

TIMES PAST



TIMELINE
THE ARAB-ISRAELI
CONFLICT



1947-49 PARTITION & WAR

In November 1947, the U.N. votes to partition British-controlled Palestine into Arab and Jewish states. Arab leaders reject partition, and when Israel declares independence in May 1948, six Arab states attack. Israel defeats the combined Arab armies and enlarges its territory; control of Jerusalem is divided between Jordan and Israel.

1967 SIX-DAY WAR

After Egypt expels U.N. peacekeepers and mobilizes its army, Israel launches a surprise attack. Syria, Jordan, and Iraq join the fighting, but Israel decimates the Arab forces, and captures East Jerusalem and the West Bank from Jordan, Gaza and Sinai from Egypt, and the Golan Heights from Syria. (see map, p. 16)

1973 YOM KIPPUR WAR

On the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur, Egypt and Syria launch a surprise attack on Israeli forces in Sinai and the Golan Heights. After initial gains by Egypt and Syria, Israel repels both armies and a cease-fire is declared. Israel later withdraws from parts of Sinai and the Golan Heights.

1979 ISRAEL-EGYPT PEACE TREATY

After Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's surprise visit to Jerusalem, U.S. President Jimmy Carter brokers peace between Egypt and Israel. Egypt becomes the first Arab nation to recognize Israel, and Israel withdraws from the rest of Sinai. Sadat is assassinated in 1981.

1987-90 FIRST INTIFADA

Angered by Israel's continuing occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, Palestinians begin an uprising, with stone-throwing youths attacking Israeli soldiers. The first suicide attack on civilians in Israel occurs in 1989.

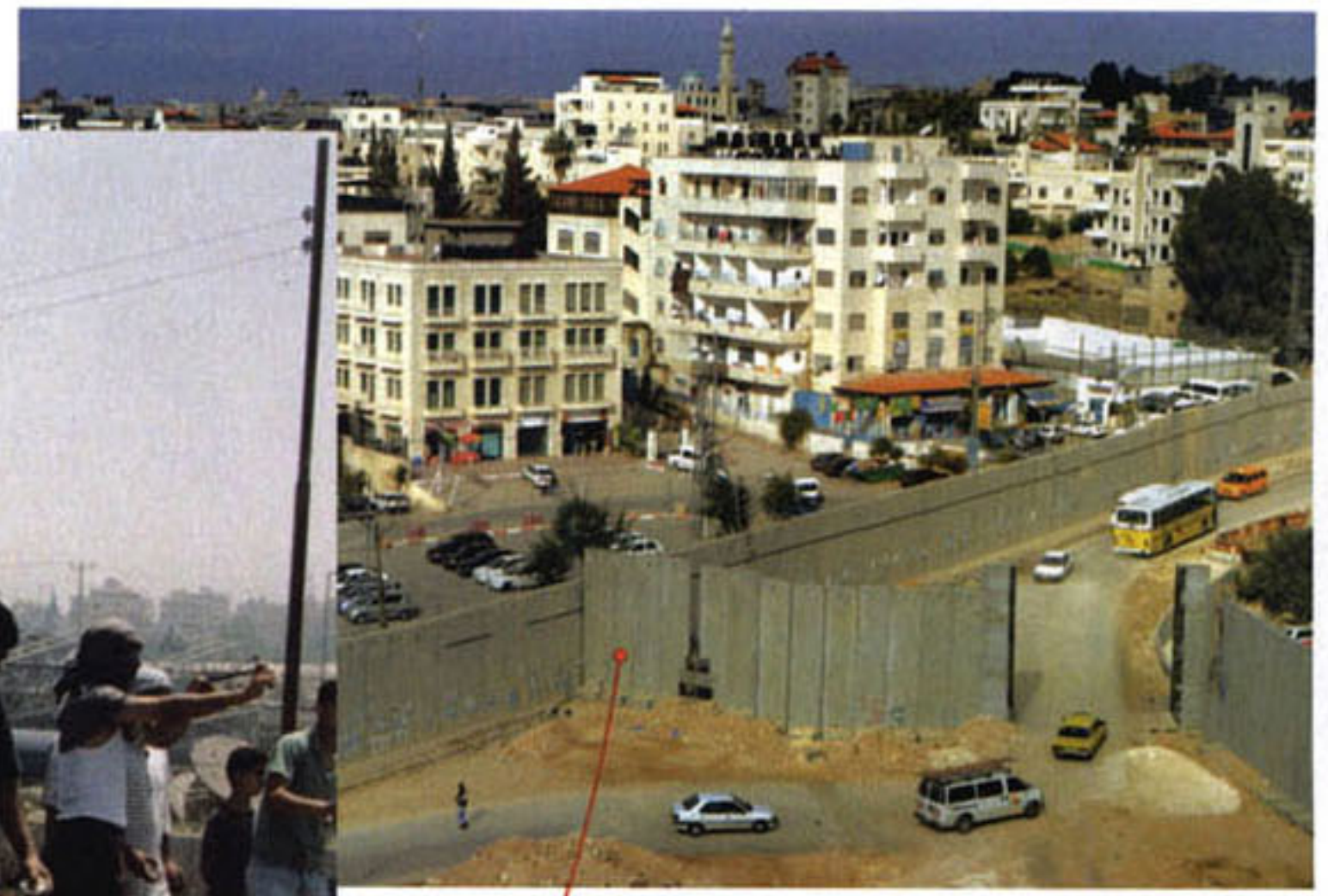
TOP: LEFT TO RIGHT: AFP/GETTY IMAGES; DAVID RUBINGER/CORBIS; WALLY MCNAMEE/CORBIS; NASSER ISSTAYEH/AP IMAGES; ODED BALILTY/AP IMAGES; MOHAMMED SABER/JEP/CORBIS

1948 THE BIRTH OF ISRAEL



In May 1948, the Jews of Palestine declared an independent state in their ancient homeland. Arab armies immediately attacked, and the conflict drags on six decades later.

By Sam Roberts



**1993-94
OSLO ACCORDS;
ISRAEL-JORDAN
PEACE TREATY**

After secret negotiations in Norway produce the Oslo Accords in 1993, Israel turns over control of parts of the West Bank and Gaza to the Palestinians as a first step toward statehood. Led by Yasir Arafat, Palestinians recognize Israel's right to exist. In 1994, Israel and Jordan sign a peace treaty.

**2000-05
SECOND INTIFADA**

Yasir Arafat rejects a final settlement with Israel negotiated by President Bill Clinton in 2000; a second, more violent uprising begins. Dozens of suicide bombings in Israel and an Israeli crackdown in Gaza and the West Bank leave more than 4,000 Palestinians and more than 1,000 Israelis dead.

**2003-PRESENT
SECURITY BARRIER**

Israel begins erecting a "separation barrier" to keep Palestinian terrorists from entering Israel from the West Bank. Suicide bombings drop 90 percent, but the path of the barrier—a combination of fence and wall—makes daily life more difficult for thousands of Palestinians.

**2005-06
GAZA PULLOUT/
HAMAS VICTORY**

Israel acts to "disengage" from the Palestinians, withdrawing settlers and troops from Gaza. In January 2006, the Islamic militant group Hamas, which the U.S. considers a terrorist group, wins Palestinian elections. The U.S. and many other countries cut off aid to the Palestinians.

**2007-08
GAZA TAKEOVER
BY HAMAS**

Civil war erupts in Gaza, and Hamas defeats forces loyal to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, who retains power in the West Bank. In January 2008, President Bush promotes a new peace effort, but Hamas rocket attacks on Israel and Israeli reprisals jeopardize negotiations.

In a simple, solemn, emotional ceremony at a Tel Aviv art museum that began with the singing of "Hatikvah," the national anthem, the state of Israel was proclaimed by the new Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, at 4 p.m. on May 14, 1948.

The proclamation 60 years ago this spring promised social and political equality for all inhabitants of the new nation, and Jewish leaders vowed to safeguard the sanctity of Muslim and Christian holy places. But there was little time for celebration in a city already blacked out to protect it from the Arab invasion everyone expected.

The attack by six Arab nations came immediately, touching off a spiral of war and violence that continues to this day, despite numerous attempts by the United States and other nations to mediate one of the world's most intractable conflicts.

Israel's roots as a Jewish homeland can be traced back thousands of years, to a time when many competing tribes struggled over the territory now known as the Middle East. The Old Testament recounts Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt, and Joshua conquering Canaanite city-states in an area that

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JERUSALEM: Judaism's holiest site, the Western Wall of the Second Temple, destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D.; above it, the Dome of the Rock, from which Muslims believe Mohammed ascended to heaven; nearby (not shown) is the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, venerated as the site of the Crucifixion.

roughly corresponds to today's Israel. David established a kingdom based around Jerusalem about 1000 B.C.

But this area on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean, at the center of ancient trade routes, would later be fought over by the Assyrians, the Persians, and the armies of Alexander the Great. In 164 B.C., the Jews came under Rome's control. In 135 A.D., the Romans drove the Jews from Jerusalem. The Romans were succeeded by the Byzantines, the Turks, the Crusaders, the Arabs, and finally the Ottomans in the 16th century.

Though there was a Jewish presence under all these rulers, it wasn't until the late 19th century that European Jews began emigrating in large numbers to what was then known as Palestine. They left Europe to escape anti-Semitism, especially in Russia, and to be part of the movement known as Zionism, one of the many strains of nationalism then sweeping the world. The Zionists' goal was to re-establish a Jewish state in the ancient land of Israel, referred to many times in the Bible as Zion.

CONFLICTING PROMISES

Zionism began to bear fruit during World War I. The Ottoman Empire—based in Turkey and spanning Southeastern Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa—had sided with Germany and against Britain, France, and later the U.S., in the war. In 1917, Britain promised support for a Jewish national home in Palestine in what is known as the Balfour Declaration. But at the same time, the British were also promising independence to Arabs in the Middle East in return for their support against the Turks and Germany.

After the Allied victory in the war, the League of Nations made Palestine a British protectorate (or mandate), and carved out the countries of Iraq, Syria, and eventually Lebanon. A few years later, Britain created Transjordan (now Jordan) from the part of Palestine located east of the Jordan river. The mostly

arbitrary boundaries of these Arab states helped set the stage for many conflicts that are still unresolved today.

At the same time, Palestinians—Arabic speakers, both Muslim and Christian, who had lived in Palestine under Ottoman and British rule—began expressing their own nationalist aspirations, putting Britain in the middle of a very difficult situation.

The British mandate continued until three years after the end of World War II in 1945. By then, Nazi Germany's campaign to exterminate Europe's Jews helped gain world support for a Jewish homeland. But to enlist Arab support against Germany

CAN U.S.-SPONSORED PEACE

during the war, the British barred additional Jewish immigration to Palestine. They continued to do so after the war despite pressure from the U.S. and other countries, keeping the population at 1.2 million Arabs and 600,000 Jews, with land ownership roughly evenly split. Zionist paramilitary groups resorted to bombings and attacks against British troops and officials.

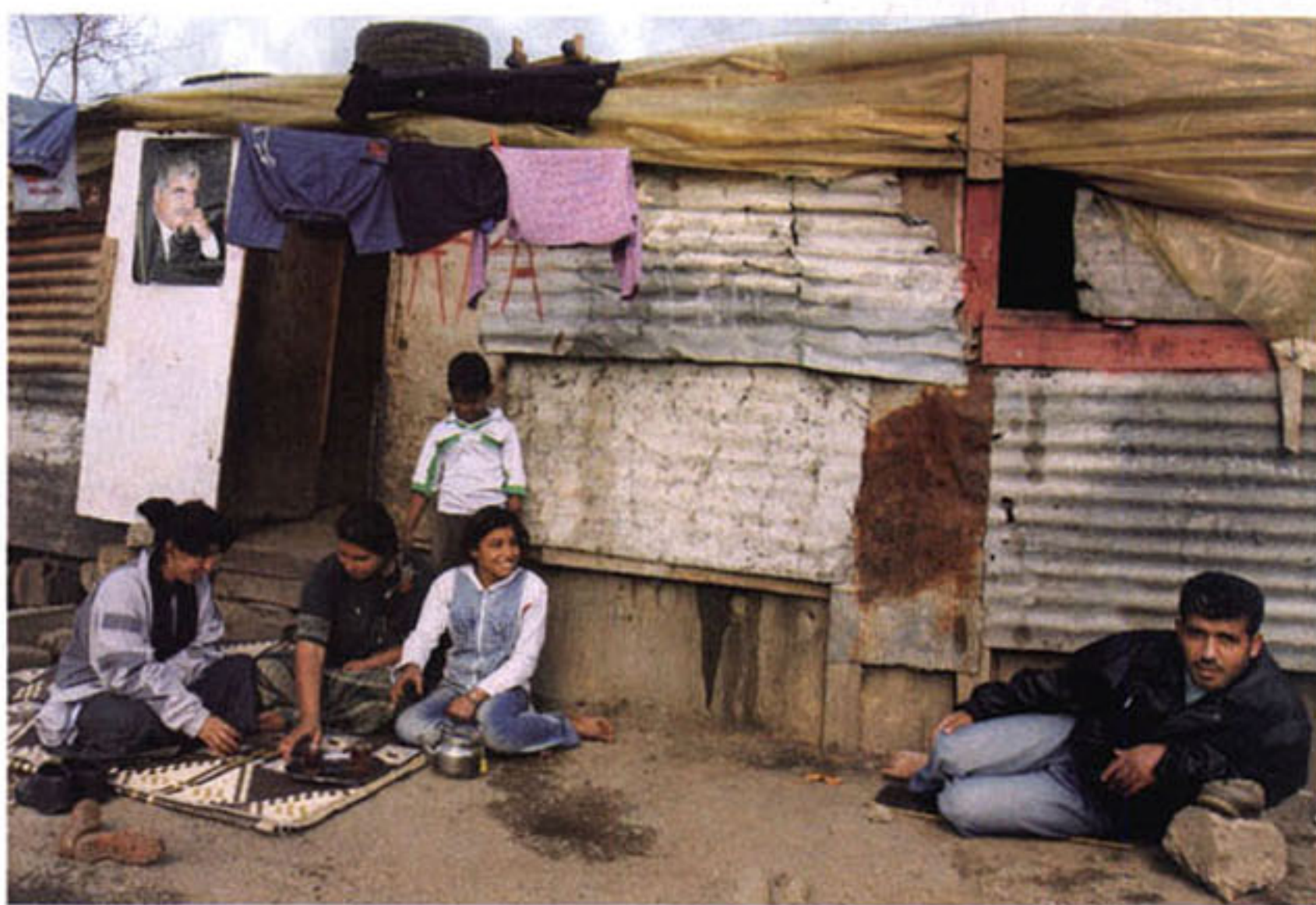
In 1947, a special United Nations commission recommended that Palestine be split into separate Arab and Jewish states, with Jerusalem under international control. On November 29, the U.N. General Assembly accepted the partition plan, with the support of the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

But while the Jews of Palestine accepted partition, the Arabs rejected it, and both sides prepared for Britain's withdrawal the next year. Arabs rioted and attacked Jewish settlements, and the Jews retaliated. Thousands of Palestinians fled the violence; some were forcibly expelled. The Haganah, a Jewish paramilitary force, transformed itself into a regular army that began to score military victories that were small but significant enough to impress President Harry S. Truman.

With the last British troops set to withdraw when the man-



THREE KEY ISSUES in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: Jerusalem (left), which both sides claim as their capital; security for Israel (mourning classmates killed in last month's attack on a Jerusalem high school, above); and Palestinian refugees who want the right to return to Israel (a refugee camp in Lebanon, right).



date expired at midnight on May 14, 1948, the Jews staked their claim and declared independence, calling the new state Israel.

All along, it had been unclear whether Washington would support a Jewish state. Truman had initially opposed independence for Israel, fearing it would want U.S. military support. But in an example of how personal politics can get, Truman was persuaded to support the new state by Eddie Jacobson, his World War I army buddy and partner in a Kansas City men's store where Truman sold suits before getting into politics. Jacobson, who was Jewish, avoided publicity by sneaking into

descendants who fled or were driven from Israel to become refugees in neighboring Arab states.

The ensuing six decades have brought several wars but also recognition of Israel and peace treaties with both Egypt and Jordan (see timeline, p. 14). But there has been no resolution to the questions of statehood for the Palestinians and security for Israel. Israelis live in fear of terrorist attacks, like the one in March in which a Palestinian gunman killed eight students studying in a Jerusalem high school library. Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza struggle with the hardships of living under

TALKS BETWEEN PALESTINIANS AND ISRAELIS SUCCEED?

the White House, and received Truman's pledge of support.

After saying that he would "do what I think is right and let them all go to hell," Truman formally recognized the Jewish state, two hours after Ben-Gurion's proclamation in Tel Aviv.

"In one of the most hopeful periods of their troubled history," a *Times* correspondent wrote from Tel Aviv that day, "the Jewish people here gave a sigh of relief and took a new hold on life when they learned that the greatest national power had accepted them into the international fraternity."

But Israel's survival was far from a sure thing. The armies of six Arab nations—Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and Syria—with a combined population of more than 30 million attacked the new state. Although there were occasional cease-fires, full-scale fighting didn't end until an armistice in 1949, with borders established along a "green line" drawn on a map; the war ended with no recognition of Israel by the Arab states, no state for Palestinians, and with control over Jerusalem divided between Israel and Jordan.

The war created a refugee problem that remains unresolved today: the fate of 700,000 Palestinians and their

Israel's 41-year military occupation; and there is high unemployment and restrictions on Palestinians' movement, including the controversial security barrier Israel began erecting in 2003.

AN ELUSIVE SEARCH

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas say they are committed to coexistence between Israel and an independent Palestinian state. But peace talks have been threatened by rocket attacks on Israeli cities by Hamas, the militant Islamic group that seized power last year in Gaza, and Israeli retaliation.

"Without measurable improvements in the lives of both Israelis and Palestinians," *The Times* wrote recently, "a few spectacular acts of terrorism can derail even the best-intentioned peace talks."

Aaron David Miller, author of *The Much Too Promised Land: America's Elusive Search for Arab-Israeli Peace*, warns that the search is even more elusive because Palestinians remain divided. "You cannot make peace with half of the Palestinian polity," he says, "and go to war with the other half." ●

CHANGING FAITHS



CRITICAL THINKING

According to the study discussed in the article, about 44 percent of Americans have switched religious affiliations since their childhoods. Why do you think that is? Does it surprise you? Why or why not?

Immigration has a great influence on American religion.

Why might that be important to politicians?

Why do you think the U.S. Census does not track religion?

WRITING PROMPT

Choose three issues in the current election. Write a five-paragraph essay

discussing how religious beliefs may sway voters who attach importance to those issues.

DEBATE

Support or refute: The separation of church and state is fiction; religion plays a large role in American politics and government.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

How do politicians use religion when campaigning for office or seeking public support on issues?

In what ways does religion play a role in American culture?

How and why might one's religious views and values change over a lifetime?

FAST FACTS

According to the survey, 31 percent of Americans who are unaffiliated with a religion are under age 30, and 71 percent are under age 50.

→ In the overall adult population, 20 percent of Americans are

under age 30, and 59 percent are under age 50.

Islam is the fastest-growing religion in the world, increasing at a rate of about 2 percent a year.

Other fast-growing religions include the Bahai faith, Sikhism, Jainism, Hinduism, and Christianity. (Data from 2000-05, as reported by *Foreign Policy* magazine.)

WEB WATCH

<http://religions.pewforum.org/reports>

The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life Web site provides a summary and analysis of the U.S. Religious Landscape Survey.

1948: THE BIRTH OF ISRAEL



CRITICAL THINKING

Why do events in the Middle East have such important political and economic ramifications around the globe?

Why do you think Israel's neighbors immediately waged war on the new state in 1948? Why was it that Jewish leaders

accepted the U.N. partition plan when Arab leaders did not?

What do you think is a fair solution to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians? How would each side respond to this solution? Do you think a mutually agreeable

solution will ever be reached? Why or why not?

WRITING PROMPT

Do you think dividing Israel into an Arab state and a Jewish state, as originally recommended by the U.N., would have led to a lasting peace in the region? Share your views in a five-paragraph essay.

DEBATE

Take sides: What responsibility, if any, do international organizations and world powers like the U.S. have in supporting the peace

process between Israel and the Palestinians?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

To what degree do you think British actions in Palestine before 1948 helped to create the problems that exist in the Middle East today?

Israel is the only Middle Eastern country that allows people of all religions to practice their faiths

openly. How do people with radical religious views affect this seemingly peaceful coexistence?

In what ways has religion helped or impeded the peace process?

FAST FACT

At the end of 2007, Israel's population reached 7.2 million residents. Seventy-six percent are Jewish and 20 percent are Arab.

WEB WATCH

www.cfr.org/publication/15268

"Timeline: The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict" presents an interactive look from 1914 to today. From the Council on Foreign Relations.

1948: THE BIRTH OF ISRAEL

1 Palestine came under British rule after

- a a recommendation by the United Nations.
- b the fall of the Ottoman Empire.
- c Britain overthrew the Palestinian government.
- d the defeat of the Nazis in World War II.

2 How did the Balfour Declaration conflict with a promise Britain made to Arabs living in Palestine?

3 What did the United Nations recommend for Palestine after World War II?

- a A division into separate Arab and Jewish states, with Jerusalem under international control
- b A binational Arab and Jewish state, with Jerusalem under Jewish control

- c A continuation of British trusteeship of Palestine
- d A division of the land to be shared by neighboring Middle Eastern countries

4 Which U.S. President was in office when Israel declared independence?

- a Herbert Hoover
- b Franklin D. Roosevelt
- c Harry S. Truman
- d Dwight D. Eisenhower

5 Which of the following happened shortly after Israel declared independence?

- a The Israeli government set bans on immigration.
- b Arab countries formally recognized Israel.
- c The Allies defeated the Nazis in World War II.
- d Nearby Arab countries attacked Israel.

IN-DEPTH QUESTIONS

1 What do you think would have been the result if Palestine had been divided into an Arab state and a Jewish state? Do you think the region would be more peaceful? Why or why not?

2 Aside from Israel, what other nations can you list that are guided in part by religious law? How are they like Israel? How are they different?

INTRODUCING

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GAME SHOW

● **USE** with articles identified.

The statements are answers to questions (modeled after the TV show *Jeopardy!*).

Students must answer in the form of questions.

● **DIVIDE** the class into teams.

● **READ** the statements.

● **CALL** on the first team with a hand raised.

CORRECT ANSWER = 10 points

WRONG ANSWER = -10 points

(And another team may respond for the same chance to gain or lose 10 points.)

STATEMENTS TO READ

CORRECT RESPONSE

DARFUR'S AGONY

① The brutal Arab militias attacking the Darfur region of Sudan.	Who are the janjaweed?
② The conflict in Darfur began when rebels demanded greater political and economic rights for this group.	Who are the black Africans?
③ Systematic destruction of a racial or cultural group.	What is genocide?
④ The attacks in Darfur involve close coordination of these two elements, along with the janjaweed.	What are air power and army troops?
⑤ Nearly 2.5 million Darfur citizens have been displaced from their homes and have become this.	What are refugees?

1948: THE BIRTH OF ISRAEL

① This British declaration in 1917 promised support for a Jewish national home in Palestine.	What was the Balfour Declaration?
② Two of the four countries that border Israel.	What are Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, and Syria?
③ Movement that worked to create a Jewish state in Palestine.	What is Zionism?
④ These superpowers backed the U.N. recommendation in 1947 to create Arab and Jewish states in Palestine.	What are the U.S. and the Soviet Union?
⑤ The 1967 war between Israel and its Arab neighbors.	What is the Six-Day War?

ANSWER KEY

QUIZ 1 ▷ PAGE TE 5

- ① [c] Taliban
- ② [b] attending school
- ③ [a] came to the U.S. for a soccer clinic
- ④ [b] She is tolerant of the ways of American teenagers.
- ⑤ Shamila values education so much because it was denied to her from ages 8 to 13, when she lived in Afghanistan under Taliban rule.

QUIZ 2 ▷ PAGE TE 5

- ① [a] one half
- ② [d] the unaffiliated
- ③ [b] The majority of immigrants are Christian.
- ④ [a] do not feel that religion is important to them
- ⑤ Religion drives beliefs and values, and understanding the perspectives held by different religious groups helps politicians and interest groups make effective appeals for support.

QUIZ 3 ▷ PAGE TE 6

- ① [b] the fall of the Ottoman Empire
- ② [a] It supported a Jewish homeland in Palestine; It also promised Arabs independence in return for their support against the Ottomans and Germans.
- ③ [a] A division into separate Arab and Jewish states with Jerusalem under international control.
- ④ [c] Harry S. Truman
- ⑤ [d] Nearby Arab countries attacked Israel.

GRAPH EXERCISE ▷ PAGE TE 4

- ① [d] Haiti and Liberia
- ② [c] Congo
- ③ [b] Kosovo
- ④ [a] one half of
- ⑤ [c] \$675 million