

# The Arab-Israeli Conflict



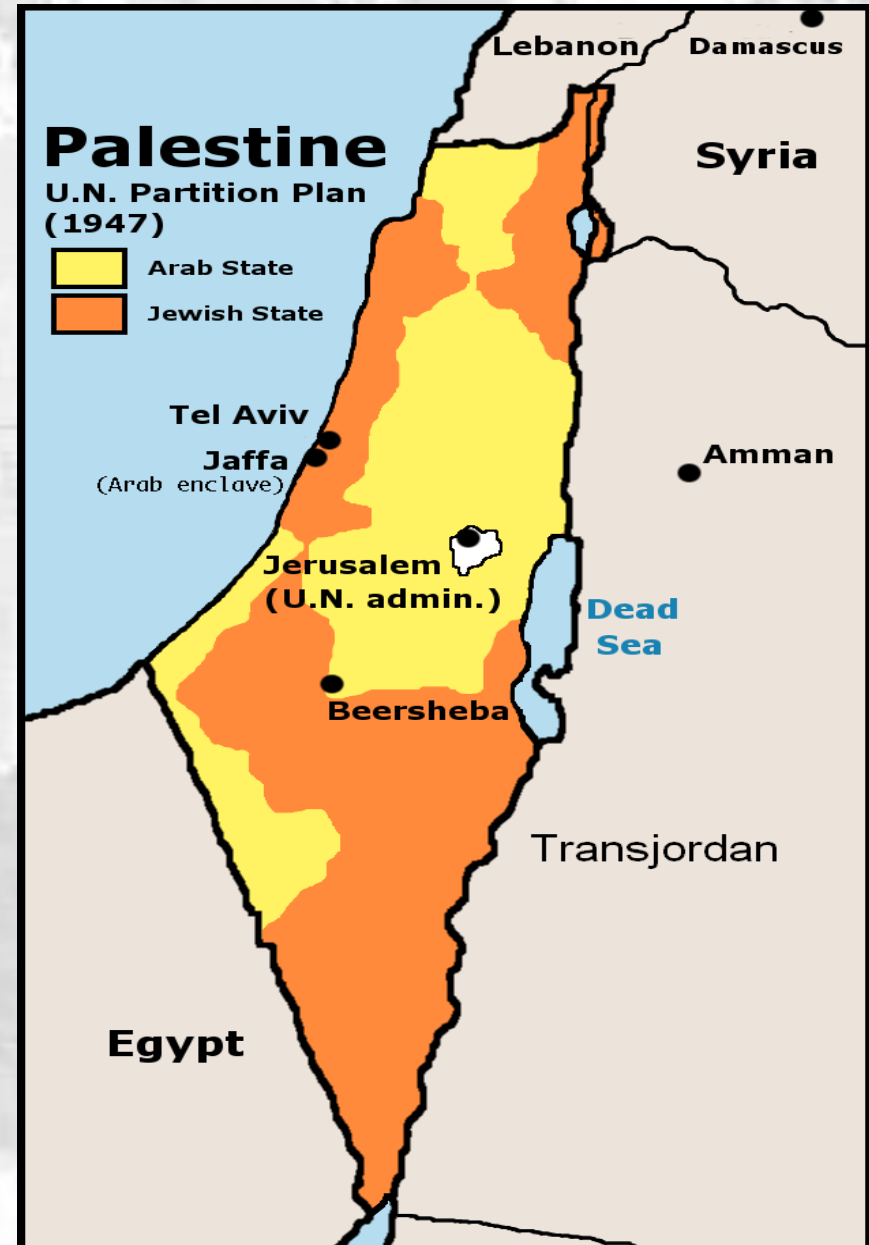
- This conflict spans a century of time and involves the creation of an Israeli state, as well as conflicts between Arab states and Israel.
- The Palestinian conflict within Israel is a part of this larger conflict, though it is difficult to say which conflict causes the other.
- The disputed ownership over the land of Palestine is central to this conflict.
- The current borders of Israel are shared with Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon, as well as the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea.

# The Arab-Israeli Conflict: Beginnings

- **After World War II, the United Nations gave land to the Jewish people of the world so they could live together in peace. Think big apology.**
- **This land, Israel, includes holy places for the Jewish religion and is surrounded by Muslim countries.**
- **Palestinian Muslims lived on the land at the time that the United Nations gave it to the Jewish people.**
- **Some sections of land that were either given to Jewish people or that were won in wars against Arabs are also important to Muslims, particularly East Jerusalem. Palestinian Muslims believe that any real peace agreement must include their ownership of this land.**
- **Further, Palestinians view themselves as living in an occupied nation, where invaders (Israelis) have placed them under military rule. To fight back, Palestinians have built a terrorist network to attack innocent Israeli civilians.**
- **Israelis feel they must continue to control Palestinians with military force to protect themselves against more terrorist attacks.**

# The Arab-Israeli Conflict: Beginnings

- In 1947 the UN Partition Plan created this map of Palestine. It would have created an Arab State and an Israeli State within Palestine.
- Jerusalem, including Bethlehem would be protected in an international zone, essentially allowing all faiths to visit the holy places within the city.
- The UN approved the Partition Plan but Palestinian Arabs and countries in the Arab League did not.
- In 1948 Israel declared its independence and soon after Egypt, Lebanon, Transjordan, Iraq, and Syria declared war on the new state: Arab-Israeli War.
- Israel won the war and signed ceasefire agreements with its neighbors, ending up with more territory than the UN Partition Plan.



# The Arab-Israeli Conflict: Wars

- In 1956 Egypt closed the Suez canal and other important ports to Israeli shipping, leading to Israel's invasion of the Sinai Peninsula with help from Britain and France.
- An agreement was made and Israel withdrew from the area.
- In 1967 Egypt expelled international helpers and placed troops in Sinai again. Jordan and Syria joined an alliance with Egypt. Egypt's president said, "Our basic objective is the destruction of Israel. The Arab people want to fight."
- In response, Israel made a preemptive strike against the Egyptian Air Force, and then turned to pulverize the air forces of Iraq, Syria, and Jordan in the Six-Day War.
- There have been several other wars since then, but Arabs look back at the borders of 1967 and often demand a return to those.



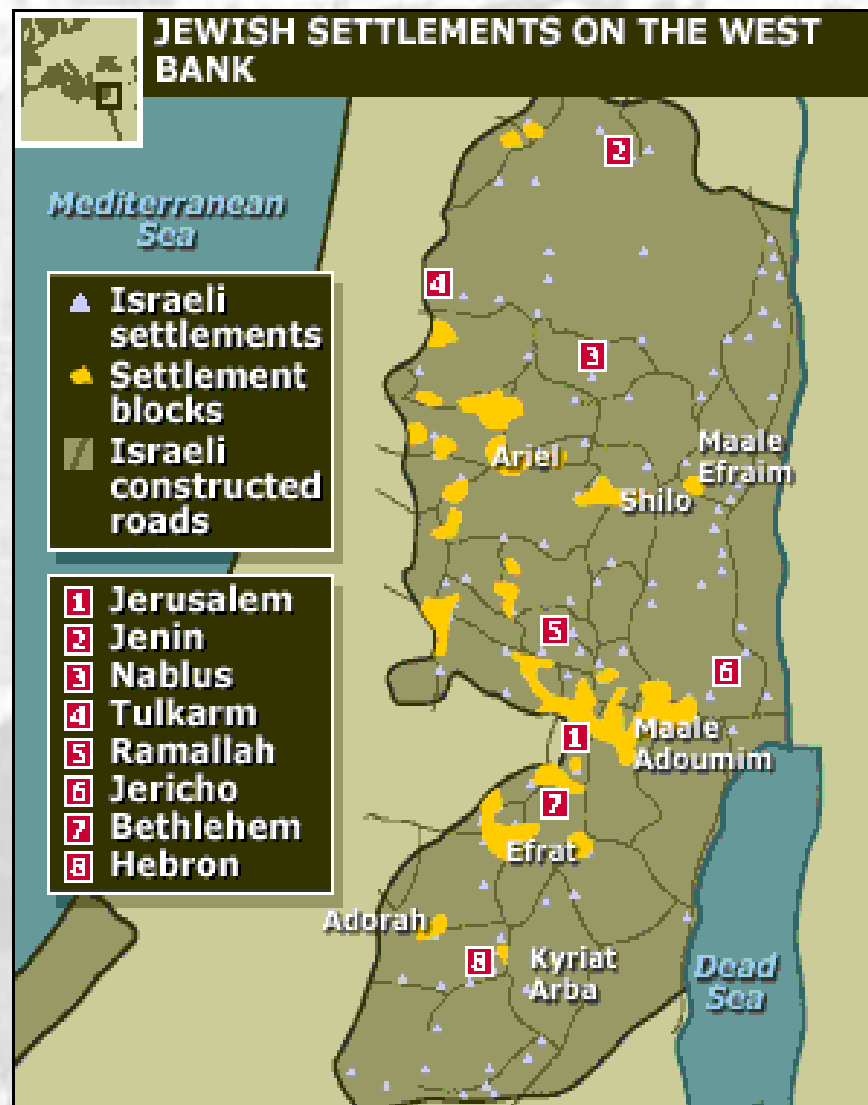
# The Palestinian Viewpoint

- **Palestinians want four things:**
  - 1) A separate Palestinian state (with the same borders as were in 1967),**
  - 2) Palestinian control of East Jerusalem (where the Al-Aqsa Mosque is located),**
  - 3) Ending Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory, and**
  - 4) Freedom of Palestinian refugees to return to their homeland.**
  
- 1) Israel is willing to discuss a Palestinian state in the distant future, but is still placing settlements in disputed areas.**
- 2) Former leader of Israel Barak negotiated regarding control of East Jerusalem, which was not received well by Israelis and is part of the reason he lost power to Ariel Sharon.**
- 3) Israel is willing to end occupation as long as Palestinians must travel through Israeli checkpoints in these areas.**
- 4) If all the Palestinians who lost their homes to Israelis returned, there would be more Palestinians than Israelis, effectively ending the existence of the Jewish state.**
  
- **Extreme (terrorist) violence is the result of all these unmet demands.**

# The Israeli Viewpoint

- **Jerusalem is mentioned in the Bible 669 times—it's not mentioned once in the Quran. It has been the Jewish capital for over 3000 years. Muhammad never visited.**
- **The number of Jewish refugees from Arab countries is around 1 million. This is more than the number of Arab refugees from Palestine since 1948.**
- **The majority of people in Israel are Jews from Arab countries. The Palestinian Arabs are from other Arab countries as well—a Palestinian refugee is defined as an Arab who had lived in Israel for more than two years.**
- **There are 21 Arab countries that Palestinians could live in, but only one small Jewish state—Israel.**
- **The Israeli viewpoint can be described by this anonymous quote:**  
**“If the Arabs put down their weapons today there would be no more violence. If the Israelis put down their weapons today there would be no more Israel.”**

# Occupation of the West Bank



# How does all this relate to today's terrorism?

- **Osama bin Laden: Son of a father from Yemen and a mother from Syria, born in Saudi Arabia and lived mostly in Afghanistan: a true Sunni Arab mutt.**
- **In Saudi Arabia, the bin Laden family owns a construction company worth billions of US\$. They were solely responsible for the renovations of the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, until 1967 when it was captured by Israel.**
- **Osama bin Laden was a major part of the war in Afghanistan versus the Soviet Union. He was partially funded by the CIA to gather and arm the mujahadin to fight the Soviets, which led to perhaps the biggest blowback in CIA history.**
- **In 1990 Iraq invaded Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia prepared to fight. Bin Laden, who was hailed a hero of jihad, offered his help to the Prince:**

**[Bin Laden:] I am ready to prepare 100,000 fighters with good combat capability within three months. You don't need American. You don't need any other non-Muslim troops. We will be enough.**

**[Prince Sultan:] There are no caves in Kuwait. What will you do when he lobbs missile at you with chemical and biological weapons?**

**[Bin Laden:] We will fight him with faith.**



# How does all this relate to today's terrorism?

- Insulted by Saudi Arabia's rejection and appalled that non-Muslim troops were being used (and trusted) on the same soil as their holy cities, bin Laden fled to Sudan.
- Sudan's government expelled bin Laden and he fled to Afghanistan where he financially supported the Taliban and formed Al-Qaeda.
- From his base in Afghanistan, bin Laden plotted numerous attacks on Americans abroad and of course in the U.S. on 9/11/01.

