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HOLLAND
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OUACHITA BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

THE PALESTINIAN RIGHT TO
SELF-DETERMINATION AND STATEHOOD

AN INDEPENDENT STUDY SUBMITTED TO
THE HONORS PROGRAM
IN CANDIDACY FOR
GRADUATION AS AN HONORS STUDENT

BY
BETH HOLLAND

ARKADELPHIA, ARKANSAS
MAY 1984

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to Martin Ziebell, Dr. Randall O'Brien, Dr. Fran Coulter, and Dr. Raouf Halaby, who graciously corrected my mistakes and encouraged me.

Thanks are also due my family and Vicki Smith for withstanding my many complaints and for aiding me in the menial tasks which often accompany research.

Beth Holland

INTRODUCTION

The boy divided his attention between the black clouds forming in the sky above the beach and his intricate sand castle. Only when the rain began filling his elaborate mote did he rise reluctantly and trot towards home.

When the rain subsided two hours later, the boy, having been grounded for his wet and sandy appearance, convinced his younger brother to go to the beach and guard his sand castle. When the brother arrived on the beach, however, he found that another boy had confiscated his brother's property and was building ugly little huts around the beautiful castle. "What are you doing to my castle?" demanded the brother, assuming his older brother's role of ownership. "I've been here for an hour," replied the present occupant, staring defiantly. "Where have you been?" Both boys stood their ground, refusing to yield an inch of sand.

This scenario represents the problem of right and wrong in today's world. Most people view themselves as right. In the words of an Israeli social scientist, "'Perceptions are as important as reality if decision-makers operate on the basis that their perceptions are reality.'

Actions and policies are made on the understanding of perceived reality."¹

Israel and the United States believe that the Israelis have the right to exist as a nation and that the Palestinians do not have this right. The Palestinians believe that Israel, with the help of the United States, has usurped their land, and that they, the Palestinians, have the right to self-determination² and statehood.

Who, then, is right, and who is wrong? The writer of this paper believes that Israel's right to statehood has been used to justify the suffering of the Palestinians. When right is used to sanction another's misery, it becomes wrong. Therefore, hoping that she may strengthen an unpopular position, the writer of this paper will look with Palestinian eyes at the official positions of the United States, Israel, and the frontline Arab states of Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan regarding the issue of the Palestinian right to self-determination and statehood.

It is necessary to clarify some basic terminology used in this paper. The term "Palestine" will refer to the area known as Mandate Palestine. This does not include the area now known as Jordan, but does include the Israeli-occupied

¹As quoted by John Edwin Mroz in Beyond Security: Private Perceptions Among Arabs and Israelis, (New York: International Peace Academy, Inc., 1980), p.27

²Self-determination is a "decision by a territorial unit as to its future political status.", 2nd ed. (1949), s.v. "Self-determination."

territories known as the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and the Golan Heights. The term "Palestinian" will refer to those persons who are or were refugees of Palestine. The term "Middle East" will refer to the region consisting of Bahrain, Cyprus, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Yemem (Aden), and Yemen (Sana).³

To understand the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, one must first have a historical knowledge of the conflict. This paper will overview the history of Palestine before and during the British mandate of 1922 and the history of the Palestinians after Israel became a state in 1948.

³For a map of the Middle East, see page 8.

PALESTINE

Beirut

LEBANON

Damascus

SYRIA

Mandate Palestine ———

Occupied Territories - - - - -

Capital Cities ●

Lake Tiberias
(Sea of Galilee)

Jordan
River

Ammān

West

Jerusalem

Bank

DEAD
SEA

Gaza
Strip

EGYPT

(Sinai Peninsula)

ISRAEL

TRANS-JORDAN
(JORDAN)



PART I: HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Chapter

- I. PALESTINE BEFORE THE BRITISH MANDATE
(3500 B.C.-A.D. 1922)
- II. PALESTINE DURING THE BRITISH MANDATE
(1922-1947)
- III. THE PALESTINIANS AFTER THE PROCLAMATION
OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL
(1948-1984)

CHAPTER I
PALESTINE DURING THE BRITISH MANDATE
(3500 B.C.-A.D. 1922)

The Jews first moved to Palestine around 1900 B.C. They remained there until the Babylonians forced them into exile in 586 B.C. When the Persian king, Cyrus, conquered Babylonia 50 years later, he allowed the Jews to return to Palestine. In 63 B.C., the Romans invaded Palestine, then known as Judah, and it became a part of the Roman Empire. Conflicts occurred when the Jews desired autonomy, and the Romans forced the Jews to flee in fear of persecution, leaving only a small minority of Jews in Palestine.

The Arabs came to Palestine around 3500 B.C. They conquered the area of Palestine in the A.D. 600's in order to spread their newly adopted Islamic religion. Other peoples, including Turkish Seljuks, European Christian crusaders, followers of the Muslim Saladin, and Egyptian Mamelukes, controlled Palestine until the Ottoman Turks seized power in A.D. 1517.⁴

The majority of the Palestinians under Ottoman rule were Arabs and could be divided into two basic classes: the Fellaheen or peasantry and the Madiyeen or townspeople.

90% of the Palestinian Arabs were fellaheen and lived in villages on communally owned lands. Land, family, and

⁴World Book Encyclopedia, s.v. "Palestine," 1984

village were vitally important to them. Each village had a council of elders to decide important matters for the people. Because the Ottomans lacked a strong state, the fellaheen became accustomed to defending their villages against frequent raids by desert-dwellers called Bedouins. These village-centered activities developed a national consciousness in the Palestinian Arabs, which would later grow into a desire for statehood.

The life of the fellaheen was relatively stable until 1858 when the Tanzimat or Land Code was introduced in order to save the crumbling Ottoman Empire. The land reform required the registration of land and the monetization of taxes. The Arab peasants, who owned their lands communally, realized that individual ownership would prevent village people from allocating new land to their sons, and that there was a possibility of increased taxes for individuals. In order to preserve their way of life, the peasants sold their land to the townspeople with the agreement that the fellaheen would control distribution of the land. This worked until the townspeople began to sell the land to distant notables. The new owners charged high tenancy fees which the peasants could not pay, forcing the peasants from the land.⁵

In the late nineteenth century, Jews began steadily moving into that part of the Ottoman Empire called Palestine.

⁵Martin Ziebell, "Poverty and Culture," Earlham College, June 2, 1983

What caused them to leave their homes, and why did they come to Palestine?

The Jews came to Palestine to escape persecution, and many came as a result of Zionist movement. Zionism had many forms: cultural, religious, and political. Theodore Herzl, the founder of political Zionism, promoted the colonization of Palestine and the strengthening of a Jewish national consciousness. In 1897, he formed a Zionist Congress whose aim was "to create for the Jewish people a home in Palestine secured by public law."⁶

The Jews chose Palestine as their home for natural reasons: the Jewish lifestyle was saturated with references to Palestine, the Hebrew language was common th both European and Palestinian Jews, and, at one time, the Jews were autonomous in Palestine. Also, the Jews claimed biblical rights to Palestine.

Early in the twentieth century, the Jews saw their chance to obtain approval by law for a Jewish homeland in Palestine. The British had gained control of the Suez Canal and showed interest in surrounding lands. After the beginning of World War I, Theodore Herzl began talking to British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Arthur James Balfour about the possibility of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. The result of these negotiations was the issuance of the

⁶Charles R. Gellner, The Palestine Problem, (Washington D.C.: Library of Congress, Public Affairs Bulletin No. 50, 1947), p.3

Balfour Declaration in October of 1917. The declaration read as follows:

His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours 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.⁷

The phraseology of this declaration was purposefully vague. For example, there was no precedent for the term "national home"; hence, interpretations of the term varied. Many people believed the term to be the equivalent to "state" or "commonwealth".

Another carefully worded phrase read, "...it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine..." It is important to note that the declaration only guaranteed the "civil" and "religious" rights of the non-Jewish communities in Palestine. It failed to mention their political rights. Later, however, when British Commander David G. Hogarth was sent to explain the Balfour Declaration to King Hussein, the leader of the Arabs, Hogarth assured the king that "Jewish settlement in Palestine would only be allowed in so far as would be consistent with the political and economic freedom of the Arab population."⁸ The fact that Hogarth used the

⁷Ibid, p.6

⁸Ibid, p.11

term "political" instead of "civil" seemem to be an inconsistency in British policy.

King Hussein's reply, on behalf of the Arabs, was that he would provide a refuge for the Jews, but that Arab sovereignty over Palestine would not be surrendered.

The Jewish reaction to the Balfour Declaration was made clear when the British Zionists held a celebration in the London Opera House. During the gala, a Dr. Gaster stated that it was the Zionists' job to assign a meaning to the term "national home" which would be closest to the original meaning decided upon by the First Zionist Congress. That meaning, according to Dr. Gaster, was the establishment of an "...autonomous Jewish Commonwealth in the fullest sense of the word."⁹

The American reaction was summed up by President Wilson's statement that "...our Government and people are agreed that in Palestine there shall be laid the foundations of a Jewish Commonwealth."¹⁰ The United States government was interpreting the term "national home" in a way favorable to the Zionists.

⁹Ibid, p.10

¹⁰Ibid, p.14

CHAPTER II
PALESTINE DURING THE BRITISH MANDATE
(1922-1947)

After World War I, disputes arose concerning promises made to the Arabs by Great Britain before the war. In order to persuade the Arab world to aid them in defeating Turkey, the British High Commissioner in Egypt, Sir Henry McMahon, promised that Great Britain would recognize Arab independence in certain Arab territories. In a letter written to King Hussein in October, 1915, McMahon agreed that the boundaries would be "...the Red Sea--Indian Ocean--Persian Gulf line, Persia on the east, the Mediterranean on the west and what is roughly the present southern boundary of Turkey on the north."¹¹ There would, however, be these exceptions: "The districts of Mersin and Alexandretta, and portions of Syria lying to the west of the districts of Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo, cannot be said to be purely Arab, and must on that account be excepted from the proposed delimitation..."¹² The Arabs believed the proposed independent territory to include Palestine and entered the war on this account. It was McMahon's intention, however, to exclude Palestine from the delimitation, and he believed that King Hussein understood this. He later made a public statement to that effect.

¹¹Ibid, p.16

¹²Ibid, p.17

Despite these disputes, Great Britain found herself in military occupation of Palestine after the war and something had to be done with the ungoverned territory. At the Peace Conference in Paris on January 18, 1919, the newly-created League of Nations adopted the mandates system to administer territories detached from Germany and Turkey during the war. Under this system, occupied territories would be managed by various Allied Powers, presumably until these territories could gain autonomy. Palestine became a mandate of Great Britain in 1922.

There are two documents which are important in discerning opinions about the Palestine problem at the time of the Paris Peace Conference of 1919. The first appeared in a report to the American Peace Conference delegation by the Section of Territorial, Economic, and Political Intelligence. It recommended that the League of Nations recognize Palestine as a Jewish state as soon as it became a Jewish state in fact. It further stated that, "It is right that Palestine should become a Jewish state, if the Jews, being given full opportunity, make it such."¹³

The second document relevant to opinion at the time of the Peace Conference was written by Henry C. King and Charles R. Crane, after they had been sent by President Wilson to investigate Near Eastern sentiment concerning the Palestine problem. Although their report reached the conference too late to have any effect on it, the results

¹³Ibid, p.26

of their investigation opposed an extreme Zionist program for Palestine. The King-Crane Commission reported that "... 'a national home for the Jewish people' is not equivalent to making Palestine into a Jewish State; nor can the erection of such a Jewish State be accomplished without the gravest trespass upon the 'civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine.'" A fact that came out repeatedly in the Commission's conference with Jewish representatives was that the Zionists looked forward to a practically complete dispossession of the present non-Jewish inhabitants of Palestine by various forms of land purchase. Said the King-Crane Commission, "... it is to be remembered that the non-Jewish population of Palestine--nearly nine-tenths of the whole--are emphatically against the entire Zionist program. The tables show that there was no one thing upon which the population of Palestine were more agreed than upon this..."¹⁴

The Arab dissatisfaction mentioned by the King-Crane Commission was revealed in a public way when, in 1921, frustrated Arabs rioted in Jaffa and other areas of Palestine. The Arabs argued that the increasing Jewish immigration was causing too great a decrease in lands and jobs available to Arabs. As a result of this complaint, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill officially enunciated British policy concerning immigration into Palestine. Churchill said that

¹⁴Ibid, p.27

the immigration could not be so great that Palestine could not absorb settlers into its economy.

After Churchill discussed the immigration policy, he went on to talk about the establishment of a constitution in Palestine. In connection with this, he officially settled the McMahon-Hussein dispute of 1915 by saying that the boundaries of Arab independence definitely excluded Palestine.¹⁵

When the United States heard Churchill's statement on Palestine, it felt that an official declaration of Congress concerning the problem of Palestine was in order. The resolution, which was signed by the President in September of 1922, stated that the United States favored the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people but that nothing should be done to prejudice the rights of Christians and other non-Jewish communities in Palestine. This resolution sparked American interest in the problem of Palestine.

Since the United States refused to participate in the League of Nations, they were not invited to join the negotiations concerning the mandates. Nevertheless, the U.S. State Department insisted that the United States had rights in these mandated territories due to the fact that the U.S. had participated in the war and was a contributor to its success. In 1924, an agreement was signed by the United States and Great Britain concerning the administration of the mandate of Palestine. Great Britain would administrate

¹⁵Ibid, p.32

the mandate and would modify the mandate if necessary. The United States could decline to accept as applicable to American interests any modifications damaging those interests.

After the mandate policies were determined, there was another problem to which the British turned their attention. Great Britain had promised Arab independence in certain territories, and the area lying east of the Jordan River was within the boundaries of these territories. In 1922, the British government, with the approval of the League of Nations, exempted Trans-jordan from the mandate clauses dealing with the Jewish national home. No Jews have been allowed to acquire land in Trans-jordan. In 1946, Trans-jordan, now known as Jordan, became a state.¹⁶

In 1925 and 1926, when the amount of Jewish immigrants entering Palestine was greater than its absorbing capacity, argument arose from the Arabs concerning this problem of Jewish immigration. Later, in 1928, these arguments erupted into Jewish and Arab rioting, when it was believed that religious rights were violated at the Wailing Wall, a shrine sacred to Jews and Arabs alike. Approximately 200 deaths occurred during the rioting.

A commission of inquiry was charged by the British to investigate the cause of the riots. Among these causes, the commission, led by Sir Walter Shaw, listed the problem of land ownership and tenancy. According to the Shaw Commission,

¹⁶Ibid, p.32-39

"...between 1921 and 1929, as a result of large sales of land, Arab tenants were being evicted from their holdings."¹⁷ This was partially due to the Land Code of 1858. Other land was being sold to the Jews by wealthy landowners and Arab peasants who sold part of their land and used the money gained to increase the value of the remaining land.¹⁸ As a result of its investigation, the Shaw Commission recommended that His Majesty's Government should issue a clear statement of policy to be pursued in Palestine.

The Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations also had something to say regarding the rioting in Palestine. The Commission reprimanded Great Britain for allowing the outbreak and redefined the essence of the mandate for Palestine. The objects of the mandate were: "The establishment of the Jewish National Home" and "The establishment of self-governing institutions..."¹⁹ The immediate obligation of Great Britain was to place Palestine under such conditions to make possible the objects of the mandate.

Pressure from the Mandates Commission led Great Britain to issue the White Paper of 1930. This Paper stressed that despite some Zionist claims that the primary role of

¹⁷Ibid, p.69

¹⁸Royal Institute of International Affairs, Great Britain and Palestine, 1915-1945, 3rd ed., (London and New York: Hyperion Press, Inc., 1946), p.57

¹⁹Gellner, The Palestine Problem, p.72

the mandate was to create a Jewish national home, the British government still held that the rights of the non-Jewish population had equal importance. Said the Paper, any power given the Jewish Agency, the Jews' representative body, was permissive and not obligatory. The Paper further noted that, as there was only 6,554,000 dunums of cultivable land in Palestine, there was no land available for agricultural settlement by new immigrants. The Jewish Agency was criticized for employing only Jews to meet its labor needs.

The Jewish reaction to the 1930 White Paper was extremely negative. Dr. Chaim Weizmann, a Jewish leader and later the first president of the state of Israel, resigned from the Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency. Others claimed that the White Paper violated the mandate.

In February, 1931, British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald issued a statement to clarify the White Paper. In it, he said that although the civil rights of non-Jewish people in Palestine must be safeguarded, this did not mean that these civil rights were to remain unchanged. In the same way, "the words of article 6, 'ensuring that the rights and position of other sections of the population are not prejudiced,' were not considered a barrier to Jewish immigration and settlement."²⁰ MacDonald also stated that the right of the Jewish Agency to employ only Jewish labor would be recognized.

²⁰Ibid, p.78

Although the Jews were happy with the clarification of the 1930 White Paper, the Arabs felt that MacDonald's statement nullified the purpose of the 1930 document.

By 1935, five Arab parties had been formed, but there was no one body representative of all of the Arabs. In November, 1935, these five parties placed three demands before the British High Commissioner: "1) establishment of a democratic government; 2) no more Arab land transfers to Jews; and 3) immediate cessation of Jewish immigration and the formation of a committee to determine the absorptive capacity of the country."²¹

When these demands were not met to the satisfaction of the Arabs, an Arab National Committee was formed in 1936, calling for a general strike. In April of the same year, all Arab parties formed an Arab Higher Committee whose president was Haj Amin El Husseini, the Mufti of Jerusalem. This committee called for a continuance of the general strike and the implementation of the three demands placed before the British High Commissioner.

A Royal Commission, of which William Robert Wellesley, Earl Peel, was chairman was appointed to investigate the causes of the 1936 disturbances and to make recommendations concerning these causes.

The Peel Commission listed two underlying causes for the 1936 disturbances: "1) The desire of the Arabs for national independence, and 2) Their hatred and fear of the estab-

²¹Ibid, p.82

lishment of the Jewish National Home."²² Their primary recommendation was to create separate states in Palestine for the Jews and the Arabs. The Jews would have a state in the north and west while the Arabs would have a state in the south and east and would be joined to Trans-jordan.

The Jewish reaction caused a split in the Jewish Agency, as half favored and half opposed the partition. The Arab reaction was one of united disapproval.

The partition plan was finally pronounced impracticable by the British in 1938.

Another outcome of the 1936 disturbances was the British decision to dissolve the Arab Higher Committee. Warrants of arrest were issued for six of its members, who, subsequently, fled or were deported to neighboring countries.

In May, 1939, British Prime Minister MacDonald published another White Paper concerning Palestine. The Paper was divided under the headings of constitution, immigration, and land. Concerning the constitution, MacDonald said that it was not the intention of Great Britain "...that Palestine should be converted into a Jewish State against the will of the Arab population of the country...His Majesty's Government therefore now declare unequivocally that it is not part of their policy that Palestine should become a Jewish State."²³ The Prime Minister went on to say that neither would Palestine be an Arab state, but that it would be ruled equally by both.

²²Ibid, p.83

²³Ibid, p.99

The future government of Palestine would be established in ten years, in which time the Jews and Arabs of Palestine would be given greater authority. At the end of a transitional period, a representative body of Arabs and Jews would make recommendations regarding the constitution of an independent Palestinian state.

Regarding Jewish immigration, the British stated that they believed indefinite immigration would cause a permanent enmity between the Arabs and the Jews. Therefore, the Arabs would decide the fate of future immigration.

However, for various reasons Jewish immigration could not be cut off immediately, so the British arrived at the following formula: 75,000 immigrants would be allowed to enter Palestine within the next five years. They would be admitted at the rate of 10,000 per year for the next five years. 25,000 refugees from the war would be admitted when their maintenance could be insured. After this five years, no Jewish immigrants would be admitted unless by approval of the Palestinian Arabs.

In reference to land, the Paper stated that in some areas land transfer to Jews was to be restricted while in other areas, land transfer was to be stopped altogether.²⁴

In reaction to the 1939 White Paper, the Arab Higher Committee, who had continued despite British opposition, formally denounced the British policy and again demanded the cessation of Jewish immigration.

²⁴Ibid, p.99-102

The Jewish Agency also rejected the White Paper. They stated that they had been deprived of their last hope.²⁵ Because of the White Paper, Jewish resistance to the government greatly increased. A reign of terror in the form of bombings, murders, robberies, arson, and wreckings swept across Palestine. Illegal armed forces were organized, the most radical being the Stern gang, who, in 1944, murdered Lord Moyne, the British Minister Resident in the Middle East.

Jewish terrorism came to an abrupt halt at the start of World War II in September, 1939. Realizing the danger of Nazism, the Jews joined the British fight against Hitler.²⁶

Illegal immigration grew enormously during the war. According to the White Paper of 1939, illegal immigrants would be subtracted from the regular quota laid down by law. On this basis, the British filled the regular quota with illegal immigrants for three periods during 1940 and 1941. For a time, deportation was utilized.

As the circumstances of the war changed, the Jews were unable to fill their immigration quotas. By September, 1943, only 43,922 immigrants had entered Palestine. The five-year period in which 75,000 immigrants were to enter Palestine would end in March of 1944. That the remaining number of immigrants should not be allowed to enter due to the time factor seemed unfair to the British. Hence, the time was

²⁵Ibid, p.103-104

²⁶Ibid, p.108-109

extended indefinitely until the quota should be filled.

Due to the deaths of six million Jews and the persecution of many more Jews during World War II, large numbers of Jews began pouring into Palestine when the war had ended. The Arabs looked on as world sympathy was lavished upon the Jews. Novelist George Steiner had this to say: "Any man can say 'Auschwitz,' and if he says it loud enough, everyone has to cast down his eyes and listen. It is like smashing a glass in the middle of dinner."²⁷

By December, 1945, the 75,000 quota issued by the 1939 White Paper had been filled. No further immigrants were to be allowed entry unless the Arabs approved. The British and the Americans decided to send a joint committee to Palestine to discuss the subject of further immigration. In the meantime, 1,500 immigrants a month were allowed to enter Palestine.²⁸

The attitude of the United States towards the Palestine problem had been fairly neutral until World War II even though U.S. presidents had expressed sympathy for the Jewish cause and their right to autonomy. After the war, however, the United States was able to make public commitments to the Jews, due to a new world sympathy directed at the Jews.

In 1944, President Roosevelt allowed the American

²⁷As quoted by Alfred M. Lilienthal in "Israel's Flag is Still not Mine," Middle East Perspective XVI (October 1983):4

²⁸Gellner, The Palestine Problem, p.106-108

Zionists to state on his behalf that if he were re-elected he would help bring about the realization of a Jewish commonwealth. One year later, President Roosevelt also made a promise to King Saud of Saudi Arabia. Speaking for the Americans, he said that no action would be taken that was hostile to the Arab people.²⁹

In December, 1945, a resolution was passed by the United States Congress concerning Palestine. The emphasis was that Palestine should be open to Jewish immigration in order to continue growing in strength as a Jewish national home, and that Palestine should become a democratic commonwealth in which all men shall have equal rights.³⁰

After the war ended in 1945, there were three years of tense argument which led to the formation of the state of Israel in 1948.

Arabs became more unified in 1945 when Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Trans-jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen joined together to form the Arab League. This organization gave united Arab representation to the Arab Palestinians.

While the Arabs were becoming unified, the Soviet Union chose this moment to pay its first visit to Palestine. Ivan Maisky, Vice-Comissar of Foreign Affairs, was sent to represent Soviet interests in the problem of Palestine.

In August of the same year, U.S. President Harry S Truman recommended to British Prime Minister Clement R.

²⁹Ibid, p.113-114

³⁰Ibid, p.118

Attlee that 100,000 immigrants be allowed to enter Palestine.

The Arabs reacted negatively to the recommendation and questioned a possible change in U.S. policy regarding hostile acts toward Arabs. In return, U.S. Secretary of State Byrnes assured the Arabs that they would be consulted "...should any proposals emerge which in our opinion would change the basic situation in Palestine."³¹

In November, 1945, the creation of an Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry to investigate the Palestine problem was announced. Until the committee could make a decision regarding immigration, the rate of immigration into Palestine would remain at 1,500 per month.

The Anglo-American Committee published its report in April of 1946. It recommended that 100,000 immigrants be allowed immediate entry into Palestine, but that Palestine remain neither an Arab nor a Jewish state.

Though grudgingly approved by the Jews, the recommendations outraged the Arabs. The right to decide the question of further immigration, given them by the 1939 White Paper, had been revoked without Arab consultation on the matter.³²

In June, 1946, the Anglo-American Cabinet Committee was formed to assist the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry. The new cabinet suggested, as a solution to the Palestine problem, that a provincial government, made up of Arab, Zionist, and central-governmental districts be set up in

³¹Ibid, p.138

³²Ibid, p.139-144

Palestine.

In the same month, members of the Jewish Agency Executive in Palestine were arrested after they were linked with terrorist activities.

When Great Britain suggested a London Peace Conference to discuss the Anglo-American Cabinet's plan for a provincial government in Palestine, the Jewish representatives refused to attend. They claimed the plan allowed them too small an area and that they could not be properly represented at the conference without the members of the Jewish Agency Executive who were being held for questioning in Palestine.

The Arabs, likewise, refused to attend because the British would not accept Amin Husseini, the Mufti of Jerusalem, as a part of the Arab delegation to the conference.³³

In October, 1946, President Truman expressed a desire that the 100,000 immigrants, proposed by the Anglo-American Committee, be allowed into Palestine. He further related his belief that a compromise could be reached between the Anglo-American provincial government plan and the Jewish plan for a larger land grant and greater autonomy.

In response to President Truman's statements, King Saud of Saudi Arabia wrote a letter saying that he believed the President had contradicted earlier promises made to the Arabs. President Truman disagreed with King Saud. He said the promise, that the Arabs would be consulted should any

³³Ibid, p.153-154

decisions be made affecting the basic situation in Palestine, had not been violated. The United States did not believe that 100,000 Jewish immigrants would change the basic situation in Palestine.

Early in 1947, Great Britain set up a meeting with Arab and Jewish leaders to discuss possible peace solutions. Both sides agreed to attend the London Talks. At these peace talks, the British suggested that Palestine be divided into Jewish and Arab areas, not necessarily adjoining, in which each would have a great amount of autonomy. A British trusteeship would be terminated in five years, at which time an independent state would be created. Both Arabs and Jews rejected this plan.

After the London talks, terrorism broke out anew in Palestine, directed mainly at the British government. The Irgun Zvai Leumi, a Jewish terrorist group, kidnapped two Britons in Palestine and blew up a police station in Haifa. To restore order, the British threatened to rule with martial law, demonstrating their threat by evacuating all British women and children and strengthening their military forces in Palestine. The British issued an ultimatum to the Jewish Agency to cooperate in bringing the terrorists to justice. When this failed, the British decided to turn the problem of Palestine over to the United Nations.³⁴

In November, 1947, the United Nations proposed that

³⁴Ibid, p.160-163

Palestine be divided into two states, one Jewish and one Arab. The Arabs rejected the plan. They said that the Arabs had permanent rights to Palestine which rested on the following grounds:

- 1)The right to dwell there. They've don so since the year 3,500 B.C. without leaving the country.
- 2)The natural right of life. 3)The existence therein of the Holy Land. 4)The Arabs are not aliens in Palestine and there is no intention to bring any of them from other parts of the world to settle there.³⁵

They further stated that the Jewish claim to Palestine was unfounded, "for to occupy a country and then leave it entitles no nation to claim and demand ownership thereof. The history of the world is full of such examples."³⁶

In May, 1948, after much deliberation, the Jews agreed to accept the United Nations' plan for Palestine and established the state of Israel on the land assigned them by the United Nations.

³⁵Ibid, p.114

³⁶Ibid

CHAPTER III

THE PALESTINIANS AFTER THE PROCLAMATION OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL (1948-1984)

After the state of Israel was proclaimed in 1948, a little less than 1,000,000 Palestinian Arabs were either forced to leave Palestine or left of their own accord. Several Arab states, having become independent, joined the Palestinians to fight the new Jewish state. By the end of the war, Israel controlled 75% of Palestine. Egypt and Jordan had the Gaza Strip and the West Bank of Jordan.³⁷

In the early 1950's, refugees from what had become Israel began raiding the new state. Instead of attacking the elusive Palestinians, the Israelis retaliated with attacks against the Arab countries.

When Nasser, Egypt's Prime Minister, asked Western nations for arms to defend his country against the Israelis, he was refused. Because Nasser turned to Russia for aid, the United States withdrew a previous offer to help build a dam in Egypt. This initiated the polarization of the United States from Egypt and the Arab world.

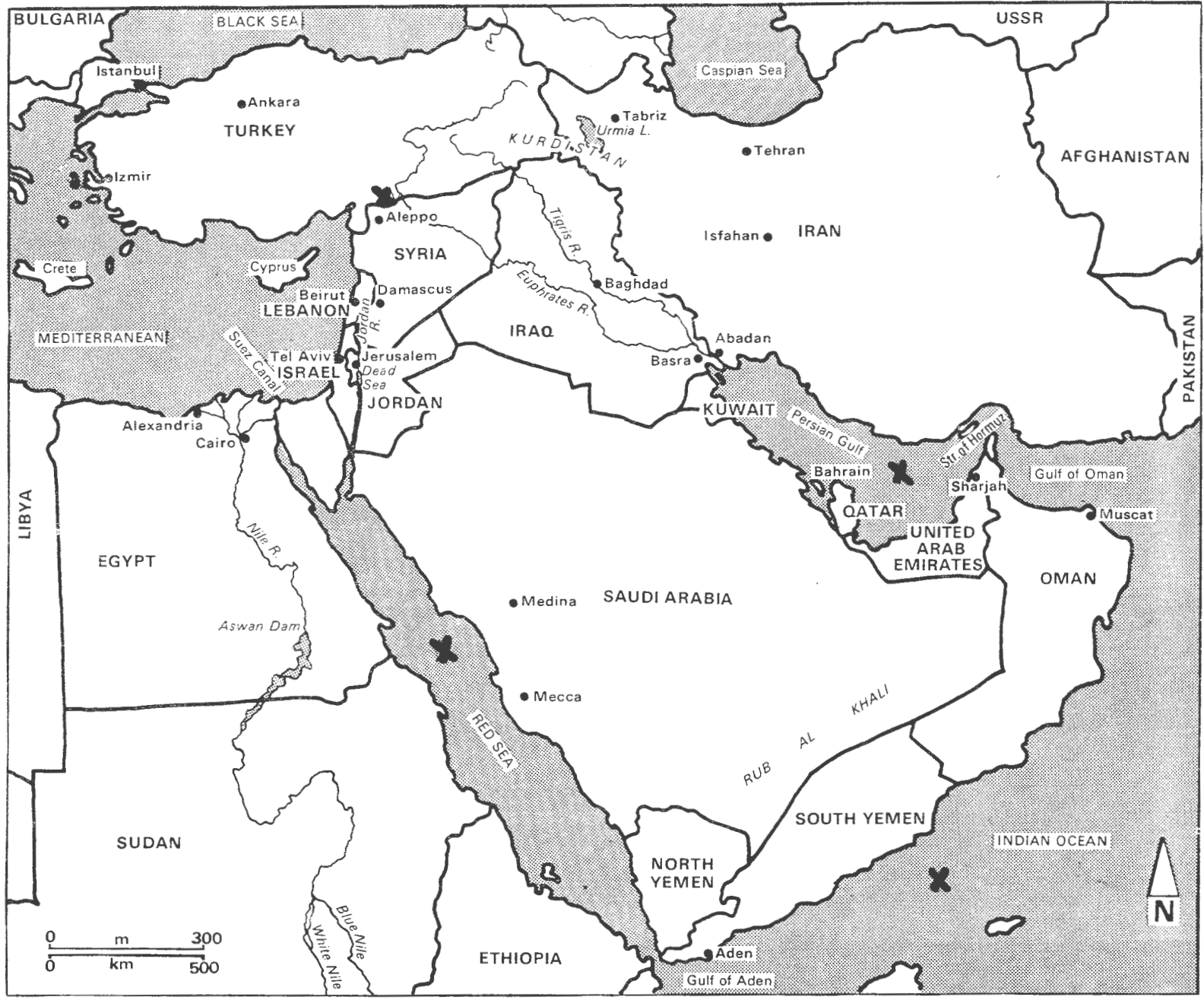
Nasser reacted to U.S. actions by seizing the Suez Canal from France and Great Britain. In October, 1956,

³⁷For map of Palestine, see page 33.

The Middle East

Boundaries discussed in the McMahon-Hussein agreement (p. 15)

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Great Britain, France, and Israel responded by invading Egypt. Pressure from the United States and Russia forced these countries to withdraw from Egypt, and a United Nations peace-keeping force was stationed along the Israeli border.

Although Israel had attacked Egypt as a result of the Palestinian controversy, the war between Israel and Egypt was destined to become a private warfare, having little to do with the cause of the Palestinians.

After 1956, Palestinians began to lessen their allegiance to pan-Arab groups and to emphasize self-reliance. They created a guerilla group known as Al-Fatah to enable them to fight for their rights. This new self-reliance stemmed largely from a lack of successful action on the part of the Arab states.

While the Palestinians were looking inward to their own strength, other Arabs were busy converting the Palestinian cause into an issue of inter-Arab politics. "Abdul-Karim Qassim of Iraq publicly committed himself to the establishment of a Palestinian entity...,"³⁸ while the Arab states pledged a deeper commitment to the Palestinians in 1964 at the First Arab Summit Conference. At the conference, the Arabs adopted "practical resolutions necessary to ward off the existing Zionist danger in the technical and defense fields and to organize the Palestinian people to enable them to carry out their role in liberating their homeland and

³⁸Rashid Hamid, "What is the P.L.O.?", Journal of Palestinian Studies IV (Summer 1975):92

determining their destiny."³⁹ Ahmad Shuqairy, representative of the Palestinians at the Arab League, toured the Arab countries publicizing the Palestine National Council to be summoned in Jerusalem in May of 1964. At this meeting, the Palestine Liberation Organization (P.L.O.) was proclaimed. Al-Fatah became a part of this organization.

In 1967, the Arabs, believing that the Israelis planned a major attack on Syria, sent military forces into the Sinai Peninsula. These Arab forces blocked the Strait of Tiran, which was the entrance to an important Israeli port. The Israelis considered this an act of war, and, in the next six days, Israeli planes almost completely destroyed the air forces of Egypt, Syria, and Jordan. Israel seized Egypt's Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip, the West Bank from Jordan, and the Golan Heights from Syria. The so-called Six-Day War ended in a U.N. cease-fire. The Arabs said that they would recognize Israel if it gave up the occupied lands, but Israel wanted negotiations. By negotiating, Israel hoped to retain control of the occupied territories.

In September, 1970, Palestinians living in the West Bank of Jordan expressed displeasure with their political status in Jordan. The Jordanians, in return, resented the fact that the Palestinians had become so strong, for the Palestinians were almost joint rulers of Jordan. This problem ballooned into a Palestinian rebellion against the

³⁹UAR, Ministry of National Guidance, Documents and Papers on the Palestine Question (Cairo: Ministry of National Guidance, 1969), p.1373

Jordanian Bedouin combat troops. King Hussein of Jordan, determined to end the rebellion, instructed his well-trained army to fire heavily upon the Palestinian guerillas positioned outside of their refugee camps. About 2,000 people, most of whom were Palestinians, died in the incident known as Black September.

On October 6, 1973, in what was known later as the October War, Egyptians crossed the Suez Canal and fought major battles with the Israelis on the Sinai Peninsula and on the Golan Heights. Cease-fires ended most fighting by November, and in 1974, Arab and Israeli forces agreed to separate. In 1975, Israel withdrew its troops from the far western Sinai. President Sadat of Egypt and Israeli Prime Minister Begin began discussing an end to the conflict in 1977.⁴⁰

The outcome of the Egyptian-Israeli war greatly affected the Palestinian issue, for the majority of the Palestinian refugees lived on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. However, the war itself was not waged on behalf of that issue. In actuality, the war served to isolate Egypt from the Palestinian problem as the Egyptians concentrated on the issue of Israeli settlements on the Sinai Peninsula.

In 1974, the P.L.O. was recognized by the United Nations as the official representative of the Palestinians.

In 1978, President Sadat, Prime Minister Begin, and

⁴⁰World Book Encyclopedia, s.v. "Middle East," by Sydney N. Fisher, 1984

President Carter held discussions at Camp David in the United States. The Camp David Accords called for the following: Israel's withdrawal from all of the Sinai, autonomy for the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, a freeze on West Bank settlements, and a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel. This peace treaty was signed in 1979, at which time Israel partially withdrew from the Sinai.⁴¹

In order to support the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, the United States designed a financial aid package to assist the two countries. This package provided Israel with \$3 billion, of which \$800 million was to cover costs for relocation of two Israeli airbases built on land to be returned to Egypt. The rest, \$2.2 billion, would finance foreign military sales credit and other Israeli relocation costs. Egypt was provided \$1.8 billion: \$1.5 billion in military sales credit financing and \$300 million in economic aid loans.⁴²

Although the Camp David Accords and the ensuing peace treaty formed an excellent framework for peace in the Middle East, they did little to solve the Palestinian issue. An agreement under Article III of the Egyptian-Israeli plan for peace prevented either party from participating in the organization of activities hostile to the security of the

⁴¹Ibid

⁴²President Carter as quoted in "Middle East: U.S. Support for the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty," Department of State Bulletin, May 1979, p.59

the other party.⁴³ This meant that the Egyptians would be unable to help any Palestinian group, such as the P.L.O., desiring the right to self-determination, for a Palestinian state, according to the Israelis, would threaten Israel's security.

The P.L.O. had been fighting the Israelis across the borders of southern Lebanon since the mid-1970's until they agreed in 1981 to cease firing into Israel for a year. Claiming that the P.L.O. had resumed firing, the Israelis invaded Lebanon in 1982 to try to wipe out P.L.O. forces. To prevent the Palestinians from being slaughtered, the United States, Italy, and France sent troops to oversee their safe departure from Lebanon. Many P.L.O. members were transported to Tunisia, Syria, and Jordan. The U.S., French, and Italian troops left a month later but had to return, along with British troops, after Israeli forces had allowed Lebanese Christian forces to massacre around 750 Palestinians in two of their refugee camps. The troops from Italy, France, the United States, and Great Britain, known as the Multi-National Force, stayed in Lebanon as a peace-keeping force to allow the country to rebuild its economy. All of these forces had withdrawn by April of 1984, leaving Lebanese, Syrian, and Israeli troops in Lebanon.⁴⁴

⁴³"Treaty of Peace Between the Arab Republic of Egypt and the State of Israel," Department of State Bulletin, May 1979, p.4

⁴⁴Ibid

In March, 1983, Yasir Arafat, the leader of the P.L.O., traveled to Jordan to talk with King Hussein about President Reagan's September First, 1982, Peace Initiative. The initiative called for an immediate freeze on Israeli West Bank settlement and self-government by the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza in association with Jordan. The initiative was against a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza and Israeli annexation or permanent control of these territories. Though the results of the Arafat-Hussein meeting were inconclusive, "there were indications that the two leaders were striving for a compromise formula that would try to bridge the Reagan initiative and the plan approved by 20 leaders at the Arab Summit in Fez, Morocco last September."⁴⁵ The Fez plan called for the creation of an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Most recent developments have been an enormous split in P.L.O. loyalties and Syrian attempts to replace Arafat as leader of the P.L.O. In May, 1983, some P.L.O. members protested when Arafat promoted several controversial commanders within Al-Fatah, the guerilla group which still has about 80% of the P.L.O.'s strength. The rebels also blamed Arafat for their departure from Lebanon and criticized him for what they regarded as a moderate line of negotiation with Israel. The rebellion spread through the summer months,

⁴⁵Marguerite Johnson, "Time for a Decision," Time, April 1983, pp.34-35

encouraged by Syrian President Assad who was enraged that Arafat would discuss President Reagan's September First initiative. Assad forced Arafat to leave Damascus and soon pushed the P.L.O. chieftain's loyal troops out of Lebanon's Bekka Valley and into Tripoli, a port city in Lebanon. In November, P.L.O. rebels, backed by Syrian troops, besieged loyal P.L.O. members stationed in the Palestinian refugee camp of Baddawi from their rebel base outside Baddawi. After the rebels overtook the refugee camp, Saudi Arabia arranged a cease-fire with Syria on behalf of the Palestinians.

The day after the publication of the cease-fire agreement, Arafat managed a lopsided exchange of Israeli and Arab prisoners. In return for six Israeli prisoners, Israel would release 4,500 Palestinian and Lebanese soldiers captured during the war in Lebanon.⁴⁶

In late December, 1983, Arafat and his loyal P.L.O. members left Tripoli aboard Greek ships bound for Tunisia and other places still willing to accept the Palestinians.

⁴⁶William E. Smith, "Heading off a Disaster," Time, December 1983, pp.156-158

An attempt has been made to show the present situation of the Palestinians by means of a historical overview of Palestine and its inhabitants from 3,500 B.C. to the present. These basic facts will help to clarify the Palestinian claim to self-determination and statehood, as well as views opposing this right. In order to understand why the Palestinians deserve the right to self-determination and statehood, one must look at the most important arguments surrounding this right from the Palestinian point of view. These arguments come from Israel, the United States, and the frontline Arab states of Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan and are cited in Part II: The Official Perspectives Concerning the Palestinian Right to Self-determination and Statehood.

PART II: THE OFFICIAL PERSPECTIVES CONCERNING
THE PALESTINIAN RIGHT TO
SELF-DETERMINATION AND STATEHOOD

Chapter

IV. THE ISRAELI PERSPECTIVE

V. THE UNITED STATES' PERSPECTIVE

VI. THE FRONTLINE ARAB STATES' PERSPECTIVE

CHAPTER IV
THE ISRAELI PERSPECTIVE

The following are the foremost Israeli views concerning the Palestinian right to self-determination and statehood. Below each view is (a) the Israeli reasoning which substantiates its view, and (b) the Palestinian perspective of that view. The same format will be used with the United States and the frontline Arab states in chapters V and VI.

1. The Palestinians already have a state in Jordan.

(a) In a 1979 summit meeting, General Sharon of Israel introduced the idea that Jordan was already a Palestinian state because it had been a part of Palestine as directed by the United Nations in 1922. He further stated that over 50% of Jordan's population was Palestinian; that did not even include the 270,000 refugees on the West Bank.

(b) In 1920, at the San Remo Conference, the British were given the mandate of Palestine, which included at the time the state known today as Jordan. However, two months later, British Prime Minister Churchill appointed an Arab chieftain to be ruler over modern Jordan. Since then, the land west of the Jordan River was known as Palestine while the land east of the Jordan River was called Trans-jordan.

This became the official name in 1946 when the Hashemite Kingdom of Trans-jordan was granted its independence by the British. However, the land west of the Jordan River is the place from which the Palestinians draw their national identity. Ask a Palestinian child in a refugee camp where he is from, and he will give the name of a village in the state of Israel. The Palestinians argue that their oneness comes not from Jordan, but from a common history and a common suffering that was shared on the west bank of the Jordan River.⁴⁷

Another problem with the consideration of Jordan as a Palestinian state arises when one looks at the internal struggle in Jordan in 1970. Heavy fighting broke out between Jordanian Bedouin combat troops and Palestinian guerillas. The war, which had been brewing since 1968, was a result of resentment on both sides. The Palestinians refused to obey the Jordanian gun prohibition and ruled their own refugee camps. On the other hand, King Hussein's government did not give the Palestinians sufficient recognition, as they made up 65% of the population. In 1974, at the Rabat Arab summit, King Hussein of Jordan was forced to renounce his claim as spokesman for the Palestinians.

2. If a Palestinian state were in the West Bank or the Gaza Strip, the security of Israel would be threatened.

(a) In a poll taken in 1979, 89% of the people of

⁴⁷Martin Ziebell, "Poverty and Culture," Earlham College, June 1983

Israel opposed the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza.⁴⁸ They believed a Palestinian state, with its Soviet backing, would be of grave danger to Israel's security. The artillery with which the Soviet Union already supplied the Palestinians had a range of 10,000 meters. When one considered that there was only an 8-mile stretch from the West Bank hills across Tel Aviv to the sea, there was no doubt that every Israeli citizen would be endangered. Added to this were the articles in the P.L.O. Covenant often referred to by the Israelis. These articles declared null and void the state of Israel and said that anything other than complete liberation of Palestine must be rejected and that all Zionist activities must be stopped.

Israel continued its argument by saying that even if the Palestinians were able to establish a state, there was no guarantee against terrorism. The instability of the P.L.O. was certain in light of the recent split due to conflicting loyalties, not to mention the many vengeful bombings and hijackings of former years.

(b) In Palestinian opinion, the Israeli threat to Palestinian security was a far more serious matter. Had the Palestinians ejected the Israelis from Palestine, the threat to Israeli security might be better understood.

⁴⁸Sidney Zion and Uri Dan, "Israel's Peace Strategy," New York Times Magazine, April 1979, p.90

Instead, a history of suffering at the hands of the Jews was a story familiar to all Palestinians.

Since the day the Jews drove them from their homeland, the Palestinians have lived in the low conditions of refugee camps, now located in territories occupied by Israeli forces. The 1982 invasion and ensuing massacre of Palestinians in the Lebanon refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila were further proof that the Palestinians were not safe from the Israelis.

The most recent threat to Palestinian security lies in Jewish settlement in the West Bank. Since 1967, Jews have been settling in occupied territories, of which the West Bank is not the least. The Israelis are content to ignore their agreement to implement the Camp David Accords, which called for a freeze of further settlement in the West Bank. Instead, they favor Begin's statement in the Eretz Israel document that Israel should include the West Bank. Begin considers the land precious to Jewish religious history and refers to the West Bank by its biblical names of Samaria and Judea.

It is obvious that Israel intends "to make the occupied territories dependent on Israel."⁴⁹ According to a P.L.O. official, they are implementing these intentions through "...their economic policies, their deportation and harassment of the educated young, and their settlement policy."⁵⁰

⁴⁹Mroz, Beyond Security, p.94

⁵⁰Ibid

The West Bank becomes more dependent on Israel as the number of jobs available to the Palestinians on the West Bank are decreased. "The International Labor Organization noted that between 1970 and 1978 there had been a drop of 6,000 employed people in the occupied territories, while the active population there increased by 34,600 people and the number of Palestinian workers in Israel rose from 20,000 to 70,000."⁵¹

It was not enough for Israel to threaten the Palestinian's security by usurping the land on which the Palestinians had resided for thousands of years. Now Israel threatened the very identity of the Palestinians. For, as Jews moved into the occupied territories, Palestinians were forced to find jobs and homes in neighboring countries, thus becoming a part of those countries.

The Palestinians believed that the Israeli fear of terrorist activities was unfounded. Although the P.L.O. largely practiced terrorism in former years to direct world attention to their cause, their methods in the 1980's have been more diplomatic for the most part. Regardless of any split in the P.L.O., the Palestinians would regard terrorism as unnecessary when they receive the right to self-determination.

⁵¹ Ibid, p.93, International Labor Office, Geneva, "Action taken by the International Labor Office at its 59th to 64th Sessions," 1979, p.43

3. Most Arabs do not want a Palestinian state.

(a) Israel states that the majority of Arabs are against them and would like to drive them into the sea.⁵² The desire for territory, say the Israelis, is more important to the Arab world than is the cause of the Palestinians.

(b) Though the Palestinians believe the majority of the Arabs are against the state of Israel, they do not believe that the whole of the Arab world places the desire for territory above the Palestinian cause. Proof of this can be found in Arab willingness to provide homes for the Palestinians in their own countries, despite the resulting damage to their relations with Israel.

Even if this last Israeli allegation were true, it would not change the Palestinian position. In 1980, in the seventh emergency session of the United Nations, the Assembly affirmed that the Palestinians had, "inalienable rights... including their right to self-determination, and their right to establish their own independent, sovereign state."⁵³ The very meaning of self-determination denies the right of the Arab states or anyone else to tell the Palestinians what their future political status will be.

⁵²Mroz, Beyond Security, p.21

⁵³"7th Emergency Special Session," UN Chronicle, September 1982, p.27

CHAPTER V

THE UNITED STATES' PERSPECTIVE

1. The United States will support the sovereignty of the State of Israel, but will not support establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

(a) President Reagan, in the September First Peace Initiative of 1982, stressed that the United States would not support the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank or Gaza, and that it would oppose any negotiations threatening the security of Israel.⁵⁴ Resolution 242 of the United Nations Security Council, upon which the former was based, said that in order to gain peace in the Middle East, Israel must withdraw from territories occupied during the war, and that belligerent claims on territory must cease while recognition of every state's right to be sovereign and have peace must commence.⁵⁵ President Reagan is firmly committed to these two solutions for peace in the Middle East. He believes that a peaceful settlement could be reached if the Palestinian people were consulted. President Reagan is convinced that a solution will not be reached by consulting the P.L.O., as they will fight to the death

⁵⁴Kenneth W. Dam, "A Time for Reason and Realism in the Middle East," Department of State Bulletin, June 1983, p.59

⁵⁵Cordier and Harrelson, Public Papers of the Secretaries-General of the United Nations, 8 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 7:603-604

for a Palestinian state. He agrees with U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Kenneth Dam, who said that "the 6-day war was forced on Israel by the imminent threat of unprovoked aggression."⁵⁶

In a talk with Meg Greenfield, editorial page editor of the Washington Post, on April 24, 1983, U.S. Secretary of State Shultz commented that King Hussein of Jordan would not join in the Middle East peace talks because, among other reasons, he could persuade Yasir Arafat to agree upon representation at the negotiations. He further stated that he was not sure if the P.L.O. should continue to have the leadership of the Palestinian people if they were not willing to do something constructive when given opportunity. When asked if he would try to contact any Palestinian leaders while on his impending trip to the Middle East, Shultz replied, "No, I certainly have no plan to meet with anyone from the P.L.O., if that is what you're getting."⁵⁷

(b) There are two facts which seem to constantly elude the United States in its search for peace in the Middle East. One is the aforementioned idea of the "unprovoked aggression" which was forced upon Israel. When the Jews began to immigrate to the Ottoman Empire in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they carried with them the socialistic dream of a Utopian state. No more would there be persecution.

⁵⁶Dam, "A Time for Reason...", Department of State Bulletin, June 1983, p.58

⁵⁷Meg Greenfield, "Secretary's Interview on the Middle East," Department of State Bulletin, June 1983, p.64

But when they arrived, there were already people there. Some Jews realized then that the moment the Arabs refused to be a part of their Utopian dream, this Arab dissatisfaction would ruin any hope for a perfect society. Most Jews, however, asked themselves if they could really allow a few peasants to destroy what was to be their perfect homeland in an age when colonialism prevailed. The answer, which marred any hope of a Utopia, has echoed across years of bloody conflict.

Another fact elusive to the United States is that the P.L.O. is the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Because this fact is elusive to the U.S., decisions concerning the Palestinians are dealt with by the Arab states, Israel, and the United States. A West Bank mayor asked, "'How can representatives of three foreign governments, Egypt, Israel, and the United States, determine the future of any other people?'"⁵⁸ The P.L.O.'s best known actions have painted a picture of blood across our television screen, as have many Israeli actions. This, and the fact that the P.L.O. will only settle for a Palestinian state, has labeled them as radicals in the minds of U.S. officials. Meanwhile, Palestinian street demonstrations and riots are ignored.

What U.S. officials do not recognize is that the P.L.O. continues to build hospitals, factories, schools, and a new computer center, while funding a pension system for families

⁵⁸Mroz, Beyond Security, p.91

of those who have died in the conflict and a scholarship program for university students. They also run a tax collection system and a democratic election of the Palestine National Council.

2. The Palestinians should become an autonomous entity in confederation with Jordan.

(a) Another of President Reagan's suggestions was that the Palestinians should become an autonomous entity in confederation. The United States chose Jordan for three main reasons: 1) It bordered the West Bank, where the majority of the Palestinian refugees are located, 2) Jordan's population was 65% Palestinian, and 3) King Hussein had been an early spokesman for the Palestinian cause. The United States believed that a confederation would grant the Palestinians autonomy and freedom from Jewish law, while Jewish security would be protected by the stability of the Jordanian government.

(b) The Palestinians maintained that they would be dissatisfied with anything less than the right to self-determination. When asked about the possibility of a link with Jordan, P.L.O. leader Yasir Arafat asked, "Why don't the Americans support self-determination for the Palestinians? Last year they backed self-determination for 2,000 people on the Falkland Islands. So why do they refuse the same principle for 5 million Palestinians?"⁵⁹ Despite Arafat's harsh

⁵⁹Roberto Suro, "It is Very, Very Serious," Time, July 1983, p.35

words, he, along with the majority of the Palestinians, expresses interest in a confederation with Jordan after the Palestinians have been granted statehood.

In reply to the American usage of the words "entity" and "confederation" to describe the future Palestinian political status, two Palestinian opinions are given. Upon finding the word entity in Webster's Dictionary, a Palestinian was disgusted to discover that its meaning was "existence" or "being". "'It means we will be given our existence?...No, thank you...We already exist.'"⁶⁰ As far as becoming part of a confederation with Jordan, a Palestinian businessman said, "'Tell me what confederations in history have been so established...and what ever happened to your Western doctrine that sovereign states make up a confederation?'"⁶¹ Jordanian officials, remembering the 1970 civil war, agree that before a confederation can take place, the issue of Palestinian statehood must be confronted.

3. A clash between the United States and the Soviet Union must be avoided.

(a) "From 1968 to September 1973 the Soviet Union sent the Arab States 2,603 million dollars worth of arms. During that same period the United States sent the Arab States 803 million dollars worth of arms..."⁶² According to U.S. Deputy

⁶⁰Ibid, p.169

⁶¹Ibid, p.169,170

⁶²Martin Gilbert, Atlas of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, Inc., 1974), p.63

Secretary of State Kenneth Dam, one of the United States' primary concerns with its involvement in the Middle East is the prevention of a conflict between super-powers.⁶³ Should there be a Palestinian state, the chance for warfare would greatly increase.

(b) The Palestinians do not feel that the threat of war will increase should they become an independent state. Most believe that Palestinian violence against Israel will end once they are given freedom to exercise their right to self-determination.

⁶³Kenneth Dam, "A Time for Reason...", Department of State Bulletin, June 1983, p.57

CHAPTER VI

THE FRONTLINE ARAB STATES' PERSPECTIVE

1. Though most Arabs publicly express a desire for a Palestinian state, reasons for wanting this state differ.

(a) The states of Jordan, Syria, and Egypt have all agreed on one point: the Palestinians have the right to self-determination. Lebanon is non-committal on this subject.

King Hussein of Jordan, at one time an official spokesman for the Palestinians, displayed his loyalty to the Palestinian cause by refusing to join any peace talks until the United States 1) recognized the Palestinian right to self-determination, and 2) allowed the P.L.O. to join him at the peace talks. The Jordanian king agreed with the Palestinians that there could be no Palestinian confederation with Jordan without first granting the Palestinians statehood. A confederation without statehood would no doubt result in another Palestinian-Jordanian civil war.

Hussein is also supportive of a freeze on Israeli settlement in the West Bank. He even went so far as to write a United Nations resolution to this effect and requested the U.S. to back the resolution. When the U.S. refused, Hussein angrily accused that nation of failing to support President Reagan's September First initiative which called for an

Israeli settlement freeze.⁶⁴

Hussein resented Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon's claim that the Palestinians already had a state in Jordan. This suggestion, which implied that Hussein should turn the Jordanian government over to the Palestinians, caused a Jordanian politician with close ties to the king to say, "If we do not force the Israelis to negotiate about the West Bank now, they will force us to negotiate over the East Bank later."⁶⁵

Although Syrian President Assad agrees that the Palestinians have a right to self-determination, his recent actions have shown his determination to make Palestinian rights subservient to Syrian interests. When Syrian troops entered Lebanon in 1976, to help control a civil war, they purposefully supported the Christian rightists against the P.L.O., who supported the Lebanese Moslem leftists. Syria was accused then by the fedayeen, or peasant Palestinians, of an anti-Palestinian plot.⁶⁶ The plot thickened when Assad backed an anti-Arafat rebellion with Syrian troops and tanks. "While Assad saw the Palestinian cause as subordinate to his wider vision of Arab unity, Arafat believed that the P.L.O. must remain independent of any Arab nation."⁶⁷

⁶⁴Douglas Watson, "Why Jordan's Hussein Plays Spoiler Role," U.S. News and World Report, April 1984, p.49

⁶⁵Marguerite Johnson, "Time for a Decision," Time, April 1983, p.35

⁶⁶"A Shaky Compromise in Lebanon," Time, June 1976, p.24-26

⁶⁷James Kelly, "Bidding for a Bigger Role," Time, December 1983, p.34

The Soviet Union, who signed a peace treaty with Syria in 1980, has given military equipment to Syrians and Palestinians. The Soviet opposes the break in relations between Arafat and Assad.

Syria joined Jordan in opposing the Reagan September First initiative, but for different reasons. Assad was against the initiative because it ignored Syria's ambition for a major political role in the Arab region by denying Syria a voice at the peace talks.

Despite the fact that the P.L.O. severed relations with Egypt in 1979 after Egypt signed a peace treaty with Israel, Egyptian President Mubarak is favorable to a Palestinian state. In an interview with Time magazine, Mubarak advised the United States to stop Israeli settlement in the West Bank before there was nothing left to negotiate. He called on Hussein to convince other Arab leaders to allow the Palestinians to join the negotiations for peace. He also asked that Arafat recognize Israel's right to exist as a nation in return for Israeli recognition of the Palestinian right to self-determination. Mubarak told the Time interviewer that he believed that Israel could live in peace with the Palestinians if they would stop being obstinate and give the Palestinians their rights.⁶⁸

Perhaps because of the Time interview, Yasir Arafat, in December of 1983, made the first official Palestinian

⁶⁸ "An Interview with Mubarak," Time, January 1983, p.48

visit to Egypt since 1978. Upon Arafat's arrival, President Mubarak hailed him as "a struggler and a moderate leader of the Palestinians who are struggling to regain the legitimate rights of the Palestinian peoples."⁶⁹

Of the frontline states, Lebanon alone withholds approval of the Palestinian right to self-determination. The reason for this is certainly related to Lebanese President Bashir Gemayal's belief that the P.L.O. bears a moral responsibility for the civil war in Lebanon. Twice, within fourteen months, the P.L.O. was expelled from Lebanon. Gemayal allowed other Palestinians to stay, but said he would no longer tolerate their being a state within a state.⁷⁰

(b) Lurking behind the comraderie of some of the Arab states, the Palestinians sense betrayal. An Israeli Cabinet minister reportedly spoke with U.S. Secretary of State Vance, who told him that, "Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Syria were against the establishment of a Palestinian state, no matter what they said publicly."⁷¹ The Palestinians suspect they are not only fighting Israelis, but Arabs as well. Since 1948, more Palestinians have been killed by Arabs than by Jews.

The most auspicious of possible Palestinian enemies

⁶⁹ "Arafat Embraces Mubarak in Cairo in Reconciliation," New York Times, December 1983, sec. 1, pp.A1, A8

⁷⁰ Wilton Wynn, "The Job: Rebuild a Country," Time, September 1982, p.31

⁷¹ Zion and Dan, "Israel's Peace Strategy," New York Times Magazine, April 1979, p.90

among the Arabs is Syria. In Damascus, a senior P.L.O. official said, "Assad's price for good relations with the P.L.O. has been the same for years. Syria must have a large, and if possible, commanding say over the P.L.O.'s political direction."⁷² The Palestinians believe that Syria is intent on seizing control of the Palestinian movement, in order that it might gain political power under the guise of helping the Palestinians. This desire for control is easily seen in Assad's attempt to overthrow Arafat in the summer of 1983. Even though Assad claimed to be aiding the Palestinian cause by ridding the P.L.O. of Arafat, a poll conducted in East Jerusalem after the P.L.O. split showed that 92% of the people surveyed were loyal to Arafat.⁷³

2. Arab opinions differ concerning the decision to recognize of Israel's right to exist as a nation.

(a) Syria refuses to recognize Israel and demands the return of the Golan Heights which Israel seized in the 1967 war and annexed in 1981.

Jordan does not recognize Israel due to close ties with the P.L.O., whose official position is one of non-recognition.

Since Lebanon and Egypt wanted to sign peace treaties with Israel, recognition of the Jewish state was imperative.

(b) The Palestinians have settled on a compromise concerning recognition of the state of Israel. They have not

⁷²Marguerite Johnson, "Facing Syria's Challenges," Time, July 1983, p.25

⁷³Ibid

made a public announcement to the effect that they will recognize Israel; however, at the Arab Summit in Fez in September of 1982, the P.L.O. and Arab states acknowledged Israel indirectly by refraining from publicly denouncing Israel as an illegitimate state.

The Palestinians have a reason for refusing direct recognition of Israel. If the Palestinians recognize Israel as a state, they will have nothing left with which to bargain. Said former West Bank mayor Karim Khalaf, "This is the last card. Arafat is ready for peace. When he sits down with Israel to negotiate--this is recognition."⁷⁴ The Palestinians will recognize Israel when Israel is ready to recognize the Palestinian right to self-determination and statehood.

⁷⁴ Chaim Shur and Liora Barash, "Karim Khalaf: 'U.N. Resolutions Are the Best Way to Peace,'" New Outlook: Middle East Monthly, February 1984, p.8

CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to show that the Palestinians have a right to self-determination and statehood. Arguments against this right have been weighed carefully with Palestinian scales and are found wanting.

Both the Palestinians and the Israelis believe that their arguments concerning Palestinians rights are just. Therefore, how can there ever be a resolution of the Palestinian conflict?

The Palestinians believe the right to self-determination is theirs because they share a common history and suffering, because they were forced to leave the land on which they had resided for centuries, and because there are over 4,000,000 people who have to have a home.

Establishment of a Palestinian state can only become reality, say the Palestinians, if Israel and the United States will recognize the P.L.O. as the representative of the Palestinians and will allow the P.L.O. a voice in the peace talks. The Palestinians also claim that a freeze on West Bank settlements is vital to a peaceful solution.

Israel does not agree that the Palestinians should have the right to self-determination. The Israelis believe that the Palestinians already have a state in Jordan. Israel is also persuaded that most Arabs are against a Palestinian state. Why, then, should they risk allowing a Palestinian

state to exist which would threaten their security?

The Israelis believe the conflict would be solved if the Palestinians were absorbed by other Arab countries or if Jordan would consent to share its government with the Palestinians.

Other opinions concerning the Palestinian right to self-determination, such as those given by the United States and the frontline Arab states of Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon, could be helpful or detrimental to a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

The United States has alienated the Palestinians by supporting Israel's sovereignty, while withholding support for a Palestinian state. This pledge to Israel and the United States' fear of a clash with the Soviet Union, have greatly immobilized U.S. involvement in a peaceful solution for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

The frontline Arab states have showed themselves ready to defend, ignore, and control the outcome of the Palestinian situation. Jordan and Egypt, especially the former, have openly supported the Palestinian right to self-determination. Both call for recognition of the P.L.O. as the legitimate spokesman for the Palestinians and see the need for Israel to stop settling in the West Bank. Lebanon has been embittered by the Palestinian involvement in its civil war, and therefore, ignores the Palestinian cry for Arab support. Syria, in a play for power, has tried to control the outcome

of the Palestinian situation by supporting rebellion within the P.L.O.

The time factor plays a vital role in a peaceful resolution. If Syria succeeds in controlling the P.L.O., any steps toward peace which Arafat has already taken will be annulled. Also, the Palestinians will have lost any chance for legitimate representation by the P.L.O.

Another time problem revolves around Israeli settlement in the West Bank. These settlements are being constructed so quickly, that if a few years, there will be no land left with which to negotiate.

Clearly, any action concerning the peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict must be taken immediately. The people of the United States could hold the key to this resolution. A poll taken in 1977 and again in 1982, showed that U.S. citizens are becoming more favorable to a Palestinian state.⁷⁵ A change in the U.S. policy which refuses to support a Palestinian state will only occur if U.S. citizens are willing to pressure their congressmen to amend the policy.

Should U.S. policy change, the Israelis might be persuaded to meet with the P.L.O. under the umbrella of the United Nations. Since the U.N. has already recognized the Palestinian right to self-determination, U.N. involvement could result in Palestinian statehood.

All of this conjecture can become reality if people

⁷⁵Connie DeBoer, "The Polls: The Arab-Israeli Conflict," Public Opinion Quarterly, Spring 1983, p.125

will recognize that the Palestinians are not merely flea-like nuisances, but that they have a legitimate right to self-determination and statehood. When the people of the world look at the Palestinian-Israeli conflict from the Palestinian viewpoint, they will understand when people like Palestinian author Fawaz Turki say, "I was a Palestinian and the name had a cadence to it. I was not the bewildered, wretched native of the land; I was the native son."⁷⁶

⁷⁶Fawaz Turki, The Disinherited: Journal of a Palestinian Exile, (London: Monthly Press Review, 1972)

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