeli occupation and the autonomy scheme that had emerged from the Camp David summit. At the same time, many stated without hesitation that they were prepared to accept the existence of Israel—and, specifically, Israel as a Jewish state—in return for the exercise of Palestinian self-determination and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel. As noted, some of these men had come to power in the relatively democratic election of 1976, which gave them an important measure of legitimacy and made it possible to gauge the political preferences of Palestinians in the territories more generally.

Standing in opposition to the PLO and the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza was the Israeli government, led by Likud and actively supported by other nationalist and religious factions on the right side of the political spectrum. No matter how vigorous might be Palestinian resistance and no matter how plausible in the eyes of outside observers might be the political solution for which Palestinians and other Arabs now claimed to be ready, these Israelis were determined that the future of the West Bank and Gaza would be shaped exclusively by their own ideological vision. Furthermore, they were in the midst of an intense campaign to transform the political, economic, and demographic character of the West Bank and Gaza, and from their point of view, they were having considerable success in their drive to translate vision into reality.

Not all Israelis shared this vision. Indeed, the country was deeply divided on questions relating to the West Bank and Gaza. Many leaders and supporters of the centrist Labor Party, as well as those affiliated with other centrist and leftist political factions, argued, often passionately, that permanent retention of the West Bank and Gaza was not in Israel's interest and that, in fact, it would be extremely detrimental to the Jewish state. Not only would this make more remote, and possibly remove permanently, any chance of peace with the Arabs; it would also leave Israel with a large non-Jewish population, whose existence was likely to force the country to choose, impossibly and with no acceptable outcome, between its Jewish character and its democratic character.

This choice could be avoided if most Palestinians in the territories could be induced, or forced, to leave the West Bank and Gaza for other Arab lands, a policy of "transfer" that was advocated by some groups on the extreme political right. But transfer, with its implications of ethnic cleansing, was strongly rejected on both moral and political grounds by the overwhelming majority of Israelis. Thus, retention of the West Bank and Gaza and the extension of Israeli sovereignty to these territories would require Israel to decide whether to grant citizenship to the Palestinian inhabitants of the territories. If citizenship were not awarded, so that these Palestinians became "subjects" with only local-level political rights, the country would cease to be a democracy. Israeli Jews and those Palestinians who were citizens of pre-1967 Israel would possess political rights denied, legally and by official design, to the West Bank and Gaza Palestinians who now lived in "greater Israel." Alternatively, if these Palestinians were granted citizenship in order to preserve the country's democratic character, non-Jews would be

a large part of the country's citizenry; and given the higher birthrate among Arabs compared with the birthrate among Jews, non-Jews within a generation might constitute the majority of the population and be in a position to pass legislation that would abolish the laws and policies that institutionalize Israel's connection to Judaism and Jews throughout the world. Israeli opponents of retaining the territories called this the "demographic issue."

Although the political weight of Labor and other domestic opponents of the Likud-led government was considerable, Likud retained its supremacy in the Israeli election of June 1981, albeit by a narrow margin, and this brought an acceleration of Israeli settlement activity. Menachem Begin appointed Ariel Sharon, a hard-line former general, as minister of defense. As minister of agriculture in the previous Begin cabinet, Sharon had emerged as a powerful force within the government and played a leading role in formulating and implementing Israel's policies in the occupied territories. Now, at the Defense Ministry he was able to dominate the army as well as government policy, and this gave him responsibility for the Israeli military government that ruled the West Bank and Gaza.

Bitter confrontations between Israelis and Palestinians in the territories emerged in this environment, and Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights in December 1981 contributed further to Arab anger. The Golan had been captured from Syria in the June 1967 War; and although the territory had no ideological significance for the Jewish state as it is not considered part of the historic Land of Israel, it was judged to be of major strategic importance. Both Labor and Likud governments had built settlements in the territory. A motivation for the Begin government's annexation of the Golan was to defuse criticism from right-wing elements that were pressing the prime minister to renege on his promise to relinquish those portions of the Sinai Peninsula that Israel still controlled. Whatever the motivations, the extension of Israeli law to the Golan Heights added to the tension. In addition to the understandable condemnation from Syria and other states, a general strike was called by Syrian Druze residents of the Golan. The Israeli military's use of coercion and collective punishment in an effort to break the strike and to force the Druze to accept Israeli identification cards only exacerbated the situation.

The most important confrontations were in the West Bank and Gaza, where Palestinian resistance and Israel's response brought broad and sustained disturbances in spring 1982. These began when an Israeli official was beaten by Palestinian students at Birzeit University near Ramallah in February, after which Israeli authorities closed the school for two months, and protest demonstrations were then organized at other West Bank universities. Agitation grew more intense in the weeks that followed, and in addition to demonstrations and protest marches, there were general strikes in many areas, including East Jerusalem, and incidents in which young Palestinians threw stones at Israeli soldiers and Jewish civilians traveling in the occupied territories. The clashes that erupted during this period were the most intense and prolonged of any that had occurred since Israel took control of the West Bank and Gaza in 1967.

Both the Israeli and Palestinian press provided vivid accounts of these clashes, giving attention not only to Palestinian activism but also to the forceful and sometimes lethal response of the Israeli military. Regular features in April and May were articles with titles such as "Boy Dies as Violence Sweeps Gaza, W. Bank," "Two Arabs Killed as Troops Disperse Riots," "Youth Shot after Stonings in Bethlehem Area Village," and "Girl Pupil Killed during Gaza Strip School Riot."[41] Describing the overall situation in a May 12 editorial titled "Road to Nowhere," the *Jerusalem Post* wrote that "this little war has emerged as nasty, brutish and hopeless." Another editorial, prompted by a press conference at which six Israeli reserve officers recounted their experiences while serving in the occupied territories,

described the situation as "depressing when it was not hair-raising." Thus with a scope and intensity unmatched during the previous fifteen years of Israeli occupation, the West Bank and Gaza exploded in the spring of 1982, making it all the more evident that even a positive evolution of relations between Israel and Egypt would not bring peace in the absence of a solution to the Palestinian dimension of the conflict.

The Israeli actions to which Palestinians were responding in the spring of 1982 included not only the settlement drive of the Begin and Sharon government but also the lawlessness and vigilantism of elements within the organized Israeli settler movement. Not only were there a number of incidents in which Palestinians were attacked by Jewish settlers, but the lenient treatment that Israeli authorities gave to the perpetrators was an additional source of Palestinian anger. In March 1982, for example, an Arab teenager from the village of Sinjal was shot and killed by an Israeli resident of a nearby settlement. The settler was detained briefly but released a few days later, and the case against him was subsequently dropped. According to an Israeli government inquiry into settler violence against Palestinians in the West Bank, headed by Deputy Attorney General Yehudit Karp, there were a total fifteen such incidents during April and May, all of which involved either death or injury as a result of shootings.[42] There were also instances of Jewish settlers throwing hand grenades at Arab homes, automobiles, and even schools in several locations.

Israeli authorities responded to the unrest not only by confronting demonstrators in the streets but also by seeking to undermine Palestinian political institutions. This included the dismissal of a number of elected mayors of West Bank towns, beginning with Ibrahim Tawil of al-Bireh and followed by Bassam Shaka of Nablus and Karim Khalaf of Ramallah. Both Shaka and Khalaf were outspoken supporters of the PLO, and both had been wounded in 1980 in attacks carried out by an underground Jewish settler group calling itself "Terror Against Terror." The Israelis said that the mayors' refusal to cooperate with the civilian administration provided a legal basis for their removal, accusing them as well of helping to incite strikes and demonstrations.

A logical extension of Israel's campaign against PLO influence in the West Bank and Gaza was a desire to inflict damage on the PLO itself through an attack on the organization's base in Lebanon. Prime Minister Begin and Defense Minister Sharon, as well as others in the Likud government, considered the PLO to be the source of most of Jerusalem's troubles in the occupied territories. As a US State Department official put the matter at the time, "The Israeli government believes it has a Palestinian problem because of the PLO; not that it has a PLO problem because of the Palestinians."[43] The conclusion that Begin and Sharon deduced from their analysis was that if Israel could force the PLO to curtail its encouragement of resistance in the West Bank and Gaza, either by weakening the organization or by teaching it that its actions were not cost free, Palestinians in the territories would accommodate themselves to a political future in which the West Bank and Gaza were part of the Jewish state. To Begin and Sharon, suppressing Palestinian nationalism in the West Bank and Gaza and inflicting a military and political defeat on the PLO in Lebanon were thus two interrelated aspects of a single political strategy.

Israeli troops entered Lebanon in force on June 6, 1982. Amid charges and denials about whether PLO fighters in southern Lebanon had been shelling towns in northern Israel, Begin and Sharon had told the cabinet that the purpose of the invasion was to establish a forty-kilometer security zone north of the Lebanon-Israel border. The IDF swept into southern Lebanon with a huge force of almost eighty thousand men and 1,240 tanks. There was fierce fighting in some areas, with the stiffest resistance to the invasion offered not by the PLO's

semiregular units but by the home guard forces of a number of Palestinian refugee camps. The Israelis nonetheless reached their objective in less than forty-eight hours. On June 8, at almost the same time that Begin was repeating to the Knesset that Israel's objectives in Lebanon were limited, Israeli forces reached a line forty kilometers from the country's northern border.

But it turned out that Israel's objectives in Lebanon were not limited, and Israeli forces did not stop upon achieving the invasion's declared objective. Instead, the IDF pushed northward and eastward and encircled Beirut in the west. Sharon had kept the cabinet in the dark about his true intentions, but he now revealed that he had always planned to expand the operation and articulated two broad goals for the mission: the elimination of the PLO as a military and a political threat and the installation of a friendly, unified, and Christian-dominated government in Lebanon.

Beyond calling for the establishment of a new political order in Lebanon, an objective that was not achieved, supporters of the expanded operation argued that crushing the PLO was the key to reaching an accommodation with Palestinians. Israeli spokespersons had long maintained that PLO intransigence was the major obstacle to an expansion of the peace process begun at Camp David. Equally important, the Begin government blamed the PLO for the disturbances in the West Bank and Gaza in spring 1982, alleging that the PLO had directed resistance to the occupation and intimidated Palestinians interested in compromise. Israel's expanded operation in Lebanon was designed to change this. With its fighting forces either captured, killed, or dispersed and with its independent political base destroyed, the organization would no longer be able to carry out operations against the Jewish state. Nor, in the Israeli analysis, would the PLO be able to impose its will on the Palestinian people and, most critically, on the inhabitants of the occupied territories.

Although some Israelis were persuaded by the government's case for an expansion of the war, others doubted the wisdom of such action; accordingly, a full-fledged political debate was raging in the Jewish state by the latter part of June 1982.[44] Critics raised two particular concerns: one relating to costs associated with the war and a second to the feasibility of Israel's expanded objectives. With respect to costs, the greatest preoccupation was the steadily growing number of Israeli casualties. With respect to feasibility, Likud's critics repeated what they had been saying for some time: Israel's policies, as much as or even more than PLO rejectionism, were what was producing unrest in the West Bank and Gaza. Without Israeli recognition of Palestinian rights, these critics asserted, resistance in the territories would continue, regardless of the outcome of the fighting in Lebanon. With such recognition, in contrast, many Palestinians would accept the principle of reconciliation with Israel, thereby making the war irrelevant in bringing mainstream Palestinians to the bargaining table.

As the expanded campaign evolved during July and August, Sharon ordered an escalation of the IDF's attacks on PLO positions in Beirut, which culminated with saturation bombing and shelling by the Israeli navy from offshore positions. Israeli firepower was directed not only at buildings used by the PLO in the center of Beirut but at Palestinian refugee camps as well. Casualty figures vary widely, but the number of Palestinians and Lebanese killed or wounded during the entire campaign is in the thousands—more than ten thousand by some estimates—with many more rendered homeless.[45] With the PLO defeated, Arafat left Lebanon at the end of August, departing by sea along with about eight thousand PLO guerrillas. Another six thousand fighters, including Syrian soldiers as well as members of the Palestine Liberation Army, left by land. The PLO then reestablished its headquarters in Tunis.

A tragic postscript to the Israeli-PLO war in Lebanon was written from September 16 to September 18. During this period, with Israeli knowledge and possibly approval, forces of the Lebanese Christian Phalange Party entered Sabra and Shatila, two large, adjacent Palestinian refugee camps on the outskirts of Beirut, and carried out a massacre of hundreds of civilians, many of them women and children.

An Israeli commission of inquiry established after the massacre, the Kahan Commission, found that Israeli authorities had permitted Phalange forces to enter Sabra and Shatila without giving proper consideration to the danger of a massacre, which, under the circumstances, they "were obligated to foresee as probable." The commission also saw fit to make recommendations concerning responsibility and punishment, reserving its harshest judgments for Ariel Sharon. It charged the defense minister with "personal responsibility" because he had not ordered "appropriate measures for preventing or reducing the chances of a massacre." It also called upon Sharon to draw "the appropriate personal conclusions," meaning that he should resign, and it added that if he refused to do so the prime minister should consider removing him from office.[46] In the end, Sharon refused to resign, and, as a compromise, Begin relieved him of the defense portfolio but allowed him to remain in the cabinet.

The war in Lebanon was followed by a number of US and Arab diplomatic initiatives. On September 1, 1982, the day that the last PLO guerrillas departed from Beirut, the US president, Ronald Reagan, introduced a peace plan. It placed emphasis on continuing US support for Israel. In addition, however, in what appeared to be an important evolution in US policy, it also spoke of the "legitimate rights of the Palestinians," specifying that these rights are political in character and acknowledging that the Palestinian problem is "more than a question of refugees." This was quickly followed by a plan put forward by Arab leaders meeting in Fez, Morocco. Frequently described as the "Fez Plan," it proposed a "two-state solution" based on Israeli withdrawal from all Arab territories occupied in 1967 and removal of the Israeli settlements in these territories.

Although they gave rise to extended diplomatic activity, neither the Reagan plan nor the Fez plan produced any lasting agreements or led to any significant changes on the ground in the occupied territories. The Fez plan was nonetheless significant for its embrace of the notion of partition, committing Arab countries to the proposition that both a Jewish state and an Arab state should be established in Palestine. This reflected a continuing evolution and clarification, and also the moderation, of Arab thinking about the basis for an accommodation with Israel.

This evolving acceptance of a two-state solution was also present among Palestinians. While the PLO mainstream had been greatly weakened by the war in Lebanon and, hence, was more vulnerable to interference by Arab governments allied with Palestinian rejectionists, PLO losses in Lebanon dealt an even harsher blow to the rejectionist camp. One Palestinian scholar explained that, prior to the war, rejectionists within the PLO possessed something approaching a veto over PLO decisions, a power incommensurate with their actual size. But the demise of the PLO's independent base in Lebanon destroyed many of the institutional arrangements that had been the power base of radicals and leftists, reducing their ability to impose limits on the policies pursued by Fatah and the PLO mainstream.[47]

The PLO's defeat in Lebanon also enhanced the political weight of the West Bank and Gaza in intra-Palestinian politics. At the grassroots level, Palestinians in the occupied territories became the PLO's most important and politically influential constituency, and this in turn brought greater support for the more moderate ideological orientation that had long been dominant among these Palestinians.

Also on the agenda in the aftermath of the war was the relationship between Israel and Lebanon. Israel attempted to persuade Lebanon to sign a peace treaty, and an accord ending the state of war between the two countries and committing Israel to withdraw all of its armed forces from the country was signed in May 1983. The accord was stillborn, however. The withdrawal of Israeli troops was conditional upon removal of the Syrian forces in Lebanon, something that was not about to take place. Even more important, the agreement was denounced in Lebanon as the product of Israel's illegal and unjustified invasion and as an unacceptable reward for an aggressor that had brought death and destruction to the country. For this reason, the accord was never submitted to the Lebanese parliament for ratification.

Finally, there was the issue of the Israeli troops that remained in Lebanon after the war. With few gains and high costs, the war, or at least the expanded operation, had become highly unpopular in Israel. Moreover, Israelis continued to be killed and wounded in Lebanon, with losses now the result of attacks by Lebanese, not Palestinians. This led to limited pullbacks in 1982 and 1983 and to a significant redeployment in the summer of 1985. Israel kept forces in southern Lebanon, however, in order to police a narrow security zone immediately north of the Israeli-Lebanese border. Israel also created a local militia, the South Lebanese Army, to assist in this policing function. The situation thus settled into a tense status quo marked by Israel's continuing occupation of a portion of Lebanese territory.

None of this was a basis for celebration in Israel. On the contrary, the country's mood was unhappy and troubled, and this was reflected in the unexpected retirement of Menachem Begin. Late in August 1983, despondent over the country's losses in Lebanon as well as the death of his wife the preceding spring, Begin announced that he would step down as the country's prime minister; he formally submitted his resignation two weeks later. Moreover, he retired from public view as well as public life, remaining in his Jerusalem apartment, refusing all requests for interviews, and playing no part in the affairs of either the nation or the political party he had previously led. He was replaced by Yitzhak Shamir, a Likud stalwart who differed greatly from Begin in style and personality but was no less committed to the expansion of settlements and the concept of greater Israel.

THE INTIFADA

Diplomatic efforts continued during the mid-1980s but produced no results of consequence. Instead, while the diplomats talked, the situation continued to deteriorate for Palestinians in the territories. Israeli settlement activity in the West Bank and Gaza continued and intensified during these years. The number of Jewish settlers in the occupied territories stood at almost sixty thousand in the fall of 1986, whereas it had been about twenty thousand four years earlier. These figures do not include East Jerusalem. Moreover, numbers tell only part of the story. The government allocated approximately $300 million for infrastructure projects in support of the settler movement.

Israel also continued its efforts to weaken those Palestinian institutions in the territories that it judged to be sources of opposition and resistance. Palestinian universities were frequently closed, for example, on the grounds that instead of pursuing their education, students were engaging in political activities and organizing opposition to the occupation. Other Israeli actions, which by summer 1985 were routinely described as an "Iron Fist" policy, included deportations, press censorship, and such forms of collective punishment as

curfews and the demolition of homes. This was the situation when Israel was led by Labor as well as Likud. The 1984 elections had produced a virtual tie between Likud and Labor, and the two parties then formed a national unity government and agreed that the premiership should rotate between Shimon Peres of Labor and Yitzhak Shamir of Likud. Peres took the first term, and the defense minister at this time was Yitzhak Rabin of Labor; but although Peres, Rabin, and their party advocated territorial compromise and the exchange of land for peace, there was no appreciable change in Israel's actions in the occupied territories.

Finally, growing tension in the West Bank and Gaza resulted not only from the actions of the Israeli government but also from confrontations between an increasingly frustrated and angry Palestinian population and an increasingly emboldened and aggressive Jewish settler movement. In the spring of 1987, for example, there was a spiral of violence that began when a petrol bomb thrown at an Israeli vehicle in the West Bank town of Qalqilya resulted in the death of a Jewish woman. Settlers took revenge by carrying out a rampage through the town, breaking windows and uprooting trees in what the May 23, 1987, *Jerusalem Post* described as a "vigilante orgy." In the weeks that followed, there were additional raids by Jewish settlers and numerous clashes between stone-throwing Palestinian youths and Israeli soldiers. By mid-1987, these confrontations had become so common that they almost ceased to be newsworthy.

All of this produced a steadily deteriorating and increasingly hopeless situation from the viewpoint of the 1.5 or 1.6 million Palestinians residing in the West Bank and Gaza. A careful Palestinian American scholar who visited the territories at this time offered the following description:

> Gaza resembles a pressure-cooker ready to explode. In this "forgotten corner of Palestine," one witnesses overcrowding, poverty, hatred, violence, oppression, poor sanitation, anger, frustration, drugs and crime. The Palestinian population is daily becoming more resentful and rebellious. The military occupation responds by becoming more insecure and oppressive.[48]

The situation in the West Bank was only slightly less grim, with Israeli as well as Palestinian analysts reporting that the tension had become palpable. As expressed in October 1987 by a correspondent for the *Jerusalem Post,* "You can feel the tension. . . . Fear, suspicion and growing hatred have replaced any hope of dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians."[49]

Under pressure and in the absence of any prospect that diplomatic efforts by either the PLO, Egypt, Jordan, the United States, or Israeli advocates of territorial compromise would bring an end to the occupation of their homeland, Palestinians were searching in 1987 for ways to change the political momentum and resist Israeli expansion. And then in December 1987, spontaneous and widespread protest demonstrations erupted throughout the territories. The spark that ignited the disturbances was an accident at the Israeli military checkpoint at the north end of the Gaza Strip. An IDF tank transport vehicle crashed into a line of cars and vans filled with men from Gaza who were returning home after a day of work in Israel, killing four and seriously injuring seven others. The funerals that night for three of the deceased quickly turned into a massive demonstration.

In the days and weeks that followed, there were protests and civil disobedience on a scale that exceeded anything seen in the territories since the beginning of the occupation in 1967. Moreover, spontaneous outbursts of anger and efforts at resistance rapidly coalesced into a coordinated uprising embracing virtually all sectors of Palestinian society, a rebellion

MAP 2.5 ■ Israeli Settlements in the West Bank, 1982

that some compared to the revolt of 1936 to 1939 and that soon became known as the *intifada,* literally translated as the "shaking off."

The intifada was marked by a new determination among Palestinians and by daring action on the part of youthful protesters taking to the streets in the West Bank and Gaza. According to one report based on two visits to Israel and the occupied territories during the first half of 1988,

> Even Israelis with little sympathy for the Palestinian cause sometimes say they
> have a new respect for their enemy . . . and one occasionally hears comments [from
> Israelis] to the effect that these are not the craven and cowardly Arabs described in
> our propaganda but young men with the courage of their convictions, willing to
> stand before our soldiers and risk their lives in order to give voice to their demands.[50]

This new assertiveness was repeatedly displayed as protest activities expanded in both scope and intensity during the months that followed. Demonstrations began in the refugee camps but soon spread to major towns and thereafter to the roughly five hundred villages of

the West Bank. Demonstrators chanted slogans, raised Palestinian flags, and threw stones at Israeli soldiers who sought to disperse them. Young Palestinians also frequently threw stones at Israeli vehicles, including those of Israeli civilians traveling in the occupied territories. Makeshift roadblocks were erected in a further attempt to disrupt normal circulation, especially at the entrances to villages or in urban neighborhoods that the Palestinians sought to prevent Israelis from entering. These roadblocks were constructed of rocks or, occasionally, of burning tires; and although they sometimes inconvenienced local inhabitants as much as Israelis, they represented an effort to wrest control of the streets from occupation authorities and were accordingly left in place.

Emerging patterns of organization and leadership constituted a particularly important feature of the intifada, and one that also helped to set the uprising apart from prior Palestinian efforts to arrest Israel's drive into the West Bank and Gaza. The political institutions that crystallized to give direction to the intifada and to deal with the problems and opportunities it created included both popular neighborhood committees and a unified national leadership structure. Furthermore, at both the local level and beyond, the new institutions were to a large extent led by the members of a new political generation.

As soon as they recognized the coordinated and sustained character of the Palestinian uprising, Israeli leaders declared their intention to suppress the intifada. Primary responsibility for achieving this objective fell to Yitzhak Rabin, the minister of defense in the national unity government that had been established after the parliamentary elections of 1984. In addition to detaining and deporting suspected activists, Israel undertook to suppress Palestinian protest demonstrations, and when necessary, it dispersed demonstrators by firing live ammunition. Rabin and most other Israeli leaders justified these actions by saying that the Palestinians had left them no alternative. Yet the intifada continued and, if anything, grew more intense, even as the number of Palestinian demonstrators shot by Israeli soldiers increased.

All of this violence was in addition to the severe administrative measures that Israel employed in its effort to contain the intifada. Universities were closed by Israeli authorities until further notice, for example, although several institutions managed to hold some classes in secret. Many primary and secondary schools were also shut for prolonged periods. Dozens of homes were blown up by Israeli troops, usually because it was believed that someone who lived there had thrown stones at Israeli soldiers. In addition, entire communities were placed under curfew, sometimes for a week or more, preventing people from leaving their homes at any time, even to obtain food. As with school closings and the demolition of homes, curfews are a form of collective punishment that falls heavily not only on protesters but also on men and women who have not taken part in protest-related activities. The fifty-five thousand residents of Jabaliya refugee camp in Gaza, for example, spent about two hundred days under curfew between the beginning of the intifada and June 1989. The continuing deportation of suspected activists was another administrative measure designed to suppress the uprising. Finally, thousands of Palestinians were arrested and detained, some for prolonged periods and the overwhelming majority without trial. In February 1989, Rabin announced that 22,000 Palestinians had been detained since the beginning of the intifada and that 6,200 were being held in administrative detention at that time. Palestinian and some US sources put the figures even higher.

These measures were not uniformly applauded in Israel. Many Israelis, including some in the military, were disturbed by the tactics being employed to suppress the uprising. In one denunciation that received wide public attention, the prime minister was told by troops in January 1988 that they were very disturbed by the IDF's behavior. Shamir was inspecting

IDF operations in the northern West Bank city of Nablus and stopped to talk to a group of soldiers who, to his consternation, told him in extremely strong terms that young Israelis were not raised on universal values and respect for human rights only to be sent to the occupied territories to commit violence unrestrained by the rule of law. The political and military establishments "have no idea what really goes on in the territories," one soldier told him, while another stated, with reporters present, that he had to "beat innocent people" every day.[51]

The Israeli government nonetheless remained determined to crush the uprising, and this determination did not diminish as the intifada entered its second and then its third year. "The nation can bear the burden no matter how long the revolt goes on," Rabin declared in December 1989. Furthermore, he specified that "we will continue with all the measures that we used for the first years, including the confrontations, the hitting, the arresting, the introduction of the plastic bullet, the rubber bullet and the curfews on a large scale."[52]

Palestinians under occupation were seeking by the rebellion that began in December 1987 to send a message to Israel and the world. The content of this message, made explicit in the conversations between Palestinian intellectuals and the large number of foreign journalists who flocked to the region to report on the spreading disturbances, can be summed up simply: We exist and have political rights, and there will be no peace until these rights are recognized.

The Israeli public was the most important audience to which the Palestinians' message was addressed. In the debates and discussions inside Israel, Prime Minister Shamir and others on the political right had frequently argued that most Palestinians in the occupied territories were actually content to live under Israeli rule. Asserting that the material conditions of most inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza had improved significantly since 1967, Likud leaders told the Israeli public that only a few radicals affiliated with the PLO called for Israeli withdrawal. The vast majority of the Palestinian population, by contrast, was said to recognize and appreciate the improvement in their standard of living that had accompanied occupation and accordingly, for the future, to seek no more than local or regional autonomy under continuing Israeli rule.

A related Likud claim was that continuing occupation of the West Bank and Gaza was without significant costs from the Israeli point of view. Shamir and like-minded Israelis insisted that the Palestinian inhabitants of these territories did not constitute a serious obstacle to developing these areas in accordance with the design of Israelis committed to territorial maximalism. Palestinian acquiescence, they asserted, meant there would be few burdens associated with the maintenance of order and little to prevent ordinary Israeli citizens from conducting themselves in the West Bank and Gaza as if they were in their own country.

The intifada was intended to show these assertions to be myths in a way that could not be explained away by apologists for the occupation. In other words, the Palestinian uprising sought to send the Israeli public a message to the effect that the parties of the political Right were either ignorant about the situation in the West Bank and Gaza or, more probable, deliberately seeking to mislead the people of Israel. Palestinians sought to leave no room for doubt about their implacable opposition to occupation and also to foster in Israel a recognition that the course charted by the country's leaders was a costly one, which was not in the interest of the Jewish state. This message was particularly important in view of the deep political divisions that existed within Israel, with the public bombarded by conflicting claims from Labor and Likud and with many ordinary Israelis trying to determine which party's vision of the country's future was the wisest and most realistic.

Evidence that the Palestinians' message was having an impact in Israel was offered by a significant change in the way that most Israelis looked at the West Bank and Gaza after

December 1987, a change often described as the resurrection of the "Green Line" in Israeli political consciousness. The Green Line refers to the pre-1967 border separating Israel from its Arab neighbors, and during the twenty years between the June 1967 War and the outbreak of the intifada, those parts of the Green Line running between the West Bank and Gaza on one side and Israel on the other had become nearly invisible to many Israelis. Israelis frequently traveled through the West Bank to get from one part of Israel to another or took their cars to garages in Gaza or drove to Jericho for a casual meal in one of the city's oasis restaurants. This gave many and perhaps most Israelis the sense of a natural connection between their country and these areas. Indeed, by the end of 1987 a majority of Israel's population was too young even to remember a time when the West Bank and Gaza were not under their country's control. As a result, while the West Bank and Gaza were not quite seen as Israel itself, neither did they appear to many Israelis to be part of another, foreign country.

The intifada transformed these perceptions, leading most Israelis to regard the West Bank and Gaza as zones of insecurity that should be avoided as much as possible. As Yitzhak Rabin himself explained in September 1988 when he was asked to comment on the fact that the number of Israelis killed in the territories had actually declined since the beginning of the uprising, "Jews simply don't visit the territories as they used to. No one's wandering around the garages of Gaza any more these days."[53] The resurrection of the Green Line was similarly evident in the effective "redivision" of Jerusalem. In the words of an authority on walking tours in the city, "Before the intifada, all the routes of the hikes I wrote about were over the Green Line. . . . [But] today the Green Line is my map of fear."[54] Thus in the judgment of yet another Israeli analyst, writing in December 1989,

> Perhaps the most conspicuous result of the intifada has been the restoration of Israel's pre-1967 border, the famous Green Line, which disappeared from Israeli maps and consciousness as early as 1968. . . . [Today] the West Bank and Gaza are seen as foreign territories inhabited by a hostile population, whose stone-throwing youngsters are ready to die—and do—in their quest for freedom.[55]

The intifada had an equally significant impact on political discourse in Israel. On the political right, some began to think about removal of the Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza, which was a disturbing but nonetheless logical response to the Palestinian uprising from the perspective of those committed to territorial maximalism. If Israel were indeed to retain the territories, and if it were the case, as the intifada itself proclaimed, that the Palestinians would never submit to Israeli rule, then it was not a very big logical leap to arrive at the view that the Palestinians should be pressured, or if necessary forced, to leave the occupied areas for a neighboring Arab country.

Of much greater consequence, however, was the degree to which the intifada strengthened the arguments of Israeli supporters of territorial compromise. With many Israelis reexamining commonly held assumptions about the costs and benefits of retaining the territories, the arguments of those who had long insisted that retention of the territories was not in Israel's interest were increasingly finding a receptive audience in the Jewish state. The new realism in debates about the West Bank and Gaza also led a growing number of Israelis to call for talks with the PLO, which was illegal at the time.

Moreover, in addition to the traditional arguments of the Center and the Left—that refusal to withdraw from the occupied territories removed what possibility might exist for

peace with the Arabs, as well as the "demographic issue," which pointed out that extending Israeli sovereignty to territories inhabited by 1.5 million Palestinians would threaten either the country's Jewish character or its democratic character—doubts were now being raised, in military as well as civilian circles, about the strategic value of the West Bank and Gaza. Indeed, many suggested that the territories might be a security liability rather than a security asset. A May 1989 poll by the newspaper *Yediot Ahronot,* for example, reported that 75 percent to 80 percent of the IDF's reserve officers believed that withdrawing from the West Bank and Gaza involved fewer security risks than remaining in these territories.

The message that Palestinians sought to send by means of the intifada was addressed to a variety of audiences; in addition to Israel, these included US policymakers and the US public. Palestinians were disturbed by Washington's apparent indifference to the deteriorating situation in the occupied territories and hoped the uprising would force Americans to look at the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in a new light. And with Americans seeing violent Israeli-Palestinian confrontations on their television sets virtually every evening, the intifada did appear to be having an impact on US public opinion. In January 1989, a *New York Times*-CBS poll found that 64 percent of the Americans surveyed favored contacts with the PLO, in contrast with 23 percent who were opposed. The same poll found that only 28 percent judged Israel to be willing to make "real concessions" for peace, whereas 52 percent did not think that Israel was genuinely interested in compromise.

The intifada also had something to say to the rulers of Arab states. By seizing the initiative and launching their own attempt to shake off the occupation, Palestinians were in effect declaring that the lethargy and self-absorption of Arab leaders left ordinary men and women with no choice but to take matters into their own hands. This message also reminded Arab leaders that Palestinians were not the only Arabs unhappy with the status quo. With many Arab countries ruled by inefficient, corrupt, or authoritarian regimes, and with many Arab leaders and elites largely preoccupied with their own power and privilege, or at least widely perceived to be thus preoccupied, the intifada demonstrated that there were limits to the patience and passivity of the Arab rank and file and that it was not inconceivable that popular rebellions would break out elsewhere.

Among individual Arab states, Jordan was the most sensitive to developments in the occupied territories, and it was King Hussein who took the most dramatic action in response to the intifada. On July 31, 1988, the king made a televised address in which he officially relinquished his country's claims to the West Bank, declaring that "the independent Palestinian state will be established on the occupied Palestinian land, after it is liberated, God willing."

Beyond seeking to make the occupied territories difficult to govern and showing that Palestinians, not Israelis, controlled events on the ground, Palestinians sought to send a second message to the Israeli public, again going over the heads of the government, as it were. To show that territorial compromise not only was in Israel's interest but was in fact a viable option, the Palestine National Assembly, meeting in Algiers in November 1988, explicitly endorsed UN resolutions 181 and 242 and declared its willingness to resolve the conflict on the basis of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza living alongside Israel in its pre-1967 borders.

This declaration was aimed in particular at Israelis who might favor territorial compromise in principle but who doubted that this would in fact bring peace. And the message appeared to be having an impact. While Israeli government spokespersons insisted that the Palestinian organization was sincere neither about renouncing terrorism nor about

recognizing Israel, support for a dialogue with the PLO continued to grow in the Jewish state. A March 1989 poll found that 58 percent of those surveyed disagreed with the proposition that Palestinians want a "Palestinian state plus all of Israel in the long run," meaning that much of the Israeli public believed there to be a basis for negotiating with the PLO; and, accordingly, 62 percent said they expected Israeli-PLO talks within five years.[56]

The intifada continued with varying but essentially sustained intensity for the next two years, or even longer by some assessments. Toward the end of this period, the uprising became less organized and lost much of its initial direction and discipline. There was even Palestinian-against-Palestinian violence in the final stages, with charges of collaborating with Israeli security forces sometimes used as a pretext for attacks that were in reality motivated by personal grievances and rivalries. Nevertheless, the intifada was a watershed event. On the one hand, it galvanized Palestinians, helped to foster a significant evolution of the PLO's official position, and consolidated a shift in the center of attention from Palestinian leaders in exile to on-the-ground Palestinians who had stood up to the Israelis and carried the uprising forward. On the other, it shifted the political center of gravity in Israel, not removing the country's sharp ideological divisions but strengthening advocates of territorial compromise and helping to lay a foundation for the peace process that would soon take shape. As explained in mid-1989 by Ze'ev Schiff, one of Israel's most highly regarded analysts of military and security affairs, the intifada "has shattered a static situation that Israel has consistently sought to preserve. . . . It has led to the unavoidable conclusion that there can be no end to the Arab-Israeli conflict without a resolution of the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians."[57]

THE OSLO PEACE PROCESS

A number of diplomatic initiatives in 1989 and 1990 sought to capitalize on the momentum generated by the intifada and the PLO's endorsement of a two-state solution. These included a substantive dialogue between the PLO and the United States, which previously had refused to recognize or talk to the Palestinian organization, as well as peace plans presented by Egypt, the United States, and the Israeli government. None produced tangible results, however; and then in summer 1990, world attention abruptly shifted from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to a new crisis in the Persian Gulf. On August 2, 1990, Iraq under Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, and early in 1991, the United States led a massive and successful military campaign to oust Iraqi forces and restore the Kuwaiti monarchy. Many Palestinians supported Saddam Hussein in the war, in part because he represented an alternative to the political status quo in the region and in part because he championed the Palestinian cause and even fired missiles at Israel.

The Gulf War had an impact on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in at least two important ways. First, because most Palestinians had supported Iraq, Kuwait as well as Saudi Arabia and several other Arab states suspended the important financial and political support they had been providing to the PLO. This significantly weakened the Palestinian organization, which had been heavily dependent on the Gulf for its budget. Second, in part to show that its intervention on behalf of oil-rich Kuwait had not been motivated solely by petroleum interests, the United States launched a diplomatic initiative that moved the Palestine question back to center stage on the region's political agenda. In a speech before a joint session of Congress in March 1991, President George H. W. Bush coupled his declaration of an end

to hostilities against Iraq with the announcement of a new US effort to achieve Arab-Israeli peace on the basis of UNSCR 242 and an exchange of land for peace.

The Bush administration quickly followed up, with Secretary of State James Baker making frequent trips to the Middle East in the spring and summer of 1991. Signaling a change in the pro-Israel policies of the Reagan years, Baker called on Israel to end the expansion of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories. Famously, he told the Shamir government that the administration would not support providing Israel with $10 billion in loan guarantees for the absorption of immigrants from the former Soviet Union if the building of settlements continued.

The culmination of the US diplomatic initiative was the 1991 Middle East Peace Conference in Madrid, convened in late October with cosponsorship by the Soviet Union and usually known simply as the Madrid Peace Conference. The meeting was attended by Israeli, Egyptian, Syrian, and Lebanese delegations, as well as a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation in which the Palestinian team was essentially independent. Also present were the Saudi Arabian ambassador to the United States and the secretary-general of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). The talks, begun at Madrid, continued in Washington and elsewhere throughout 1992 and the first half of 1993. Although no important agreements were reached, the fact that Israeli and Arab representatives were meeting and discussing substantive issues was itself a significant development. Particularly encouraging was the spectacle of Israeli officials negotiating with Palestinians from the occupied territories who were in direct contact with PLO leaders in Tunis.

Another important development that further changed the political landscape during this period was the Labor Party's victory in the Israeli parliamentary election of June 1992. Although narrow, reflecting the continuing political divisions within the Jewish state, Labor's victory was widely interpreted as giving Yitzhak Rabin, the new prime minister, a mandate to seek an accord with the Palestinians. Indeed, the June 1992 balloting is sometimes described as Israel's "intifada election," meaning that it was shaped in substantial measure by the messages directed at the Israeli public by the Palestinian uprising and the PLO peace initiative. Labor's principal coalition partner in the government that now came to power was the peace-oriented Meretz bloc, with the relatively dovish Shas Party supplying the remaining votes necessary for a parliamentary majority.

This was the situation in August 1993 when the world learned that secret negotiations between officials of the Israeli government and the PLO had been taking place in Norway for several months. Even more dramatic was the news that the two sides had reached agreement on a Declaration of Principles, often called the "Oslo Accords," that held out the possibility of a revolutionary breakthrough in the long-standing conflict. The declaration's preamble recorded the parties' hope for the future; it stated that it was time for Israelis and Palestinians to end "decades of confrontation and conflict, recognize their mutual legitimate and political rights, and strive to live in peaceful coexistence and mutual dignity and security to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement and historic reconciliation." The declaration was signed on September 13, 1993, at a ceremony at the White House in Washington. Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO chairman Yasir Arafat both spoke movingly, and Rabin then accepted the hand extended to him by Arafat.

Although important obstacles remained on the road to peace, the Declaration of Principles generated hope throughout the Middle East and beyond and introduced significant changes into the dynamic of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In line with agreed-upon interim arrangements, Israeli forces withdrew from Gaza and the Jericho area in May 1994,

and Palestinians assumed administrative responsibility for the two territories. An Egyptian helicopter then flew Arafat from Cairo to Gaza, where he had decided to establish his permanent residence. Before departing, the Palestinian leader declared, "Now I am returning to the first free Palestinian lands." After Arafat arrived in Gaza, while right-wing Israelis protested in Jerusalem, he delivered to a waiting crowd of two hundred thousand Palestinians a triumphant address from the balcony of the former headquarters of the Israeli military governor.

In addition to this "Gaza and Jericho First" plan, the interim accords outlined provisions for Palestinian self-rule in other parts of the West Bank. Specifically, it called for the establishment of a Palestinian Interim Self-Government Authority, which would take the form of an elected council and would govern during a transition period not to exceed five years. This council was to be elected no later than July 13, 1994, by which time the modalities of the balloting were to have been negotiated, as were structure, size, and powers of the council and the transfer of responsibilities from the Israeli military government and its civil administration.

Finally, the Israeli-PLO accords specified that negotiations to resolve final status issues should commence no later than two years after the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho, at which time the transition period would begin. These negotiations were to cover all outstanding issues, including Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, security, borders, and relations with other neighbors. The transitional period, which was not to exceed five years, would end with the conclusion of a "permanent settlement based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338." UNSCR 338, adopted during the war of October 1973, called on the parties to terminate all military activity and implement UNSCR 242 immediately after the ceasefire.

Many Israelis and Palestinians doubted the sincerity of the other side's commitments. Many Palestinians also complained that the Declaration of Principles did not require a halt to Israeli settlement activity in the West Bank and Gaza. Nor did it explicitly promise that negotiations would lead to the creation of a Palestinian state. As expressed by one Palestinian leader from Gaza, who favored compromise but viewed the accords as one-sided and flawed, the agreement "is phrased in terms of generalities that leave room for wide interpretations. . . . It seems to me that we are trying to read into it what is not there."[58]

Despite this kind of skepticism, as well as the determined opposition of some Israelis and some Palestinians, there was unprecedented movement in the direction of peace during 1994 and 1995. Israeli-Palestinian negotiations during this period culminated in Washington on September 28, 1995, with Arafat and Rabin signing the "Oslo Interim Agreement," often described as "Oslo II." Provisions of the agreement dealt in detail with the redeployment of Israeli military forces and the transfer of power and responsibility to the Palestinian Authority (PA) and subsequently to an elected Palestinian Council. With respect to deployment, the agreement delineated three categories of territory. In Area A, which included the major cities of the West Bank as well as Jericho and Gaza, Palestinians were to have both civilian and security control. In Area B, which included most smaller towns, villages, refugee camps, and hamlets, Palestinians were to exercise administrative authority, with Israel retaining overall security responsibility. In Area C, which included Israeli settlements, military bases, and state lands, Israel retained sole control over both civilian and military affairs. Areas A and B together constituted about 27 percent of the West Bank, exclusive of East Jerusalem, and gave the PA responsibility for about 97 percent of the Palestinian population of Gaza and the West Bank, again exclusive of East Jerusalem (see Chapter 20, Map 20.1).

Oslo II also dealt with the institutions that would govern the areas over which Palestinians exercised authority. These included a Palestinian Council and an Executive

Authority, with the council and the chairman of the Executive Authority, or president, constituting the Palestinian Interim Self-Government Authority. Both the council and the president were to be elected directly and simultaneously by the Palestinian people of the West Bank, Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip, and these elections took place on January 20, 1996. With turnout heavy and monitors pronouncing the balloting to be generally free and fair, the results were a decisive victory for Arafat and Fatah. The Palestinian leader received 88 percent of the vote for the post of chairman of the Executive Authority. Fatah, for its part, won 68 of the council's 88 seats, 21 of these going to candidates who supported the faction but had run as independents.

The Israeli redeployment and the establishment of a Palestinian Interim Self-Government Authority were not the only important accomplishments during the hopeful years of 1994 and 1995. There was also a significant change in Israel's relations with the broader Arab world. With Israel recognized by the PLO, a number of Arab countries were now willing to deal with the Jewish state, and new contacts were established almost immediately after the Declaration of Principles was signed. In October 1994, Israel and Jordan signed a peace treaty, making Jordan the second Arab country after Egypt to formally declare itself at peace with the Jewish state. Israel also established important cooperative relations or joint projects with Morocco, Tunisia, Qatar, and Oman at this time. In addition, Saudi Arabia and other GCC countries ended their boycott of Israel; more generally, the Arab states ended their practice of challenging Israeli credentials at the United Nations. Israel, for its part, supported Oman's bid for a seat on the UN Security Council, this being the first time Israel had supported an Arab country seeking membership on the council.

Nor was cooperation limited to state-to-state relations. In Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, in Arab capitals, and in Europe, Arab and Israeli businesspeople and others met to discuss a wide range of joint ventures and collaborations. A sense of the momentum that had been generated is conveyed in the following excerpt from a May 1994 *International Herald Tribune* article, titled "When Former Enemies Turn Business Partners":

> Israel's transition from pariah to potential partner is most evident in the overtures to Israel by Arab governments and businessmen seeking potentially lucrative deals. Since September, Israeli officials have received VIP treatment in Qatar, Oman, Tunisia and Morocco. Qatar is studying how to supply Israel with natural gas. Egypt has launched discussions on a joint oil refinery, and officials talk of eventually linking Arab and Israeli electricity grids. . . . Millionaire businessmen from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain [are] jetting off to London, Paris, and Cairo to meet Israelis, while Jordanians, Egyptians and Lebanese are rushing to Jerusalem for similar contacts.[59]

While business and commerce were at the heart of most of these contacts, it was understood, especially in Israel, that the noneconomic benefits of business deals, joint ventures, and development projects were no less important. Of equal or perhaps even greater value was their contribution to the normalization of Arab-Israeli relations. Economic linkages and cooperative ventures would give each side proof of the other's good intentions, thereby contributing to the psychology of peace and accelerating its momentum. They would also establish a network of shared interests, thus discouraging any resumption of hostilities and interlocking the new economic and security regimes that appeared to be sprouting in the region.

This was not the whole story of this period, however. Against the hope and optimism generated by what became known as the Oslo peace process stood the continuation of Israel's settlement drive and a cycle of violence that usually began with attacks on Israeli civilians by Palestinian extremists opposed to an accommodation with the Jewish state, followed by harsh and sometimes excessive reprisals by Israel. With respect to settlements, while the number of Israelis living in the occupied territories (exclusive of East Jerusalem) had already grown to 105,000 by the beginning of 1993, settlement activity did not slow; if anything, it accelerated after the signing of the Oslo Accords. By spring 1996, there were 145,000 Israelis living in these territories. With respect to violence, Israelis were particularly disturbed by the growing number of suicide bomb attacks against civilian targets in Israel, for the most part carried out by Hamas (*H·arakat al-Muqāwamah al-'Islāmiyyah*), an Islamist political movement that had grown up in recent years. In 1994 and 1995, these and other attacks, including those directed at civilian and military targets in the West Bank and Gaza, killed 120 Israelis. Also contributing to the violence were attacks on Palestinians by Israeli settlers.

These trends reinforced the fear of each side that the other side was not serious. For Palestinians, the Israeli government appeared to lack the ability and perhaps even the will and desire to confront the settlers and, as had been expected, to limit settlement expansion and preserve the status quo in the West Bank and Gaza until final status negotiations. For Israelis, the PA appeared to lack the ability and perhaps even the will and desire to put an end to the violence that was claiming Israeli lives. There were thus competing trends in late 1995: one extremely hopeful but another that raised fears that the Oslo process might unravel.

The tragic assassination of Yitzhak Rabin on November 4, 1995, marked the beginning of a new phase of the Oslo process. Rabin was shot by Yigal Amir, a young religious Jew and former yeshiva student, following a rally in Tel Aviv in support of the Oslo Accords. Amir had made plans to assassinate Rabin on two previous occasions, although these were never implemented, and he expressed satisfaction upon hearing that his attack had killed the prime minister. In his view, Rabin deserved to die for his willingness to withdraw from parts of the Land of Israel, which he considered a betrayal of the Jewish people.

Shimon Peres, a veteran Labor Party politician who at the time was foreign minister, assumed the premiership upon Rabin's death, and in February, he called for new elections, which were held in May. The election, which was marked by an especially bitter campaign, pitted Peres against Benjamin Netanyahu, the leader of Likud. By a slender margin, 50.5 percent to 49.5 percent, Netanyahu emerged the victor and became prime minister. The coalition government formed by Netanyahu included Knesset members from Likud and religious and other parties from the Center and the Right.

Although he had opposed the Oslo Accords, Netanyahu stated that his government would respect agreements made by the previous government. At the same time, he insisted that he would do only what was clearly required, embracing the letter but not the spirit of the interim agreement, and that he would demand strict Palestinian compliance with all relevant provisions. Netanyahu also had little interest in halting or even slowing the expansion of Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. His government restored the financial incentives offered to settlers that had been canceled by Labor and authorized settlement expansion in the central part of the West Bank, which had been opposed by Labor. More than four thousand new housing units were built during his time as prime minister.

All of this reinforced Palestinian doubts about the peace process, but Israeli actions were not the only Palestinian complaints. Many Palestinians were also disappointed at the

autocratic way in which Arafat and the PA governed the areas over which they had authority. As described by a prominent Palestinian analyst, Arafat "was egocentric, reveled in attention, and was jealous of rivals. He worked tirelessly to keep all the strings controlling Palestinian politics, particularly the financial ones, in his hands alone."[60] There were also growing complaints about corruption within the Palestinian leadership and administration. According to opinion polls, the proportion of Palestinians concerned about corruption was 49 percent in September 1996, 61 percent in March 1998, and 71 percent in June 1999.

The failure of the peace process to halt or even slow Israel's settlement drive, as well as mounting dissatisfaction with Arafat's leadership, contributed to the growing popularity of Hamas, and to a lesser extent Islamic Jihad, another political faction operating under the banner of Islam. Although these were still minority movements, a growing number of Palestinians were receptive to their message that peace with Israel was neither possible nor desirable and that "armed struggle" was the only way to secure Palestinian rights. By late 1998, approximately 20 percent of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza were telling pollsters that Hamas and Islamic Jihad were their preferred political factions.[61] The Islamist movement was also building a grassroots organization, laying the foundation for a more serious challenge in the future, especially if Arafat was unable to obtain meaningful concessions from Israel and unwilling to deliver honest and effective government.

In January 1999, amid mounting political discontent in Israel, not only among those dissatisfied with the meager accomplishments of the peace process but also among those to the right of Netanyahu, the Knesset voted to dissolve itself and hold new elections. The Labor Party was led at this time by Ehud Barak, one of the most decorated soldiers in the history of Israel, and Barak's election campaign emphasized the need for a breakthrough in the peace process and also the withdrawal of the Israeli troops remaining in southern Lebanon. The election was held in May, and the result was a decisive victory for Barak and Labor over Netanyahu and Likud.

Upon becoming Israel's tenth prime minister, Barak moved quickly on his agenda, displaying the straightforward and goal-oriented style of a military officer. There was a flurry of diplomatic activity during the remainder of 1999 and the first half of 2000. This period saw the first Israeli-Palestinian talks addressed to final status issues, as well as a short-lived effort by Israel and Syria to reach a peace agreement and, as Barak had promised, the withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon. Barak's election also brought increased US involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In July 1999, for example, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright coordinated a meeting between Arafat and Barak at the Egyptian resort of Sharm al-Shaykh, where the Israeli and Palestinian leaders signed a document devoted to the implementation of outstanding commitments and agreements. Also notable at this time was President Bill Clinton's strong personal interest and involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

Despite the flurry of diplomatic activity, progress on the ground was limited, and by 2000, both Barak and Clinton had concluded that a summit meeting offered the only possibility for a breakthrough. Clinton was in the last months of his presidency, and having already invested heavily in the Middle East peace process, he hoped that his legacy would include an Israeli-Palestinian accord. Barak believed that only at a summit devoted to final status issues could the two sides make concessions that were not only difficult and painful but also potentially explosive at home. The Palestinians did not share the US and Israeli eagerness for a summit; in fact, they strongly opposed the idea, insisting that they would not

have time to prepare adequately and that continued negotiations were required if the summit, when held, were to have any chance of success. Pressed by the United States, however, and with Clinton assuring Arafat that the Palestinians would not be blamed if the summit ended in failure, the Palestinian leader was unable to refuse the Americans, and the summit opened at Camp David on July 11, 2000.

The overriding final status issues facing the Israelis and Palestinians at Camp David were borders and settlements (which were interrelated), Jerusalem, refugees, and security. Each of these issues would have to be satisfactorily resolved if there were to be a two-state solution that brought the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to an end. With respect to borders, the question was the extent to which Israel would withdraw from the West Bank and Gaza, allowing all or at least most of this territory to be the basis for a Palestinian state, and to what extent Israel would dismantle Jewish settlements in order to make this possible. Palestinians claimed that by recognizing Israel in its pre-1967 borders they had already agreed that the Jewish state would occupy 78 percent of historic Palestine, and they thus insisted that they could not accept less than the remaining 22 percent for their own state. Indeed, they claimed that a territorial compromise on the basis of the pre-1967 borders was implicit in the Oslo Accords. For its part, Israel sought to retain at least some of the West Bank and to reach agreement on a border that would allow the largest-possible number of settlements to be annexed to the Jewish state and the smallest-possible number of settlements to be dismantled because they would otherwise be in the territory of the Palestinian state.

With respect to Jerusalem, the question was the extent to which the city would be redivided on the basis of the pre-1967 borders so that the Palestinians would have all of East Jerusalem as their capital, or whether the borders would be redrawn to reflect the fact that Israel had unified the city after 1967 and since that time had built new neighborhoods and municipal institutions that virtually erased the old boundaries. Furthermore, apart from the question of how to distribute Israeli and Palestinian sovereignty across the various and intertwined Jewish and Arab neighborhoods in the eastern part of the city, there would also have to be agreement about the exercise of sovereignty over places having religious significance for both Jews and Muslims. Of particular importance in this connection was the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif, which neither side was prepared to see fall under the sovereign control of the other.

The refugee question concerned the rights and future of Palestinians who had left or been driven from their homes during the 1947 to 1948 war, many of whom, with their offspring, had lived in neighboring countries, frequently in refugee camps, since that time. The Palestinians insisted that Israel recognize the refugees' "right of return"—their right to return to the communities, now in Israel, they had left in 1947 and 1948. They also called for reparations, to include compensation not only for individuals but also for the property abandoned by the refugees, and they argued that claims for these reparations should be addressed solely to Israel. The refugee question was thus a *political* issue for the Palestinians, and they insisted that Israel's recognition of its responsibility for creating the refugee problem would be a historic gesture—one that was necessary for Israeli-Palestinian peace.

The Israelis, by contrast, insisted on addressing the issue as a *humanitarian* concern. They were unwilling to recognize the Palestinians' right of return, arguing that Israel's Jewish character would be compromised should a significant number of non-Jews be added to the country's population. Already Muslim and Christian Arabs constituted about 20 percent of Israel's citizens. From the Israeli perspective, the solution to the refugee issue thus

lay in compensation and resettlement. No more than a small number of refugees would be permitted to return to Israel, and this would be within the framework of family reunification. The rest would be able either to move to the Palestinian state or, should they prefer, to receive assistance in relocating elsewhere.

After two weeks of complicated, difficult, and ultimately unsuccessful negotiations, the Camp David summit ended on July 25, 2000, with no agreement on any of the key issues. Nor was there agreement after the summit about exactly what had been offered by each side and, in particular, about who was responsible for the failure to reach agreement on any of the final status issues (see Box 2.1).

With distrust already heightened by the failure of the Camp David summit, the situation in the West Bank and Gaza deteriorated quickly, and an escalating cycle of violence, often called the "al-Aqsa intifada," took shape in the fall of 2000. Helping to ignite the violence in late September was a provocative and controversial visit to the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif by Ariel Sharon, who had assumed the leadership of Likud following Netanyahu's electoral defeat in 1999. There is dispute about Sharon's motives for this visit. Sharon himself declared that his purpose was to examine archaeological sites following work by Muslim authorities in an area of historic importance to Jews. Others suggested that his objectives were more political, both to shore up support within Likud against a possible challenge from Netanyahu and to pressure Barak and reduce any chance of a compromise with the Palestinians on control of the holy sites.

Whatever his motivation, or combination of motivations, the visit helped to touch off a cycle of violence that continued throughout the fall and then through 2001, 2002, and beyond. Although the visit itself was completed without incident, clashes soon followed as young Palestinians threw stones at Israeli police, who in return fired tear gas and rubber bullets at the protesters. Rioting later broke out in East Jerusalem and Ramallah, and confrontations continued and became more lethal in the days that followed. By the end of the month, the disturbances had spread to almost all Palestinian towns in the West Bank and Gaza, with twelve Palestinians killed and more than five hundred wounded. Small numbers of IDF troops were also wounded during this period. Palestinian and Israeli deaths resulting from the violence during 2001 were 469 and 191, respectively. The next year was even more lethal; the numbers for 2002 were 1,032 and 321, respectively.

As with the Camp David summit, there are competing narratives about who was responsible for the outbreak of the al-Aqsa intifada. Although it seems clear that Sharon's action was a catalyst, some Israeli accounts contend that the visit merely gave the Palestinians an excuse to launch a campaign of violence that had in fact been planned in advance. A variation on this Israeli narrative is that although the uprising may not have been planned in advance, Palestinian leaders, and Arafat in particular, concluded that it served their interest, and they therefore made no attempt to restrain it once it was under way. For Palestinians, however, the disturbances were simply an understandable response to the deteriorating conditions and hopelessness that characterized life under occupation. Given this situation, it was predictable; and indeed the Palestinians had predicted it and had warned Israeli authorities in advance that Sharon's visit would bring protests that could easily lead to violence.

What was left of the Oslo peace process played out against the background of the intifada in late 2000 and early 2001. Diplomatic initiatives were renewed during these months, including meetings that brought Barak and Arafat together in Paris and Sharm al-Shaykh and even in Barak's home. The most important events during this period were meetings at the White House in December 2000 and at Taba, Egypt, in late January 2001. Bill Clinton

BOX 2.1
COMPETING NARRATIVES OVER THE JULY 2000 CAMP DAVID SUMMIT

Although there is a general consensus on the broad outlines of the positions and proposals that were advanced, there are competing narratives about exactly what transpired at Camp David in July 2000.[62]

One narrative reflects the Israeli position, which also received support from Bill Clinton and some US analysts. It holds that Israel made unprecedented and indeed revolutionary concessions at Camp David. For example, Barak crossed traditional Israeli red lines by agreeing to Palestinian sovereignty in the Jordan Valley and some parts of Jerusalem. More generally, as expressed by Barak himself, for the first time in the history of this conflict, the Palestinians were offered . . . an independent contiguous state in more than 90 percent of the West Bank and in 100 percent of the Gaza Strip, access to neighboring Arab countries, the right of return for Palestinian refugees to any place in the Palestinian state, massive international assistance and even a hold in a part of Jerusalem that would become the Palestinian capital.

Thus, according to this narrative, the summit failed not because of any deficiencies in what the Israelis offered but rather because the Palestinians, and Arafat in particular, were not seriously interested in concluding a peace agreement. After describing what the Israelis offered, Barak stated that "Arafat refused to accept all this as a basis for negotiations and [later] deliberately opted for terror. That is the whole story."[63]

Another narrative, advanced not only by Palestinians but also by some US and Israeli analysts, puts forward two interrelated arguments: that there were serious shortcomings in what the Israelis offered, even if the proposals did break new ground from the Israeli perspective; and that responsibility for the failure to conclude an agreement does not rest solely with Arafat and the Palestinians. Furthermore, many of these analysts contend that the summit was followed by a campaign of disinformation and spin, led by Israeli and US allies of Barak, regarding Israel's "generous offer" and Arafat's "rejectionism." According to Robert Malley, a member of the US team at Camp David, "The largely one-sided accounts spread in the period immediately after Camp David have had

a very damaging effect." Malley additionally asserts, however, that these accounts "have been widely discredited over time."[64]

The substance of this second narrative identifies what its advocates consider serious deficiencies in the Israeli proposals offered at Camp David. Specifically, the borders proposed by Israel made a significant portion of the West Bank and most of East Jerusalem a permanent part of the Jewish state; Israel refused to accept Muslim sovereignty over the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif in return for Palestinian recognition of Jewish sovereignty over the Western Wall; Israel insisted on de facto control of the Jordan Valley for an extended period, thereby reducing further the proportion of historic Palestine controlled by the Palestinian state; Israel also insisted on retaining two slender land corridors running from pre-1967 Israel in the west to the Jordan Valley in the east, thus dividing the Palestinian state into three noncontiguous blocks, in addition to Gaza; and not only did Israel refuse the return of a significant number of Palestinian refugees to the territory they left in 1947 and 1948, but the Israelis at Camp David also refused even to acknowledge Israel's responsibility for the refugee problem.

Those who support this narrative do not necessarily contend that the failure of the summit rests solely with the limitations of Israel's proposals. Many acknowledge that the Palestinians did not do an adequate job of advancing counterproposals and that Clinton and the Americans were too closely aligned with the Israelis and should have done more to fashion compromise proposals. Overall, as Malley writes in this connection, "All three sides are to be indicted for their conduct" at Camp David, including the Palestinians, but the summit did not fail because of Palestinian rejectionism. "If there is one myth that has to be put to rest," he contends, it is that the US-backed Israeli offer was something that any Palestinian could have accepted. One should not excuse the Palestinians' passivity or unhelpful posture at Camp David. But the simple and inescapable truth is that there was no deal at Camp David that Arafat, Abu Mazen, Dahlan or any other Palestinian in his right mind could have accepted.[65]

presented what became known as the "Clinton Parameters" at the December White House meeting. These spelled out what the US president, and many others, considered to be a fair and realistic compromise on each of the issues that had divided Israelis and Palestinians at Camp David, and this led some analysts to suggest that had Clinton presented these at Camp David the summit might have turned out differently.

The Taba meeting took place without US participation. George W. Bush had won the US election of November 2000, and the new US president decided that his administration would not get involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict. The discussions at Taba were nonetheless substantive and productive, and at their conclusion, the parties issued a joint statement saying they had made significant progress even though important gaps remained. The talks concluded shortly before elections were to be held in Israel, and the final communiqué stated that "the sides declare that they have never been closer to reaching an agreement and it is thus our shared belief that the remaining gaps could be bridged with the resumption of negotiations following the Israeli elections."[66]

The elections held on February 6 resulted in a crushing defeat for Barak and Labor and a decisive victory for Sharon and Likud. Sharon received 62.39 percent of the vote, winning by the largest margin ever in Israeli politics. During the electoral campaign, the Likud leader had made clear that his government would have no interest in talks with the Palestinians under the conditions prevailing in the West Bank and Gaza. Thus, if there is a specific date on which the Oslo peace process can be said to have completed its run, it would be February 6, 2001.

NEW ACTORS, CONTINUING CONFLICT

The post-Oslo period was marked not only by the absence of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations but also by a deteriorating situation on the ground. On the one hand, the settler population in the West Bank and Gaza continued to grow and received increased support from the government. On the other, the al-Aqsa intifada continued and became ever more deadly. Thus, whereas there had been something of a contest between hope and doubt during the early years of the Oslo process—when a sense of genuine opportunity competed with a history of distrust and for a few years it even looked like hope was the more justified sentiment—the landscape of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in 2001 was bleak, angry, and moving in a direction that brought satisfaction only to those who opposed the historic compromise promised by the Declaration of Principles.

Approximately 193,000 Israeli settlers were living in the West Bank, exclusive of East Jerusalem, at the beginning of 2001, and the number increased steadily in the years that followed. According to Israeli government figures, the settler population of the West Bank had grown to about 259,000 by the end of 2005. Moreover, according to a report based on a 2004 Israeli government database, 38.8 percent of the West Bank land on which settlements were built was listed as "private Palestinian land," much of it secured illegally for settlement purposes.[67] The settler population also grew in Gaza and East Jerusalem during this period. In Gaza, the number of settlers increased by 18 percent after Sharon became prime minister, from about 6,700 in early 2001 to about 7,900 in August 2005, when the settlers were evacuated. The number of Israelis living in East Jerusalem in areas captured in the June 1967 War increased from 172,000 to 184,000 between the beginning of 2001 and the end of 2005 (see Chapter 20, Map 20.1).

The troubled situation on the ground was also the result of the expanding and increasingly lethal violence associated with the al-Aqsa intifada. Whether condemned as "pure terrorism" by Israelis or defended by Palestinians as "armed struggle" against a determined and deepening occupation, the al-Aqsa intifada did not resemble the popular mass uprising of the first intifada, in which most Palestinians pursued a strategy of nonviolent resistance. With murderous attacks on civilian targets inside Israel, as well as armed assaults on both soldiers and settlers in the occupied territories, the al-Aqsa intifada had the character of a guerrilla war. By the end of 2004, 905 Israelis had been killed by Palestinians, with the largest number of deaths (443) resulting from suicide bomb attacks against civilians in Israel.

If the total number of Israelis killed by Palestinians from 2001 to 2004 was 905, the number of Palestinians killed by Israelis during the same period was more than three times as high: 469 in 2001, 1,032 in 2002, 588 in 2003, and 821 in 2004, for a total of 2,910. Most of these deaths were the result of Israeli military action, although fifty-five Palestinians were killed by settlers. It was inevitable, and understandable, that Israel would respond to the violent assaults by Palestinians and that Israelis would be particularly outraged by the attacks carried out not in the occupied territories but against civilian targets in the country itself. Many observers nonetheless judged the Israeli response to be excessive, and some, including some Israeli analysts, suggested that IDF aggressiveness may have helped to shape the violent character of the intifada. For example, a report written by prominent Israeli scholars and published in 2005 by the Teddy Kollek Center for Jerusalem Studies stated, "The IDF's excessive reaction might have . . . transformed the popular uprising into a full-fledged armed conflict."[68]

Among the strategies Israel employed in an effort to suppress the intifada was Operation Defensive Shield, launched in late March 2002. The operation brought about the reoccupation of the West Bank by the Israeli forces and was intended to undermine the PA as well as to suppress the violence—related objectives in the judgment of the Sharon government. In what became the largest IDF operation in the West Bank since the June 1967 War, armored units moved into major Palestinian cities for the purpose, as Sharon told the Knesset, of capturing terrorists, their dispatchers, and those who support them; confiscating weapons intended for use against Israeli citizens; and destroying the facilities used to produce weapons. Strict and extended curfews were placed on Palestinian communities during the operation, leading human rights organizations to complain that Israel was practicing collective punishment. The fiercest fighting associated with the operation was in Jenin and its refugee camp, considered by Israel to be a center of Palestinian terrorism. During a two-week assault, the IDF used tanks and helicopters to support its troops and suppress local resistance. Some Palestinians and others described the military campaign as a "massacre." An investigation by Human Rights Watch disputed this charge, concluding that a massacre did not take place but that the IDF had used excessive and indiscriminate force in Jenin.

Operation Defensive Shield was officially terminated on April 21, 2002, even though the occupation of areas under PA authority continued. Furthermore, although the campaign achieved some of its objectives—capturing or killing key activists—it did little to restrain the Palestinian intifada. The violence continued and, as noted, brought about a steadily increasing number of Israeli and Palestinian deaths.

With suicide bombings inside Israel continuing in the weeks and months after Operation Defensive Shield, the Sharon government in June 2002 began the construction of what it termed a security barrier (and what critics called a separation wall) in an effort to

prevent terrorists from entering Israel from the West Bank. The barrier was to consist of an electrified fence in most sections, with barbed wire, trenches, cameras, and sensors running alongside. In some areas, it was to involve high concrete walls with fortified guard towers. Designed to seal off the West Bank and projected to be more than four hundred miles long when complete, the barrier was to run through Palestinian territory, roughly following the Green Line but also cutting eastward in order to place settlements on the Israeli side of the divide whenever possible. The first phase of the construction, involving stretches around Jerusalem and in the areas of Jenin, Tulkarm, and Qalqilya, totaling about ninety miles, was completed in summer 2003.

The barrier was strongly condemned by Palestinians, in part because its projected route placed almost 15 percent of the West Bank and the villages in this territory on the Israeli side of the barrier. In some instances, it also divided Palestinian communities or separated Palestinian farmers from their fields and made it difficult for them to market their produce to other parts of the West Bank. If Israelis sought to barricade themselves inside a wall, the Palestinians argued, the wall should be built on Israeli land rather than along a route that imposed new hardships on many Palestinians and also confiscated Palestinian land.

The barrier was also controversial in Israel, in ways that transcended the traditional ideological differences between the Right and the Left. Sharon, like many on the right, had initially opposed the construction of a barrier, despite the popularity of the idea among the Israeli public, because it would divide the Land of Israel and separate not only Palestinians but also many settlers from the Jewish state. Thus, the project was originally proposed by Labor and the Left, rather than Likud and the Right, as a response to Palestinian terrorism. Sharon embraced the concept in the aftermath of Operation Defensive Shield, but the plan remained a divisive issue on the right side of the political spectrum—not only because of its potential territorial implications but also because it might send the message that the intifada had succeeded in forcing Israel to make unilateral concessions.

Four initiatives aimed at reviving the peace process were put forward in 2002 and 2003 in an effort to reverse the deteriorating spiral of events on the ground. Two were well-intentioned but ultimately short-lived Israeli-Palestinian efforts. The first of these was a petition drive initiated in March 2002 by Ami Ayalon, former head of Israel's General Security Services, and Sari Nusseibeh, a prominent Palestinian intellectual and president of al-Quds University in East Jerusalem. The petition called for a two-state solution and the resolution of final status issues along the lines set forth in the Clinton Parameters and the understandings reached at Taba the year before. By late summer 2005, the petition had been signed by 254,000 Israelis and 161,000 Palestinians. The second Israeli-Palestinian effort was the product of a small working group led by Yossi Beilin, who had been minister of justice in the Barak government, and Yasir Abd Rabbo, who at the time was the PA's minister of information. The document produced by the group, known as a "Geneva accord" because of support provided by the Swiss government, was introduced at a signing ceremony in Jordan in October 2003. It also drew on the Clinton Parameters and the discussions at Taba but went into more detail than the Ayalon-Nusseibeh proposal.

One of the two remaining initiatives during this period was a Saudi Arabian proposal introduced at an Arab League summit in March 2002. The proposal advocated a two-state solution and offered Israel not only peace with the Arabs but also full and normal relations. In return, it called upon Israel to return to its pre-1967 borders and agree to the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The Arab League summit, with all twenty-two member states represented, approved the proposal unanimously but added the provision of a "just solution to the Palestinian refugee problem" to be agreed upon in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions.

Finally, there was an international initiative. Called the "Road Map for Peace," or simply the "road map," it was put forward in April 2002 by the United States, the European Union, Russia, and the United Nations, frequently designated "the quartet" in diplomatic circles. The road map put forward a three-stage plan: first, through May 2003, ending violence, normalizing Palestinian life, and building Palestinian institutions; second, from June to December 2003, a transition to an independent Palestinian state with provisional borders and attributes of sovereignty; and third, a permanent status and end of conflict agreement to be completed during 2004 and 2005.

None of the documents and plans put forward in 2002 and 2003 brought changes on the ground or led to a resumption of peace talks. Other post-Oslo developments, by contrast, altered the political landscape in both Israel and the Palestinian territories. In January 2003, the Likud coalition won an overwhelming victory in the Israeli general election, enabling Sharon to form a new center-right government. Surprisingly, though, Sharon would soon modify his long-held opposition to territorial compromise and introduce a new dynamic into Israeli political life.

Of even more immediate consequence was a change in Palestinian politics. In November 2004, Yasir Arafat fell ill, and after being taken to France for treatment, the seventy-five-year-old Palestinian leader fell into a coma and died. Following Arafat's death, Mahmud Abbas, commonly known as Abu Mazen, became head of the PLO, which in theory continued to represent Palestinians throughout the world. Abbas was also nominated to replace Arafat as president of the PA, a position to which he was formally elected in January 2005. As a member of Arafat's inner circle, Abbas represented continuity in Palestinian leadership. At the same time, he was known as someone who favored negotiations with Israel and who considered the use of violence in the name of "armed struggle" and "resistance" to be detrimental to the Palestinian cause.

Palestinian politics at this time was also marked by the emergence of a "young guard," younger members of Fatah who had not been in exile with Arafat and had earned their nationalist credentials during the first intifada or in Israeli jails. These Palestinians complained about the cronyism and corruption of the PA under Arafat. They also resented their own limited influence in Palestinian politics and were unhappy that this appeared to be continuing after Arafat's death. The most prominent member of the young guard was Marwan Barghouti, who had been in prison in Israel since 2002. In late 2004, Barghouti declared that he would run against Abbas in the presidential election, although he subsequently withdrew after receiving assurances that the younger generation would be given more influence in the future.

The young guard was not the only challenge facing Abbas. Of greater and more immediate concern were relations with Hamas, which had gained significantly in popularity during the al-Aqsa intifada. Confronting Abbas in particular was the question of Hamas's participation in elections for a new Palestinian Legislative Council, which were scheduled for January 2006. Israel opposed the Islamist movement's participation since it had not given up its weapons and had not recognized Israel. The United States declined to support the Israeli position, however, and with PA leadership insisting that the question of participation was for Palestinians alone to decide, planning went forward and the elections were scheduled for January 25, 2006.

Israeli politics also saw transformative developments during this period. Early in 2004, Sharon shocked both supporters and opponents by announcing "a change in the deployment of settlements, which will reduce as much as possible the number of Israelis located in the heart of the Palestinian population," and he then indicated that the key element of the new policy would be Israel's total pullout from the Gaza Strip, not only redeploying the IDF but also relocating the settlers and dismantling the settlements. The proposed pullout from Gaza divided the political Right in Israel and brought bitter criticism from many in Sharon's coalition. The prime minister nevertheless pushed ahead, and the pullout began in August 2005, with the IDF forcibly removing those settlers who insisted on remaining in Gaza and then demolishing their residences. The removal of all Israeli civilian and military personnel and the demolition of all residential buildings were completed by mid-September. Opponents of the withdrawal had hoped the pullout would prove to be something of a national trauma, sufficiently difficult and divisive to discourage any consideration, by both the government and the public, of dismantling additional settlements in the future. In fact, however, despite angry denunciations on the political right and determined resistance by some settlers, the evacuation for the most part went smoothly, giving more encouragement to those who favored the evacuation of settlements than to those who opposed it.

In explaining and seeking to justify the withdrawal, Sharon stated that defending the Gaza settlements had become unacceptably difficult and costly, whereas the pullout would facilitate engagement with the enemy, when needed, and improve Israel's security. He insisted that "it is out of strength and not weakness that we are taking this step," yet many, including many Palestinians, pointed out that the disengagement from Gaza was a tacit admission that the intifada was taking a toll and sent the message that armed struggle was more effective than negotiation in securing Israel's withdrawal from occupied territory.

The withdrawal was also a tacit admission that retention of the West Bank and Gaza involved a demographic challenge. The argument, whose implications Sharon and Likud had always refused to accept, is that Arabs would soon outnumber Jews in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza, taken together and that permanent retention of the occupied territories would make Jews a minority in the Land of Israel when this occurred. According to this argument, this situation would present Israel with an impossible choice: either deny political rights to a permanent Palestinian majority, in which case the country would cease to be democratic, or grant citizenship and equality to the Palestinians, in which case the country would not remain Jewish. Sharon's spokesman said in this connection that Israel "must draw its borders so it has a clear Jewish majority, ensuring that it is both a Jewish and democratic state. Staying in Gaza goes against those goals."[69]

Palestinians, for their part, welcomed the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, and many also drew the conclusion that confrontation rather than negotiation seemed to be the best way to obtain territorial concessions from the Jewish state. But Palestinians also had important complaints and reservations. They complained about the unilateral character of Israel's action. The absence of Palestinian involvement, they contended, worked against a smooth and orderly transfer of authority to the PA, which might lead to instability in the future. In addition, many pointed out that the withdrawal hardly made Gaza independent since Israel retained control of its sea and airspace and most land access routes. Indeed, the disengagement plan itself specified that Israel "will guard and monitor the external land perimeter of the Gaza Strip, will continue to maintain exclusive authority in Gaza air space, and will continue to exercise security activity in the sea off the coast of the Gaza Strip."

Many Palestinians also distrusted Sharon's motives, arguing that he was pulling Israel out of Gaza in order to remove security and demographic challenges that might exert pressure for greater territorial concessions elsewhere. According to this analysis, the Gaza pullout was not a step on the road to territorial compromise. On the contrary, by withdrawing from Gaza with its roughly 1.4 million Palestinians, Sharon was sacrificing seventeen Israeli settlements in order to retain the West Bank, or at least most of it. Thus, as expressed by a knowledgeable researcher who works with the Palestinians of Gaza,

> Of course, it is better for Israel to leave Gaza than to remain there and for some sort of renewal to begin. . . . But equally, we should oppose Sharon's Disengagement Plan for the cynical motivations that inspired it and the reality its execution is going to create.[70]

Whatever the relative explanatory power of the various factors that shaped Sharon's decision to evacuate the settlements in Gaza, his action split the Right in Israel and dramatically changed the country's partisan landscape. With continuing opposition to his policies in Likud and with new elections scheduled for March 2006, Sharon formed a new political party, Kadima, in order to have a freer hand in pursuing his policy of unilateral disengagement should the new party succeed in the forthcoming election. A number of Sharon's allies in Likud followed him into Kadima, including Ehud Olmert. Shimon Peres, at the time vice premier in Sharon's beleaguered coalition, stated that he would leave the Labor Party and join the prime minister's next government, should he be elected.

Early in January 2006, the seventy-seven-year-old Sharon suffered a massive brain hemorrhage and subsequently lapsed into a prolonged coma. With the prime minister incapacitated, presumably permanently, Olmert assumed the leadership of Kadima as the party prepared for elections and as Israeli politics entered the post-Sharon era. Sharon's program of unilateral disengagement was a central plank in the party's campaign platform. It specified that the borders to be drawn by Israel would be determined according to three rules: inclusion of areas necessary for Israel's security; inclusion of places sacred to the Jewish religion, and first and foremost a united Jerusalem; and inclusion of a maximum number of settlers, with a stress on settlement blocs. The election gave Kadima 29 seats in the new parliament, with Labor finishing second and winning 19 seats; this enabled Olmert to form a new centrist-governing coalition.

In the meantime, elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council in January 2006 had introduced equally significant changes into Palestinian political life. With a turnout of 78 percent and in balloting pronounced to be free and fair by both international and local observers, the Palestinian public handed a decisive and unexpected victory to Hamas. The party's lists, presented to voters under the label of Change and Reform, captured 74 of the Council's 132 seats. Fatah, by contrast, won 45 seats. Of the remaining 13 seats, 4 went to independent candidates backed by Hamas, 3 went to the Popular Front, 2 went to an alliance of the Democratic Front and several other small factions, 2 went to the Independent Palestine list, and 2 went to the Third Way list of Hanan Ashrawi and Salam Fayyad.

A variety of factors contributed to the Hamas victory. Prominent among these was dissatisfaction with Fatah and the leadership of the PA. There was broad dissatisfaction with the PA, and hence with Fatah, because it had failed to win concessions from Israel or even slow Israeli settlement activity, despite more than a decade of peace negotiations. Hamas, by

contrast, was given credit for the resistance that had forced Israel to dismantle settlements and withdraw from Gaza, the only time the Jewish state had ever relinquished Palestinian territory. Probably even more important, the PA's corruption and cronyism hurt Fatah candidates, whereas Hamas won appreciation from the public for its operation of schools, orphanages, mosques, clinics, and soup kitchens. As reported by one observer shortly after the election,

> Gaza and the West Bank are poor, and although in the past decade Western and Arab governments have poured billions of dollars into the accounts of the PA, most Palestinians believe that, thanks to the corruption of Fatah, they have been systematically robbed of much of that aid money.[71]

Alternatively, Hamas was reported to be devoting about 90 percent of its estimated annual budget of $70 million to social, welfare, cultural, and educational activities, delivering services that the government often failed to provide.

In addition to emphasizing social justice and internal political reform, the Hamas electoral platform also declared, "Historic Palestine is part of the Arab and Islamic land and its ownership by the Palestinian people is a right that does not diminish over time. No military or legal measures will change that right." Accordingly, there were immediate questions about the degree to which Palestinians who voted for Hamas were endorsing the party's rejection of territorial compromise and a two-state solution. Many in Israel argued that this was the case—that the victory of Hamas showed that many and probably most Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza did not accept Israel's right to exist. In fact, however, public opinion polls taken at the time of the election showed only a weak correlation between partisan preference and attitudes toward Israel and the peace process. A poll taken by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PCPSR) two weeks after the election, for example, reported that 40 percent of Hamas voters supported the peace process and only 30 percent opposed it, so it concluded that the victory of Hamas "should not be interpreted as a vote against the peace process." A PCPSR poll taken a month later reported that 75 percent of the Palestinian public wanted Hamas to conduct peace negotiations with Israel, while only 22 percent were opposed to such negotiations.

These developments from 2004 to 2006 swept away the status quo that had been in place for decades. For Palestinians, not only had the thirty-six-year era of Yasir Arafat's leadership come to an end, but the equally prolonged dominance of Fatah had been successfully challenged. For Israelis, the incapacitation of Ariel Sharon removed the man who had dominated the Right for more than a quarter of a century, exercising greater and more sustained influence over Israeli policy in the West Bank and Gaza than had Begin, Shamir, Netanyahu, or any other right-wing politician. And the situation on the ground had changed as well. The intifada, however painful for both Israelis and Palestinians, had helped to persuade Israel, for the first time, to withdraw from occupied Palestinian territory; and Israel's new leadership team was promising additional disengagement, albeit unilateral disengagement. On the Palestinian side, control of Gaza offered an opportunity to initiate new programs of reform and development and to demonstrate, to the Palestinians themselves as well as to Israelis and others, what might be expected from an independent Palestinian state.

Subsequent events played out against this background, and regrettably, they did not involve new opportunities for progress toward peace but instead brought continuing tension and fresh confrontation. Following its success in the Palestinian elections of January

2006, Hamas invited Fatah to join it in a national unity cabinet. Abbas and Fatah declined, however, in large part because Hamas refused to accept international agreements previously signed by the PA, without which negotiations with Israel would be impossible. The situation became much more tense in April 2006 when PA security forces, most of whom were members of Fatah, clashed in Gaza with forces loyal to Hamas and the latter eventually seized control of the territory. Thereafter, Gaza and the West Bank had separate and competing administrations. This split persisted through 2008 and 2009 and was the source of serious tension in Palestinian political life.

Israel held elections for a new Knesset in March 2006, and the balloting confirmed the political primacy of Kadima, now led by Ehud Olmert. In December, Olmert began negotiations with PA president Mahmud Abbas, and over the course of 2007 and much of 2008, the two leaders developed many creative ideas and significantly narrowed the gap between them on key issues, including security, borders, Jerusalem, and refugees. Despite the promise of these negotiations, however, and while both Olmert and Abbas later made statements to the effect that they were "very close," negotiations ended in September 2008 without a final agreement.[72]

In the meantime, the newly elected Olmert government almost immediately faced serious challenges on other fronts. In July 2006, Hizbullah fired rockets at towns south of the Israel-Lebanon border and then attacked two IDF vehicles patrolling on the Israeli side of the frontier, killing three soldiers and kidnapping two others. Israel's need to respond to this provocation was understandable, but at least some observers believed that the situation could have been resolved through diplomacy; many, in any event, judged the IDF's military response to be disproportionate and excessive. Israel's military operation, which included massive air strikes and artillery fire, caused extensive loss of life and damage to the Lebanese infrastructure. Yet the campaign was largely unsuccessful. When the IDF withdrew after thirty-four days of fighting, the result was a stalemate, not an Israeli victory. The campaign also brought widespread criticism of Olmert—from the international community for the devastation caused by the Israeli action and within Israel for failing to manage the war effectively and achieve a satisfactory outcome.

Increasingly accurate missile attacks from Gaza caused tension to rise further from 2006 to 2008. By May 2007, four Israelis had been killed and eighty-four had been injured. Hamas argued that the continuing Israeli blockade of Gaza justified these attacks, but the attacks were intolerable for Israel, and the Jewish state responded with massive retaliatory strikes. During the fall of 2006, Israeli actions killed more than three hundred Palestinians. In December 2008, following a short ceasefire, the Palestinian organization intensified its campaign of rocket attacks on Israeli communities, and Israel again responded with devastating air raids, this time followed by a ground assault in January 2009. The Israeli operation, "Operation Cast Lead," killed more than one thousand Palestinians, most of whom were civilians, according to Israeli human rights organizations. It also caused extensive damage to both government and civilian buildings.

The death and destruction in Gaza brought a predictable array of charges and countercharges. Israelis argued that their military operation was both necessary and justified. They pointed out that the actions of Hamas had initiated the confrontation, and they bitterly observed that the international community, now eager to condemn Israel for defending itself, had not responded to Israel's repeated complaints about Hamas's provocations and its own consistent warnings that its patience in the face of these attacks was limited. Israelis also charged that Hamas had launched many of its missile attacks from areas with a dense

civilian population and that this, not any Israeli desire to punish the people of Gaza, was the main reason for the large number of civilian deaths.

Palestinians and some international observers offered a different assessment. While not necessarily defending Hamas, they argued that the root of the problem lay in the Israeli block-ade of Gaza and, more generally, in Israel's refusal to offer the Palestinians a serious alternative to armed struggle. In addition, even those who expressed sympathy for the Israeli position often judged the Jewish state's action to have been disproportionate and significantly beyond what could be justified. These arguments were rekindled in the fall of 2009 when the "Report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict" was submitted. The mission was headed by Richard Goldstone, former judge of the Constitutional Court of South Africa and former prosecutor of the international criminal tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. The Goldstone report condemned both Hamas and Israel, but it was much more critical of Israel. It condemned Israel in particular for failing to take the actions needed to prevent the widespread loss of civilian life. Subsequently, while continuing to be critical of Israel's actions on the ground, Goldstone stirred new controversy in April 2011 when, in a *Washington Post* opinion article, he distanced himself from some of the report's conclusions and endorsed the Israeli position that Palestinian deaths had not been the result of deliberate policy.

Israel held elections for a new Knesset in February 2009 against the background of these developments, and Likud, once again led by Benjamin Netanyahu, was victorious. Netanyahu initially formed a right-wing coalition with a slender parliamentary majority. Coalition politics changed in May 2012, however, when Netanyahu announced that Likud and the centrist opposition Kadima Party had formed a national unity government. The coalition agreement pledged to "renew the political process with the Palestinian Authority," but this was never implemented since Kadima left the coalition two months later following a failure to reach agreement with Likud on an important and controversial domestic political issue—regulations for drafting ultra-Orthodox men into the IDF. Netanyahu and Likud called early elections several months later, and the balloting was held in January 2013. Likud presented a common list with Yisrael Beitanu, a secular right-wing party, and captured 31 Knesset seats, well ahead of its nearest rival. The new government, again headed by Netanyahu, was dominated by Likud but included centrist as well as rightist parties. Kadima received only 2 seats, in large part because its leader, Tzipi Livni, and others had left to form a new political party.

In the Palestinian political arena, Fatah and Hamas worked during this period, with uneven results, to end their four-year rift. Meeting in Cairo in talks brokered by Egypt, Abbas and Hamas leader Khaled Meshal signed a "Reconciliation Pact" in May 2011. The pact called for an interim government to administer both the West Bank and Gaza Strip and to prepare for presidential and parliamentary elections within a year. Talks aimed at implementing the agreement made only limited progress, however, and although further agreements were signed in Doha in February 2012 and in Cairo in May of the same year, skeptical observers waited to see whether and when there would be a unity government and new elections and with what implications.

The second decade of the twenty-first century brought not only continuing domestic political challenges for Israelis and Palestinians but also regional developments that introduced additional uncertainties. One source of tension was Iran's increasingly effective efforts to produce weapons-grade nuclear materials. Israel and its supporters insisted that Iran could not be allowed to acquire nuclear weapons, raising the prospect of an Israeli attack on Iranian facilities if international sanctions failed to bring a change of course in Tehran.

Perhaps the most important sources of regional uncertainty during the first years of the current decade were associated with what became known as the "Arab Spring," which involved massive antigovernment protests in a number of countries and led to the fall of long-standing authoritarian regimes in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen. The change of regime in Egypt was of particular concern, especially after a candidate affiliated with the Islamist Muslim Brotherhood, Muhammad Morsi, became the country's first democratically elected president in June 2012. While promising to respect Egypt's international engagements, including its peace treaty with Israel, and while also helping to broker a ceasefire between Hamas and Israel when the two were on the brink of war in November 2012, Morsi and his party were much more critical of Israel than had been the Mubarak government, and this raised the possibility of a change in the Egyptian-Israeli relationship. It also raised the possibility that Egypt might build a stronger alliance with Hamas. Morsi was ousted by the Egyptian military in July 2013, however, and Egypt-Israel relations returned to the "cold peace" based on mutual interest by which it had been characterized for decades.

There were also diplomatic initiatives during these years. The election of a new American president, Barack Obama, brought hopes that the United States would work to revive the Israel-Palestinian peace process. In May 2011, Obama made an especially strong speech in which he called for a Palestinian state based on Israel's pre-1967 borders. Then in July 2013, following Obama's reelection the previous November, the new US secretary of state, John Kerry, launched a peace initiative that involved numerous meetings with Israeli and Palestinian leaders, as well as direct meetings between Palestinian and Israeli officials. The initiative never made significant or sustained progress, however, despite Kerry's very substantial commitment. With each side blaming the other and with some blaming the United States as well, Kerry reluctantly abandoned his quest nine months after it had begun.[73]

The Palestinians undertook diplomatic initiatives of their own during this period. In fall 2011, Mahmud Abbas declared that Palestine would seek to become a full member of the United Nations, thereby giving it access to additional channels through which to put pressure on Israel and the United States. Israel urged the United States to oppose the Palestinian effort, however, and the Obama administration aligned itself with the Israeli position and threatened to veto any resolution for full Palestinian membership that came to the Security Council. Indeed, the United States terminated its aid to UNESCO when, later in the fall, despite American objections, Palestine was granted full membership in the UN agency.

The Palestinians had more success in November 2012 when they sought, and received, recognition by the UN General Assembly. By a vote of 138 to 9, with forty-one abstentions and with the United States among the dissenters, the assembly passed a resolution upgrading Palestine to a "nonmember observer state" at the United Nations. Predictably, Israel denounced the resolution, and a few days later, the Netanyahu government announced plans to expand Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The Palestinians also continued to press their case for international recognition beyond the UN. In December 2014, the European Union passed a resolution recognizing Palestinian statehood. The Vatican officially recognized the Palestinian state in May 2015.

An additional dimension of the Palestinians' international campaign in support of their cause is the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement, popularly known as BDS. Claiming inspiration from the campaign to end apartheid in South Africa, the BDS movement was initiated in 2005 by a coalition of Palestinian nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and since that time, it has evolved into a global campaign with support in many

countries. It calls for divestment from Israeli companies, or at least those that do work in the occupied territories, and the boycott of Israeli activities and institutions, including Israeli universities. The movement has been strongly criticized by Israel and its supporters, who argue that many of its advocates are motivated by anti-Semitism and also that it seeks to undermine Israel's right to exist, not only to pressure the Jewish state into withdrawing from the West Bank and East Jerusalem.[74] The effectiveness of BDS has also been questioned, and even many supporters acknowledge that its impact has thus far been limited. Nevertheless, the movement has continued to gain support in some quarters, particularly in Europe and on some American university campuses. In November 2015, for example, the European Union mandated that there be identifying labels on Israeli products manufactured in the West Bank and exported to Europe.

The fighting between Israel and Hamas in Gaza was replayed in fall 2012 and again in summer 2014. The 2012 clashes, though deadly, did not escalate into a full-blown and sustained confrontation, thanks in large part to mediation provided by Egypt and the United States. By contrast, summer 2014 brought violence and destruction that exceeded even that of the Israel-Hamas "war" of January 2009. Responding to Hamas rocket attacks and the use by Hamas of tunnels to carry out raids or to attack or kidnap Israelis, the IDF launched Operation Protective Edge. Air strikes were accompanied by the entrance into Gaza of Israeli troops. By the time a ceasefire was accepted in late August, more than 2,100 Palestinians had been killed, the majority of whom were civilians, and seventy Israelis, sixty-four of whom were soldiers, had lost their lives. There was also extensive damage to housing and infrastructure in Gaza. As in the past, there were bitter arguments about the legitimacy of Hamas' attacks on Israel and about the legitimacy and proportionality of the Israeli response.

Developments during the years that followed left prospects for an Israeli-Palestinian accord as remote as ever. Likud scored a decisive victory in the Knesset elections of March 2015, and Israeli settlement activity continued to surge under the right-wing Netanyahu government. By early 2018, the number of Israeli settlers in the West Bank was about 400,000, with another 215,000 Israelis living in East Jerusalem. Among Palestinians, anger was fueled not only by the deepening occupation and expansion of Israeli settlements but also by discontent with the Palestinian Authority under the leadership of Mahmoud Abbas and by the continuing division between Fatah and Hamas. A poll in December 2016 reported, for example, that two-thirds of the Palestinian public believed a two-state solution to the conflict with Israel was no longer possible, and about the same proportion wanted Abbas to resign. In October 2017, Fatah and Hamas agreed to a "reconciliation" arrangement that gave Fatah civilian control in the Gaza Strip, but an April 2018 poll found that only one-third of those surveyed were satisfied with the performance of the reconciliation government. And again, two-thirds wanted Abbas to resign.[75]

The election of Donald Trump as US president in November 2017 brought increased American support for Israel and its occupation policies. Particularly significant and symbolic was Trump's decision to move the American Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem—something that past presidents, both Republican and Democratic, had been unwilling to do. The new American Embassy opened in May 2018. Trump also appointed as American ambassador to Israel a man who endorsed and had financially supported Israeli settlement activity in the West Bank.

Tensions were also fueled by new confrontations between Israel and Hamas in the spring and summer of 2018. Beginning in March, Palestinians in Gaza began a series of

protest demonstrations near the territory's border with Israel. The protests were organized by independent activists but had the support of Hamas. While organizers stated that the demonstrations were to commemorate the *nakba* and affirm the Palestinian refugees' right of return, demonstrators were also protesting and were clearly motivated by the move of the US Embassy to Jerusalem and Israel's deepening blockade of Gaza. In response to the protests, Israel deployed the IDF and, in some cases, shot at and killed Palestinian demonstrators. On May 14, as the day of Israeli independence and the Palestinian *nakba* approached, protesters massed along the border and some tried to cross into Israel. Israeli soldiers responded by firing at the Palestinians; according to Palestinian sources, fifty-eight were killed, and more than one thousand were wounded. Adding yet another dimension to the confrontation, Palestinians in Gaza sent kites and balloons with fire across the border and into Israel in summer 2018. In response, Israel imposed additional restrictions on the entry of goods into Gaza and blocked all delivery of fuel and gas.

As in the past, each side blamed the other for these confrontations; and by this time also, significantly, majorities on each side appear to have concluded that the other side was not seriously interested in territorial compromise and peace. Accordingly, the two questions posed by this situation were whether it still made sense to think about the conflict in terms of a two-state solution; and if not, what was the best way to think about the alternative? A two-state solution was not beyond the realm of possibility. But it would require that the parties suddenly find the political will to address final status issues seriously and accept a compromise formula—perhaps based on the parameters offered by Bill Clinton in late 2000 or the Olmert-Abbas negotiations of 2007 and 2008. In mid-2018, there was little to suggest that this political will would be found in the foreseeable future.

The alternative, made increasingly likely by the facts on the ground, is what many observers were beginning to describe as a "one-state reality," meaning that Israel would retain most if not all of the West Bank and offer its Palestinian inhabitants local autonomy and improved security and economic conditions. Some Israelis argued, as they had in the 1980s before the first intifada, that the Palestinians would eventually accept this formula and that Israel could then, without significant cost, avoid any division of the historic Land of Israel. It was far from evident that Palestinians were any more likely to accept this than they had been a quarter of a century earlier, however. On the contrary, in the absence of any prospect for the establishment of a Palestinian state, it was hard to imagine anything other than continued conflict. And even if the Palestinians should grudgingly conclude that they had no choice but to accept a political formula that leaves them stateless, Israel would be left with the question of whether it can retain its democratic character if a significant proportion of the permanent population within its borders, possibly a majority, does not have full political rights, or if it can retain its Jewish character if it extends these rights to the Palestinians.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has sometimes produced surprises. Both Sadat's trip to Jerusalem in 1977 and the secret Israel-PLO negotiations in Oslo in 1993 introduced a hopeful political dynamic that few would have predicted beforehand. And since many Israelis and Palestinians have long been ready for meaningful compromise, perhaps the future holds additional surprises—developments that will restore hope and set in motion a peace process that this time, finally, will lead to a just resolution of the conflict. Unfortunately, as welcome as this would be, the situation in the summer of 2018 was such that this would indeed be a surprise.

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