

Syria~Israel~Palestine~Lebanon~Jordan

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السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ

~Peace Be With You All~

The United States, the Soviet Union, and the
University of Michigan
Invite you to attend the
**Middle East
Peace Conference**
in Madrid, Spain at the Royal Palace
on October 31-November 3, 1991

MIDDLE EAST PEACE CONFERENCE - LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Wednesday, October 30, 1991-THOSE PRESENT

Prime Minister Gonzalez of Spain
President Bush of the United States
President Gorbachev of the U.S.S.R.
EC Delegation
Egyptian Delegation

Thursday, October 31, 1991-THOSE PRESENT

Israeli Delegation
Jordanian/Palestinian Delegation - Jordanians
Jordanian/Palestinian Delegation - Palestinians
Lebanese Delegation
Syrian Delegation

Friday, November 1, 1991-THOSE PRESENT

Israeli Delegation
Jordanian/Palestinian Delegation - Jordanians
Jordanian/Palestinian Delegation - Palestinians
Lebanese Delegation
Syrian Delegation
Egyptian Delegation
Foreign Minister Pankin of the U.S.S.R.
Secretary of State Baker of the United States
Foreign Minister van den Broek of the Netherlands, for the E.C.

Below is a double-faced image of the diplomatic leaders in the SALON DE
LAS COLUMNAS
See both the inside and outside of the Royal Palace

The question of Peace in the Middle East

Visit the links below

Read--> Why the Peace Conference in Madrid was such a **success**
An * In-Depth* look at the Middle East with Maps

Visit the source of the Invitation
See the timeline of the Travels of Secretary of State, James Baker
Accompany James Baker, architect of the Peace Conference, on his travels by flying back in time with Google Earth!

The Atmosphere before the Conference-**Doubtful Thoughts**

*Breaking News-**U.S. Embassy in Lebanon** Hit day before Madrid*
Tensions Rise at the **Madrid** Conference

View the Conference Center in 3-D images, as a JPG
View the Conference Center and additional photos, as a KMZ file
Understand the background of the conference
Meet the Actors of the Peace Process in the Middle East
Learn your way around the Middle East and the Delegate countries

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[Israel](#)
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*Info taken from the U.S. State Dept, [Background Notes on Countries of the World](#)

Understand the significance of Madrid, Spain
Familiarize yourself with the **Madrid Framework**
See a Middle East **Peace Chronology** dating back to 1978

Bilateral Negotiations

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Understand the **Israeli-Palestinian Conflict**

Differing **Viewpoints**
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Multilateral Negotiations

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Economic Development

Quick **VIDEO** History Lesson-check it out!

Discover the different components/atmospheres of the Middle East

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Read the **Opening and Closing Speeches** at the Conference

Declaration by the UN on the **10th Anniversary** of the Conference

Calendrical Timeline-The Quest for Peace over the years
1991 Let's **Agree to Disagree**
1992 Where was **Palestine** in the Moscow Peace Talks

4th row from left: unknown, unknown, [Amre Moussa](#)

3rd row from left: unknown, [James Baker III](#), unknown, [Dr.Kamel Abu Jaber](#) , [Hans Van Den Broek](#)

2nd row from left: unknown, unknown, [Yitzhak Shamir](#), unknown

1st row from left: [Boris Pankin](#), [Mikhail Gorbachev](#) , [George H.W. Bush](#)

CONTINUE TO NAVIGATE YOUR WAY AROUND THIS GEOMAT PROJECT! THE TABLES ON THE RIGHT ARE YOUR GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING ALL ASPECTS OF THE MADRID PEACE CONFERENCE. THE GRAY BOX CONTAINS ALL THE INFORMATION SURROUNDING THE CONFERENCE, MAKE SURE TO VISIT ALL THE LINKS AND BE CURIOUS WHEN YOU GET TO THOSE PAGES, FOR THERE ARE MORE LINKS THAT GET IN GREATER DEPTH.

BELOW THE GRAY TABLE IS THE OFFICAL INVITATION TO THE CONFERENCE, I AM GLAD YOU HAVE CONFIRMED YOUR ATTENDANCE!



Below: Current Map of the Middle East Region, the countries and their borders are labeled; capitals and major cities are also shown

1993 [Oslo Declaration of Principles](#)

1994 [American Aid](#) in the Peace Process

1995 Have Arab Governments loss [confidence](#) in the Peace Process

1996 Will Israel [strike](#)

1997 The Israel-Palestine [Conflict](#)-in need of America's help

1998 The [Trust](#) is missing in negotiations

1999 [Meeting](#) of Clinton & Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel

2000 What Gorbachev [thinks](#)

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LETTER OF INVITATION TO MADRID PEACE CONFERENCE October 30, 1991

The breakup of the Soviet Union and the Gulf War reshaped the basic political order of the Middle East. In an attempt to take advantage of this change, US Secretary of State James Baker made eight trips to the region in the eight months following the Gulf War. The Madrid Invitation, inviting Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and the Palestinians to an opening conference represents the result of this shuttle diplomacy. The invitation, an outcome of compromises by all sides, details the structure of the Madrid process:

- *An opening conference having no power to impose solutions*
- *Bilateral talks with the Arab states bordering Israel,*
- *Talks with the Palestinians on 5-year interim self-rule, to be followed by talks on the permanent status*
- *Multilateral talks on key regional issues, like refugees.*

The following is the complete text of the invitation to the Madrid Peace Conference on October 30, 1991, jointly issued by the U.S. and the Soviet Union:

TEXT:

After extensive consultations with Arab states, Israel and the Palestinians, the United States and the Soviet Union believe that an historic opportunity exists to advance the prospects for genuine peace throughout the region. The United States and the Soviet Union are prepared to assist the parties to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement, through direct negotiations along two tracks, between Israel and the Arab states, and between Israel and the Palestinians, based on United Nations Security Council Resolutions [242](#) and [338](#). The objective of this process is real peace.

Toward that end, the president of the U.S. and the president of the USSR invite you to a peace conference, which their countries will co-sponsor, followed immediately by direct negotiations. The conference will be convened in Madrid on October 30, 1991.

President Bush and President Gorbachev request your acceptance of this invitation no later than 6 P.M. Washington time, October 23, 1991, in order to ensure proper organization and preparation of the conference.

Direct bilateral negotiations will begin four days after the opening of the conference. Those parties who wish to attend multilateral negotiations will convene two weeks after the opening of the conference to organize those negotiations. The co-sponsors believe that those negotiations should focus on region-wide issues of water, refugee issues, environment, economic development, and other subjects of mutual interest.





The co-sponsors will chair the conference which will be held at ministerial level. Governments to be invited include Israel, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. Palestinians will be invited and attend as part of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. Egypt will be invited to the conference as a participant. The European Community will be a participant in the conference, alongside the United States and the Soviet Union and will be represented by its presidency. The Gulf Cooperation Council will be invited to send its secretary-general to the conference as an observer, and GCC member states will be invited to participate in organizing the negotiations on multilateral issues. The United Nations will be invited to send an observer, representing the secretary-general.

The conference will have no power to impose solutions on the parties or veto agreements reached by them. It will have no authority to make decisions for the parties and no ability to vote on issues of results. The conference can reconvene only with the consent of all the parties.

With respect to negotiations between Israel and Palestinians who are part of the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation, negotiations will be conducted in phases, beginning with talks on interim self-government arrangements. These talks will be conducted with the objective of reaching agreement within one year. Once agreed, the interim self-government arrangements will last for a period of five years; beginning the third year of the period of interim self-government arrangements, negotiations will take place on permanent status. These permanent status negotiations, and the negotiations between Israel and the Arab states, will take place on the basis of Resolutions 242 and 338.

It is understood that the co-sponsors are committed to making this process succeed. It is their intention to convene the conference and negotiations with those parties who agree to attend.

The co-sponsors believe that this process offers the promise of ending decades of confrontation and conflict and the hope of a lasting peace. Thus, the co-sponsors hope that the parties will approach these negotiations in a spirit of good will and mutual respect. In this way, the peace process can begin to break down the mutual suspicions and mistrust that perpetuate the conflict and allow the parties to begin to resolve their differences. Indeed, only through such a process can real peace and reconciliation among the Arab states, Israel and the Palestinians be achieved. And only through this process can the peoples of the Middle East attain the peace and security they richly deserve.

This GeoMat Study was designed by Angelina Sulaka,
with contribution by the following [people and works](#)

Syrian Arab Republic

Geography

Area: 185,170 sq. km. (71,504 sq. mi.), including 1,295 sq. km. of Israeli-occupied territory; about the size of North Dakota.

Cities: *Capital*--Damascus (pop. 4 million). *Other cities*--Aleppo (4.2 million), Homs (1.6 million), Hama (1.4 million), Idleb (1.3 million), al-Hasakeh (1.2 million), Dayr al-Zur (1.1), Latakia (0.9 million), Dar'a (0.9), al-Raqqa (0.8), and Tartous (0.7).

Terrain: Narrow coastal plain with a double mountain belt in the west; large, semiarid and desert plateau to the east.

Climate: Mostly desert; hot, dry, sunny summers (June to August) and mild, rainy winters (December to February) along coast.

People

Nationality: *Noun and adjective*--Syrian (s).

Population (2005 est.): 18.6 million. Growth rate (2005 est.): 2.45%.

Major ethnic groups: Arabs (90%), Kurds (9%), Armenians, Circassians, Turkomans.



Religions: Sunni Muslims (74%), Alawis (12%), Christians (10%), Druze (3%), and small numbers of other Muslim sects, Jews, and Yazidis. Languages: Arabic (official), English (widely understood in major cities only), Kurdish, Armenian, Aramaic, Circassian. Education (2005 est.): *Years compulsory*--primary, 6 yrs. *Attendance*--97.9%. *Literacy*--92.5%; 87.9% male, 73.9% female. Health (2004): *Infant mortality rate*--17.1/1,000. *Life expectancy*--68.47 yrs. male, 71.02 yrs. female. Work force (6.1 million, 2004 est.): Services (including government); agriculture; industry and commerce.

Government

Type: Republic, under Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party regimes since March 1963. Independence: April 17, 1946. Constitution: March 13, 1973. Branches: *Executive*--president, two vice presidents, prime minister, Council of Ministers (cabinet). *Legislative*--unicameral People's Council. *Judicial*--Supreme Constitutional Court, High Judicial Council, Court of Cassation, State Security Courts. Administrative subdivisions: 13

POLITICAL CONDITIONS

Officially, Syria is a republic. In reality, however, it is an authoritarian regime that exhibits only the forms of a democratic system. Although citizens ostensibly vote for the President and members of Parliament, they do not have the right to change their government. The late President Hafiz Al-Asad was confirmed by unopposed referenda five times. His son, Bashar Al-Asad, also was confirmed by an unopposed referendum in July 2000. The President and his senior aides, particularly those in the military and security services, ultimately make most basic decisions in political and economic life, with a very limited degree of public accountability. Political opposition to the President is not tolerated. Syria has been under a state of emergency since 1963. Syrian governments have justified martial law by the state of war, which continues to exist with Israel and by continuing threats posed by terrorist groups.

The Asad regime (little has changed since Bashar Al-Asad succeeded his father) has held power longer than any other Syrian government since independence; its survival is due partly to a strong desire for stability and the regime's success in giving groups such as religious minorities and peasant farmers a stake in society. The expansion of the government bureaucracy has also created a large class loyal to the regime. The President's continuing strength is due also to the army's continued loyalty and the effectiveness of Syria's large internal security apparatus. The leadership of both is comprised largely of members of Asad's own Alawi sect. The several main branches of the security services operate independently of each other and outside of the legal system. Each continues to be responsible for human rights violations.

All three branches of government are guided by the views of the Ba'ath Party, whose primacy in state institutions is assured by the constitution. The Ba'ath platform is proclaimed succinctly in the party's slogan: "Unity, freedom, and socialism." The party has traditionally been considered both socialist, advocating state ownership of the means of industrial production and the redistribution of agricultural land, and revolutionary, dedicated to carrying a socialist revolution to every part of the Arab world. Founded by Michel 'Aflaq, a Syrian Christian and Salah al-Din Al-Bitar, a Syrian Sunni, the Ba'ath Party embraces secularism and has attracted supporters of all faiths in many Arab countries, especially Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon. Since August 1990, however, the party has tended to de-emphasize socialism and to stress both pan-Arab unity and the need for gradual reform of the Syrian economy.

Nine smaller political parties are permitted to exist and, along with the Ba'ath Party, make up the National Progressive Front (NPF), a grouping of parties that represents the sole framework of legal political party participation for citizens. While created ostensibly to give the appearance of a multi-party system, the NPF is dominated by the Ba'ath Party and does not change the essentially one-party character of the political system. Non-Ba'ath parties included in the NPF represent small political groupings of a few hundred members each and conform strictly to Ba'ath Party and government policies. There were reports in 2005, in the wake of the June Ba'ath Party Congress, that the government was considering legislation to permit the formation of new political parties and the legalization of parties previously banned. These changes have not taken place. In addition, some 15 small independent parties outside the NPF operate without government sanction.

The Ba'ath Party dominates the parliament, which is known as the People's Council. With members elected every 4 years, the Council has no independent authority. The executive branch retains ultimate control over the legislative process, although parliamentarians may criticize policies and modify draft laws; according to the constitution and its bylaws, a group of 10 parliamentarians can propose legislation. During 2001, two independent members of parliament, Ma'mun al-Humsy and Riad Seif, who had advocated political reforms, were stripped of their parliamentary immunity and tried and convicted of charges of "attempting to illegally change the constitution." Seif was released from prison in early 2006, but remains under strict surveillance by the security services. The government has allowed independent non-NPF candidates to run for a limited allotment of seats in the 250-member People's Council. Following the April 22-23, 2007 parliamentary elections, the NPF strengthened its hold on parliament, with the number of non-NPF deputies shrinking from 83 to 80, ensuring a permanent absolute majority for the Ba'ath Party-dominated NPF.

There was a surge of interest in political reform after Bashar al-Asad assumed power in 2000. Human rights activists and other civil society advocates, as well as some parliamentarians, became more outspoken during a period referred to as "Damascus Spring" (July 2000-February 2001). Asad also made a series of appointments of reform-minded advisors to formal and less formal positions, and included a number of similarly oriented individuals in his cabinet. The 2001 arrest and long-term detention of the two reformist parliamentarians and the apparent marginalizing of some of the reformist advisors in the past five years,

provinces and city of Damascus (administered as a separate unit). Political parties: Arab Socialist Resurrection (Ba'ath) Party, Syrian Arab Socialist Party, Arab Socialist Union, Syrian Communist Party, Arab Socialist Unionist Movement, Democratic Socialist Union Party, and some 15 very small quasi-tolerated political parties, generally considered opposition-oriented but enfeebled and reluctant to challenge the government. Suffrage: Universal at 18.

Economy

2005 estimate+ + + GDP (2005 nominal) *: \$27.3 billion.

Real growth rate*: 2.9%.

Per capita GDP*: \$1464.

Natural resources: Crude oil and natural gas, phosphates, asphalt, rock salt, marble, gypsum, iron ore, chrome, and manganese ores.

Agriculture:

Products--cotton, wheat, barley, sugar beets, fruits and vegetables. *Arable land*--32%.

Industry: *Types*--mining, manufacturing (textiles, food processing), construction, petroleum.

Trade: *Exports*--\$10.2 billion: petroleum, textiles,

indicate that the pace of any political reform in Syria is likely to be much slower than the short-lived Damascus Spring promised. A crackdown on civil society in 2005, in the wake of Syria's withdrawal from Lebanon, and again in the late winter and spring of 2006, reinforced the perception that any steps toward political form were likely to be halting and piecemeal at best.

ECONOMY

Syria is a middle-income, developing country with an economy based on agriculture, oil, industry, and tourism. However, Syria's economy faces serious challenges and impediments to growth, including: a large and poorly performing public sector; declining rates of oil production; widening non-oil deficit; wide scale corruption; weak financial and capital markets; and high rates of unemployment tied to a high population growth rate. In addition, Syria currently is the subject of U.S. economic sanctions under the Syria Accountability Act, which prohibits the export and re-export of most U.S. products to Syria.

As a result of an inefficient and corrupt centrally planned economy, Syria has low rates of investment, and low levels of industrial and agricultural productivity. Its GDP growth rate was approximately 2.9% in 2005, according to IMF statistics. The two main pillars of the Syrian economy have been agriculture and oil. Agriculture, for instance, accounts for 25% of GDP and employs 42% of the total labor force. The government hopes to attract new investment in the tourism, natural gas, and service sectors to diversify its economy and reduce its dependence on oil and agriculture. The government has begun to institute economic reforms aimed at liberalizing most markets, but reform thus far has been slow and ad hoc. For ideological reasons, privatization of government enterprises is explicitly rejected. Therefore major sectors of the economy including refining, ports operation, air transportation, power generation, and water distribution, remain firmly controlled by the government.

The Bashar al-Asad government started its reform efforts by changing the regulatory environment in the financial sector. In 2001, Syria legalized private banking and the sector, while still nascent, has been growing quickly in the last four years. Controls on foreign exchange continue to be one of the biggest impediments to the growth of the banking sector, although Syria has taken gradual steps to loosen those controls. In 2003, the government canceled a law that criminalized private sector use of foreign currencies, and in 2005 it issued legislation that allows licensed private banks to sell specific amounts of foreign currency to Syrian citizens under certain circumstances and to the private sector to finance imports. Syria's exchange rate is fixed, and the government maintains two official rates -- one rate on which the budget and the value of imports, customs, and other official transactions are based, and a second set by the Central Bank on a daily basis that covers all other financial transactions. There is, however, still an active black market for foreign currency.

Given the policies adopted from the 1960s through the late 1980s, which included nationalization of companies and private assets, Syria failed to join an increasingly interconnected global economy. Syria withdrew from the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in 1951 because of Israel's accession. It is not a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), although it submitted a request to begin the accession process in 2001. Syria is developing regional free trade agreements. As of January 1, 2005, the Greater Arab Free Trade Agreement (GAFTA) came into effect and customs duties were eliminated between Syria and all other members of GAFTA. In addition, Syria has signed a free trade agreement with Turkey, which came into force in January 2007, and initialed an Association Agreement with the EU, which has yet to be signed. Although Syria claims a recent boom in non-oil exports, its trade numbers are notoriously inaccurate and out-of-date. Syria's main exports include crude oil, refined products, raw cotton, clothing, fruits, and grains. The bulk of Syrian imports are raw materials essential for industry, vehicles, agricultural equipment, and heavy machinery. Earnings from oil exports as well as remittances from Syrian workers are the government's most important sources of foreign exchange.

Syria has produced heavy-grade oil from fields located in the northeast since the late 1960s. In the early 1980s, light-grade, low-sulphur oil was discovered near Dayr al-Zur in eastern Syria. Syria's rate of oil production has been decreasing steadily, from a peak close to 600,000 barrels per day (bpd) in 1995 down to approximately 425,000 bpd in 2005. Experts generally agree that Syria will become a net importer of petroleum not later than 2012. Syria exported roughly 200,000 bpd in 2005, and oil still accounts for a majority of the country's export income. Syria also produces 22 million cubic meters of gas per day, with estimated reserves around 8.5 trillion cubic feet. While the government has begun to work with international energy companies in the hopes of eventually becoming a gas exporter, all gas currently produced is consumed domestically.

phosphates, antiquities, fruits and vegetables, cotton. *Major markets*--EU, Arab countries, United States, New Independent States, Eastern Europe. *Imports*--\$10.8 billion: foodstuffs, metal and metal products, machinery, textiles, petroleum. *Major suppliers*--Russia, Turkey, Ukraine, China, U.S., Japan. *according to IMF statistics

PEOPLE

Ethnic Syrians are of Semitic stock. Syria's population is 90% Muslim--74% Sunni, and 16% other Muslim groups, including the Alawi, Shi'a, and Druze--and 10% Christian. There also is a tiny Syrian Jewish community.

Arabic is the official, and most widely spoken, language. Arabs, including some 500,000 Palestinian and up to 1.3 million Iraqi refugees, make up 90% of the population. Many educated Syrians also speak English or French, but English is the more widely understood. The Kurds, many of whom speak the banned Kurdish language, make up 9% of the population and live mostly in the northeast corner of Syria, though sizable Kurdish

Some basic commodities, such as diesel, continue to be heavily subsidized, and social services are provided for nominal charges. The subsidies are becoming harder to sustain as the gap between consumption and production continues to increase. Syria has a population of approximately 19 million people, and Syrian Government figures place the population growth rate at 2.45%, with 75% of the population under the age of 35 and more than 40% under the age of 15. Approximately 200,000 people enter the labor market every year. According to Syrian Government statistics, the unemployment rate is 7.5%, however, more accurate independent sources place it closer to 20%. Government and public sector employees constitute over one quarter of the total labor force and are paid very low salaries and wages. Government officials acknowledge that the economy is not growing at a pace sufficient to create enough new jobs annually to match population growth. The UNDP announced in 2005 that 30% of the Syrian population lives in poverty and 11.4% live below the subsistence level.

Syria has made progress in easing its heavy foreign debt burden through bilateral rescheduling deals with its key creditors in Europe, most importantly Russia, Germany, and France. Syria has also settled its debt with Iran and the World Bank. In December 2004, Syria and Poland reached an agreement by which Syria would pay \$27 million out of the total \$261.7 million debt. In January 2005, Russia forgave 80% of Syria's \$13 billion long-outstanding debt, and later that year Syria reached an agreement with Slovakia, and the Czech Republic to settle debt estimated at \$1.6 billion. Again Syria was forgiven the bulk of its debt, in exchange for a one time payment of \$150 million.

U.S. - SYRIAN RELATIONS

U.S.-Syrian relations, severed in 1967, were resumed in June 1974, following the achievement of the Syrian-Israeli disengagement agreement. In 1990-91, Syria cooperated with the United States as a member of the multinational coalition of forces in the Gulf War. The U.S. and Syria also consulted closely on the Taif Accord, ending the civil war in Lebanon. In 1991, President Asad made a historic decision to accept then President Bush's invitation to attend a Middle East peace conference and to engage in subsequent bilateral negotiations with Israel. Syria's efforts to secure the release of Western hostages held in Lebanon and its lifting of restrictions on travel by Syrian Jews helped to further improve relations between Syria and the United States. There were several presidential summits; the last one occurred when then-President Clinton met the late President Hafiz al-Asad in Geneva in March 2000. In the aftermath of September 11th the Syrian Government began limited cooperation with U.S. in the war against terror.

Syria has been on the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism since the list's inception in 1979. Because of its continuing support and safe haven for terrorist organizations, Syria is subject to legislatively mandated penalties, including export sanctions and ineligibility to receive most forms of U.S. aid or to purchase U.S. military equipment. In 1986, the U.S. withdrew its ambassador and imposed additional administrative sanctions on Syria in response to evidence of direct Syrian involvement in an attempt to blow up an Israeli airplane. A U.S. ambassador returned to Damascus in 1987, partially in response to positive Syrian actions against terrorism such as expelling the Abu Nidal Organization from Syria and helping free an American hostage earlier that year.

However, relations since the February 2005 assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Hariri have considerably deteriorated. Issues of U.S. concern include the Syrian Government's failure to prevent Syria from becoming a major transit point for foreign fighters entering Iraq, its refusal to deport from Syria former Saddam regime elements who are supporting the insurgency in Iraq, its ongoing interference in Lebanese affairs, its protection of the leadership of Palestinian rejectionist groups in Damascus, its deplorable human rights record, and its pursuit of weapons of mass destruction. In May 2004, the Bush administration, pursuant to the provisions of the Syrian Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act, imposed sanctions on Syria which banned nearly all exports to Syria except food and medicine. In February 2005, in the wake of the Hariri assassination, the U.S. recalled its Ambassador to Washington.

On September 12, 2006 the U.S. Embassy was attacked by four armed assailants with guns, grenades and a car bomb (which failed to detonate). Syrian Security Forces successfully countered the attack, killing all four attackers. Two other Syrians killed during the attack were a government security guard and a passerby. The Syrian Government publicly stated that terrorists had carried out the attack. The U.S. Government has not received an official Syrian Government assessment of the motives or organization behind the attack, but security was upgraded at U.S. facilities. Both the Syrian ambassador to the U.S.,

communities live in most major Syrian cities as well. Armenian and Turkic are spoken among the small Armenian and Turkoman populations.

Most people live in the Euphrates River valley and along the coastal plain, a fertile strip between the coastal mountains and the desert. Overall population density is about 140 per sq. mi. Education is free and compulsory from ages 6 to 11. Schooling consists of 6 years of primary education followed by a 3-year general or vocational training period and a 3-year academic or vocational program. The second 3-year period of academic training is required for university admission. Total enrollment at post-secondary schools is over 150,000. The literacy rate of Syrians aged 15 and older is 88% for males and 74% for females.

Ancient Syria's cultural and artistic achievements and contributions are many. Archaeologists have discovered extensive writings and evidence of a brilliant culture rivaling those of Mesopotamia and Egypt in and around the ancient city of Ebla. Later Syrian scholars and artists

Imad Mushtapha, and President Bashar Asad, however, blamed U.S. foreign policy in the region as contributing to the incident.

Principal U.S. Officials

Ambassador--vacant

Charge d'Affaires--Michael Corbin

Acting Deputy Chief of Mission--William Roebuck

Head of the Economic/Political Section--Todd Holmstrom

Head of the Consular Section--Patricia Fietz

Management Counselor--John Finnegan

Public Affairs Officer--Chris Eccel

Defense Attaché--Col. Norman Larson

GOVERNMENT

The Syrian constitution vests the Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party with leadership functions in the state and society and provides broad powers to the president. The president, approved by referendum for a 7-year term, is also Secretary General of the Ba'ath Party and leader of the National Progressive Front, which is a coalition of 10 political parties authorized by the regime. The president has the right to appoint ministers, to declare war and states of emergency, to issue laws (which, except in the case of emergency, require ratification by the People's Council), to declare amnesty, to amend the constitution, and to appoint civil servants and military personnel. The Emergency Law, which effectively suspends most constitutional protections for Syrians, has been in effect since 1963.

The National Progressive Front also acts as a forum in which economic policies are debated and the country's political orientation is determined. However, because of Ba'ath Party dominance, the National Progressive Front has traditionally exercised little independent power.

The Syrian constitution of 1973 requires that the president be Muslim but does not make Islam the state religion. Islamic jurisprudence, however, is required to be a main source of legislation. The judicial system in Syria is an amalgam of Ottoman, French, and Islamic laws, with three levels of courts: courts of first instance, courts of appeals, and the constitutional court, the highest tribunal. In addition, religious courts handle questions of personal and family law.

The Ba'ath Party emphasizes socialism and secular Arabism. Although Ba'ath Party doctrine seeks to build pan-Arab rather than ethnic identity, ethnic, religious, and regional allegiances remain important in Syria.

Members of President Asad's own minority sect, the Alawis, hold most of the important military and security positions, while Sunnis (in 2006) controlled ten of 14 positions on the powerful Ba'ath Party Regional Command. In recent years there has been a gradual decline in the party's preeminence. The party also is heavily influenced by the security services and the military, the latter of which consumes a large share of Syria's economic resources.

Syria is divided administratively into 14 provinces, one of which is Damascus. A governor for each province is appointed by the President. The governor is assisted by an elected provincial council.

Principal Government Officials

President--Bashar Al-Asad

Vice President--Farouk al-Shar'a

Vice President--Najah al-Attar

Prime Minister--Muhammad Naji al-Utri

Minister of Foreign Affairs--Walid al-Mouallem

Ambassador to the United States--Ambassador Imad Moustapha

Ambassador to the United Nations--Ambassador Dr. Bashar al-Ja'fari

NATIONAL SECURITY

President Bashar Al-Asad is commander in chief of the Syrian armed forces, comprised of some 400,000

contributed to Hellenistic and Roman thought and culture. Zeno of Sidon founded the Epicurean school; Cicero was a pupil of Antiochus of Ascalon at Athens; and the writings of Posidonius of Apamea influenced Livy and Plutarch. Syrians have contributed to Arabic literature and music and have a proud tradition of oral and written poetry. Although declining, the world-famous handicraft industry still employs thousands.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

Ensuring national security, increasing influence among its Arab neighbors, and achieving a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace settlement, which includes the return of the Golan Heights, are the primary goals of President Asad's foreign policy.

Relations with Other Arab Countries

Syria reestablished full diplomatic relations with Egypt in 1989. In the 1990-91 Gulf War, Syria joined other Arab states in the U.S.-led multinational coalition against Iraq. In 1998, Syria began a slow rapprochement with Iraq, driven primarily by

troops upon mobilization. The military is a conscripted force; males serve 24 months in the military upon reaching the age of 18. Some 17,000 Syrian soldiers formerly deployed in Lebanon have been withdrawn to Syria in response to UNSCR 1559, which was passed in the fall of 2004. Demands that Syria comply with 1559 intensified after the February 2005 assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri.

Syria's military remains one of the largest in the region, although the breakup of the Soviet Union--long the principal source of training, material, and credit for the Syrian forces--slowed Syria's ability to acquire modern military equipment. Syria received significant financial aid from Gulf Arab states in the 1990s as a result of its participation in the first Gulf War, with a sizable portion of these funds earmarked for military spending. Besides sustaining its conventional forces, Syria seeks to develop its weapons of mass destruction (WMD) capability.

HISTORY

Archaeologists have demonstrated that Syria was the center of one of the most ancient civilizations on earth. Around the excavated city of Ebla in northern Syria, discovered in 1975, a great Semitic empire spread from the Red Sea north to Turkey and east to Mesopotamia from 2500 to 2400 B.C. The city of Ebla alone during that time had a population estimated at 260,000. Scholars believe the language of Ebla to be the oldest Semitic language.

Syria was occupied successively by Canaanites, Phoenicians, Hebrews, Arameans, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Nabataeans, Byzantines, and, in part, Crusaders before finally coming under the control of the Ottoman Turks. Syria is significant in the history of Christianity; Paul was converted on the road to Damascus and established the first organized Christian Church at Antioch in ancient Syria, from which he left on many of his missionary journeys.

Damascus, settled about 2500 B.C., is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. It came under Muslim rule in A.D. 636. Immediately thereafter, the city's power and prestige reached its peak, and it became the capital of the Omayyad Empire, which extended from Spain to India from A.D. 661 to A.D. 750, when the Abbasid caliphate was established at Baghdad, Iraq.

Damascus became a provincial capital of the Mameluke Empire around 1260. It was largely destroyed in 1400 by Tamerlane, the Mongol conqueror, who removed many of its craftsmen to Samarkand. Rebuilt, it continued to serve as a capital until 1516. In 1517, it fell under Ottoman rule. The Ottomans remained for the next 400 years, except for a brief occupation by Ibrahim Pasha of Egypt from 1832 to 1840.

French Occupation

In 1920, an independent Arab Kingdom of Syria was established under King Faysal of the Hashemite family, who later became King of Iraq. However, his rule over Syria ended after only a few months, following the clash between his Syrian Arab forces and regular French forces at the battle of Maysalun. French troops occupied Syria later that year after the League of Nations put Syria under French mandate. With the fall of France in 1940, Syria came under the control of the Vichy Government until the British and Free French occupied the country in July 1941. Continuing pressure from Syrian nationalist groups forced the French to evacuate their troops in April 1946, leaving the country in the hands of a republican government that had been formed during the mandate.

Independence to 1970

Although rapid economic development followed the declaration of independence of April 17, 1946, Syrian politics from independence through the late 1960s were marked by upheaval. A series of military coups, begun in 1949, undermined civilian rule and led to army colonel Adib Shishakli's seizure of power in 1951. After the overthrow of President Shishakli in a 1954 coup, continued political maneuvering supported by competing factions in the military eventually brought Arab nationalist and socialist elements to power.

Syria's political instability during the years after the 1954 coup, the parallelism of Syrian and Egyptian policies, and the appeal of Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser's leadership in the wake of the 1956 Suez crisis created support in Syria for union with Egypt. On February 1, 1958, the two countries merged to create the United Arab Republic, and all Syrian political parties ceased overt activities.

The union was not a success, however. Following a military coup on September 28, 1961, Syria seceded,

economic needs. Syria continues to play an active pan-Arab role, although in the wake of the Hariri assassination, Syria became more isolated diplomatically, both in the region and beyond.

Though it voted in favor of UNSCR 1441 in 2002, Syria was against coalition military action in Iraq in 2003. However, the Syrian Government accepted UNSCR 1483 (after being absent for the actual vote), which lifted sanctions on Iraq and established a framework to assist the Iraqi people in determining their political future and rebuilding their economy. Syria also voted for UNSCR 1511, which called for greater international involvement in Iraq and addressed the transfer of sovereignty from the U.S.-led coalition. Since the transfer of sovereignty in Iraq on June 28, 2004, Syria extended qualified support to the Iraqi Government and pledged to cooperate in the areas of border security, repatriation of Iraqi assets, and eventual restoration of formal diplomatic relations. While Syria has taken some steps to tighten controls along the Syria-Iraq

reestablishing itself as the Syrian Arab Republic. Instability characterized the next 18 months, with various coups culminating on March 8, 1963, in the installation by leftist Syrian Army officers of the National Council of the Revolutionary Command (NCRC), a group of military and civilian officials who assumed control of all executive and legislative authority. The takeover was engineered by members of the Arab Socialist Resurrection Party (Ba'ath Party), which had been active in Syria and other Arab countries since the late 1940s. The new cabinet was dominated by Ba'ath members.

The Ba'ath takeover in Syria followed a Ba'ath coup in Iraq the previous month. The new Syrian Government explored the possibility of federation with Egypt and Ba'ath--controlled Iraq. An agreement was concluded in Cairo on April 17, 1963, for a referendum on unity to be held in September 1963. However, serious disagreements among the parties soon developed, and the tripartite federation failed to materialize. Thereafter, the Ba'ath regimes in Syria and Iraq began to work for bilateral unity. These plans foundered in November 1963, when the Ba'ath regime in Iraq was overthrown. In May 1964, President Amin Hafiz of the NCRC promulgated a provisional constitution providing for a National Council of the Revolution (NCR), an appointed legislature composed of representatives of mass organizations--labor, peasant, and professional unions--a presidential council, in which executive power was vested, and a cabinet. On February 23, 1966, a group of army officers carried out a successful, intra-party coup, imprisoned President Hafiz, dissolved the cabinet and the NCR, abrogated the provisional constitution, and designated a regionalist, civilian Ba'ath government. The coup leaders described it as a "rectification" of Ba'ath Party principles. The defeat of the Syrians and Egyptians in the June 1967 war with Israel weakened the radical socialist regime established by the 1966 coup. Conflict developed between a moderate military wing and a more extremist civilian wing of the Ba'ath Party. The 1970 retreat of Syrian forces sent to aid the PLO during the "Black September" hostilities with Jordan reflected this political disagreement within the ruling Ba'ath leadership. On November 13, 1970, Minister of Defense Hafiz al-Asad affected a bloodless military coup, ousting the civilian party leadership and assuming the role of prime minister.

1970 to 2000

Upon assuming power, Hafiz al-Asad moved quickly to create an organizational infrastructure for his government and to consolidate control. The Provisional Regional Command of Asad's Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party nominated a 173-member legislature, the People's Council, in which the Ba'ath Party took 87 seats. The remaining seats were divided among "popular organizations" and other minor parties. In March 1971, the party held its regional congress and elected a new 21-member Regional Command headed by Asad. In the same month, a national referendum was held to confirm Asad as President for a 7-year term. In March 1972, to broaden the base of his government, Asad formed the National Progressive Front, a coalition of parties led by the Ba'ath Party, and elections were held to establish local councils in each of Syria's 14 governorates. In March 1973, a new Syrian constitution went into effect followed shortly thereafter by parliamentary elections for the People's Council, the first such elections since 1962.

The authoritarian regime was not without its critics, though most were quickly dealt with. A serious challenge arose in the late 1970s, however, from fundamentalist Sunni Muslims, who reject the basic values of the secular Ba'ath program and object to rule by the Alawis, whom they consider heretical. From 1976 until its suppression in 1982, the archconservative Muslim Brotherhood led an armed insurgency against the regime. In response to an attempted uprising by the brotherhood in February 1982, the government crushed the fundamentalist opposition centered in the city of Hama, leveling parts of the city with artillery fire and causing many thousands of dead and wounded. Since then, public manifestations of anti-regime activity have been very limited.

Syria's 1990 participation in the U.S.-led multinational coalition aligned against Saddam Hussein marked a dramatic watershed in Syria's relations both with other Arab states and with the West. Syria participated in the multilateral Middle East Peace Conference in Madrid in October 1991, and during the 1990s engaged in direct, face-to-face negotiations with Israel. These negotiations failed, and there have been no further Syrian-Israeli talks since President Hafiz Al-Asad's meeting with then President Bill Clinton in Geneva in March 2000.

Hafiz Al-Asad died on June 10, 2000, after 30 years in power. Immediately following Al-Asad's death, the Parliament amended the constitution, reducing the mandatory minimum age of the President from 40 to 34 years old, which allowed his son, Bashar Al-Asad legally to be eligible for nomination by the ruling Ba'ath party. On July 10, 2000, Bashar Al-Asad was elected President by referendum in which he ran unopposed, garnering 97.29% of the vote, according to Syrian Government statistics. He was inaugurated into office on July 17, 2000 for a 7-year term.

border, Syria remains one of the primary transit points for foreign fighters entering Iraq. Consequently, relations between Syria and the Iraqi Government remained strained. However, following a series of visits between high-level officials from both governments--including Foreign Minister Mu'allim's November 2006 visit to Baghdad and Iraqi President Talabani's subsequent visit to Damascus--formal diplomatic relations were finally established in December 2006. That same month, the Ministers of Interior from both countries signed a Memorandum of Security Understanding aimed at improving border security and combating terrorism and crime. Iraq continues to call for more action on the part of Syria to control its border and to prevent Iraqi and Arab elements residing in--or transiting--Syria from contributing financially, politically, or militarily to the insurgency in Iraq.

Involvement in Lebanon

Syria has played an important role in Lebanon by virtue of its history, size, power, and economy. Lebanon was part of post-Ottoman Syria until

2000 to 2007

In the aftermath of September 11, 2001 the Syrian Government began limited cooperation with United States in the global war against terrorism. However, Syria opposed the Iraq war in March 2003, and bilateral relations with the United States swiftly deteriorated. In December 2003, President Bush signed into law the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2003, which provided for the imposition of a series of sanctions against Syria if Syria did not end its support for Palestinian terrorist groups, end its military and security interference in Lebanon, cease its pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and meet its obligations under United Nations Security Council resolutions regarding the stabilization and reconstruction of Iraq. In May 2004, the President determined that Syria had not met these conditions and implemented sanctions that prohibit the export to Syria of U.S. products except for food and medicine, and the taking off from or landing in the United States of Syrian Government-owned aircraft. At the same time, the U.S. Department of the Treasury announced its intention to order U.S. financial institutions to sever correspondent accounts with the Commercial Bank of Syria based on money-laundering concerns, pursuant to Section 311 of the USA PATRIOT Act. Acting under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), the President also authorized the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, to freeze assets belonging to certain Syrian individuals and entities.

Tensions between Syria and the United States intensified from late 2004 to 2007, primarily over issues relating to Iraq and Lebanon. The U.S. Government recalled its Ambassador to Syria in February 2005, after the assassination of Lebanese Prime Minister Hariri. Sensing its international isolation, the Syrians shored up their relations with Iran and radical Palestinians groups based in Damascus, and cracked down on any signs of internal dissent. There has been little movement on political reform, with more public focus on limited economic liberalizations. The Syrian Government has provided some cooperation to the UN Independent International Investigation Commission, headed by Serge Brammertz, which is investigating the killing of Hariri. Since the 34-day conflict in Lebanon in July and August 2006, evidence of Syrian compliance with its obligations under UN Security Council Resolution 1701 not to rearm the Lebanese group Hezbollah is unpersuasive. On April 17, 2007, the United Nations Security Council welcomed the Secretary General's intention to evaluate the situation along the entire Syria-Lebanon border and invited the Secretary General to dispatch an independent mission to fully assess the monitoring of the border, and to report back on its findings and recommendations.



1926. The presence of Syrian troops in Lebanon dated to 1976, when President Hafiz al-Asad intervened in the Lebanese civil war on behalf of Maronite Christians. Following the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, Syrian and Israeli forces clashed in eastern Lebanon. However, Syrian opposition blocked implementation of the May 17, 1983, Lebanese-Israeli accord on the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon.

In 1989, Syria endorsed the Charter of National Reconciliation, or "Taif Accord," a comprehensive plan for ending the Lebanese conflict negotiated under the auspices of Saudi Arabia, Algeria, and Morocco. In May 1991, Lebanon and Syria signed the treaty of brotherhood, cooperation, and coordination called for in the Taif Accord.

According to the U. S. interpretation of the Taif Accord, Syria and Lebanon were to have decided on the redeployment of Syrian forces from Beirut and other coastal areas of Lebanon by September 1992. Israeli occupation of Lebanon until May 2000, the



breakdown of peace negotiations between Syria and Israel that same year, and intensifying Arab/Israeli tensions since the start of the second Palestinian uprising in September 2000 helped delay full implementation of the Taif Accords. The United Nations declared that Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon fulfilled the requirements of UN Security Council Resolution 425. However, Syria and Lebanon claimed that UNSCR 425 had not been fully implemented because Israel did not withdraw from an area of the Golan Heights called Sheba Farms, which had been occupied by Israel in 1967, and which Syria now claimed was part of Lebanon. The United Nations does not recognize this claim. However, Lebanese resistance groups such as Hezbollah use it to justify attacks against Israeli forces in that region. The danger of Hezbollah's tactics was highlighted when Hezbollah's attacks on and hostage-taking of Israeli soldiers on July 12, 2006 sparked a 34-day conflict in Lebanon. After the conflict, the passing of UNSCR 1701 authorized the enhancement of the UN Interim Force in



Lebanon (UNIFIL). Before the conflict, UNIFIL authorized a presence of 2,000 troops in southern Lebanon; post-conflict, this ceiling is to be raised to 15,000. As of September 2006, 5,000 troops had deployed to southern Lebanon. UNIFIL is tasked with ensuring peace and security along the frontier and overseeing the eventual return of effective Lebanese government and military authority throughout the border region.

Until its withdrawal in April 2005, Syria maintained approximately 17,000 troops in Lebanon. A September 2004 vote by Lebanon's Chamber of Deputies to amend the constitution to extend Lebanese President Lahoud's term in office by three years amplified the question of Lebanese sovereignty and the continuing Syrian presence. The vote was clearly taken under Syrian pressure, exercised in part through Syria's military intelligence service, whose chief in Lebanon had acted as a virtual proconsul for many years. The UN Security Council expressed its concern over the situation by passing Resolution 1559,



which called for the withdrawal of all remaining foreign forces from Lebanon, disbanding and disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias, the deployment of the Lebanese Armed Forces throughout the country, and a free and fair electoral process in the presidential election.

Former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri and 19 others were assassinated in Beirut by a car bomb on February 14, 2005. The assassination spurred massive protests in Beirut and international pressure that led to the withdrawal of the remaining Syrian military troops from Lebanon on April 26, 2005. Rafiq Hariri's assassination was just one of a number of attacks that continue to target high-profile Lebanese critics of Syria. The UN International Independent Investigative Commission (UNIIIC) headed by Serge Brammertz is investigating Hariri's assassination and is expected to report its findings to the Security Council by June 2007.

The United States supports a sovereign, independent Lebanon, free of all



foreign forces, and believes that the best interests of both Lebanon and Syria are served by a positive and constructive relationship based upon principles of mutual respect and non-intervention between two neighboring sovereign and independent states. The United States calls for Syrian non-interference in Lebanon, consistent with UNSCR 1559 and 1701.

Arab-Israeli Relations

Syria was an active belligerent in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, which resulted in Israel's occupation of the Golan Heights and the city of Quneitra. Following the October 1973 Arab-Israeli War, which left Israel in occupation of additional Syrian territory, Syria accepted UN Security Council Resolution 338, which signaled an implicit acceptance of Resolution 242. Resolution 242, which became the basis for the peace process negotiations begun in Madrid in 1981, calls for a just and lasting Middle East peace to include withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in 1967; termination of the state of belligerency; and acknowledgment of the sovereignty,



territorial integrity, and political independence of all regional states and of their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries.

As a result of the mediation efforts of then U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, Syria and Israel concluded a disengagement agreement in May 1974, enabling Syria to recover territory lost in the October war and part of the Golan Heights occupied by Israel since 1967, including Quneitra. The two sides have effectively implemented the agreement, which is monitored by UN forces.

In December 1981, the Israeli Knesset voted to extend Israeli law to the part of the Golan Heights over which Israel retained control. The UN Security Council subsequently passed a resolution calling on Israel to rescind this measure. Syria participated in the Middle East Peace Conference in Madrid in October 1991. Negotiations were conducted intermittently through the 1990s, and came very close to succeeding. However, the parties were unable to come to an agreement over Syria's



nonnegotiable demand that Israel withdraw to the positions it held on June 4, 1967. The peace process collapsed following the outbreak of the second Palestinian (Intifada) uprising in September 2000, though Syria continues to call for a comprehensive settlement based on UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, and the land-for-peace formula adopted at the 1991 Madrid conference.

Tensions between Israel and Syria increased as the second Intifada dragged on, primarily as a result of Syria's unwillingness to stop giving sanctuary to Palestinian terrorist groups conducting operations against Israel. In October 2003, following a suicide bombing carried out by a member of Palestinian Islamic Jihad in Haifa that killed 20 Israeli citizens, Israeli Defense Forces attacked a suspected Palestinian terrorist training camp 15 kilometers north of Damascus. This was the first such Israeli attack deep inside Syrian territory since the 1973 war. During the summer of 2006 tensions again heightened due to Israeli fighter jets buzzing President Asad's summer castle in



response to Syria's support for the Palestinian group Hamas, Syria's support of Hezbollah during the July-August 2006 conflict in Lebanon, and the possible rearming of Hezbollah in potential violation of UN Resolution 1701. Rumors of "back-channel" negotiations in 2006-2007 between the Israeli and Syrian Governments were discounted by both Israel and Syria, with spokespersons for both countries indicating that any such talks were not officially sanctioned.

Membership in International Organizations

Syria is a member of the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa, Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, Arab League, Arab Monetary Fund, Council of Arab Economic Unity, Customs Cooperation Council, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Food and Agricultural Organization, Group of 24, Group of 77, International Atomic Energy Agency, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, International Civil Aviation Organization, International Chamber of Commerce, International Development Association, Islamic



Development Bank, International Fund for Agricultural Development, International Finance Corporation, International Labor Organization, International Monetary Fund, International Maritime Organization, INTERPOL, International Olympic Committee, International Organization for Standardization, International Telecommunication Union, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Non-Aligned Movement, Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries, Organization of the Islamic Conference, United Nations, UN Conference on Trade and Development, UN Industrial Development Organization, UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, Universal Postal Union, World Federation of Trade Unions, World Health Organization, World Meteorological Organization, and World Tourism Organization.

Syria's 2-year term as a nonpermanent member of the UN Security Council ended in December 2003





Israel's Historical Timeline

The State of Israel

Geography

Area: 20,330 sq. km.¹ (7,850 sq. mi.); about the size of New Jersey.

Cities: *Capital*--Jerusalem.² *Other cities*--Tel Aviv, Haifa.

Terrain: Plains, mountains, desert, and coast.

Climate: Temperate, except in desert areas.

People

Population (2007 est.): 6.43 million. Annual population growth rate (2007 est.): 1.2%.

Ethnic groups: Jews 76.2%; Arabs 19.5%; other 4.3%. Religions: Judaism,



Islam, Christianity, Druze.

Languages: Hebrew (official), Arabic (official), English, Russian.

Education: *Years compulsory*--11.

Literacy--96.9% (female 95.6%; male 98.3%).

Health: *Infant mortality rate* (2005 est.)--7.03/1,000 births. *Life expectancy at birth*--79.32 years; female 81.55 years, male 77.21 years.

Work force (2.68 million; Central Bureau for Statistics, 2004): *Agriculture*--2.1%;

manufacturing--16.2%; *electricity and water supply*--0.8%; *construction*--5.4%; *trade and repair of motor vehicles*--3.6%; *accommodation services and restaurants*--4.3%; *transport, storage, and communication*--6.5%; *banking, insurance, and finance*--3.3%; *business activities*--13.4%; *public*



administration--4.7%; education--12.7%; health, welfare, and social services--10.7%; community, social, and personal services--4.6%; services for households by domestic personnel--1.6%.

Government

Type: Parliamentary democracy.

Independence: May 14, 1948.

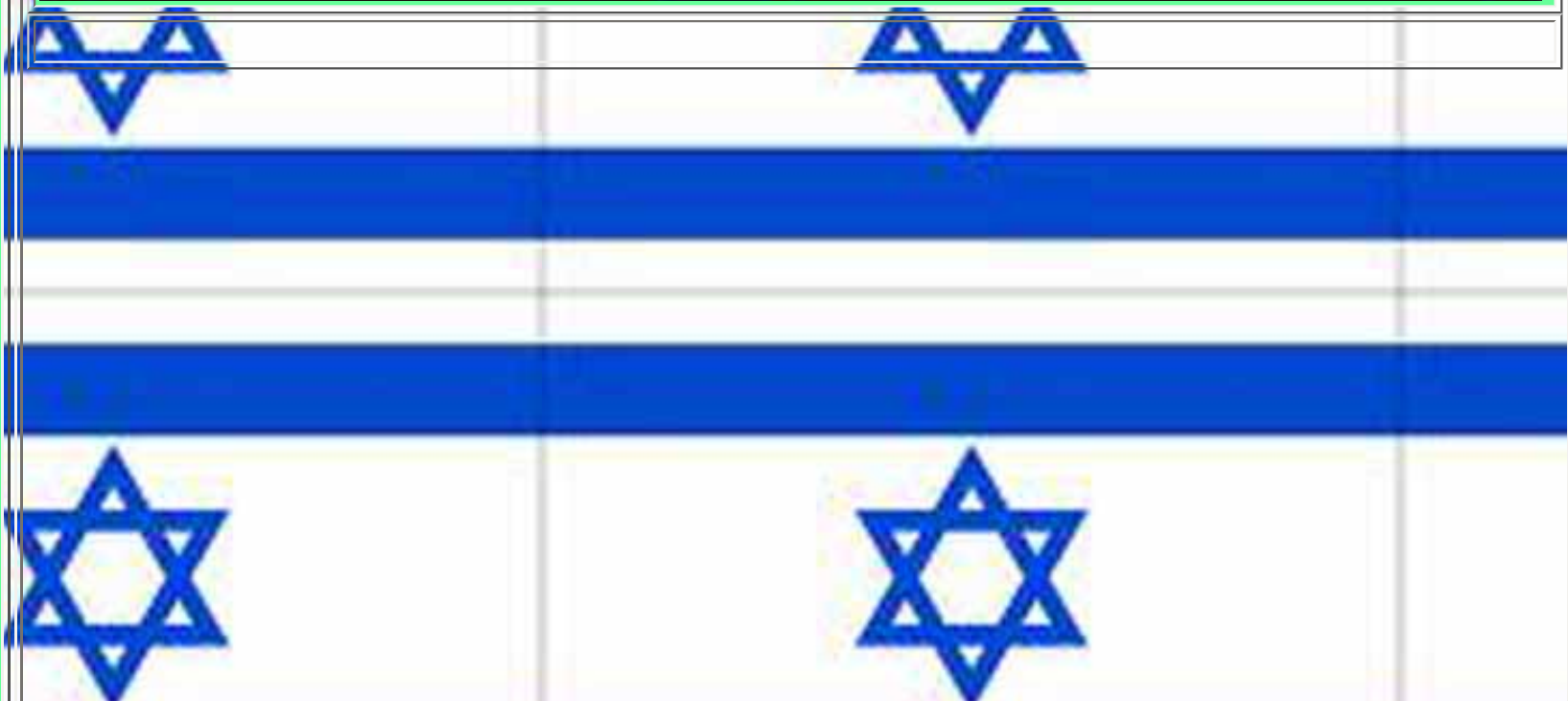
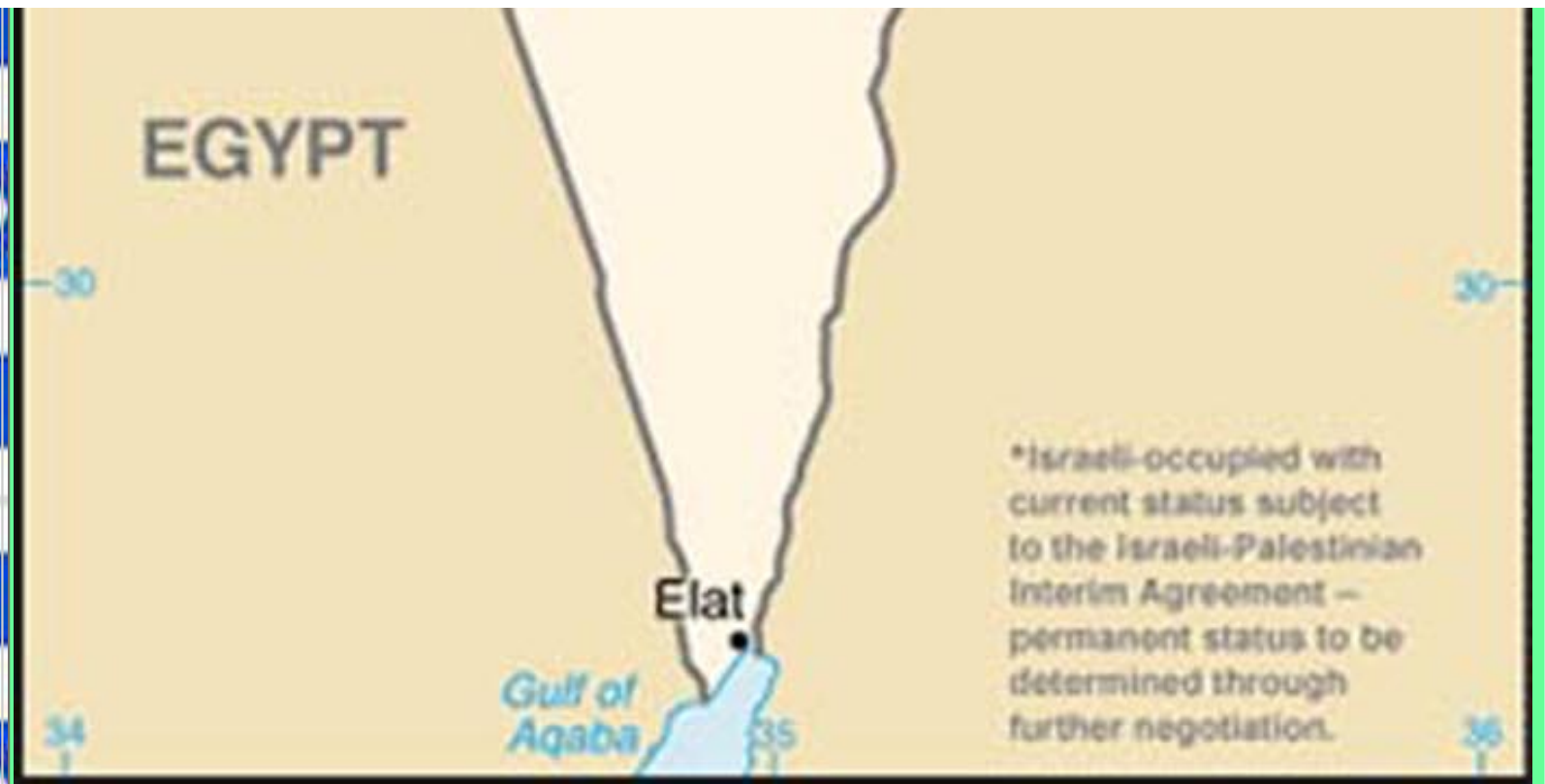
Constitution: None; however, the Declaration of Establishment (1948), the Basic Laws of the parliament (the Knesset), and the Israeli citizenship law fill many of the functions of a constitution.

Branches: *Executive*--president (chief of state); prime minister (head of government).

Legislative--unicameral Knesset.

Judicial--Supreme Court.

Political parties:



Labor, Likud, Kadima, and various other secular and religious parties, including some wholly or predominantly supported by Israel's Arab citizens. A total of 12 parties are represented in the 17th Knesset, elected March 2006. Suffrage: Universal at 18.

Economy

GDP (2006 est.): \$170.3 billion.
 Annual growth rate (2006): 4.8%.
 Per capita GDP (2006): \$26,800.
 Currency: Shekel (4.13 shekels = 1 U. S. dollar; 2007 est.).
 Natural resources: Copper, phosphate, bromide, potash, clay, sand, sulfur, bitumen, manganese.
 Agriculture:
Products--citrus and other fruits, vegetables, beef, dairy, and poultry products.
Industry: Types--high-technology projects (including

POLITICAL CONDITIONS

From the founding of Israel in 1948 until the election of May 1977, Israel was ruled by successive coalition governments led by the Labor alignment or its constituent parties. From 1967-70, the coalition government included all of Israel's parties except the communist party. After the 1977 election, the Likud bloc, then composed of Herut, the Liberals, and the smaller La'am Party, came to power forming a coalition with the National Religious Party, Agudat Israel, and others. As head of Likud, Menachem Begin became Prime Minister. The Likud retained power in the succeeding election in June 1981, and Begin remained Prime Minister. In the summer of 1983, Begin resigned and was succeeded by his Foreign Minister, Yitzhak Shamir.

After Prime Minister Shamir lost a Knesset vote of confidence early in 1984, new elections in July provided no clear winner, with both Labor and Likud considerably short of a Knesset majority and unable to form even narrow coalitions. After several weeks of difficult negotiations, they agreed on a government of national unity, including the rotation of the office of Prime Minister and the combined office of Vice Prime Minister and Foreign Minister midway through the government's 50-month term.

During the first 25 months of unity government rule, Labor's Shimon Peres served as Prime Minister, while Likud's Shamir held the posts of Vice Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, until they switched positions in October 1986. In November 1988 elections, Likud edged Labor out by one seat but was unable to form a coalition, producing another national unity government in January 1989. Yitzhak Shamir became Prime Minister, and Shimon Peres became Vice Prime Minister and Finance Minister. This government fell in March 1990, however, in a vote of no confidence precipitated by disagreement over the government's response to U.S. Secretary of State Baker's initiative in the peace process. Labor Party leader Peres was unable to attract sufficient support among the religious parties to form a government. Yitzhak Shamir then formed a Likud-led coalition government, including members from religious and right-wing parties.

Shamir's government took office in June 1990, and held power for 2 years. In the June 1992 national elections, the Labor Party reversed its electoral fortunes, taking 44 seats. Labor Party leader Yitzhak Rabin formed a coalition with Meretz (a group of three leftist parties) and Shas (an ultra-Orthodox religious party). The coalition included the support of two Arab-majority parties. Rabin became Prime Minister in July 1992, presiding over the signing of the Oslo accords with the Palestine Liberation Organization. However, Rabin was assassinated by a right-wing Jewish radical on November 4, 1995. Peres, then Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, once again became Prime Minister and immediately proceeded to carry forward the peace policies of the Rabin government and to implement Israel's Oslo commitments, including military redeployment in the West Bank and the holding of historic Palestinian elections on January 20, 1996.

Enjoying broad public support and anxious to secure his own mandate, Peres called for early elections after just 3 months in office. (They would have otherwise been held by the end of October 1996.) In late February and early March, a series of suicide bombing attacks by Palestinian terrorists took some 60 Israeli lives, seriously eroding public support for Peres and raising concerns about the peace process. Increased fighting in southern

aviation, communications, computer-aided design and manufactures, medical electronics, fiber optics), wood and paper products, potash and phosphates, food, beverages, tobacco, caustic soda, cement, construction, plastics, chemical products, diamond cutting and polishing, metal products, textiles, and footwear.

Trade: *Exports* (2006 est.)--\$42.86 billion. Exports include polished diamonds, electronic communication, medical and scientific equipment, chemicals and chemical products, electronic components and computers, machinery and equipment, transport equipment, rubber, plastics, and textiles. *Imports* (excluding defense imports, 2006 est.)--\$47.8

Lebanon, which also brought Katyusha rocket attacks against northern Israel, also raised tensions and weakened the government politically a month before the May 29 elections.

In those elections--the first direct election of a Prime Minister in Israeli history--Likud leader Binyamin Netanyahu won by a narrow margin, having sharply criticized the government's peace policies for failing to protect Israeli security. Netanyahu subsequently formed a right-wing coalition government publicly committed to pursuing the peace process, but with an emphasis on security and reciprocity. In 1999, with a shrunken coalition and facing increasing difficulty passing legislation and defeating no-confidence motions, Netanyahu dissolved parliament and called for new elections. This time, the Labor candidate--Ehud Barak--was victorious. Barak formed a mixed coalition government of secular and religious parties, with Likud in the opposition. In May 2000, Barak fulfilled one of his major campaign promises by withdrawing Israeli forces from Southern Lebanon. However, by mid-autumn, with the breakdown of the Camp David talks and the worsening security situation caused by the new intifada, Barak's coalition was in jeopardy. In December, he resigned as Prime Minister, precipitating a new prime ministerial election.

In a special election on February 6, 2001, after a campaign stressing security and the maintenance of Israeli sovereignty over Jerusalem, Likud leader Ariel Sharon defeated Barak by over 20 percentage points. As he had promised in his campaign, Sharon formed a broad unity government that included the Labor and Likud parties, the far-right parties, some smaller secular parties, and several religious parties. The unity government collapsed in late 2002, and new elections were held in January 2003. Sharon again won, and formed a new government consisting of his own Likud party, the right-wing National Religious Party and National Union party, and centrist Shinui.

The summer of 2004 saw renewed instability in the government, as disagreement over the Gaza disengagement plan resulted in Sharon's firing two ministers of the National Union Party and accepting the resignation of a third from the National Religious Party in order to secure cabinet approval of the plan (it was endorsed on June 6, 2004). Continuing divisions within the Likud on next steps then prompted Ariel Sharon to leave the party in November 2005 to form the Kadima ("Forward") party and call new elections for March 2006. However, Sharon was unexpectedly incapacitated in January 2006 due to a severe stroke and leadership of Kadima shifted to Acting Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, who on March 28 led the party to 29 seats in the Knesset. Labor came in second with 19 seats, and Shas and Likud tied with 12. After intensive coalition negotiations, a new, Kadima-led government, with Labor as "senior partner", was sworn in on May 4, 2006.

ECONOMY

Israel has a diversified, technologically advanced economy with substantial but decreasing government ownership and a strong high-tech sector. The major industrial sectors include high-technology electronic and biomedical equipment, metal products, processed foods, chemicals, and transport equipment. Israel possesses a substantial service sector and is one of the world's centers for diamond cutting and polishing. It also is a world leader in software development and, prior to the violence that began in September 2000, was a major tourist

billion: raw materials, diamonds, energy ships and airplanes, machinery, equipment, land transportation equipment for investment, and consumer goods.

Major partners--U.S., U.K., Germany; *exports*--U.S., Belgium, Hong Kong; *imports*--U.S., Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, U.K.

¹Including Jerusalem

²Israel proclaimed Jerusalem as its capital in 1950. The United States, like nearly all other countries, maintains its embassy in Tel Aviv.

PEOPLE

Of the approximately 6.43 million Israelis in 2007, about 76% were counted as Jewish, though some of those are not considered Jewish under Orthodox Jewish law. Since 1989,

destination.

Israel's strong commitment to economic development and its talented work force led to economic growth rates during the nation's first two decades that frequently exceeded 10% annually. The years after the 1973 Yom Kippur War were a lost decade economically, as growth stalled and inflation reached triple-digit levels. The successful economic stabilization plan implemented in 1985 and the subsequent introduction of market-oriented structural reforms reinvigorated the economy and paved the way for rapid growth in the 1990s.

A wave of Jewish immigration beginning in 1989, predominantly from the countries of the former U.S.S.R., brought nearly a million new citizens to Israel. These new immigrants, many of them highly educated, now constitute some 13% of Israel's 6.7 million inhabitants. Their successful absorption into Israeli society and its labor force forms a remarkable chapter in Israeli history. The skills brought by the new immigrants and their added demand as consumers gave the Israeli economy a strong upward push and in the 1990s, they played a key role in the ongoing development of Israel's high-tech sector.

During the 1990s, progress in the Middle East peace process, beginning with the Madrid Conference of 1991, helped to reduce Israel's economic isolation from its neighbors and opened up new markets to Israeli exporters farther afield. The peace process stimulated an unprecedented inflow of foreign investment in Israel, and provided a substantial boost to economic growth in the region over the last decade. The onset of the intifada beginning at the end of September of 2000, the downturn in the high-tech sector and Nasdaq crisis, and the slowdown of the global economy have all significantly affected the Israeli economy. However, despite the recent conflicts in Gaza and Lebanon, the Israeli economy grew during 2006.

Israeli companies, particularly in the high-tech area, have in the past enjoyed considerable success raising money on Wall Street and other world financial markets; Israel ranks second to Canada among foreign countries in the number of its companies listed on U.S. stock exchanges. Israel's tech market is very developed, and in spite of the pause in the industry's growth, the high-tech sector is likely to be the major driver of the Israeli economy. Almost half of Israel's exports are high tech. Most leading players, including Intel, IBM, and Cisco have a presence in Israel.

Growth was an exceptional 6.2% in 2000, due in part to a number of one-time high tech acquisitions and investments. This exceptional year was followed by two years of negative growth of -0.9% and -1%, respectively, in 2001 and 2002. As a result of the security situation and the associated downturn in the economy, there was a significant rise in unemployment and wage erosion. This led to a decline in private consumption in 2002, the first time that there had been negative private consumption since the early 1980s. However, following growth rates of 1.7% in 2003 and 4.4% in 2004, the Israeli economy entered into a period of stabilization and recovery after the deep recession of 2001 and 2002. Since then, the Israeli economy seems to have returned to a trend of consistent growth. The Israeli economy grew by 5.2% in 2005 and GDP per capita (U.S. \$17,800) increased by 3.3%. The Israeli economy grew by an estimated 4.8% in 2006.

nearly a million immigrants from the former Soviet Union have arrived in Israel, making this the largest wave of immigration since independence. In addition, an estimated 105,000 members of the Ethiopian Jewish community have immigrated to Israel, 14,000 of them during the dramatic May 1991 Operation Solomon airlift. 32.9% of Israelis were born outside of Israel.

The three broad Jewish groupings are the Ashkenazim, or Jews who trace their ancestry to western, central, and eastern Europe; the Sephardim, who trace their origin to Spain, Portugal, southern Europe, and North Africa; and Eastern or Oriental Jews, who descend from ancient communities in Islamic lands. Of the non-Jewish

Exports of goods and services in Israel grew by 7% in 2005. Service and agricultural exports each increased by more than 10% in 2005, whereas exports increased by 5.6% and imports rose to 4.4%. Tourism revenues increased by 22.7% as a result of the dramatic increase following the intifada's subsidence.

Israel's private consumption increased by 4% in 2005. The largest growth in private consumption was in the purchase of clothing, footwear, and personal effects, which increased by 10.2%, following an increase of 5.4% in 2004. Consumption of consumer durables grew much more slowly than in 2004, with an increase of only 3.4%, compared with 14.3% the previous year.

In the Israeli business sector, business GDP grew by 6.6% in 2005. According to CBS statistics, the transportation, storage, and communications industries grew by 9.2%, following growth of 6.6% in 2004. The GDP of the wholesale, retail, restaurant, and hotel sector increased by 8.1%, up from 6.1% in 2004. The GDP of the finance and business services sector in 2005 increased by 6.4%, up from the previous year's 6.1% growth rate.

The general consensus among economists is that Israel's economy is very strong and that its growth potential is in the 4% to 5% range.

The United States is Israel's largest trading partner. In 2005, two-way trade totaled some \$26.6 billion, up 12% from 2004. The U.S. trade deficit with Israel was \$7.1 billion in 2005, up 33% from 2004, due largely to rising Israeli exports to the U.S. U.S. exports to Israel rose 6.1% in 2005 to \$9.7 billion, making Israel our 19th largest export market for goods. The principal goods exported from the U.S. include civilian aircraft parts, telecommunications equipment, semiconductors, civilian aircraft, electrical apparatus, and computer accessories. Israel's chief exports to the U.S. include diamonds, pharmaceutical preparations, telecommunications equipment, medicinal equipment, electrical apparatus, and cotton apparel. The two countries signed a free trade agreement (FTA) in 1985 that progressively eliminated tariffs on most goods traded between the two countries over the following 10 years. An agricultural trade accord signed in November 1996 addressed the remaining goods not covered in the FTA but has not entirely erased barriers to trade in the agricultural sector. Israel also has trade and cooperation agreements in place with the European Union, Canada, Mexico, and other countries.

Best prospect industry sectors in Israel for U.S. exporters are electricity and gas equipment, defense equipment, medical instruments and disposable products, industrial chemicals, telecommunication equipment, electronic components, building materials/construction industries (DIY and infrastructure), safety and security equipment and services, non-prescription drugs, travel and tourism services, and computer software.

HISTORY

The creation of the State of Israel in 1948 was preceded by more than 50 years of efforts to establish a sovereign nation as a homeland for Jews. These efforts were initiated by Theodore Herzl, founder of the Zionist movement, and were given added impetus by the Balfour Declaration of 1917, which asserted the British

population, about 68% are Muslims, about 9% are Christian, and about 7% are Druze.

Education is compulsory from age 6 to 16 and is free up to age 18. The school system is organized into kindergartens, 6-year primary schools, 3-year junior secondary schools, and 3-year senior secondary schools, after which a comprehensive examination is offered for university admissions. There are seven university-level institutions in Israel, a number of regional colleges, and an Open University program.

With a population drawn from more than 100 countries on 5 continents, Israeli society is rich in cultural diversity and artistic creativity. The arts are actively encouraged and

Government's support for the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

In the years following World War I, Palestine became a Mandate and Jewish immigration steadily increased, as did violence between Palestine's Jewish and Arab communities. Mounting British efforts to restrict this immigration were countered by international support for Jewish national aspirations following the near-extermination of European Jewry by the Nazis during World War II. This support led to the 1947 UN partition plan, which would have divided Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states, with Jerusalem under UN administration.

On May 14, 1948, soon after the British quit Palestine, the State of Israel was proclaimed and was immediately invaded by armies from neighboring Arab states, which rejected the UN partition plan. This conflict, Israel's War of Independence, was concluded by armistice agreements between Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria in 1949 and resulted in 50% increase in Israeli territory.

In 1956, French, British, and Israeli forces engaged Egypt in response to its nationalization of the Suez Canal and blockade of the Straits of Tiran. Israeli forces withdrew in March 1957, after the United Nations established the UN Emergency Force (UNEF) in the Gaza Strip and Sinai. This war resulted in no territorial shifts and was followed by several years of terrorist incidents and retaliatory acts across Israel's borders.

In June 1967, Israeli forces struck targets in Egypt, Jordan, and Syria in response to Egyptian President Nasser's ordered withdrawal of UN peacekeepers from the Sinai Peninsula and the buildup of Arab armies along Israel's borders. After 6 days, all parties agreed to a cease-fire, under which Israel retained control of the Sinai Peninsula, the Golan Heights, the Gaza Strip, the formerly Jordanian-controlled West Bank of the Jordan River, and East Jerusalem. On November 22, 1967, the Security Council adopted Resolution 242, the "land for peace" formula, which called for the establishment of a just and lasting peace based on Israeli withdrawal from territories occupied in 1967 in return for the end of all states of belligerency, respect for the sovereignty of all states in the area, and the right to live in peace within secure, recognized boundaries.

The following years were marked by continuing violence across the Suez Canal, punctuated by the 1969-70 war of attrition. On October 6, 1973--Yom Kippur (the Jewish Day of Atonement), the armies of Syria and Egypt launched an attack against Israel. Although the Egyptians and Syrians initially made significant advances, Israel was able to push the invading armies back beyond the 1967 cease-fire lines by the time the United States and the Soviet Union helped bring an end to the fighting. In the UN Security Council, the United States supported Resolution 338, which reaffirmed Resolution 242 as the framework for peace and called for peace negotiations between the parties.

In the years that followed, sporadic clashes continued along the cease-fire lines but guided by the U.S., Egypt, and Israel continued negotiations. In November 1977, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat made a historic visit to Jerusalem, which opened the door for the 1978 Israeli-Egyptian peace summit convened at Camp David by President Carter. These negotiations led to a 1979 peace treaty between Israel and Egypt, pursuant to which

supported by the government. The Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra performs throughout the country and frequently tours abroad. The Jerusalem Symphony and the New Israel Opera also tour frequently, as do other musical ensembles. Almost every municipality has a chamber orchestra or ensemble, many boasting the talents of gifted performers from the countries of the former Soviet Union.

Israel has several professional ballet and modern dance companies, and folk dancing, which draws upon the cultural heritage of many immigrant groups, continues to be very popular. There is great public interest in the theater; the repertoire covers the entire range of classical and

Israel withdrew from the Sinai in 1982, signed by President Sadat of Egypt and Prime Minister Menahem Begin of Israel.

In the years following the 1948 war, Israel's border with Lebanon was quiet relative to its borders with other neighbors. After the expulsion of Palestinian fighters from Jordan in 1970 and their influx into southern Lebanon, however, hostilities along Israel's northern border increased and Israeli forces crossed into Lebanon. After passage of Security Council Resolution 425, calling for Israeli withdrawal and the creation of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon peacekeeping force (UNIFIL), Israel withdrew its troops.

In June 1982, following a series of cross-border terrorist attacks and the attempted assassination of the Israeli Ambassador to the U.K., Israel invaded Lebanon to fight the forces of Yasser Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The PLO withdrew its forces from Lebanon in August 1982. Israel, having failed to finalize an agreement with Lebanon, withdrew most of its troops in June 1985 save for a residual force which remained in southern Lebanon to act as a buffer against attacks on northern Israel. These remaining forces were completely withdrawn in May 2000 behind a UN-brokered delineation of the Israel-Lebanon border (the Blue Line). Hezbollah forces in Southern Lebanon continued to attack Israeli positions south of the Blue Line in the Sheba Farms/Har Dov area of the Golan Heights.

The victory of the U.S.-led coalition in the Persian Gulf War of 1991 opened new possibilities for regional peace. In October 1991, the United States and the Soviet Union convened the Madrid Conference, in which Israeli, Lebanese, Jordanian, Syrian, and Palestinian leaders laid the foundations for ongoing negotiations designed to bring peace and economic development to the region. Within this framework, Israel and the PLO signed a Declaration of Principles on September 13, 1993, which established an ambitious set of objectives relating to a transfer of authority from Israel to an interim Palestinian authority. Israel and the PLO subsequently signed the Gaza-Jericho Agreement on May 4, 1994, and the Agreement on Preparatory Transfer of Powers and Responsibilities on August 29, 1994, which began the process of transferring authority from Israel to the Palestinians.

On October 26, 1994, Israel and Jordan signed a historic peace treaty, witnessed by President Clinton. This was followed by Israeli Prime Minister Rabin and PLO Chairman Arafat's signing of the historic Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on September 28, 1995. This accord, which incorporated and superseded previous agreements, broadened Palestinian self-government and provided for cooperation between Israel and the Palestinians in several areas.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated on November 4, 1995, by a right-wing Jewish radical, bringing the increasingly bitter national debate over the peace process to a climax. Subsequent Israeli governments continued to negotiate with the PLO resulting in additional agreements, including the Wye River and the Sharm el-Sheikh memoranda. However, a summit hosted by President Clinton at Camp David in July 2000 to address permanent status issues--including the status of Jerusalem, Palestinian refugees, Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, final security arrangements, borders, and relations and cooperation with

contemporary drama in translation as well as plays by Israeli authors. Of the three major repertory companies, the most famous, Habimah, was founded in 1917.

Active artist colonies thrive in Safed, Jaffa, and Ein Hod, and Israeli painters and sculptors exhibit works worldwide. Israel boasts more than 120 museums, including the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, which houses the Dead Sea Scrolls along with an extensive collection of regional archaeological artifacts, art, and Jewish religious and folk exhibits. Israelis are avid newspaper readers, with more than 90% of Israeli adults reading a newspaper at least once a week. Major daily papers are in Hebrew; others are in Arabic, English, French, Polish,

neighboring states--failed to produce an agreement.

Following the failed talks, widespread violence broke out in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza in September 2000. In April 2001 the Sharm el-Sheikh Fact Finding Committee, commissioned by the October 2000 Middle East Peace Summit and chaired by former U.S. Senator George Mitchell, submitted its report, which recommended an immediate end to the violence followed by confidence-building measures and a resumption of security cooperation and peace negotiations. Building on the Mitchell report, In April 2003, the Quartet (the U.S., UN, European Union (EU), and the Russian Federation) announced the "roadmap," a performance-based plan to bring about two states, Israel and a democratic, viable Palestine, living side by side in peace and security.

Despite the promising developments of spring 2003, violence continued and in September 2003 the first Palestinian Prime Minister, Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen), resigned after failing to win true authority to restore law and order, fight terror, and reform Palestinian institutions. In response to the deadlock, in the winter of 2003-2004 Prime Minister Sharon put forward his Gaza disengagement initiative, proposing the withdrawal of Israeli settlements from Gaza as well as parts of the northern West Bank. President Bush endorsed this initiative in an exchange of letters with Prime Minister Sharon on April 14, 2004, viewing Gaza disengagement as an opportunity to move towards implementation of the two-state vision and begin the development of Palestinian institutions. In a meeting in May 2004 the Quartet endorsed the initiative, which was approved by the Knesset in October 2004.

The run-up to disengagement saw a flurry of diplomatic activity, including the February 2005 announcement of Lieutenant General William Ward as U.S. Security Coordinator; the March 2005 Sharon-Abbas summit in Sharm el-Sheikh; the return of Egyptian and Jordanian ambassadors to Israel; and the May 2005 appointment of former World Bank president James D. Wolfensohn as Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement to work for a revitalization of the Palestinian economy after disengagement. Wolfensohn's direct involvement spurred Israeli-Palestinian agreement on the Gaza 'crossings' at Karni and Erez, on the demolition of settler homes, water, electricity, and communications infrastructure issues, as well as other issues related to the Palestinian economy.

On August 15, 2005, Israel began implementing its [disengagement](#) from the Gaza Strip, and the Israeli Defense Forces completed their withdrawal, including the dismantling of 17 settlements, on September 12. After broad recognition for Prime Minister Sharon's accomplishment at that fall's UN General Assembly, international attention quickly turned to efforts to strengthen Palestinian governance and the economy in Gaza. The United States brokered a landmark Agreement on Movement and Access between the parties in November 2005 to facilitate further progress on Palestinian economic issues. However, the terrorist organization Hamas--building on popular support for its "resistance" to Israeli occupation and a commitment to clean up the notorious corruption of the Palestinian Authority (PA)--took a majority in the January 2006 Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) elections, with Hamas leader Ismail Haniya as Prime Minister. The Israeli leadership pledged not to work with a Palestinian government in which Hamas had a role.

Shortly following Hamas' PLC victory, the Quartet--comprised of the United States, European Union, United

Yiddish, Russian, Hungarian, and German.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

In addition to seeking an end to hostilities with Arab forces, against which it has fought five wars since 1948, Israel has given high priority to gaining wide acceptance as a sovereign state with an important international role.

Before 1967, Israel had established diplomatic relations with a majority of the world's nations, except for the Arab states and most other Muslim countries. UN Security Council resolutions provided the basis for cease-fire and disengagement agreements concerning the Sinai and the Golan Heights between Israel, Egypt, and Syria and for promoting the Camp

Nations. and Russia--outlined three basic principles the Hamas-led PA must meet in order for the U.S. and the international community to reengage with the PA: renounce violence and terror, recognize Israel, and respect previous agreements, including the roadmap. The Hamas-led PA government rejected these principles, resulting in a Quartet statement of "grave concern" on March 30, 2006 and the suspension of U.S. assistance to the PA, complete prohibition on U.S. Government contacts with the PA, and prohibition of unlicensed transactions with the PA government. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) under the leadership of PLO Chairman and PA President Mahmud Abbas (Abu Mazen), by contrast, remained consistently committed to the Quartet principles.

Despite several negotiated cease-fires between Hamas and Fatah, violent clashes in the Gaza Strip--and to a lesser extent in the West Bank--were commonplace between December 2006 and February 2007 and resulted in dozens of deaths and injuries. In an attempt to end the intra-Palestinian violence, the King of Saudi Arabia invited Palestinian rivals to Mecca, and on February 9, 2007, Abbas and Hamas leader Haniya agreed to the formation of a Palestinian national unity government and a cessation of violence. Hamas' rejectionist policies and violent behavior continued despite the formation of the national unity government.

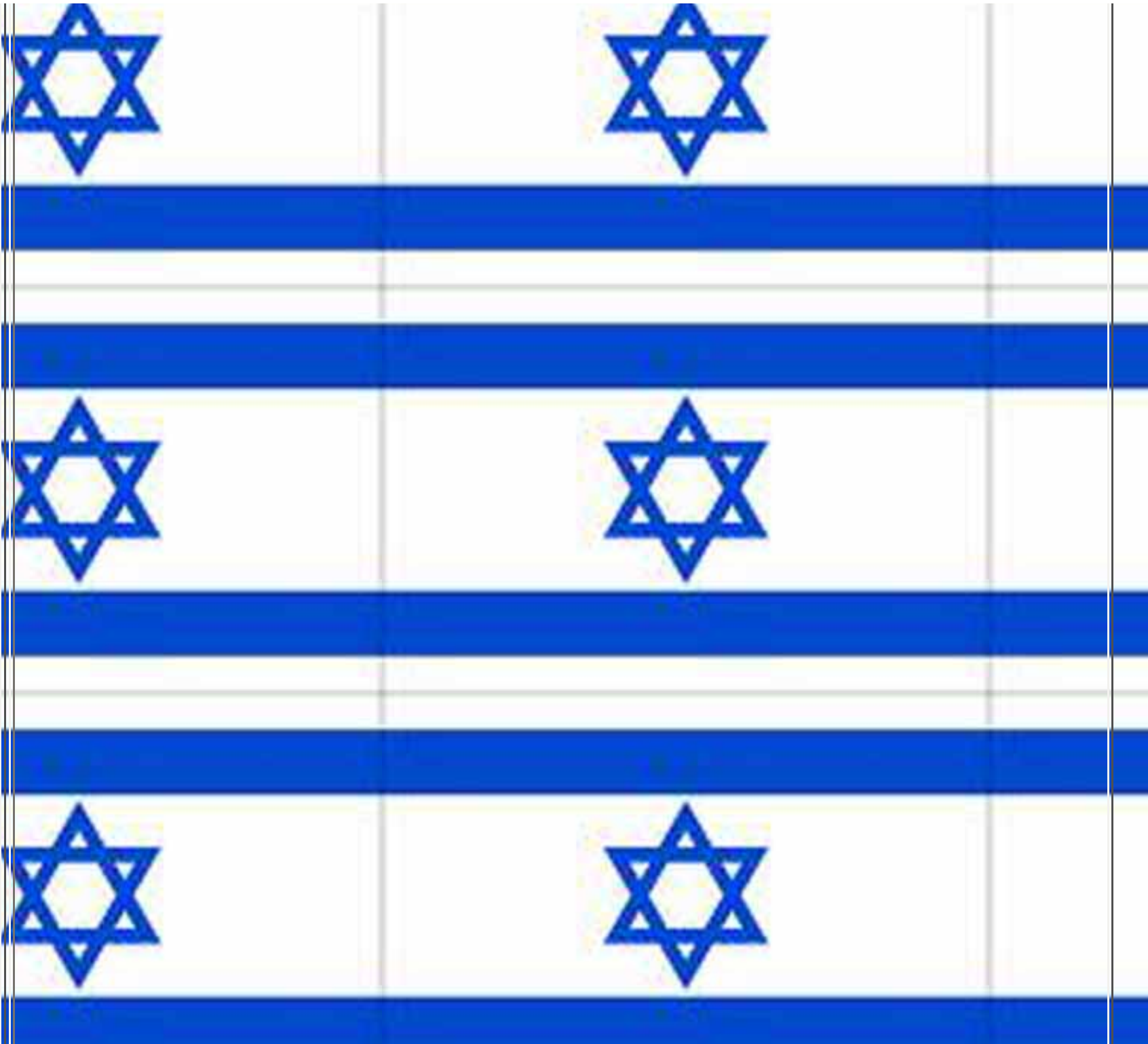
In June 2007, Hamas effectively orchestrated a violent coup in Gaza. Hamas also launched scores of Qassam rockets into southern Israel in an attempt to involve Israel in the Hamas-Fatah conflict. On June 14, Palestinian Authority President Mahoud Abbas exercised his lawful authority by declaring a state of emergency, dissolving the national unity government, and replacing it with a new government with Salam Fayyad as Prime Minister.

The new Palestinian Authority government under President Abbas and Prime Minister Fayyad has no elements controlled by Hamas or any other terrorist group. The new government is dedicated to peace and the Quartet principles and has been embraced politically and financially by the international community, including Israel.



David accords and the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty. The Soviet Union and the communist states of Eastern Europe (except Romania) broke diplomatic relations with Israel during the 1967 war, but those relations were restored by 1991.

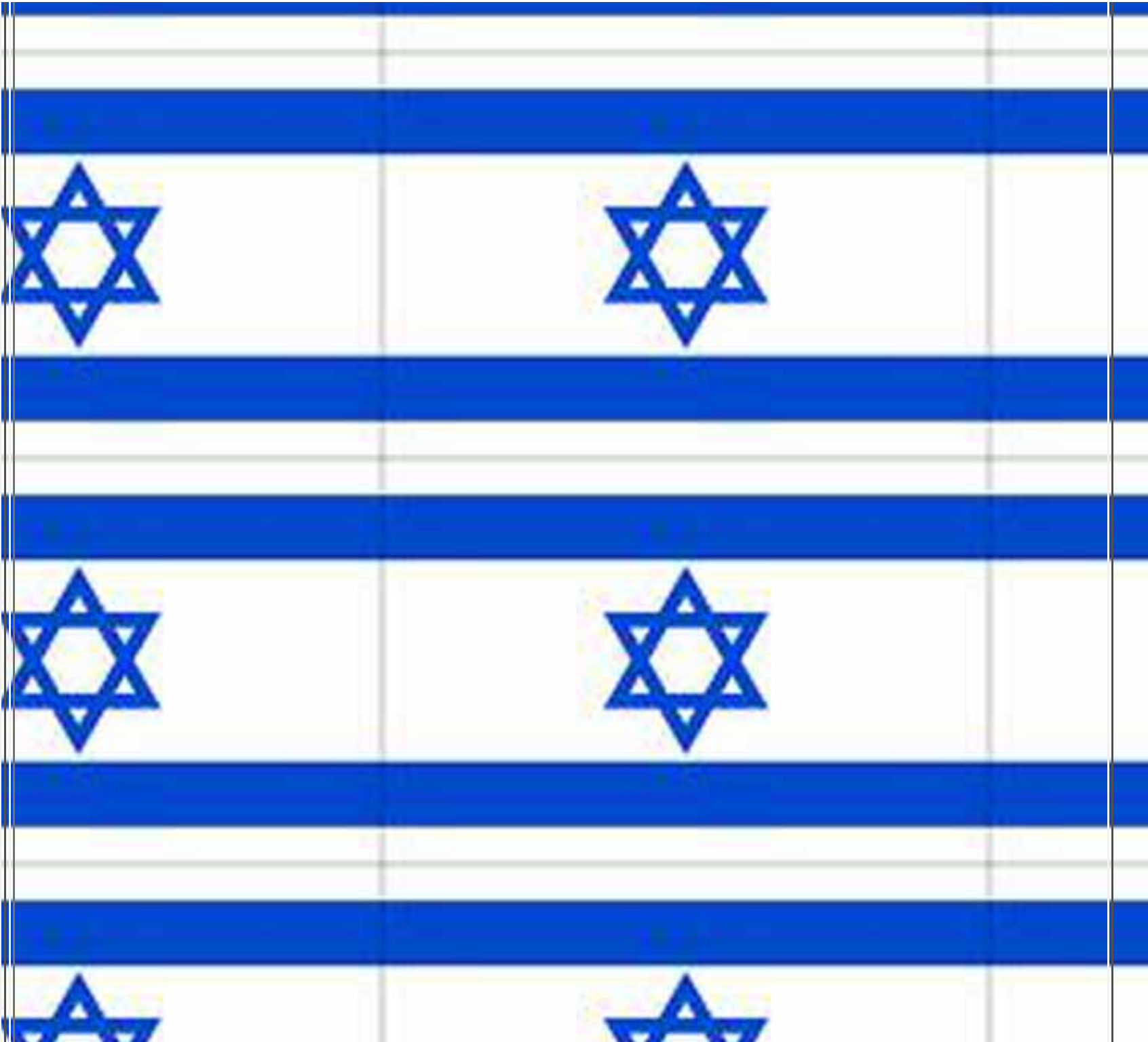
The landmark October 1991 Madrid conference recognized the importance of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 in resolving regional disputes, and brought together for the first time Israel, the Palestinians, and the neighboring Arab countries, launching a series of direct bilateral and multilateral negotiations. These talks were designed to finally resolve outstanding security, border, and other issues between the parties while providing a basis for



mutual cooperation on issues of general concern, including the status of refugees, arms control and regional security, water and environmental concerns, and economic development.

Today, Israel has diplomatic relations with 161 states. Following the signing of the Israel-PLO Declaration of Principles on September 13, 1993, Israel established or renewed diplomatic relations with 36 countries. Israel has full diplomatic relations with Egypt, Jordan, and Mauritania. In addition, on October 1, 1994, the Gulf States publicly announced their support for a review of the Arab boycott, in effect abolishing the secondary and tertiary boycotts against Israel.

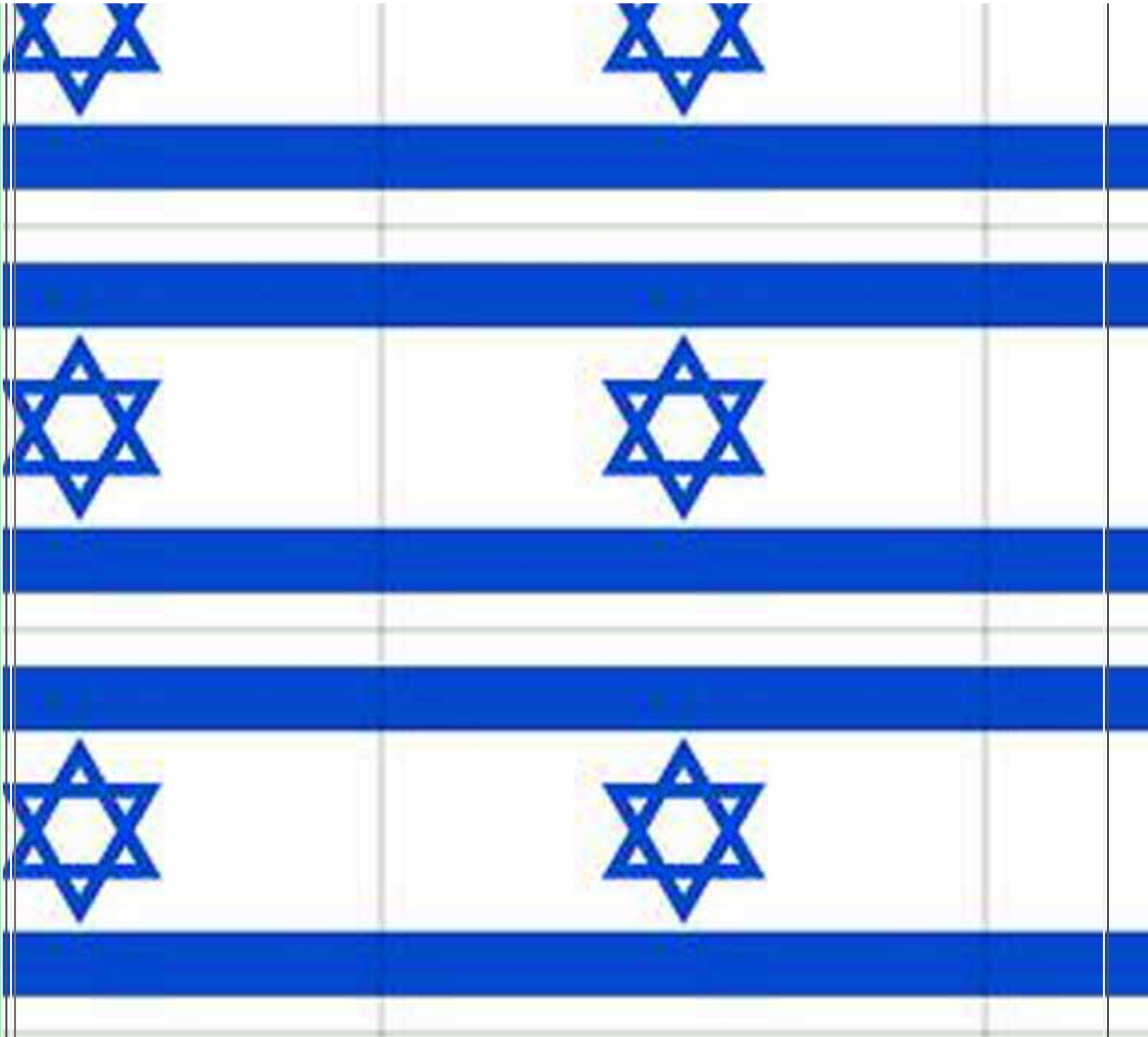
Israel has diplomatic



relations with nine non-Arab Muslim states and with 32 of the 43 Sub-Saharan states that are not members of the Arab League. Israel established relations with China and India in 1992 and with the Holy See in 1993.

DEFENSE

Israel's ground, air, and naval forces, known as the Israel Defense Force (IDF), fall under the command of a single general staff. Conscription is universal for Jewish men and women over the age of 18, although exemptions may be made on religious grounds. Druze, members of a small Islamic offshoot living in Israel's mountains, also serve in the IDF. Israeli Arabs, with the exception of some Bedouins, do not serve. During 1950-66, Israel spent an average of 9% of GDP on

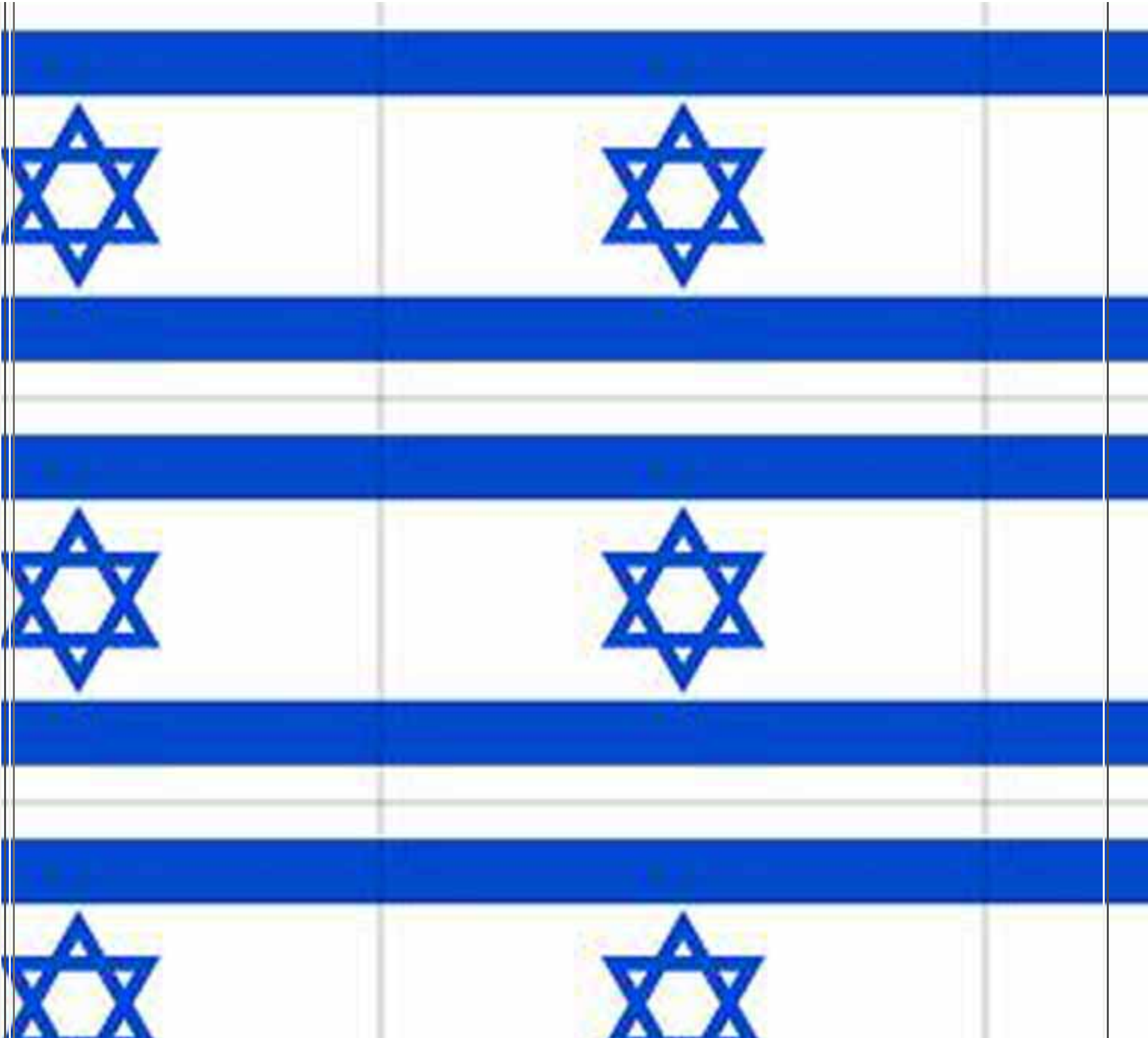


defense. Real defense expenditures increased dramatically after both the 1967 and 1973 wars. Military spending in 2005 totaled \$9.45 billion, which is equivalent to 7.7% of GDP, and represents 16.3% of government expenditures. The United States provides approximately \$2.4 billion per year in security assistance.

In 1983, the United States and Israel established the Joint Political Military Group, which meets twice a year. Both the U.S. and Israel participate in joint military planning and combined exercises, and have collaborated on military research and weapons development.

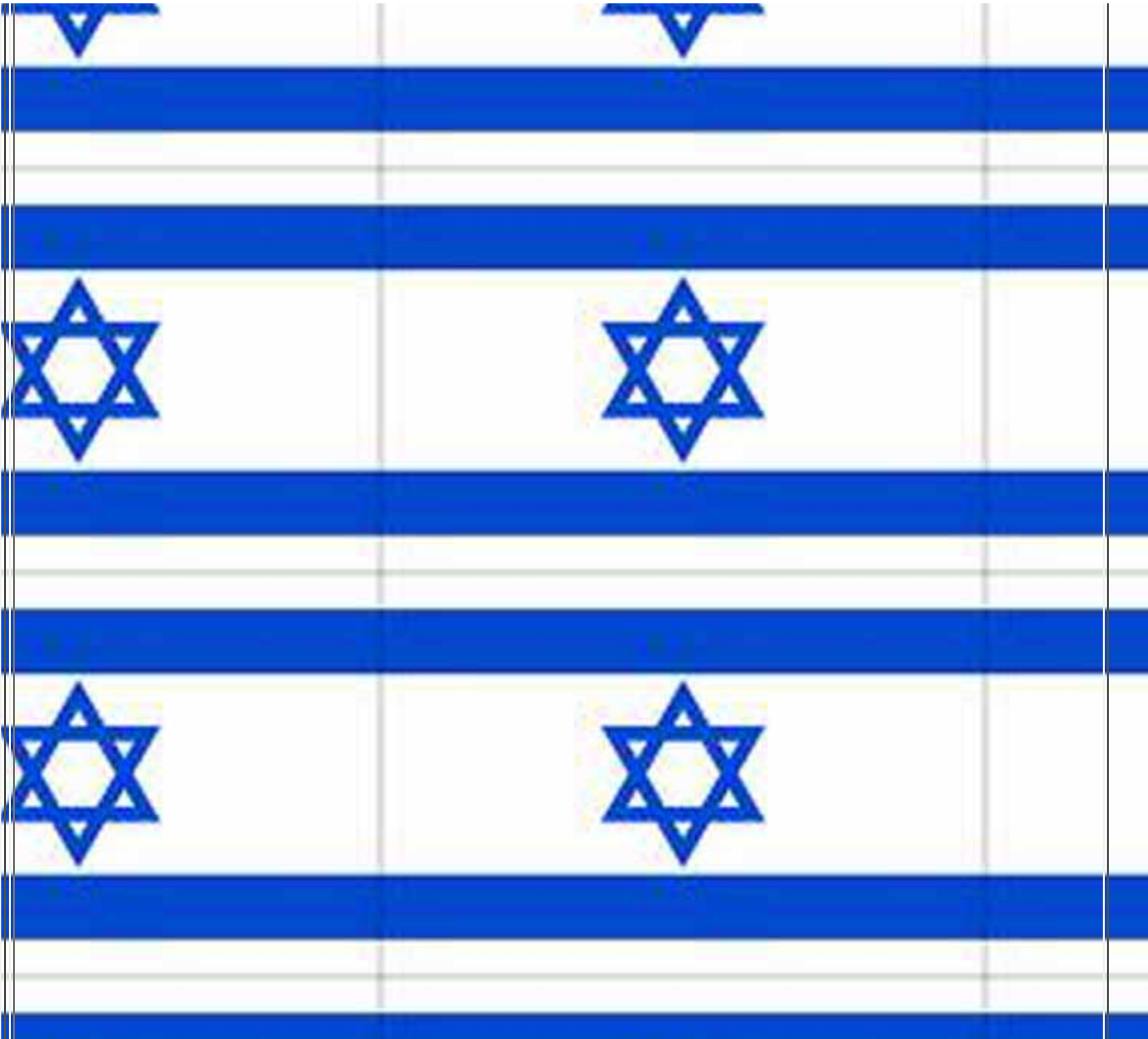
GOVERNMENT

Israel is a parliamentary democracy. Its



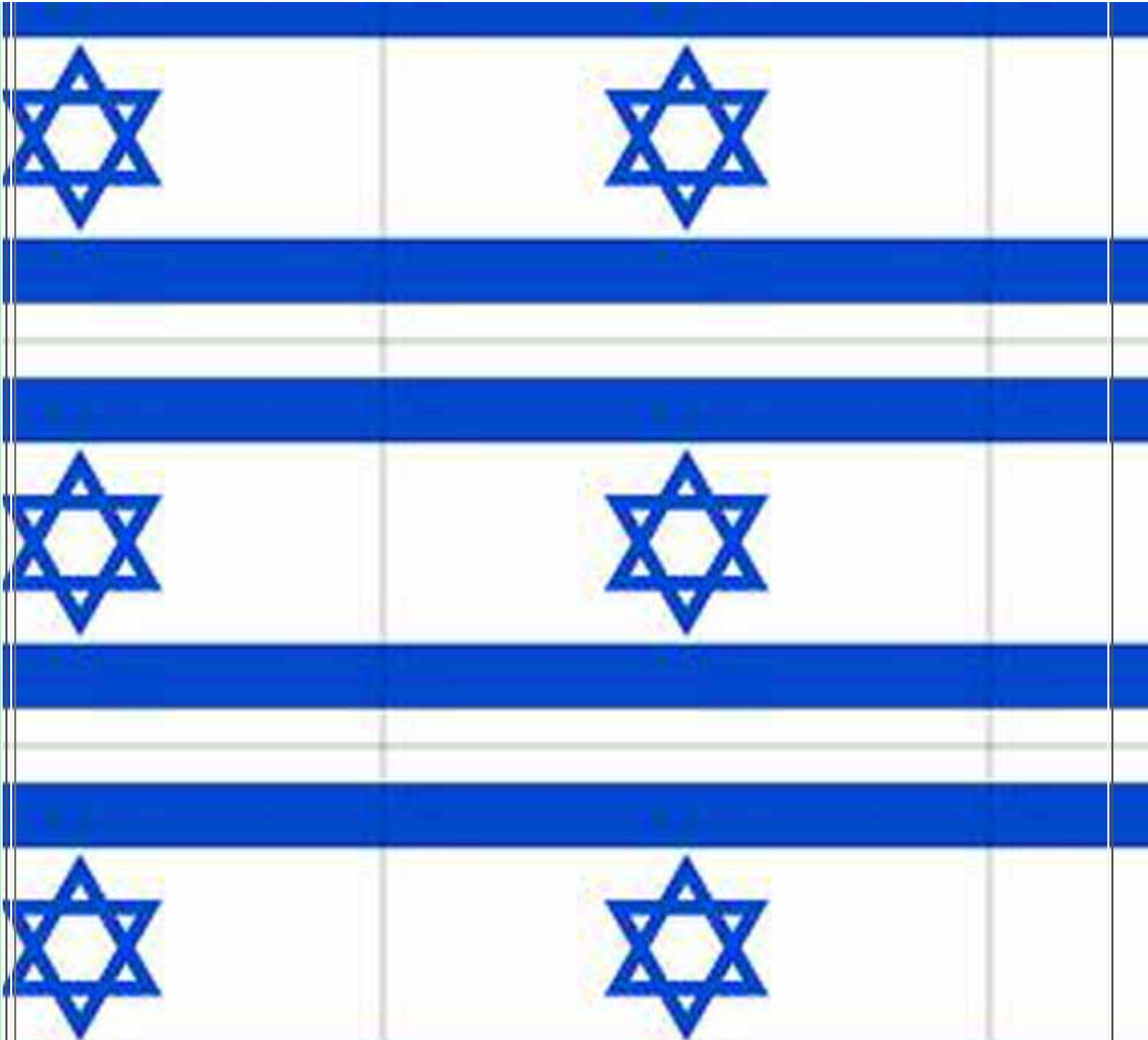
governmental system is based on several basic laws enacted by its unicameral parliament, the Knesset. The president (chief of state) is elected by the Knesset for a 5-year term.

The prime minister (head of government) exercises executive power and has in the past been selected by the president as the party leader most able to form a government. Between May 1996 and March 2001, Israelis voted for the prime minister directly. (The legislation, which required the direct election of the prime minister, was rescinded by the Knesset in March 2001.) The members of the cabinet must be collectively approved by the Knesset.



The Knesset's 120 members are elected by secret ballot to 4-year terms, although the prime minister may decide to call for new elections before the end of the 4-year term. Voting is for party lists rather than for individual candidates, and the total number of seats assigned each party reflects that party's percentage of the vote. Successful Knesset candidates are drawn from the lists in order of party-assigned rank. Under the present electoral system, all members of the Knesset are elected at large.

The independent judicial system includes secular and religious courts. The courts' right of judicial review of the Knesset's legislation is limited. Judicial interpretation is restricted to problems of

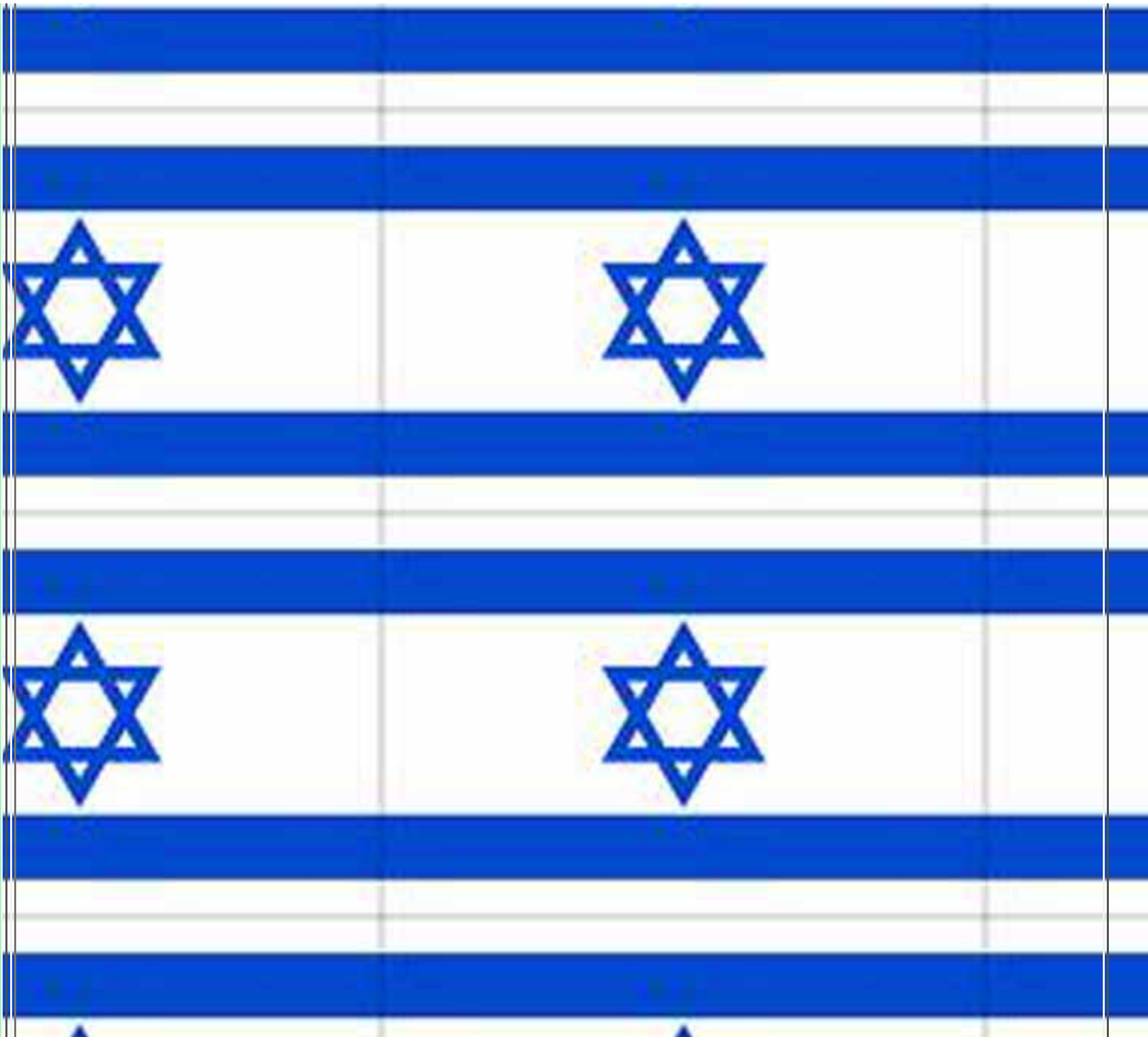


execution of laws and validity of subsidiary legislation. The highest court in Israel is the Supreme Court, whose judges are approved by the President.

Israel is divided into six districts, administration of which is coordinated by the Ministry of Interior. The Ministry of Defense is responsible for the administration of the occupied territories.

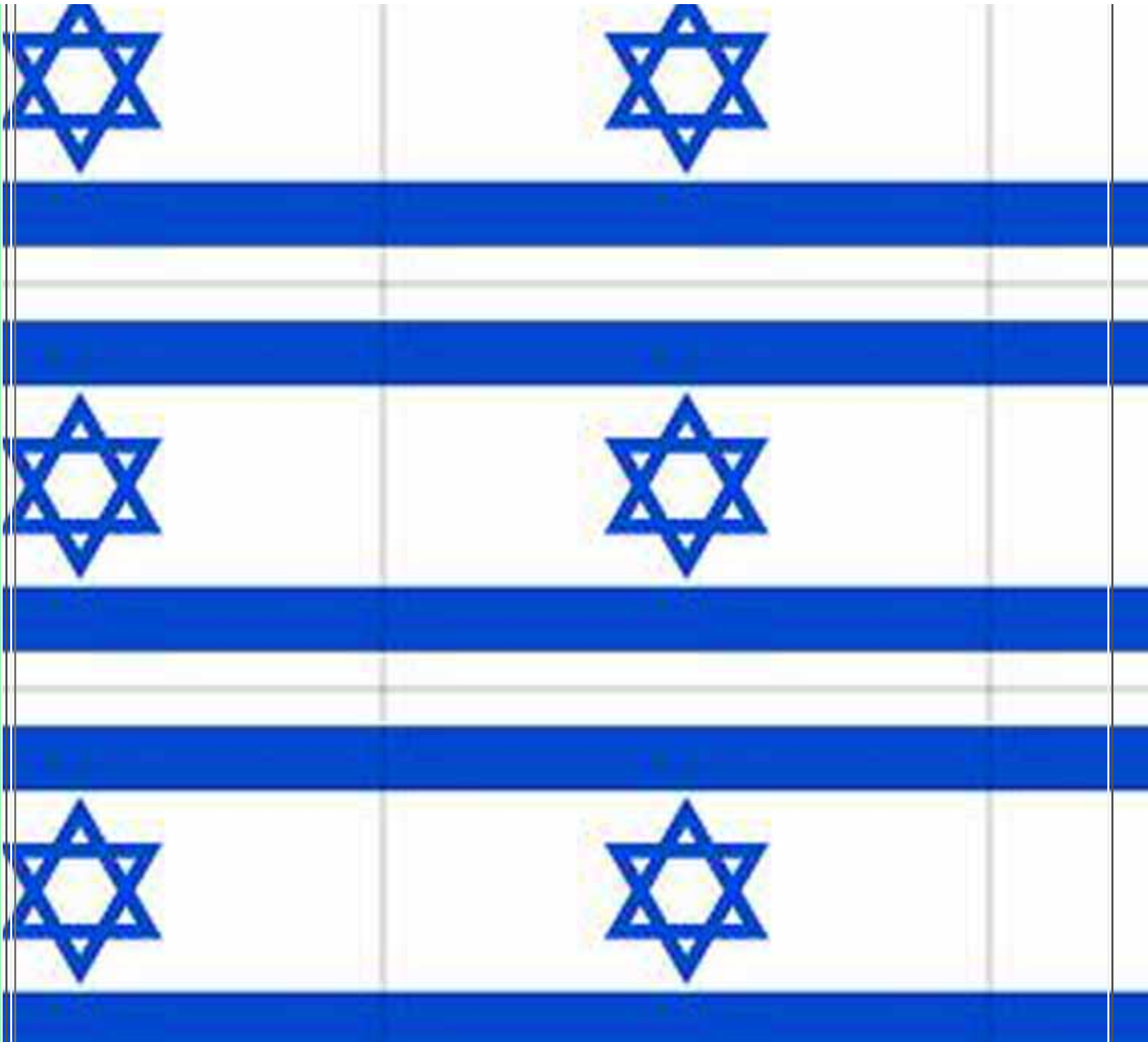
US - ISRAELI RELATIONS

Commitment to Israel's security and well being has been a cornerstone of U. S. policy in the Middle East since Israel's founding in 1948, in which the United States played a key supporting role. Israel and the United States are bound closely by historic and cultural ties as well as by mutual interests.



Continuing U.S. economic and security assistance to Israel acknowledges these ties and signals U.S. commitment. The broad issues of Arab-Israeli peace have been a major focus in the U.S.-Israeli relationship. U.S. efforts to reach a Middle East peace settlement are based on UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and have been based on the premise that as Israel takes calculated risks for peace the United States will help minimize those risks.

On a bilateral level, relations between the United States and Israel are continually strengthening in every field. In addition to the Joint Political-Military Group described above, there are: bilateral science and technology efforts



(including the Binational Science Foundation and the Binational Agricultural Research and Development Foundation); the U. S.-Israeli Education Foundation, which sponsors educational and cultural programs; the Joint Economic Development Group, which maintains a high-level dialogue on economic issues; the Joint Counterterrorism Group, designed to enhance cooperation in fighting terrorism; and a high-level Strategic Dialogue that meets biannually.



Click below to read
[The
 Palestinian Charter](#)

Palestine

***In the map below, the West Bank is the land known as Palestine

HISTORY

Ottoman rule (1516 - 1917 CE)

Territory of the
 Ottoman Empire in 1890

After the Ottoman
 conquest, the name
 "Palestine" disappeared
 as the official name of
 an administrative unit,
 as the Turks often
 called their (sub)
 provinces after the
 capital. Since its 1516
 incorporation in the
 Ottoman Empire, it was
 part of the *vilayet*
 (province) of Damascus-
 Syria until 1660, next of
 the *vilayet* of Saida
 (Sidon), briefly
 interrupted by the 7
 March 1799 - July 1799
 French occupation of

Jaffa, Haifa, and Caesarea. During the siege of Acre in 1799, Napoleon prepared a proclamation declaring a Jewish state in Palestine. On 10 May 1832 it was one of the Turkish provinces annexed by Muhammad Ali's shortly imperialistic Egypt (nominally still Ottoman), but in November 1840 direct Ottoman rule was restored.

Still the old name remained in popular and semi-official use. Many examples of its usage in the 16th and 17th centuries have survived.

^[95] During the 19th century, the "Ottoman Government employed the term *Arz-i Filistin* (the 'Land of Palestine') in official correspondence, meaning for all intents and purposes the area to the west of the River Jordan which became 'Palestine' under the British in 1922".^[96]

Amongst the educated Arab public, *Filastin* was a common concept,

Palestine Map



referring either to the whole of Palestine or to the Jerusalem *sanjaq* alone^[97] or just to the area around Ramle.^[98]

Ottoman rule over the region lasted until the Great War (World War I) when the Ottomans sided with Germany and the Central Powers. During World War I, the Ottomans were driven from much of the area by the United Kingdom during the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire.

The 20th century

In European usage up to World War I, "Palestine" was used informally for a region that extended in the north-south direction typically from Raphia (south-east of Gaza) to the Litani River (now in Lebanon). The western boundary was the sea, and the eastern boundary was the poorly-defined place where the Syrian desert began. In various European sources, the

CURRENT STATUS

Following the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, the 1949 Armistice Agreements between Israel and neighboring Arab states eliminated Palestine as a distinct territory. With the establishment of Israel, the remaining lands were divided amongst Egypt, Syria and Jordan.

 In addition to the UN-partitioned area it was allotted, Israel captured 26% of the Mandate territory west of the Jordan river. Jordan captured and annexed about 21% of the Mandate territory, known today as the West Bank. Jerusalem was divided, with Jordan taking the eastern parts, including the Old City, and Israel taking the western parts. The Gaza Strip was captured by Egypt.

For a description of the massive population movements, Arab and Jewish, at the time of the 1948 war and over the following decades, see Palestinian exodus and Jewish exodus from Arab lands.

From the 1960s onward, the term "Palestine" was regularly used in political contexts.

Various declarations, such as the 15 November 1988 proclamation of a State of Palestine by the PLO referred to a country called Palestine, defining its borders based on the U.N. Resolution 242 and 383 and the principle of land for peace. The Green Line was the 1967 border established by many UN resolutions including those mentioned above.

In the course of the Six Day War in June 1967, Israel captured the West Bank from Jordan and Gaza from Egypt.

According to the CIA World Factbook,^[108] of the ten million people living between Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea, about five million (49%) identify as Palestinian, Arab, Bedouin and/or Druze. One million of those are citizens of Israel. The other four million are residents of the West Bank and Gaza, which are under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian National Authority.

In the West Bank, 360,000 Israeli settlers live in a hundred scattered settlements with connecting corridors. The 2.5 million West Bank Palestinians live in four blocs centered in Hebron, Ramallah, Nablus, and Jericho. In 2005, all the Israeli settlers were evacuated from the

eastern boundary was placed anywhere from the Jordan River to slightly east of Amman. The Negev Desert was not included.^[99]

Under the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916, it was envisioned that most of Palestine, when freed from Ottoman control, would become an international zone not under direct French or British colonial control. Shortly thereafter, British foreign minister Arthur Balfour issued the Balfour Declaration of 1917, which laid plans for a Jewish homeland to be established in Palestine eventually.

The British-led Egyptian Expeditionary Force, commanded by Edmund Allenby, captured Jerusalem on 9 December, 1917 and occupied the whole of the Levant following the defeat of Turkish forces in Palestine at the Battle of Megiddo in September 1918 and the capitulation of Turkey

Gaza Strip in keeping with Ariel Sharon's plan for unilateral disengagement, and control over the area was transferred to the Palestinian Authority.

THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

The Greek toponym *Palaistinê* (Παλαιστίνη), with which the Arabic *Filastin* (فلسطين) is cognate, first occurs in the work of the Ionian historian Herodotus, active in the middle of the 5th century BCE, where it denotes generally^[6] all of the coastal land, including Phoenicia, down to Egypt. In expressions where he employs it as an ethnonym, as when he speaks of the 'Syrians of Palestine'^[7] it refers to a population distinct from the Phoenicians, and thus probably Philistines, though it may also cover several other tribes and ethnic groups present in the area, including the Jews.^[8] The word bears comparison to a congeries of ethnonyms in Semitic languages, Egyptian *Prst*, Assyrian *Palastu*, and the Hebraic *Plishtim*, the latter term used in the Bible to signify the Philistines.

The Arabic word *Filastin* has been used to refer to the region since the earliest medieval Arab geographers adopted the Greek name. *Filastini* (فلسطيني), also derived from the Latinized Greek term *Palaestina* (Παλαιστίνη), appears to have been used as an Arabic adjectival noun in the region since as early as the 7th century CE.^[9]

During the British Mandate of Palestine, the term "Palestinian" was used to refer to all people residing there, regardless of religion or ethnicity, and those granted citizenship by the Mandatory authorities were granted "Palestinian citizenship".^[10]

Following the 1948 establishment of the State of Israel as the national homeland of the Jewish people, the use and application of the terms "Palestine" and "Palestinian" by and to Palestinian Jews largely dropped from use. The English-language newspaper *The Palestine Post* for example — which, since 1932, primarily served the Jewish community in the British Mandate of Palestine — changed its name in 1950 to *The Jerusalem Post*. Jews in Israel and the West Bank today generally identify as Israelis. Arab citizens of Israel identify themselves as Israeli and/or Palestinian and/or Arab.^[11]

The Palestinian National Charter, as amended by the PLO's Palestine National Council in July

on 31 October.^[100]

British Mandate (1920–1948)

Palestine and Transjordan were incorporated (under different legal and administrative arrangements) into the Mandate for Palestine issued by the League of Nations to Great Britain on 29 September 1923

The British Mandate enacted English, Hebrew and Arabic as its three official languages. The land designated by the mandate was called Palestine in English, Falastin (فلسطين) in Arabic, and in Hebrew *Palestina* or *Eretz Yisrael* (ארץ ישראל).

In April 1920 the Allied Supreme Council (the USA, Great Britain, France, Italy and Japan) met at Sanremo and formal decisions were taken on the allocation of mandate territories. The United Kingdom accepted a mandate for Palestine, but the

1968, defined "Palestinians" as: "those Arab nationals who, until 1947, normally resided in Palestine regardless of whether they were evicted from it or stayed there. Anyone born, after that date, of a Palestinian father — whether in Palestine or outside it — is also a Palestinian."^[12] This definition also extends to, "The Jews who had normally resided in Palestine until the beginning of the Zionist invasion." The Charter also states that "Palestine with the boundaries it had during the British Mandate, is an indivisible territorial unit."^{[13][12]}

Palestinian perceptions of identity

In his 1997 book, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness*, historian Rashid Khalidi notes that the archaeological strata that denote the history of Palestine —encompassing the Biblical, Roman, Byzantine, Umayyad, Fatimid, Crusader, Ayyubid, Mamluk and Ottoman periods—form part of the identity of the modern-day Palestinian people, as they have come to understand it over the last century.^[14] Khalidi stresses that Palestinian identity has never been an exclusive one, with "Arabism, religion, and local loyalties" continuing to play an important role.^[15]

Echoing this view, Walid Khalidi writes that Palestinians in Ottoman times were "[a]cutely aware of the distinctiveness of Palestinian history ..." and that "[a]lthough proud of their Arab heritage and ancestry, the Palestinians considered themselves to be descended not only from Arab conquerors of the seventh century but also from indigenous peoples who had lived in the country since time immemorial, including the ancient Hebrews and the Canaanites before them."^[16]

Ali Qleibo, a Palestinian anthropologist, explains how identity is "a discursive narrative that validates the present by selecting events, characters, and moments in time as formative beginnings."^[17] Qleibo critiques Muslim historiography for assigning the beginning of Palestinian cultural identity to the advent of Islam in the seventh century.^[17] In describing the effect of such a historiography, he writes: "Pagan origins are disavowed. As such the peoples that populated Palestine throughout history have discursively rescinded their own history and religion as they adopted the religion, language, and culture of Islam."^[17]

According to Salim Tamari, the 'nativist' ethnographies produced by Tawfiq Canaan and other Palestinian writers and published in *The Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society* (1920-1948), were driven by the concern that the "native culture of Palestine", and in particular

boundaries of the mandate and the conditions under which it was to be held were not decided. The Zionist Organization's representative at Sanremo, Chaim Weizmann, subsequently reported to his colleagues in London:

"There are still important details outstanding, such as the actual terms of the mandate and the question of the boundaries in Palestine. There is the delimitation of the boundary between French Syria and Palestine, which will constitute the northern frontier and the eastern line of demarcation, adjoining Arab Syria. The latter is not likely to be fixed until the Emir Feisal attends the Peace Conference, probably in Paris."^[101]

peasant society, was being undermined by the forces of modernity.^[18] Tamari continues: "Implicit in their scholarship (and made explicit by Canaan himself) was another theme, namely that the peasants of Palestine represent—through their folk norms ... the living heritage of all the accumulated ancient cultures that had appeared in Palestine (principally the Canaanite, Philistine, Hebraic, Nabatean, Syrio-Aramaic and Arab)."^[18]

The folklorist revival among Palestinian intellectuals such as Nimr Sirhan, Musa Allush, Salim Mubayyid, and the Palestinian Folklore Society of the 1970s, highlighted pre-Islamic (and pre-Hebraic) cultural roots, re-constructing Palestinian identity with a focus on Canaanite and Jebusite cultures.^[18] These efforts seem to have borne fruit as evidenced in the organization of celebrations like the Qabatiya Canaanite festival and the annual Music Festival of Yabus by the Palestinian Ministry of Culture.^[18] Nonetheless, some Palestinians, like Zakariyya Muhammad, have criticized the "Canaanite ideology" as an "intellectual fad, divorced from the concerns of ordinary people."^[18]

Emergent nationalism(s)

The timing and causes behind the emergence of a distinctively Palestinian national consciousness among the Arabs of Palestine are matters of scholarly disagreement. Rashid Khalidi argues that the modern national identity of Palestinians has its roots in nationalist discourses that emerged among the peoples of the Ottoman empire in the late 19th century, and which sharpened following the demarcation of modern nation-state boundaries in the Middle East after World War I.^[15] Khalidi also states that although the challenge posed by Zionism played a role in shaping this identity, that "it is a serious mistake to suggest that Palestinian identity emerged mainly as a response to Zionism."^[15]

In contrast, historian James L. Gelvin argues that Palestinian nationalism was a direct reaction to Zionism. In his book *The Israel-Palestine Conflict: One Hundred Years of War* he states that "Palestinian nationalism emerged during the interwar period in response to Zionist immigration and settlement."^[19] Gelvin argues that this fact does not make the Palestinian identity any less legitimate:

Whatever the causal mechanism, by the early 20th century strong opposition to Zionism and evidence of a burgeoning nationalistic Palestinian identity is found in the content of Arabic-

In July 1920, the French drove Faisal bin Husayn from Damascus ending his already negligible control over the region of Transjordan, where local chiefs traditionally resisted any central authority. The sheikhs, who had earlier pledged their loyalty to the Sharif of Mecca, asked the British to undertake the region's administration. Herbert Samuel asked for the extension of the Palestine government's authority to Transjordan, but at meetings in Cairo and Jerusalem between Winston Churchill and Emir Abdullah in March 1921 it was agreed that Abdullah would administer the territory (initially for six months only) on behalf of the Palestine administration. In the summer of 1921 Transjordan was included within the Mandate, but excluded from the provisions for a Jewish National Home.^[102] On 24 July, 1922 the League of Nations

language newspapers in Palestine, such as *Al-Karmil* (est. 1908) and *Filasteen* (est. 1911).

^[20] *Filasteen*, published in Jaffa by Issa and Yusef al-Issa, addressed its readers as "Palestinians",

^[21] first focusing its critique of Zionism around the failure of the Ottoman administration to control Jewish immigration and the large influx of foreigners, later exploring the impact of Zionist land-purchases on Palestinian peasants ((Arabic: *فلاحين*, *fellahin*), expressing growing concern over land dispossession and its implications for the society at large.^[20]

The historical record also reveals an interplay between "Arab" and "Palestinian" identities and nationalisms. The idea of a unique Palestinian state separated out from its Arab neighbors was at first rejected by some Palestinian representatives. The First Congress of Muslim-Christian Associations (in Jerusalem, February 1919), which met for the purpose of selecting a Palestinian Arab representative for the Paris Peace Conference, adopted the following resolution: "We consider Palestine as part of Arab Syria, as it has never been separated from it at any time. We are connected with it by national, religious, linguistic, natural, economic and geographical bonds."^[22] After the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the French conquest of Syria, however, the notion took on greater appeal. In 1920, for instance, the formerly pan-Syrianist mayor of Jerusalem, Musa Qasim Pasha al-Husayni, said "Now, after the recent events in Damascus, we have to effect a complete change in our plans here. Southern Syria no longer exists. We must defend Palestine".^[citation needed]

In 1922, the British authorities over Mandate Palestine proposed a draft constitution which would have granted the Palestinian Arabs representation in a Legislative Council. The Palestine Arab delegation rejected the proposal as "wholly unsatisfactory," noting that "the People of Palestine" could not accept the inclusion of the Balfour Declaration in the constitution's preamble, as the basis for discussions, and further taking issue with the designation of Palestine as a British "colony of the lowest order."^[23] The Arabs tried to get the British to offer an Arab legal establishment again roughly ten years later, but to no avail.^[24]

Conflict between Palestinian nationalists and various types of pan-Arabists continued during the British Mandate, but the latter became increasingly marginalized. Two prominent leaders of the Palestinian nationalists were Mohammad Amin al-Husayni, Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, appointed by the British, and Izz ad-Din al-Qassam.^[25] Followers of Sheikh Izz ad-Din al-Qassam, who was killed by the British in 1935, initiated the 1936–1939 Arab revolt in Palestine which began with a

approved the terms of the British Mandate over Palestine and Transjordan. On 16 September the League formally approved a memorandum from Lord Balfour confirming the exemption of Transjordan from the clauses of the mandate concerning the creation of a Jewish national home and from the mandate's responsibility to *facilitate* Jewish immigration and land settlement.^[103] With

Transjordan coming under the administration of the British Mandate, the mandate's collective territory became constituted of 23% Palestine and 77% Transjordan. Transjordan was a very sparsely populated region (specially in comparison with Palestine proper) due to its relatively limited resources and largely desert environment.

The award of the mandates was delayed as a result of the United States' suspicions regarding Britain's

general strike and attacks on Jewish and British installations in Nablus.^[25] The call for a general strike, non-payment of taxes, and the closure of municipal governments was met and by the end of 1936, the movement had become a national revolt, often credited as marking the birth of the "Arab Palestinian identity".^[25]

The "lost years" (1948 - 1967)

After the 1948 Arab-Israeli war and the accompanying Palestinian exodus, known to Palestinians as Al Nakba (the "catastrophe"), there was a hiatus in Palestinian political activity which Khalidi partially attributes to "the fact that Palestinian society had been devastated between November 1947 and mid-May 1948 as a result of a series of overwhelming military defeats of the disorganized Palestinians by the armed forces of the Zionist movement."^[26] Those parts of British Mandate Palestine which did not become part of the newly declared Israeli state were occupied by Egypt and Jordan. During what Khalidi terms the "lost years" that followed, Palestinians lacked a center of gravity, divided as they were between these countries and others such as Syria, Lebanon, and elsewhere.^[27]

In the 1950s, a new generation of Palestinian nationalist groups and movements began to organize clandestinely, stepping out onto the public stage in the 1960s.^[28] The traditional Palestinian elite who had dominated negotiations with the British and the Zionists in the Mandate, and who were largely held responsible for the loss of Palestine, were replaced by these new movements whose recruits generally came from poor to middle class backgrounds and were often students or recent graduates of universities in Cairo, Beirut and Damascus.^[28] The potency of the pan-Arabist ideology put forward by Gamel Abdel Nasser—popular among Palestinian for whom Arabism was already an important component of their identity^[29]—tended to obscure

Recent developments in Palestinian identity (1967 - present)

Since 1967, pan-Arabism has diminished as an aspect of Palestinian identity. The Israeli capture of the Gaza Strip and West Bank in the 1967 Six-Day War prompted fractured Palestinian political and militant groups to give up any remaining hope they had placed in pan-Arabism. Instead, they rallied around the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and its nationalistic orientation.

^[31] Mainstream secular Palestinian nationalism was grouped together under the umbrella of the PLO whose constituent organizations include Fateh and the Popular Front for the Liberation

colonial ambitions and similar reservations held by Italy about France's intentions. France in turn refused to reach a settlement over Palestine until its own mandate in Syria became final. According to Louis,

Together with the American protests against the issuance of mandates these triangular quarrels between the Italians, French, and British explain why the A mandates did not come into force until nearly four years after the signing of the Peace Treaty.... The British documents clearly reveal that Balfour's patient and skillful diplomacy contributed greatly to the final issuance of the A mandates for Syria and Palestine on September 29, 1923.^[104]

of Palestine, among others.^[32] These groups have also given voice to a tradition that emerged in 1960s that argues Palestinian nationalism has deep historical roots, with extreme advocates reading a Palestinian nationalist consciousness and identity back into the history of Palestine over the past few centuries, and even millennia, when such a consciousness is in fact relatively modern.^[33]

The Battle of Karameh and the events of Black September in Jordan contributed to growing Palestinian support for these groups. In 1974, the PLO was recognized as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people by the Arab states and was granted observer status as a national liberation movement by the United Nations that same year.^{[5][34]} Israel rejected the resolution, calling it "shameful".^[35] In a speech to the Knesset, Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Allon outlined the government's view that: 'No one can expect us to recognize the terrorist organization called the PLO as representing the Palestinians—because it does not. No one can expect us to negotiate with the heads of terror-gangs, who through their ideology and actions, endeavour to liquidate the State of Israel.'^[35]

The identity of Palestinians has been a point of contestation with Israel. Golda Meir expounded the early position in her famous remark that:

'It was not as though there was a Palestinian people in Palestine considering itself as a Palestinian people and we came and threw them out and took their country away from them. **They did not exist.**'^[36]

. The British historian Eric Hobsbawn allows that an element of justness can be discerned in sceptical outsider views that dismiss the propriety of using the term 'nation' to peoples like the Palestinians: such language arises often as the rhetoric of an evolved minority out of touch with the larger community that lacks this modern sense of national belonging. But at the same time, he argues, this outsider perspective has tended to

'overlook the rise of mass national identification when it did occur, as Zionist and Israeli Jews notably did in the case of the Palestinian Arabs.'^[37]

. From 1948 through until the 1980's, according to Eli Podeh, professor at Hebrew University, the textbooks used in Israeli schools tried to disavow a unique Palestinian identity, referring to 'the Arabs of the land of Israel' instead of 'Palestinians.' Israeli textbooks now widely use the term 'Palestinians.' Podeh believes that Palestinian textbooks of today resemble those from the early years of the Israeli state.^[38]

Even before the Mandate came into legal effect in 1923 (text), British terminology sometimes used "Palestine" for the part west of the Jordan River and "Trans-Jordan" (or *Transjordan*) for the part east of the Jordan River.^{[105][106]}

In the years following World War II, Britain's control over Palestine became increasingly tenuous. This was caused by a combination of factors, including:

- Rapid deterioration due to the attacks by the Irgun and Lehi on British officials, armed forces, and strategic installations. This caused severe damage to British morale and prestige, as well as increasing opposition to the

Various declarations, such as the PLO's 1988 proclamation of a State of Palestine, have further

served to reinforce the Palestinian national identity.^[citation needed] Today, most Palestinian organizations conceive of their struggle as either Palestinian-nationalist or Islamic in nature, and these themes predominate even more today. Within Israel itself, there are political movements, such as Abnaa el-Balad that assert their Palestinian identity, to the exclusion of their Israeli one.

mandate in Britain itself, public opinion demanding to "bring the boys home".^[107]

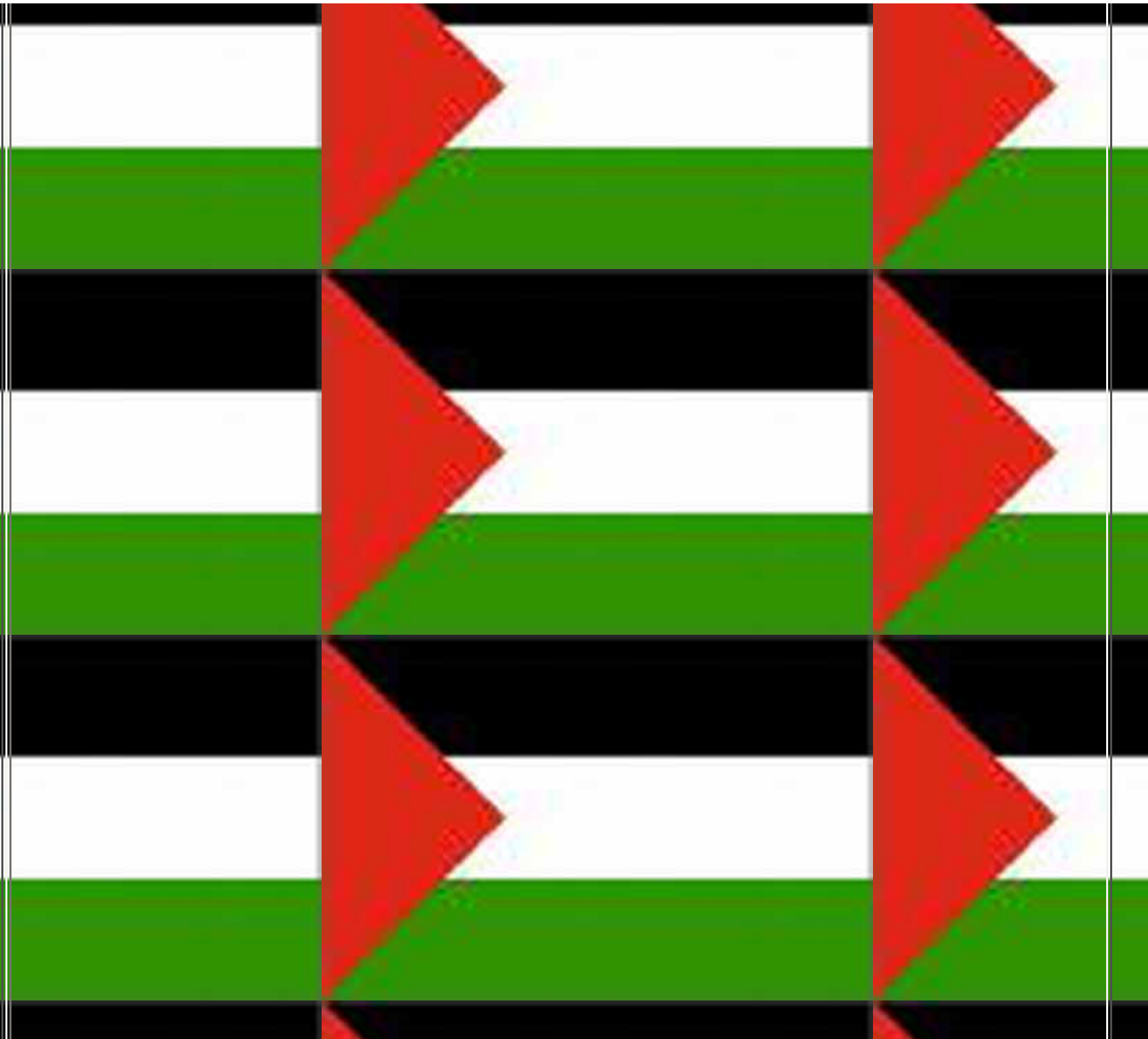
- World public opinion turned against Britain as a result of the British policy of preventing Holocaust survivors from reaching Palestine, sending them instead to Cyprus internment camps, or even back to Germany, as in the case of Exodus 1947.
- The costs of maintaining an army of over 100,000 men in Palestine weighed heavily on a British economy suffering from post-war depression, and was another cause for British public opinion to demand an end to the Mandate.
- US Congress was

delaying a loan necessary to prevent British bankruptcy. The delays were in response to the British refusal to fulfill a promise given to Truman that 100,000 Holocaust survivors would be allowed to migrate to Palestine.

Finally in early 1947 the British Government announced their desire to terminate the Mandate, and passed the responsibility over Palestine to the United Nations.

UN Partition Plan

On 29 November 1947, the United Nations General Assembly, with a two-thirds majority international vote, passed the United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine (United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181), a plan to resolve

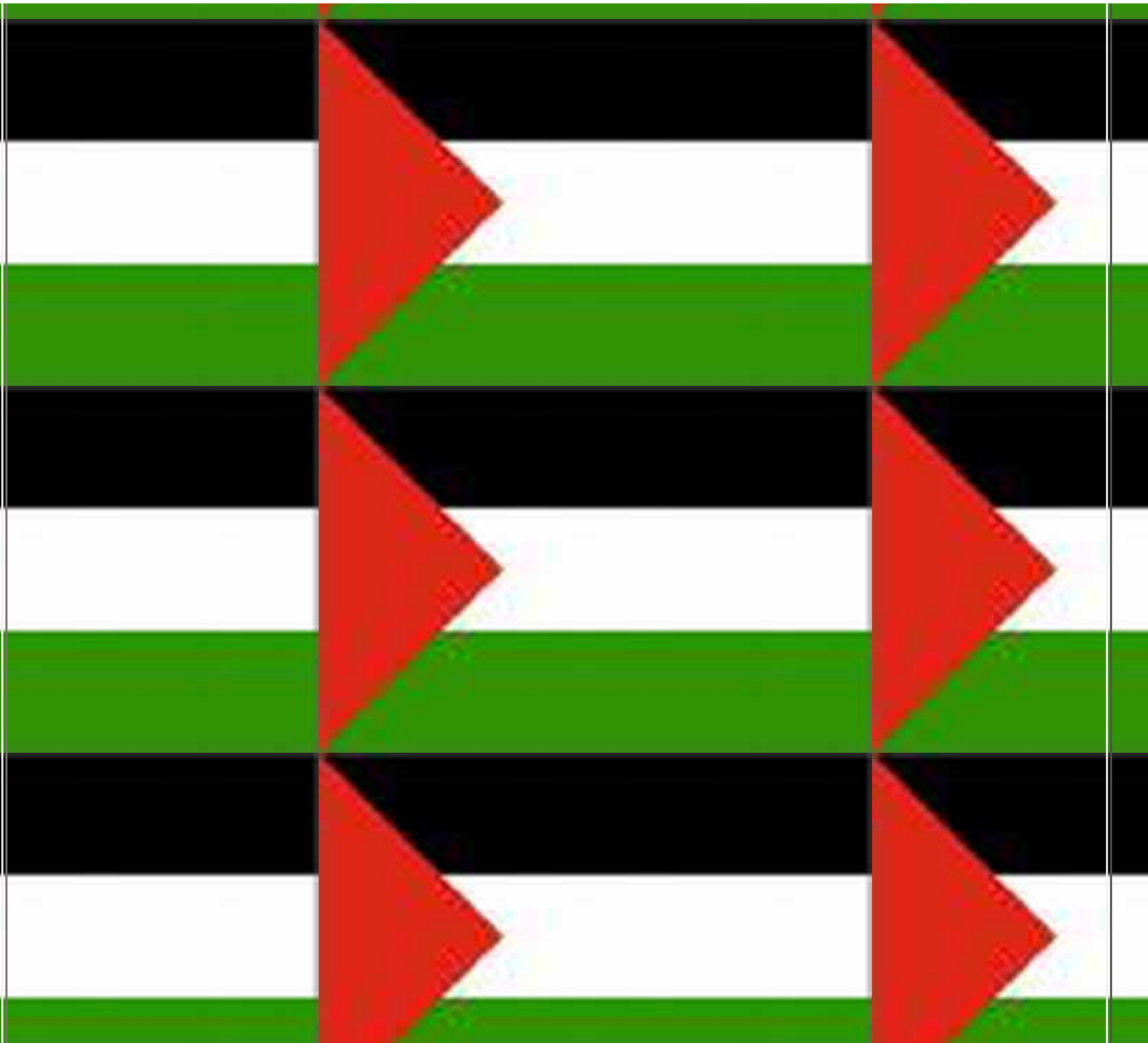


the Arab-Jewish conflict by partitioning the territory into separate Jewish and Arab states, with the Greater Jerusalem area (encompassing Bethlehem) coming under international control. Jewish leaders (including the Jewish Agency), accepted the plan, while Palestinian Arab leaders rejected it and refused to negotiate. Neighboring Arab and Muslim states also rejected the partition plan. The Arab community reacted violently after the Arab Higher Committee declared a strike and burned many buildings and shops. As armed skirmishes between Arab and Jewish paramilitary forces in Palestine continued, the British mandate ended on May 15, 1948, the establishment of the State of Israel having been proclaimed the day before (see Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel). The neighboring Arab states and armies (Lebanon,

Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Transjordan, Holy War Army, Arab Liberation Army, and local Arabs) immediately attacked Israel following its declaration of independence, and the 1948 Arab-Israeli War ensued. Consequently, the partition plan was never implemented.

Refugees

There are 4,255,120 Palestinians registered as refugees with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). This number includes the descendants of refugees from the 1948 war, but excludes those who have emigrated to areas outside of UNRWA's remit. Based on these figures, almost half of all Palestinians are registered refugees. The 993,818 Palestinian refugees in the Gaza Strip and 705,207 Palestinian refugees in the West Bank who hail from towns and villages that are now located in Israel are included in these UNRWA figures.



UNRWA figures do not include some 274,000 people, or 1 in 4 of all Arab citizens of Israel, who are internally displaced Palestinian refugees.

Lebanese Republic

Geography:

Area: 10,400 sq. km.
(4,015 sq. km.)

about 0.7 times the
size of Connecticut.

Cities: *Capital*--
Beirut (pop. 1.5
million). *Other
cities*--Tripoli/
Trablus (210,000),
Zahle (60,000),
Sidon/Sayda
(50,000), Tyre/Sur
(20,000), Byblos/
Jbail (10,000).

Terrain: Narrow
coastal plain; El
Beqaa (Bekaa
Valley) separates
Lebanon and Anti-
Lebanon Mountains.

Climate:
Mediterranean; mild
to cool, wet winters
with hot, dry
summers; Lebanon
mountains
experience heavy
winter snows.



People:

Nationality: *noun and adjective*—

Lebanese (singular and plural).

Population (2006 est.): 3,874,050.

Growth rate (2006 est.): 1.23%.

Major ethnic groups:

Arab 95%, Armenian 4%, other 1%

(note: many Christian Lebanese do not identify themselves as Arab but rather as descendents of the ancient Canaanites and prefer to be called Phoenicians).

Religions: Muslim 60% (Shi'a, Sunni, Druze, Isma'ili, Alawite or Nusayri), Christian 39% (Maronite Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Melkite Catholic, Armenian Orthodox, Syrian Catholic, Armenian Catholic, Syrian Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Chaldean, Assyrian, Copt, Protestant), other 1%.

Languages: Arabic (official), English, French, Armenian.



HISTORY

Lebanon is the historic home of the Phoenicians, Semitic traders whose maritime culture flourished there for more than 2,000 years (c.2700-450 B.C.). In later centuries, Lebanon's mountains were a refuge for Christians, and Crusaders established several strongholds there. Following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire after World War I, the League of Nations mandated the five provinces that comprise present-day Lebanon to France. Modern Lebanon's constitution, drawn up in 1926, specified a balance of political power among the various religious groups. The country gained independence in 1943, and French troops withdrew in 1946. Lebanon participated in the 1948 Arab-Israeli War and signed an armistice with Israel on March 23, 1949.

Lebanon's history since independence has been marked by periods of political turmoil interspersed with prosperity built on Beirut's position as a regional center for finance and trade. In 1958, during the last months of President Camille Chamoun's term, an insurrection broke out, and U.S. forces were briefly dispatched to Lebanon in response to an appeal by the government. During the 1960s, Lebanon enjoyed a period of relative calm and Beirut-focused tourism and banking sector-driven prosperity. Other areas of the country, however, notably the South, North, and Bekaa Valley, remained poor in comparison.

In the early 1970's, difficulties arose over the presence of Palestinian refugees, many of whom arrived after the

Education: *Years compulsory*--8.
Attendance--99%.
Literacy (2005 est.)--87.4%; 93.1% male, 82.2% female.
 Health (2006 est.):
Infant mortality rate--23.7/1,000.
Life expectancy--70.41 male, 75.48 female.
 Work force (2001 est.): 2.6 million.

Government:

Type: Republic.
 Independence: November 22, 1943.
 Constitution: May 23, 1926.
 Branches: *Executive*--president (chief of state), prime minister (head of government), deputy prime minister, cabinet.
Legislative--unicameral national assembly. *Judicial*--four Courts of Cassation, Constitutional Council, Supreme Council.
 Administrative subdivisions: 8 governorates.
 Political parties:

1967 Arab-Israeli war, the secret 1969 Cairo Agreement permitting the establishment of Palestinian camps in Lebanon, and 1970 "Black September" hostilities in Jordan. Among the 1970 arrivals were Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). Coupled with the Palestinian problem, Muslim and Christian differences grew more intense.

Beginning of the Civil War--1975-81

Full-scale civil war broke out in April 1975. After shots were fired at a church, gunmen in Christian East Beirut ambushed a busload of Palestinians. Palestinian forces joined predominantly leftist-Muslim factions as the fighting persisted, eventually spreading to most parts of the country and precipitating the Lebanese President's call for support from Syrian troops in June 1976. In fall of 1976, Arab summits in Riyadh and Cairo set out a plan to end the war. The resulting Arab Deterrent Force, which included Syrian troops already present, moved in to help separate the combatants. As an uneasy quiet settled over Beirut, security conditions in the south began to deteriorate.

After a PLO attack on a bus in northern Israel and Israeli retaliation that caused heavy casualties, Israel invaded Lebanon in March 1978, occupying most of the area south of the Litani River. In response, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 425 calling for the immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces and creating the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), charged with maintaining peace. Israeli forces withdrew later in 1978, turning over positions inside Lebanon along the border to their Lebanese ally, the South Lebanon Army (SLA) under the leadership of Maj. Sa'ad Haddad, thus informally setting up a 12-mile wide "security zone" to protect Israeli territory from cross border attack.

U.S. Intervention--1982-84

An interim cease-fire brokered by the U.S. in 1981 among Syria, the PLO, and Israel was respected for almost a year. Several incidents, including PLO rocket attacks on northern Israel, as well as an assassination attempt on the Israeli Ambassador to the United Kingdom, led to the June 6, 1982 Israeli ground attack into Lebanon to remove PLO forces. Operation "Peace for Galilee" aimed at establishing a deeper security zone and pushing Syrian troops out of Lebanon, with a view toward paving the way for an Israeli-Lebanese peace agreement. With these aims in mind, Israeli forces drove 25 miles into Lebanon, moving into East Beirut with the support of Maronite Christian leaders and militia.

In August 1982, U.S. mediation resulted in the evacuation of Syrian troops and PLO fighters from Beirut. The agreement also provided for the deployment of a multinational force composed of U.S. Marines along with French and Italian units. A new President, Bashir Gemayel, was elected with acknowledged Israeli backing. On September 14, however, he was assassinated. The next day, Israeli troops crossed into West Beirut to secure Muslim militia strongholds and stood aside as Lebanese Christian militias massacred almost 800 Palestinian civilians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps. Israel's then-Minister of Defense Ariel Sharon was held indirectly responsible for the massacre by the Kahane Commission and later resigned. With U.S. backing, Amin Gemayel, chosen by the Lebanese parliament to succeed his brother as President, focused anew on securing the withdrawal of Israeli and Syrian forces. The multinational force returned.

Amal Movement,
Ba'ath Party,
Democratic Left,
Democratic Renewal
Movement, Free
Patriotic Movement,
Future Movement,
Hezbollah, Kataeb
Party, Kataeb
Reform Movement,
Lebanese Forces,
National Bloc,
Marada Movement,
Nasserite Popular
Movement, National
Liberal Party,
Popular Bloc,
Progressive Socialist
Party, Qornet
Shehwan Gathering,
Syrian Social
National Party,
Tachnaq Party.

A principal divide in
current Lebanese
politics is between
pro-and anti-Syrian
forces, often
referred to,
respectively, as
March 8 and March
14, after major
demonstrations they
organized in 2005.
"March 8" consists
principally of the
Shi'ite Amal and
Hezbollah, now
allied with the Free
Patriotic Movement
(Christian), while

On May 17, 1983, Lebanon, Israel, and the United States signed an agreement on Israeli withdrawal that was conditioned on the departure of Syrian troops. Syria opposed the agreement and declined to discuss the withdrawal of its troops, effectively stalemating further progress. In August 1983, Israel withdrew from the Shuf (southeast of Beirut), thus removing the buffer between the Druze and the Christian militias and triggering another round of brutal fighting. By September, the Druze had gained control over most of the Shuf, and Israeli forces had pulled out from all but the southern security zone, where they remained until May 2000. The virtual collapse of the Lebanese Army in February 1984, following the defection of many Muslim and Druze units to militias, was a major blow to the government. With the U.S. Marines looking ready to withdraw, Syria and Muslim groups stepped up pressure on Gemayal. On March 5, 1984 the Lebanese Government canceled the May 17 agreement; the Marines departed a few weeks later.

This period of chaos witnessed the beginning of terrorist attacks launched against U.S. and Western interests. These included the April 18, 1983 suicide attack at the U.S. Embassy in West Beirut (63 dead), the bombing of the headquarters of U.S. and French forces on October 23, 1983 (298 dead), the assassination of American University of Beirut President Malcolm Kerr on January 18, 1984, and the bombing of the U.S. Embassy annex in East Beirut on September 20, 1984 (9 dead).

It also saw the rise of radicalism among a small number of Lebanese Muslim factions who believed that the successive Israeli and U.S. interventions in Lebanon were serving primarily Christian interests. It was from these factions that Hezbollah emerged from a loose coalition of Shi'a groups. Hezbollah employed terrorist tactics and was supported by Syria and Iran.

Worsening Conflict and Political Crisis--1985-89

Between 1985 and 1989, factional conflict worsened as various efforts at national reconciliation failed. Heavy fighting took place in the "War of the Camps" in 1985 and 1986 as the Shi'a Muslim Amal militia sought to rout the Palestinians from Lebanese strongholds. The Amal movement had been organized in mid-1975, at the beginning of the civil war, to confront what were seen as Israeli plans to displace the Lebanese population with Palestinians. (Its charismatic founder Imam Musa Sadr disappeared in Libya three years later. Its current leader, Nabih Berri, is the Speaker of the National Assembly.) The combat returned to Beirut in 1987, with Palestinians, leftists, and Druze fighters allied against Amal, eventually drawing further Syrian intervention. Violent confrontation flared up again in Beirut in 1988 between Amal and Hezbollah.

Meanwhile, on the political front, Prime Minister Rashid Karami, head of a government of national unity set up after the failed peace efforts of 1984, was assassinated on June 1, 1987. President Gemayel's term of office expired in September 1988. Before stepping down, he appointed another Maronite Christian, Lebanese Armed Forces Commanding General Michel Aoun, as acting Prime Minister, contravening Lebanon's unwritten "National Pact," which required the prime minister to be Sunni Muslim. Muslim groups rejected the move and pledged support to Salim al-Hoss, a Sunni who had succeeded Karami. Lebanon was thus divided between a Christian government in East Beirut and a Muslim government in West Beirut, with no president.

March 14 includes the Future Movement (Sunni), Progressive Socialist Party (Druze), and Lebanese Forces and Qornet Shehwan Gathering (both Christian).

Suffrage: 21; compulsory for all males; authorized for women at 21 with elementary education.

Economy:

GDP (2006 est.): \$21.5 billion.

GDP growth rate (2006 est.): (-5%).

Per capita GDP (2006 est.): \$5,500.

Natural resources: limestone, iron ore, salt.

Agriculture:

Products--citrus, grapes, tomatoes, apples, vegetables, potatoes, olives, tobacco; sheep, goats. *Arable land*--18%.

Industry: *Types*--banking, tourism, food processing, jewelry, cement, textiles, mineral and chemical products,

In February 1989 Aoun attacked the rival Lebanese Forces militia. By March he turned his attention to other militias, launching what he termed a "War of Liberation" against the Syrians and their Lebanese militia allies. In the months that followed, Aoun rejected both the agreement that ultimately ended the civil war and the election of another Christian leader as president. A Lebanese-Syrian military operation in October 1990 forced him to take refuge in the French Embassy in Beirut and later to go into a 15-year exile in Paris. After Syrian troop withdrawal, Aoun returned to Lebanon on May 7, 2005 and won a seat in the 2005 parliamentary elections. His Free Patriotic Movement became a principal element of the pro-Syrian opposition bloc.

End of the Civil War--1989-91

The Ta'if Agreement of 1989 marked the beginning of the end of the war. In January of that year, a committee appointed by the Arab League, chaired by Kuwait and including Saudi Arabia, Algeria, and Morocco, had begun to formulate solutions to the conflict, leading to a meeting of Lebanese parliamentarians in Ta'if, Saudi Arabia, where they agreed to the national reconciliation accord in October. Returning to Lebanon, they ratified the agreement on November 4 and elected Rene Moawad as President the following day. Moawad was assassinated in a car bombing in Beirut on November 22 as his motorcade returned from Lebanese Independence Day ceremonies. Elias Hrawi, who remained in office until 1998, succeeded him.

In August 1990, parliament and the new President agreed on constitutional amendments embodying some of the political reforms envisioned at Ta'if. The National Assembly expanded to 128 seats and was divided equally between Christians and Muslims (with Druze counted as Muslims). In March 1991, parliament passed an amnesty law that pardoned all political crimes prior to its enactment. The amnesty was not extended to crimes perpetrated against foreign diplomats or certain crimes referred by the cabinet to the Higher Judicial Council. In May 1991, the militias (with the important exception of Hezbollah and Palestinian militias) were dissolved, and the Lebanese Armed Forces began to slowly rebuild itself as Lebanon's only major nonsectarian institution.

In all, it is estimated that more than 100,000 were killed, and another 100,000 left handicapped, during Lebanon's 16-year civil war. Up to one-fifth of the pre-war resident population, or about 900,000 people, were displaced from their homes, of which perhaps a quarter of a million emigrated permanently. The last of the Western hostages taken during the mid-1980s were released in May 1992.

Postwar Reconstruction--1992 to 2005

Postwar social and political instability, fueled by economic uncertainty and the collapse of the Lebanese currency, led to the resignation of Prime Minister Omar Karami in May 1992, after less than 2 years in office. Former Prime Minister Rashid al Sulh, who was widely viewed as a caretaker to oversee Lebanon's first parliamentary elections in 20 years, replaced him.

By early November 1992, a new parliament had been elected, and Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri had formed a cabinet, retaining for himself the finance portfolio. The formation of a government headed by a successful billionaire businessman was widely seen as a sign that Lebanon would make a priority of rebuilding the country

wood and furniture products, oil refining, metal fabricating.

Trade: *Exports*--\$1.88 billion (2005 est., f.o.b.):

authentic jewelry, inorganic chemicals, miscellaneous consumer goods, fruit, tobacco, construction minerals, electric power machinery and switchgear, textile fibers, paper.

Major markets--

Syria, U.A.E., Switzerland, Turkey, Saudi Arabia.

Imports--\$9.34 billion (2005 est., f.o.b.):

petroleum products, cars, medicinal products, clothing, meat and live animals, consumer goods, paper, textile fabrics, tobacco.

Major suppliers--

Italy, Syria, France, Germany, China, U. S., U.K., Saudi Arabia.

PEOPLE

The population of Lebanon comprises

and reviving the economy. Solidere, a private real estate company set up to rebuild downtown Beirut, was a symbol of Hariri's strategy to link economic recovery to private sector investment. After the election of then-commander of the Lebanese Armed Forces Emile Lahoud in 1998, following Hrawi's extended term as President, Salim al-Hoss again served as Prime Minister. Hariri returned to office as Prime Minister in November 2000. Although problems with basic infrastructure and government services persist, and Lebanon is now highly indebted, much of the civil war damage was repaired throughout the country, and many foreign investors and tourists returned.

In early April 1996, Israel conducted a military operation dubbed "Grapes of Wrath" in response to Hezbollah's continued launching of rockets at villages in northern Israel. The 16-day operation caused hundreds of thousands of civilians in south Lebanon to flee their homes. On April 18, Hezbollah fired mortars at an Israeli military unit from a position near the UN compound at Qana, and the Israeli Army responded with artillery fire. Several Israeli shells struck the compound, killing 102 civilians sheltered there. In the "April Understanding" concluded on April 26, Israel and Hezbollah committed themselves to avoid targeting civilians and using populated areas to launch attacks. The Israel-Lebanon Monitoring Group (ILMG), co-chaired by France and the United States, with Syria, Lebanon, and Israel all represented, was set up to implement the Understanding and assess reports of violations. ILMG ceased operations following the May 2000 Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon.

On May 23, 2000, the Israeli military carried out a total withdrawal of Israeli troops from the south and the Bekaa Valley, effectively ending 22 years of occupation. The SLA collapsed and about 6,000 SLA members and their families fled the country, although more than 3,000 had returned by November 2003. The military court tried all of the SLA operatives who remained in the country and the average sentence handed down was 1-year imprisonment.

On June 16, 2000, the UN Security Council adopted the report of the Secretary General verifying Israeli compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 425 (1978) and the withdrawal of Israeli troops to their side of the demarcated Lebanese-Israeli line of separation (the "Blue Line") mapped out by UN cartographers. (The international border between Lebanon and Israel is still to be determined in the framework of a peace agreement.) In August 2000, the Government of Lebanon deployed over 1,000 police and soldiers to the former security zone, but Hezbollah also maintained observation posts and conducted patrols along the Blue Line. While Lebanon and Syria initially agreed to respect the Blue Line, both since have registered objections and continue to argue that Israel has not fully withdrawn from Lebanese soil. As regional tension escalated with the Palestinian *intifada* in September 2000, Hezbollah cited Blue Line discrepancies when it reengaged Israel on October 7, taking three Israeli soldiers captive in an area known as Sheba'a Farms. (In 2001, the Israeli Government declared the three soldiers were believed to be dead.) Sheba'a Farms, a largely unpopulated area just south of the Blue Line opposite the Lebanese town of Sheba'a, was captured by Israel when it occupied Syria's Golan Heights in 1967. The Lebanese Government has repeatedly laid claim to the area since shortly before Israel's general withdrawal. Meanwhile, the Syrian Government has verbally stated that the Sheba'a Farms tract is Lebanese, but, as with the rest of the Lebanon-Syria border, has been unwilling to commit to a

various Christian and Muslim sects as well as Druze. No official census has been taken since 1932, reflecting the political sensitivity in Lebanon over confessional (religious) balance. While there is no consensus over the confessional breakdown of the population for this reason, it is safe to say that the Muslim sects as a whole make up a majority, and that Shi'ites, Sunnis, and Maronites are the three largest groups.

About 400,000 Palestinian refugees, some in Lebanon since 1948, are registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). They are not accorded the legal rights enjoyed by the rest of the population.

With no official figures available, it is estimated that

formal border demarcation in the area. As a result of secret mediation by the German Government, Israel released a number of Lebanese prisoners held by Israel in early 2004 in exchange for Elhanan Tannenbaum, an Israeli reservist abducted by Hezbollah in late 2000.

In January 2000 the government took action against Sunni Muslim extremists in the north who had attacked its soldiers, and it continues to act against groups such as Asbat al-Ansar, which has been linked to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network, and other extremists. On January 24, 2002, Elie Hobeika, a former Lebanese Forces figure associated with the Sabra and Shatila massacres and who later served in three cabinets and the parliament, was assassinated in a car bombing in Beirut.

A September 2004 vote by the Chamber of Deputies to amend the constitution to extend President Lahoud's term in office by 3 years amplified the question of Lebanese sovereignty and the continuing Syrian presence. The vote was clearly taken under Syrian pressure, exercised in part through Syria's military intelligence service, whose chief in Lebanon had acted as a virtual proconsul for many years. Syria, which views Lebanon as part of its own territory, has not signed a boundary agreement with Lebanon and does not have normal diplomatic relations with Lebanon. The UN Security Council expressed its concern over the situation by passing Resolution 1559, also in September 2004, which called for withdrawal of all remaining foreign forces from Lebanon, disbanding and disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias, the deployment of the Lebanese Armed Forces throughout the country, and a free and fair electoral process in the presidential election.

Syrian Withdrawal--2005

Former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, who had resisted Syria's effort to secure Lahoud's extension, and 19 others were assassinated in Beirut by a car bomb on February 14, 2005. The assassination spurred massive protests in Beirut and international pressure that led to the withdrawal of the remaining Syrian military troops from Lebanon on April 26. In the months that followed Hariri's assassination, journalist Samir Qassir, Lebanese politician George Hawi, and journalist Gebran Tueni were murdered by car bombs, and Defense Minister Elias Murr and journalist May Chidiac narrowly avoided a similar fate when they were targeted with car bombs. The UN International Independent Investigative Commission (UNIIIC) headed by Detlev Mehlis began an investigation of Hariri's assassination and related crimes, beginning with the October 2004 attempt to assassinate Communications Minister Marwan Hamadeh. Serge Brammertz took over the investigation at the beginning of 2006. In December 2006, the Lebanese Cabinet approved an agreement with the UN Security Council to create a Special Tribunal of international character which will be responsible for trying those who may be indicted as a result of the investigation. President Lahoud, Parliament Speaker Berri, and the Shia ministers who resigned from Lebanon's cabinet in November 2006 do not recognize the cabinet's decision on this matter, however.

Parliamentary elections were held May 29-June 19, 2005 and the anti-Syrian opposition led by Sa'ad Hariri, Rafiq Hariri's son, won a majority of 72 seats (out of 128). Hariri ally and former Finance Minister Fouad Siniora was named Prime Minister and Nabih Berri was reelected as Speaker of Parliament. Parliament approved the first "made-in-Lebanon" cabinet in almost 30 years on July 30. The ministerial statement of the new cabinet (which included two Hezbollah ministers), a summary of the new government's agenda and priorities, focused on

600,000-900,000 persons fled the country during the initial years of civil war (1975-76). Although some returned, continuing conflict through 1990 as well as after the 2006 war sparked further waves of emigration, casting even more doubt on population figures. As much as 7% of the population was killed during the civil war between 1975 and 1990. Approximately 17,000-20,000 people are still "missing" or unaccounted for from the civil war period.

Many Lebanese still derive their living from agriculture. The urban population, concentrated mainly in Beirut and Mount Lebanon, is noted for its commercial enterprise. A century and a half of migration and return have produced

political and economic reform, but also endorsed Hezbollah's right to possess military weapons to carry out a "national resistance" against the perceived Israeli occupation of Lebanese territory.

Hezbollah forces continued to launch sporadic military strikes on Israeli forces, drawing responses that produced casualties on both sides and, on two occasions in 2001, Israeli air strikes on Syrian radar sites in Lebanon. Israel continues to violate Lebanese sovereignty by conducting overflights of Lebanese territory north of the Blue Line. UNIFIL has recorded numerous violations of the Blue Line by both sides since the Israeli withdrawal. In general, however, the level of violence along the Israeli-Lebanon front decreased dramatically from May 2000 until mid-2006.

War with Israel--2006

On July 12, 2006, Hezbollah guerillas crossed into Israel, killed three Israeli soldiers, and kidnapped two others, precipitating a war with Israel. Israeli air strikes hit Hezbollah positions in the south and strategic targets throughout Lebanon, and Israeli ground forces moved against Hezbollah in southern Lebanon. Hezbollah resisted the ground attack and fired thousands of rockets at civilian targets in Israel. By the time the war ended, on Aug. 14, an estimated 1200 Lebanese civilians and hundreds of Hezbollah fighters had died, along with 119 Israeli military and 43 Israeli civilians. UN Security Council Resolution 1701, which ended the war, provided for a ceasefire, Israeli withdrawal and lifting of blockades, disarming of Hezbollah and other militias, and a ban on unauthorized weapons transfers into Lebanon. UNSCR 1701 also significantly strengthened UNIFIL's mandate and authorized its enlargement from about 2,000 initially up to a maximum of 15,000. Bolstered by UNIFIL, which by the beginning of 2007 had more than 11,000 personnel, the Lebanese Armed Forces deployed to southern Lebanon and the border with Israel for the first time in almost four decades.

The war temporarily or permanently displaced roughly one-fourth of Lebanon's population, and caused enormous damage to homes, businesses, and infrastructure. The country, which was already seriously indebted, suffered roughly \$5 billion in damages and financial losses. The international community provided massive humanitarian relief, plus substantial aid for economic reconstruction and reform, with \$940 million in aid pledged at an August 31, 2006 donors conference in Stockholm and \$7.6 billion in pledges announced at a Paris conference January 25, 2007. Aid pledged in Paris was to be coordinated with the Lebanese Government's program for fiscal and economic reform.

Although Syria withdrew its military forces from Lebanon, intelligence assets remained, and Syria continues to have a strong influence in Lebanese politics. In November 2006, as Siniora's cabinet neared approval of the Hariri tribunal, pro-Syrian ministers, including all the Shi'ite ministers, withdrew from the cabinet. Led by Hezbollah, pro-Syrian forces began months of massive demonstrations, sit-ins, and occasional violence with the aim of either paralyzing or bringing down the cabinet. Minister of Industry Pierre Gemayel, son of ex-president Amin Gemayel, was assassinated November 21.

POLITICAL CONDITIONS

Lebanese commercial networks around the globe--from North and South America to Europe, the Gulf, and Africa. Lebanon has a high proportion of skilled labor compared with many other Arab countries.

GOVERNMENT

Lebanon is a parliamentary democracy in which the people constitutionally have the right to change their government. However, from the mid-1970s until the parliamentary elections in 1992, civil war precluded the effective exercise of political rights. According to the constitution, direct elections must be held for the parliament every 4 years. Parliament, in turn, is tasked to elect a new president every 6 years. A presidential election scheduled for the autumn of

Lebanese political institutions often play a secondary role to highly confessionalized personality-based politics. Powerful families also still play an independent role in mobilizing votes for both local and parliamentary elections. Nonetheless, a lively panoply of domestic political parties, some even predating independence, still exists. The largest are all confessional based. The Phalange, National Bloc, National Liberal Party, Lebanese Forces and Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) are overwhelmingly Christian parties. Amal and Hezbollah are the main rivals for the organized Shi'a vote, and the PSP (Progressive Socialist Party) is the leading Druze party. In the recent parliamentary elections, an anti-Syrian opposition coalition ("March 14") emerged, led by Sa'ad Hariri's predominantly Sunni Future Movement and allied with Druze leader Jumblatt, the Qornet Shehwan coalition of center-right Christian politicians, Samir Geagea's mostly Maronite Lebanese Forces, and Elias Attallah's Democratic Left secular movement. In addition to domestic parties, there are branches of pan-Arab secular parties (Ba'ath, socialist and communist parties) that were active in the 1960s and throughout the period of civil war.

There are differences both between and among Muslim and Christian parties regarding the role of religion in state affairs. There is a very high degree of political activism among religious leaders across the sectarian spectrum. The interplay for position and power among the religious, political, and party leaders and groups produces a political tapestry of extraordinary complexity.

In the past, the system worked to produce a viable democracy. The civil war resulted in greater segregation across the confessional spectrum. Whether in political parties, places of residence, schools, media outlets, even workplaces, there is a lack of regular interaction across sectarian lines to facilitate the exchange of views and promote understanding.

Some Christians favor political and administrative decentralization of the government, with separate Muslim and Christian sectors operating within the framework of a confederation. Muslims, for the most part, prefer a unified, central government with an enhanced share of power commensurate with their larger share of the population. The trajectory of the Ta'if Agreement points towards a non-confessional system, but there has been no real movement in this direction in the decade and a half since Ta'if.

Palestinian refugees, predominantly Sunni Muslims, who numbered 405,525 in 2006 according to UNWRA, are not active on the domestic political scene. Nonetheless, they constitute an important minority whose naturalization/settlement in Lebanon is vigorously opposed by most Lebanese, who see them as a threat to Lebanon's delicate confessional balance. During 2002, parliament enacted legislation banning Palestinians from owning property in Lebanon. The Labor Ministry opened up professions previously closed to Palestinians in June 2005. The number of recent Iraqi refugees numbers in the tens of thousands and is believed to be growing.

ECONOMY

Lebanon has a free-market economy and a strong laissez-faire commercial tradition. The Lebanese economy is service-oriented; main growth sectors include banking and tourism. According to the Lebanese Ministry of

2004 was pre-empted by a parliamentary vote to extend the sitting President's term in office by 3 years. The president and parliament choose the prime minister. Political parties may be formed. However, the political parties that do exist are weak and mostly based on sectarian interests.

Since the emergence of the post-1943 state, national policy has been determined largely by a relatively restricted group of traditional regional and sectarian leaders. The 1943 national pact, an unwritten agreement that established the political foundations of modern Lebanon, allocated political power on an essentially confessional system based on the 1932 census. Until 1990, seats in parliament were divided on a 6-

Economy and Trade, Lebanon posted 5% real growth in 2004, with inflation running at 3%. There are no restrictions on foreign exchange or capital movement, and bank secrecy is strictly enforced. Lebanon has adopted a law to combat money laundering. There are practically no restrictions on foreign investment; however, the investment climate suffers from red tape, corruption, arbitrary licensing decisions, high taxes, tariffs, and fees, archaic legislation, and a lack of adequate protection of intellectual property. There are no country-specific U.S. trade sanctions against Lebanon.

Lebanon embarked on a massive reconstruction program in 1992 to rebuild the country's physical and social infrastructure devastated by both the long civil war (1975-90) and the Israeli occupation of the south (1978-2000). In addition, the delicate social balance and the near-dissolution of central government institutions during the civil war handicapped the state as it sought to capture revenues to fund the recovery effort. Monetary stabilization coupled with high interest rate policies aggravated the debt service burden, leading to a substantial rise in budget deficits. Thus, the government accumulated significant debt, which by 2005 had reached \$36 billion, or 185% of GDP. Unemployment is estimated at 18% officially, but in the absence of reliable statistics, some estimate it could be as high as 20-25%.

The government also has maintained a firm commitment to the Lebanese pound, which has been pegged to the dollar since September 1999. The government passed an Investment Development Law as well as laws for the privatization of the telecom and the electricity sector, signed the Euro-Med Partnership Agreement with the European Union (EU) in March 2003, and is working toward accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO). In order to increase revenues, the government introduced a 10% value added tax (VAT) that became applicable in February 2002 and a 5% tax that became applicable in February 2003.

Plagued by mounting indebtedness, Lebanon submitted a comprehensive program on its financing needs at the Paris II donors conference in November 2002 and succeeded in attracting pledges totaling \$4.4 billion, including \$3.1 billion to support fiscal adjustment and \$1.2 billion to support economic development projects. Despite the substantial aid it had received, the government made little progress on its reform program, and by 2006, even before the war, the debt problem had grown worse. After the war, \$940 million in relief and early reconstruction aid was pledged to Lebanon August 31, 2006 at a donors conference in Stockholm, and an additional \$7.6 billion in assistance for reconstruction and economic stabilization was pledged January 25, 2007 at the International Conference for Support to Lebanon, "Paris III". Unlike the Paris II aid, much of the Paris III aid was to be contingent on Lebanon's meeting agreed benchmarks in implementing its proposed five-year economic and social reform program. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) agreed to initiate a Post-Conflict Program and to assign a team to Lebanon to provide technical assistance, to monitor the progress of reforms, and to advise donors on the timing of aid delivery.

The U.S. enjoys a strong exporter position with Lebanon, generally ranking as Lebanon's fifth-largest source of imported goods. More than 160 offices representing U.S. businesses currently operate in Lebanon. Since the lifting of the passport restriction in 1997 (see below), a number of large U.S. companies have opened branch or regional offices, including Microsoft, American Airlines, Coca-Cola, FedEx, UPS, General Electric, Parsons

to-5 ratio of Christians to Muslims (with Druze counted as Muslims). With the Ta'if Agreement, the ratio changed to half and half. Positions in the government bureaucracy are allocated on a similar basis. Indeed, gaining political office is virtually impossible without the firm backing of a particular religious or confessional group. The pact also allocated public offices along religious lines, with the top three positions in the ruling "troika" distributed as follows:

- The presidency is reserved for a Maronite Christian;
- The prime minister, a Sunni Muslim, and
- The speaker of parliament,

Brinkerhoff, Cisco, Eli Lilly, and Pepsi Cola.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

The foreign policy of Lebanon reflects its geographic location, the composition of its population, and its reliance on commerce and trade. Lebanon's foreign policy has been heavily influenced by neighboring Syria, which has also long influenced Lebanon's internal policies as well. Reflecting lingering feelings in Syria that Lebanon was unjustly separated from Syria by European powers, Syria and Lebanon have never formally agreed on their mutual boundaries, and, rather than having normal diplomatic relations, the two countries are linked by a Higher Council for Bilateral Relations. Syria has no embassy or equivalent office in Beirut, while Lebanon has an "Interest Office" in Damascus. The framework for relations was first codified in May 1991, when Lebanon and Syria signed a treaty of mutual cooperation. This treaty came out of the Ta'if Agreement, which stipulated "Lebanon is linked to Syria by distinctive ties deriving strength from kinship, history, and common interests." The Lebanese-Syria treaty calls for "coordination and cooperation between the two countries" that would serve the "interests of the two countries within the framework of sovereignty and independence of each." Numerous agreements on political, economic, security, and judicial affairs have followed over the years. Syria maintained troops in Lebanon from 1976 until 2005; however, even after the withdrawal of Syria's military troops, it is believed to have maintained intelligence assets in Lebanon. In any case, Syrian influence in Lebanese politics remains strong.

Lebanon, like most Arab states, does not recognize Israel, with which it has been technically at war since Israel's establishment. Lebanon participated in the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, and despite the 1948 Lebanon-Israel armistice, Lebanon's lack of control over the border region resulted in repeated border hostilities, initiated mainly by Palestinian exile groups from 1968 to 1982 and later by Hezbollah. These attacks led to Israeli counterattacks, including a 1978 invasion, a 1982 invasion and occupation which ended in 2000, and the 2006 war. Lebanon did not participate in the 1967 or 1973 Arab-Israeli wars, nor in the 1991 Gulf War. The success of the latter created new opportunities for Middle East peacemaking. In October 1991, under the sponsorship of the United States and the then-Soviet Union, Middle East peace talks were held in Madrid, Spain, where Israel and a majority of its Arab neighbors conducted direct bilateral negotiations to seek a just, lasting, and comprehensive peace based on UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 (and 425 on Lebanon) and the concept of "land for peace." Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, and representatives of the Palestinians continued negotiating until the Oslo interim peace accords were concluded between Israel and the Palestinians in September 1993 and Jordan and Israel signed an agreement in October 1994. In March 1996, Syria and Israel held another round of Madrid talks; the Lebanon track did not convene. Lebanon has repeatedly called for a solution of the Israeli-Palestinian problem as a prerequisite to peace with Israel.

Lebanon concluded negotiations on an association agreement with the European Union in late 2001, and both sides initialed the accord in January 2002. Lebanon also has bilateral trade agreements with several Arab states and is working toward accession to the World Trade Organization. Aside from Syria, Lebanon enjoys good relations with virtually all of the other Arab countries (despite historic tensions with Libya, the Palestinians, and Iraq), and hosted an Arab League Summit in March 2002 for the first time in more than 35 years. Lebanon also

a Shi'a Muslim.

Efforts to alter or abolish the confessional system of allocating power have been at the center of Lebanese politics for decades. Those religious groups most favored by the 1943 formula sought to preserve it, while those who saw themselves at a disadvantage sought either to revise it after updating key demographic data or to abolish it entirely. Nonetheless, many of the provisions of the national pact were codified in the 1989 Ta'if Agreement, perpetuating sectarianism as a key element of Lebanese political life.

Although moderated somewhat under Ta'if, constitutionally, the president has a strong and influential position. The president has

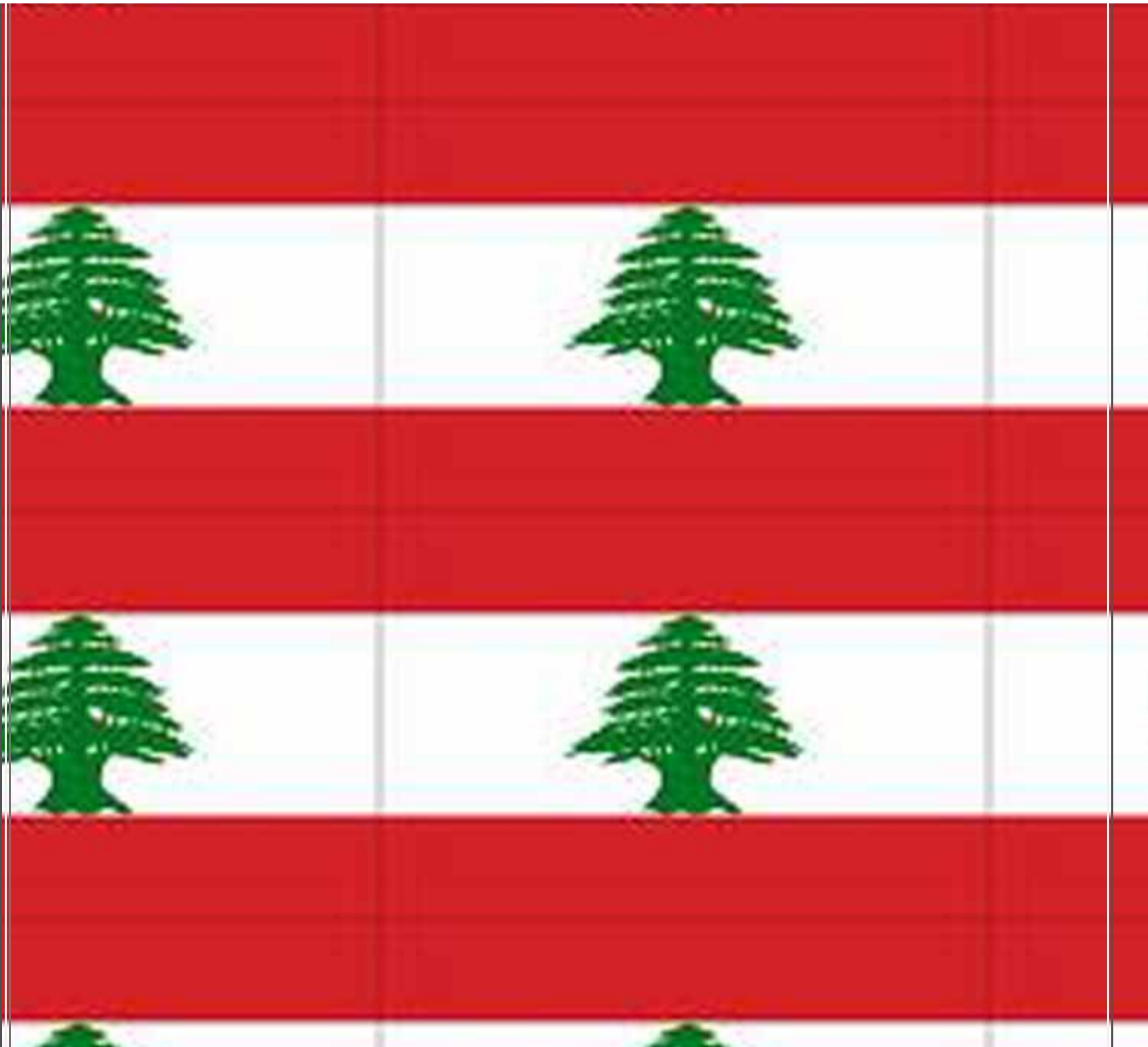
is a member of the Organization of Islamic Conference and maintains a close relationship with Iran, largely centered on Shi'a Muslim links. Lebanon is a member of the Francophone countries and hosted the Francophone Summit in October 2002.



the authority to promulgate laws passed by the Chamber of Deputies, to issue supplementary regulations to ensure the execution of laws, and to negotiate and ratify treaties.

The Chamber of Deputies is elected by adult suffrage (majority age is 21) based on a system of proportional representation for the various confessional groups. Political blocs are usually based on confessional and local interests or on personal/family allegiance rather than on left/right policy orientations.

The parliament traditionally has played a significant role in financial affairs, since it has the responsibility for levying taxes and passing the budget. It also exercises political control over

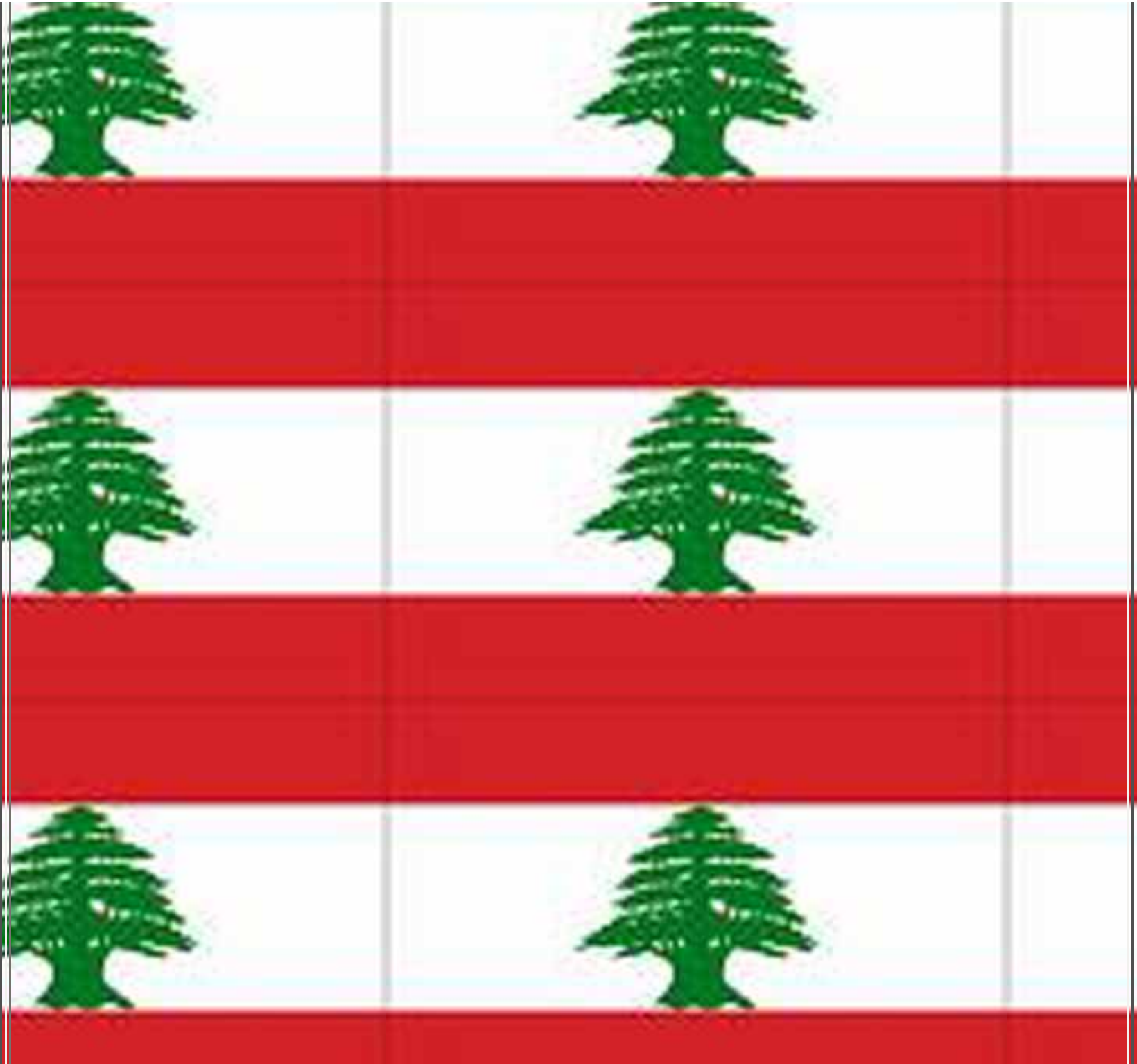


the cabinet through formal questioning of ministers on policy issues and by requesting a confidence debate.

Lebanon's judicial system is based on the Napoleonic Code. Juries are not used in trials. The Lebanese court system has three levels--courts of first instance, courts of appeal, and the court of cassation. There also is a system of religious courts having jurisdiction over personal status matters within particular religious communities, e.g., rules on such matters as marriage, divorce, and inheritance.

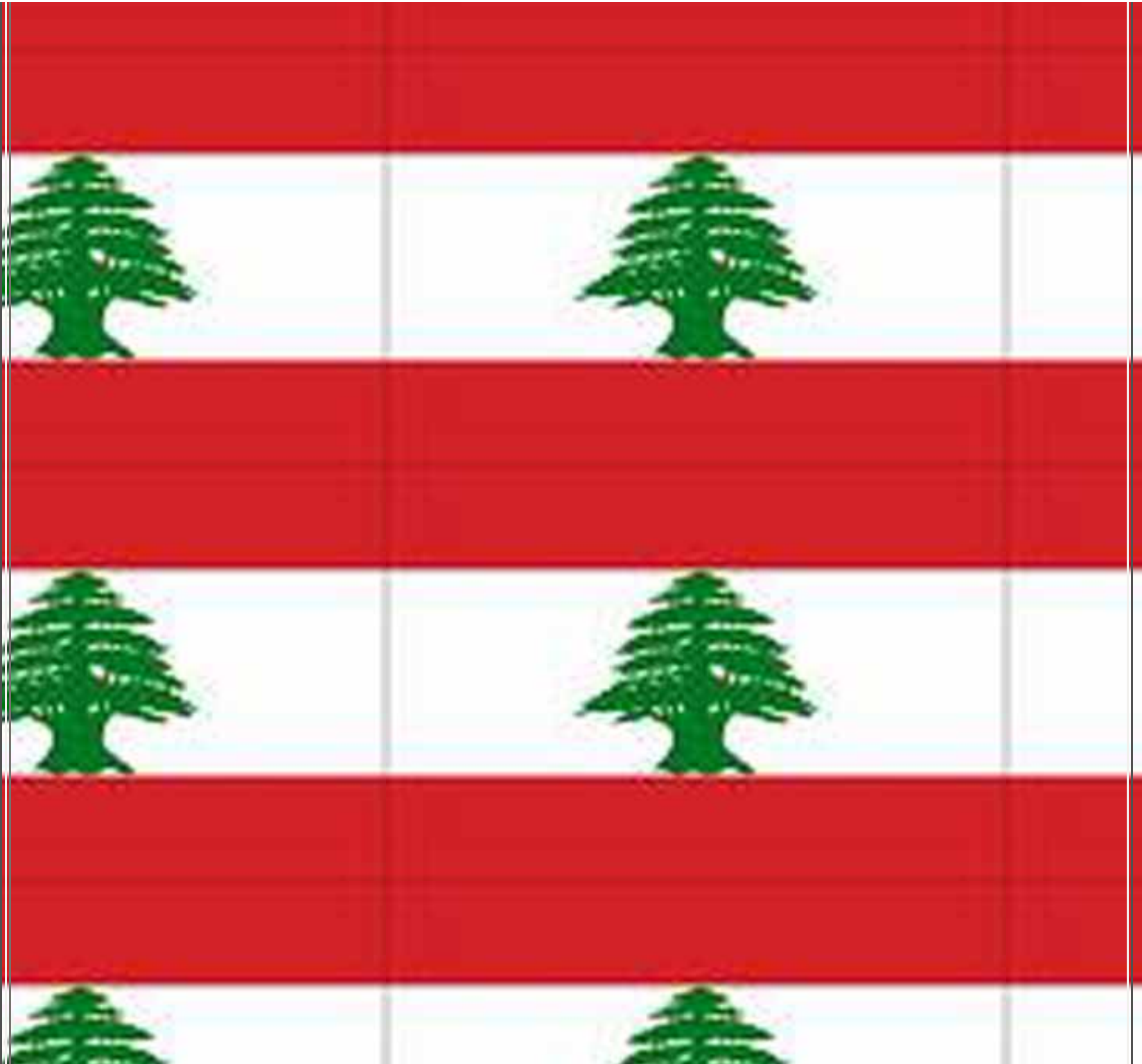
US - LEBANESE RELATIONS

The United States seeks to maintain its traditionally close ties with Lebanon, and to help preserve its independence, sovereignty, national

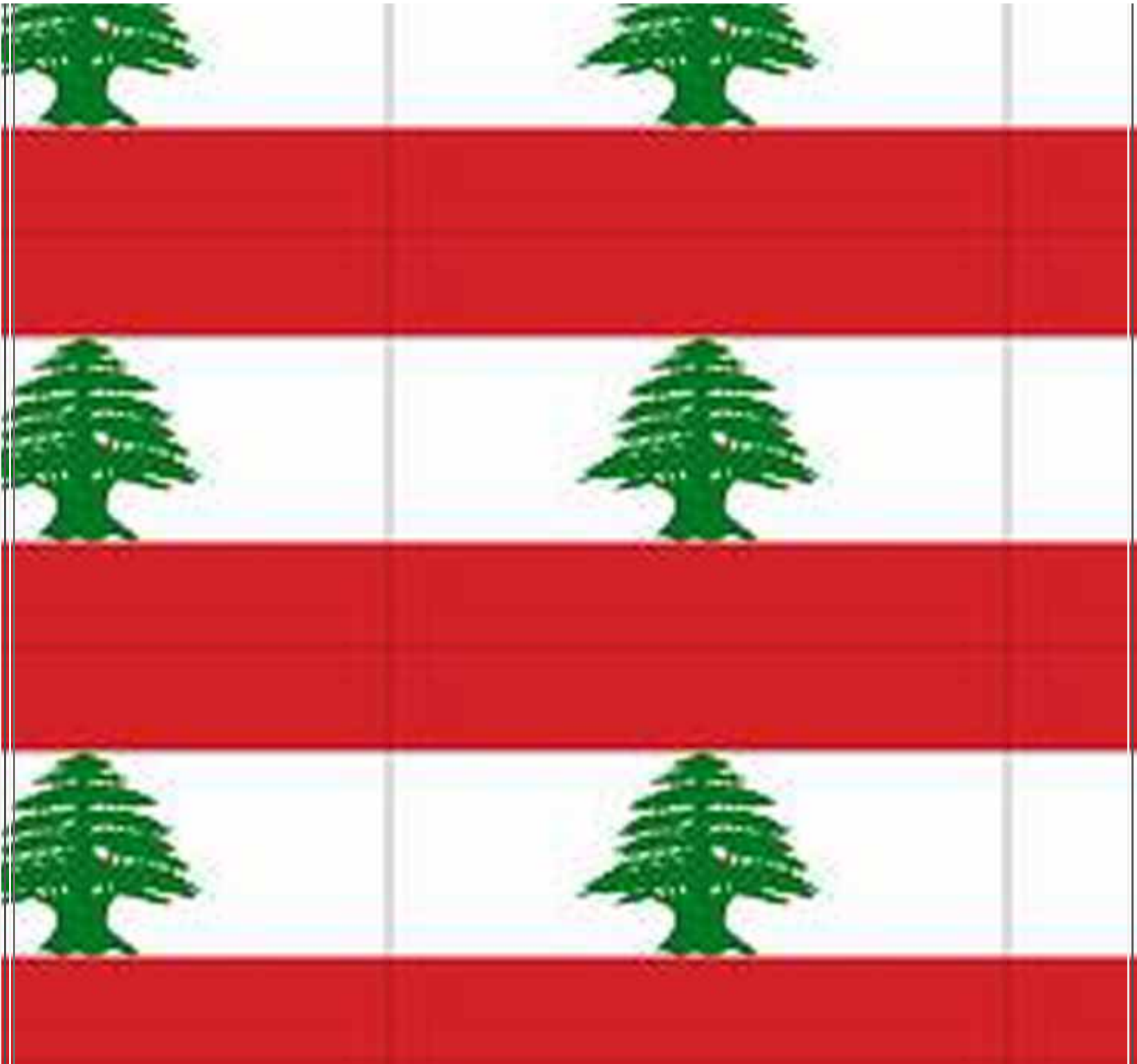


unity, and territorial integrity. The United States, along with the international community, supports full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1559, including the disarming of all militias and the deployment of the Lebanese Armed Forces throughout Lebanon. The United States believes that a peaceful, prosperous, and stable Lebanon can make an important contribution to comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

One measure of U.S. concern and involvement has been a program of relief, rehabilitation, and recovery that from 1975 through 2005 totaled more than \$400 million in aid to Lebanon. For relief, recovery, rebuilding, and security in the wake of the 2006 war, the U.S. Government



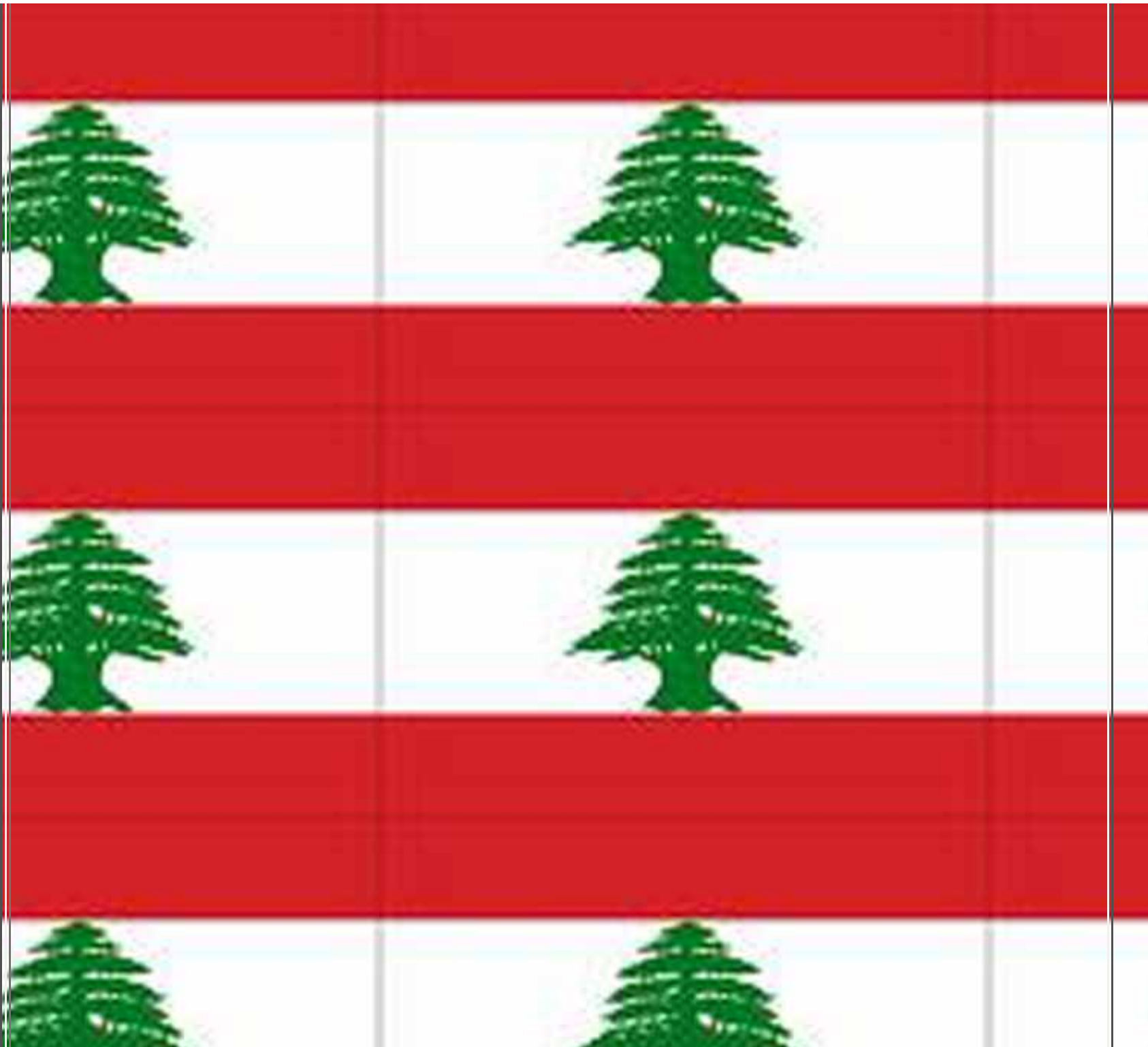
substantially stepped up this program, pledging well over \$1 billion in additional assistance for the 2006 and 2007 fiscal years. This support reflects not only humanitarian concerns and historical ties but also the importance the United States attaches to sustainable development and the restoration of an independent, sovereign, unified Lebanon. Some of current funding is used to support the activities of U.S. and Lebanese private voluntary organizations engaged in rural and municipal development programs nationwide, improve the economic climate for global trade and investment, and enhance security and resettlement in south Lebanon. The U.S. also supports humanitarian



demining and victims' assistance programs.

Over the years, the United States also has assisted the American University of Beirut (AUB) and the Lebanese American University (LAU) with budget support and student scholarships. Assistance also has been provided to the Lebanese-American Community School (ACS) and the International College (IC).

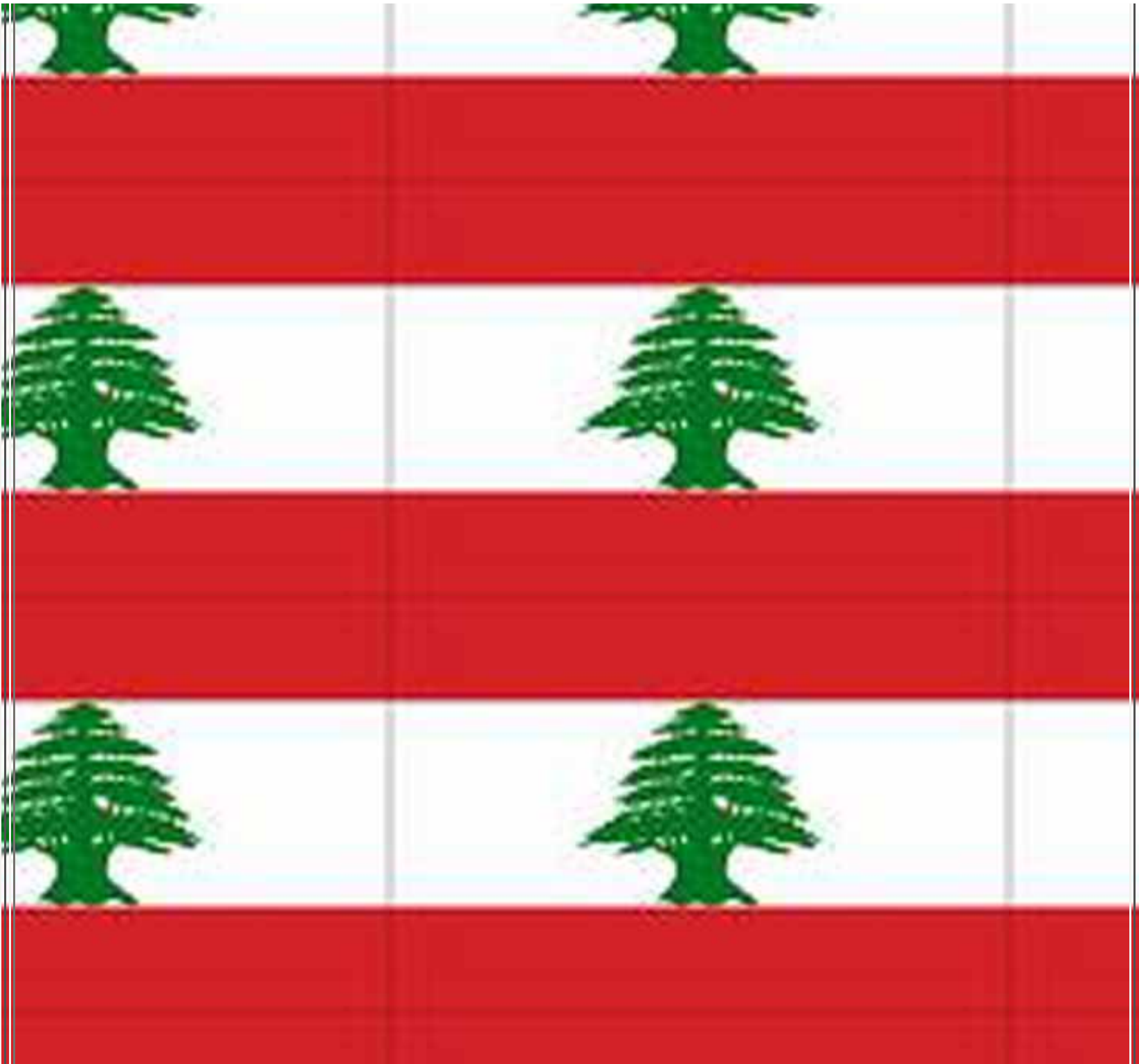
1993, the U.S. resumed the International Military Education and Training program in Lebanon to help bolster the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF)--the country's only nonsectarian national institution--and reinforce the importance of civilian control of the military. Sales of excess defense articles (EDA) resumed in 1991



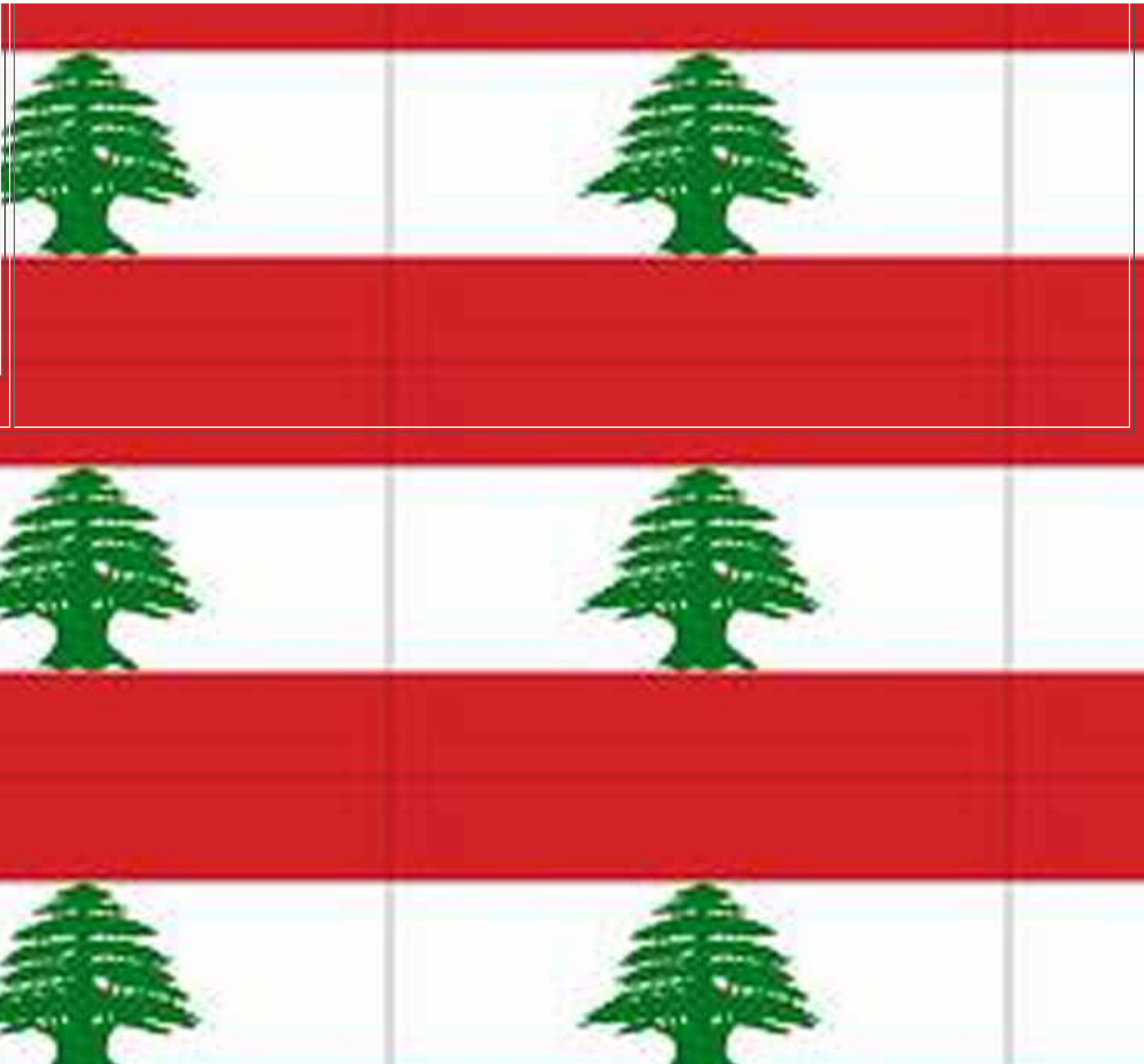
and have allowed the LAF to enhance both its transportation and communications capabilities, which were severely degraded during the civil war. Security assistance to both the LAF and the Internal Security Forces (ISF) increased significantly after the 2006 war, in order to support the democratically elected Government of Lebanon as it carries out the requirements of UNSCR 1701 and asserts its sovereignty over the whole of Lebanese territory.

**Principal
Government
Officials**

President--Emile
Lahoud
Prime Minister--
Fouad Siniora
Speaker of
Parliament--Nabih
Berri
Minister of Foreign
Affairs--Fawzi



Salloukh (resigned--
resignation not
accepted)
Finance Minister--
Jihad Azour
Deputy Prime
Minister and
Defense Minister--
Elias Murr
Ambassador to the U.
S.--Antoine Chedid
Ambassador to the
UN--Nawaf Salam



Kingdom of Jordan

Geography

Area: 89,342 sq. km. (34,495 sq. mi.).

Cities: *Capital*-- Amman (pop. 1.9 million).

Other cities-- Irbid (272,681), Az-Zarqa (472,830).

People

Nationality:

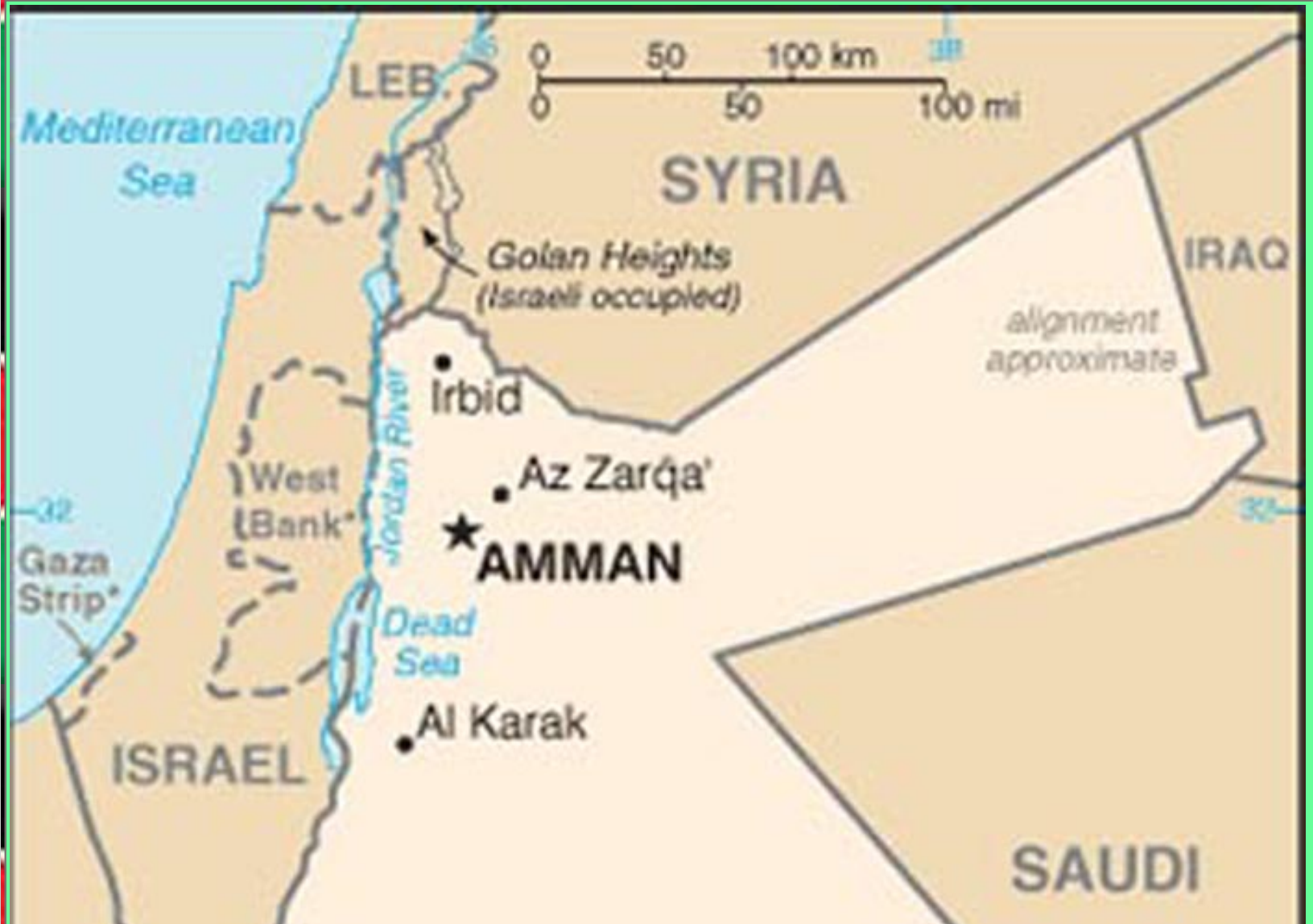
Noun and adjective-- Jordanian(s).

Population (2006, per IMF): 5.63 million.

Religions (est.): Sunni Muslim 95%, Christian 4%, other 1%.

Languages: Arabic (official), English.

Education (2006, according



to Jordan's Department of Statistics):
Literacy--90.9%.
Health (2003):
Infant mortality rate--19/1,000.
Life expectancy--71 yrs.
 Ethnic groups: Mostly Arab but small communities of Circassians, Armenians, and Kurds.
 Work force (1.3 million, of which 260 thousand are registered guest workers): public sector 17%, services 36%, manufacturing 20%, education 12%, health and social services 10%, primary industries 5%.
 Unemployment rate (2006): 13% of economically active Jordanians.

Government
 Type:



POLITICAL CONDITIONS

King Hussein ruled Jordan from 1953 to 1999, surviving a number of challenges to his rule, drawing on the loyalty of his military, and serving as a symbol of unity and stability for both the East Bank and Palestinian communities in Jordan. In 1989 and 1993, Jordan held free and fair parliamentary elections. Controversial changes in the election law led Islamist parties to boycott the 1997 elections. King Hussein ended martial law in 1991 and legalized political parties in 1992.

King Abdullah II succeeded his father Hussein following the latter's death in February 1999. Abdullah moved quickly to reaffirm Jordan's peace treaty with Israel and its relations with the U.S. Abdullah, during his first year in power, refocused the government's agenda on economic reform.

Jordan's continuing structural economic difficulties, burgeoning population, and more open political environment led to the emergence of a variety of political parties. Moving toward greater independence, Jordan's Parliament has investigated corruption charges against several regime figures and has become the major forum in which differing political views, including those of political Islamists, are expressed. In June 2001, the King dissolved Parliament. Parliamentary elections were held in June 2003, and municipal elections were held in July 2003. The

Constitutional monarchy.
 Independence: May 25, 1946.
 Constitution: January 8, 1952.
 Branches:
Executive--King (chief of state), Prime Minister (head of government), Council of Ministers (cabinet).
Legislative--bicameral National Assembly (appointed Senate, elected Chamber of Deputies).
Judicial--civil, religious, special courts.
 Political parties: Wide spectrum of parties legalized in 1992.
 Suffrage: Universal at 18.
 Administrative subdivisions: Twelve governorates--Irbid, Jarash, Ajloun,

King appointed the current Prime Minister, Marouf Bakhit, in December 2005. Bakhit and his cabinet have set as their goal the continued legislative implementation of a ten-year reform plan, known as the National Agenda, drafted by a royal commission in 2005. The King also charged the new cabinet with strengthening Jordan's security following the November 2005 suicide hotel bombings in Amman that killed 60.

ECONOMY

Jordan is a small country with limited natural resources. The country is currently exploring ways to expand its limited water supply and use its existing water resources more efficiently, including through regional cooperation. Jordan also depends on external sources for the majority of its energy requirements. During the 1990s, its crude petroleum needs were met through imports from neighboring Iraq. Since early 2003, oil has been provided by some Gulf Cooperation Council member countries. In addition, a natural gas pipeline from Egypt to Jordan through the southern port city of Aqaba is now operational. The pipeline has reached northern Jordan and construction to connect it to Syria and beyond is underway.

Under King Abdullah, Jordan has undertaken a program of economic reform. The government has taken the initiative to gradually eliminate fuel subsidies, pass legislation targeting corruption, and begin tax reform. It has also worked to liberalize trade, gaining access to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2000, signing an Association Agreement with the European Union (EU) in 2001, and securing the first bilateral Free Trade Agreement between the U.S. and an Arab country in 2001. Since 2000, exports of light manufactured products, principally textiles and garments manufactured in the Qualifying Industrial Zones (QIZ) that enter the United States tariff and quota free, have been driving economic growth. Jordan exported \$6.9 million in goods to the U. S. in 1997, when two-way trade was \$395 million; according to the U.S. International Trade Commission, it exported \$1.42 billion in 2006, with two-way trade at \$2.07 billion.

The Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the United States that went into effect in December 2001 will phase out duties on nearly all goods and services by 2010. The agreement also provides for more open markets in communications, construction, finance, health, transportation, and services, as well as strict application of international standards for the protection of intellectual property. In 1996, Jordan and the United States signed a civil aviation agreement that provides for "open skies" between the two countries, and a U.S.-Jordan treaty for the protection and encouragement of bilateral investment entered into force in 2003. More information on the FTA is available on www.jordanusfta.com.

Such developments hold considerable promise for diversifying Jordan's economy away from its traditional reliance on exports of phosphates and potash, overseas remittances, and foreign aid. The government has emphasized the information technology (IT) and tourism sectors as other promising growth sectors. The low tax and low regulation Aqaba Special Economic Zone (ASEZ) is considered a model of a government-provided framework for private sector-led economic growth.

Jordan is classified by the World Bank as a "lower middle income country." The per capita GDP, as reported by

al-'Aqaba, Madaba, al-Mafraq, al-Zarqa, Amman, al-Balqa, al-Karak, al-Tafilah, and Ma'an.

Economy

Nominal GDP (2006): \$14.3 billion.

Annual real growth rate (2006): 6.4%.

Per capita GDP (2006): \$2,533.

Natural resources:

Phosphate, potash.

Agriculture:

Products--fruits, vegetables, wheat, olive oil, barley, olives.

Land--10% arable; 5% cultivated.

Industry (26.5% of GDP in 2006):

Types--

phosphate mining, manufacturing, electricity and water; cement and petroleum

the International Monetary Fund (IMF), was \$2,533 for 2006. According to Jordan's Department of Statistics, 13% of the economically active Jordanian population residing in Jordan was unemployed in 2006. Education and literacy rates and measures of social well-being are relatively high compared to other countries with similar incomes. Jordan's population growth rate has declined in recent years and is currently 2.3% as reported by the Jordanian government. One of the most important factors in the government's efforts to improve the well-being of its citizens is the macroeconomic stability that has been achieved since the 1990s. The rate of inflation in 2006 was 6.3%; the currency has been stable with an exchange rate fixed to the U.S. dollar since 1995 at JD 0.708-0.710 to the dollar. In 2006, Jordan significantly reduced its debt to GDP ratio to 73.2% of GDP.

While pursuing economic reform and increased trade, Jordan's economy will continue to be vulnerable to external shocks and regional unrest. Without calm in the region, economic growth seems destined to stay below its potential.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

Jordan has consistently followed a pro-Western foreign policy and traditionally has had close relations with the United States. These relations were damaged by support in Jordan for Iraq during the first Gulf war. Although the Government of Jordan stated its opposition to the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, popular support for Iraq was driven by Jordan's Palestinian community, which favored Saddam as a champion against Western supporters of Israel.

Following the first Gulf war, Jordan largely restored its relations with Western countries through its participation in the Middle East peace process and enforcement of UN sanctions against Iraq. Relations between Jordan and the Gulf countries improved substantially after King Hussein's death. Following the fall of the Iraqi regime, Jordan has played a pivotal role in supporting the restoration of stability and security to Iraq. The Government of Jordan has facilitated the training of over 50,000 Iraqi police cadets at a Jordanian facility near Amman.

Jordan signed a nonbelligerency agreement with Israel (the Washington Declaration) in Washington, DC, on July 25, 1994. Jordan and Israel signed a historic peace treaty on October 26, 1994, witnessed by President Clinton, accompanied by Secretary Christopher. The U.S. has participated with Jordan and Israel in trilateral development discussions in which key issues have been water-sharing and security; cooperation on Jordan Rift Valley development; infrastructure projects; and trade, finance, and banking issues. Jordan also participates in multilateral peace talks. Jordan belongs to the UN and several of its specialized and related agencies, including the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Meteorological Organization (IMO), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and World Health Organization (WHO). Jordan also is a member of the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Nonaligned Movement, and Arab League.

Since the outbreak of the Intifada in September 2000, Jordan has worked to maintain lines of communication between the Israelis and the Palestinians to counsel moderation and to return the parties to negotiations of

production, and construction.

Trade: *Exports* (2006)--\$5.17 billion:

phosphates, potash, garments, fertilizers, pharmaceutical products, agricultural products. *Major markets*--U.S., Iraq, India, Saudi Arabia, U. A.E., Syria, Israel, Kuwait. *Imports* (2006)--\$11.46 billion: crude petroleum and derivatives, vehicles, machinery and equipment, cereals, fabrics and textiles.

Major suppliers--Saudi Arabia (mainly crude oil and derivatives), EU, China, U.S., Egypt, South Korea, Japan, Turkey.

Note: From 1949 to 1967, Jordan

outstanding permanent status issues.

During summer 2006, Jordan provided considerable relief supplies to Lebanon and has supported U.S. efforts to generate international security assistance for Lebanese national forces.

U.S.-JORDANIAN RELATIONS

Relations between the U.S. and Jordan have been close for over four decades. A primary objective of U.S. policy has been the achievement of a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace in the Middle East.

U.S. policy seeks to reinforce Jordan's commitment to peace, stability, and moderation. The peace process and Jordan's opposition to terrorism parallel and indirectly assist wider U.S. interests. Accordingly, through economic and military assistance and through close political cooperation, the United States has helped Jordan maintain its stability and prosperity.

Since 1952, the United States has provided Jordan with economic assistance totaling more than \$9 billion (\$1.3 billion in loans and \$7.7 billion in grants), including funds for development projects, health care, education, construction to increase water availability, support for microeconomic policy shifts toward a more completely free market system, and both grant and loan acquisition of U.S. agriculture commodities. These programs have been successful and have contributed to Jordanian stability while strengthening the bilateral relationship. U.S. military assistance--provision of material and training--is designed to meet Jordan's legitimate defense needs, including preservation of border integrity and regional stability. Jordan signed a Threshold Agreement with the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) in October 2006, and was subsequently deemed by the MCC to be eligible for a Compact Agreement in recognition of the country's progress on economic, social, and political reform indicators.

GOVERNMENT

Jordan is a constitutional monarchy based on the constitution promulgated on January 8, 1952. Executive authority is vested in the King and his Council of Ministers. The King signs and executes all laws. His veto power may be overridden by a two-thirds vote of both houses of the National Assembly. He appoints and may dismiss all judges by decree, approves amendments to the constitution, declares war, and commands the armed forces. Cabinet decisions, court judgments, and the national currency are issued in his name. The King, who may dismiss other cabinet members at the prime minister's request, appoints the council of ministers, led by a prime minister. The cabinet is responsible to the Chamber of Deputies on matters of general policy and can be forced to resign by a two-thirds vote of "no confidence" by that body.

Legislative power rests in the bicameral National Assembly. The number of deputies in the current Chamber of Deputies is 110, with a number of seats reserved for various religions, ethnicities, and women. The Chamber, elected by universal suffrage to a 4-year term, is subject to dissolution by the King. The King appoints the 55-member Senate for a 4-year term. Parliamentary elections are scheduled to be held in the fall of 2007.

administered the West Bank. Since the 1967 war, when Israel took control of this territory, the United States has considered the West Bank to be territory occupied by Israel. The United States believes that the final status of the West Bank can be determined only through negotiations among the concerned parties based on UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

PEOPLE

Jordanians are Arabs, except for a few small communities of Circassians, Armenians, and Kurds who have adapted to Arab culture. The official language

The constitution provides for three categories of courts--civil, religious, and special. Administratively, Jordan is divided into 12 governorates, each headed by a governor appointed by the King. They are the sole authorities for all government departments and development projects in their respective areas.

Principal U.S. Officials

Ambassador--[David M. Hale](#)

Deputy Chief of Mission--Daniel Rubinstein

Political Affairs--David Greene

Economic Affairs--Natalie Brown

Consular Affairs--Rena Bitter

Management Affairs--Perry Adair

Public Affairs--Phillip Frayne

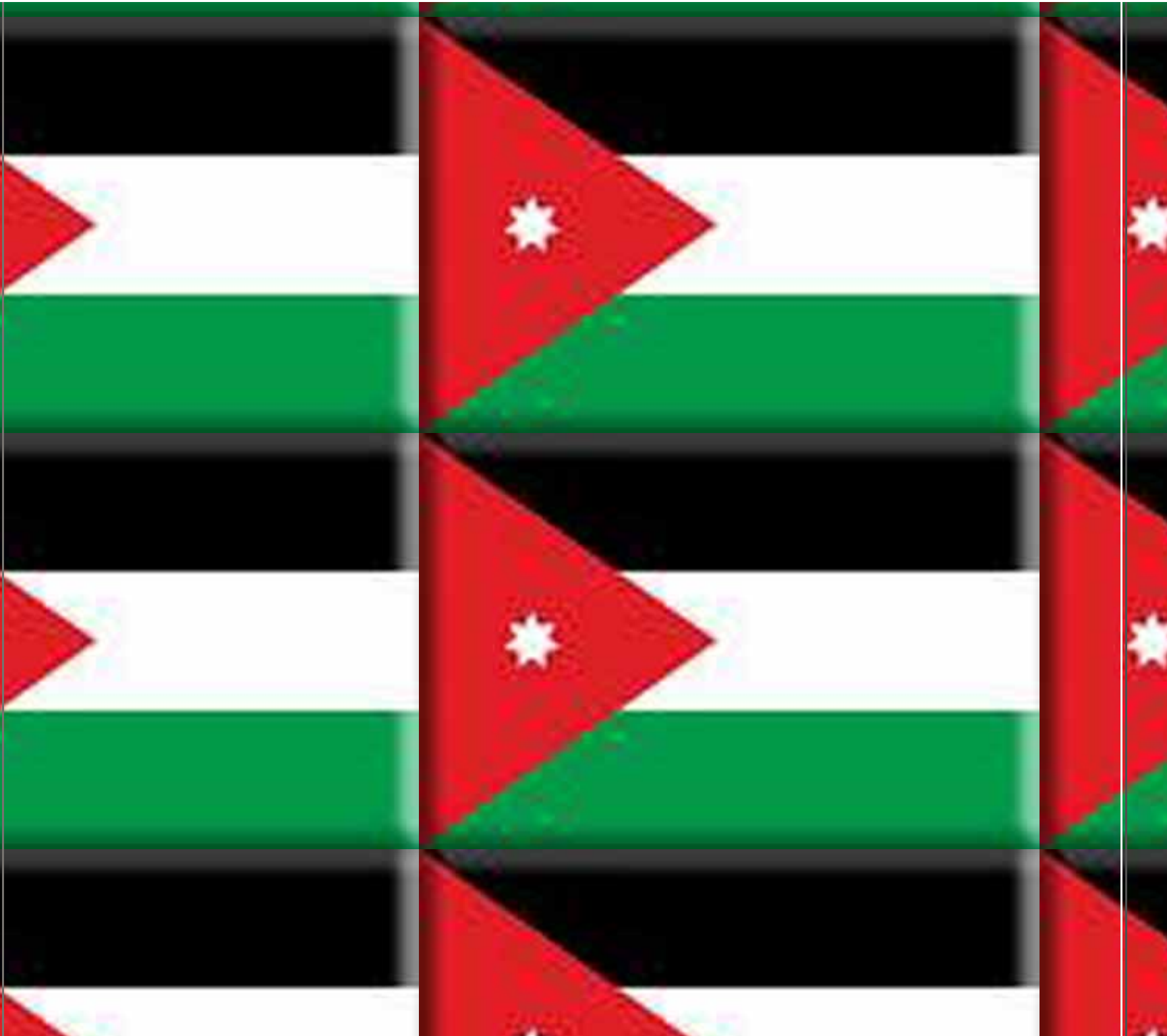
Commercial Counselor--Sheryl Maas



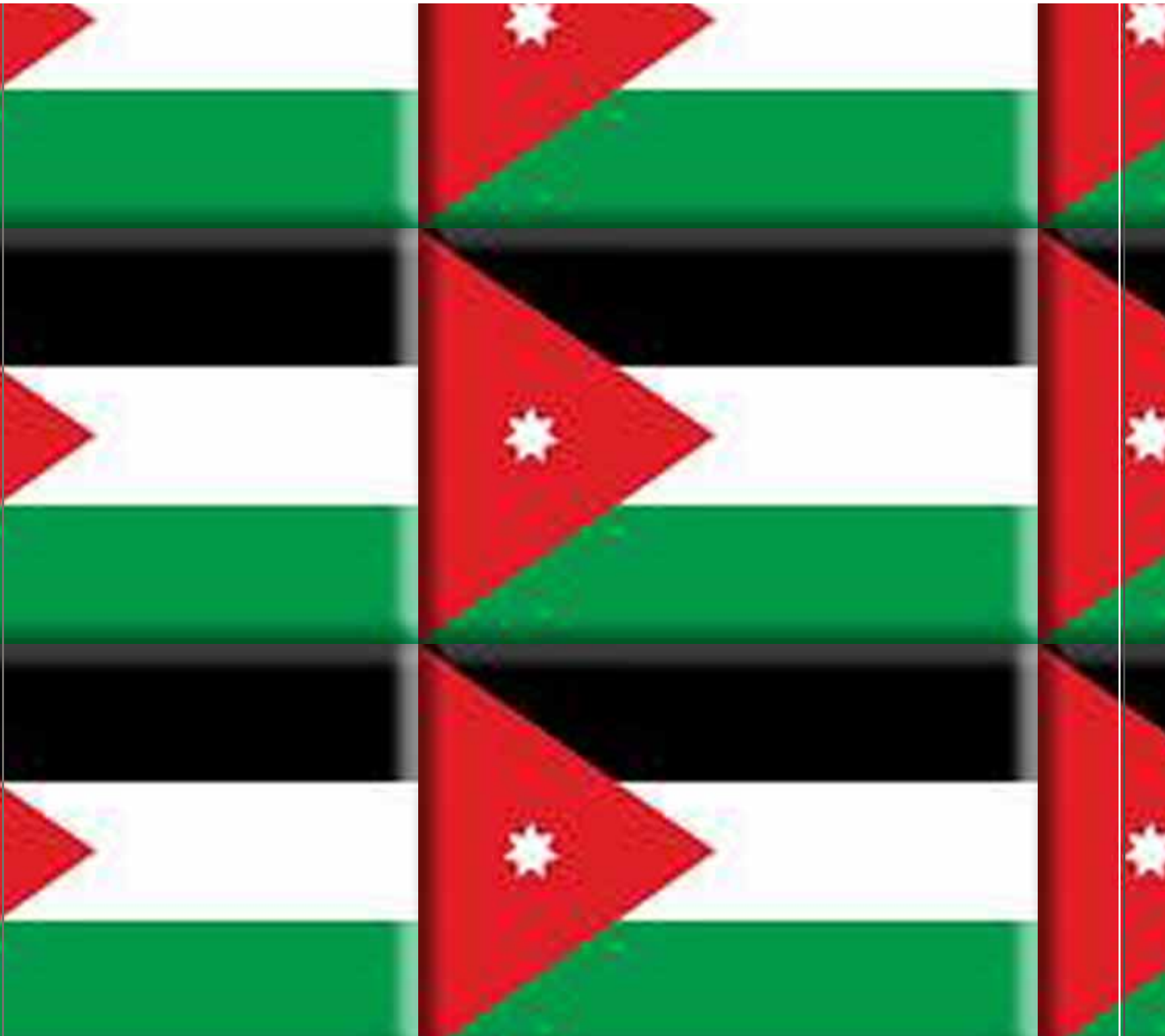
is Arabic, but English is used widely in commerce and government. About 70% of Jordan's population is urban; less than 6% of the rural population is nomadic or semi-nomadic. Most of the population lives where rainfall can support agriculture. Approximately 1.7 million registered Palestinian refugees and other displaced persons reside in Jordan, many as citizens.

HISTORY

The land that became Jordan is part of the richly historical Fertile Crescent region. Around 2000 B.C., Semitic Amorites settled around the Jordan River



in the area called Canaan. Subsequent invaders and settlers included Hittites, Egyptians, Israelites, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Arab Muslims, Christian Crusaders, Mameluks, Ottoman Turks, and, finally, the British. At the end of World War I, the League of Nations awarded the territory now comprising Israel, Jordan, the West Bank, Gaza, and Jerusalem to the United Kingdom as the mandate for Palestine and Transjordan. In 1922, the British divided the mandate by establishing the semiautonomous



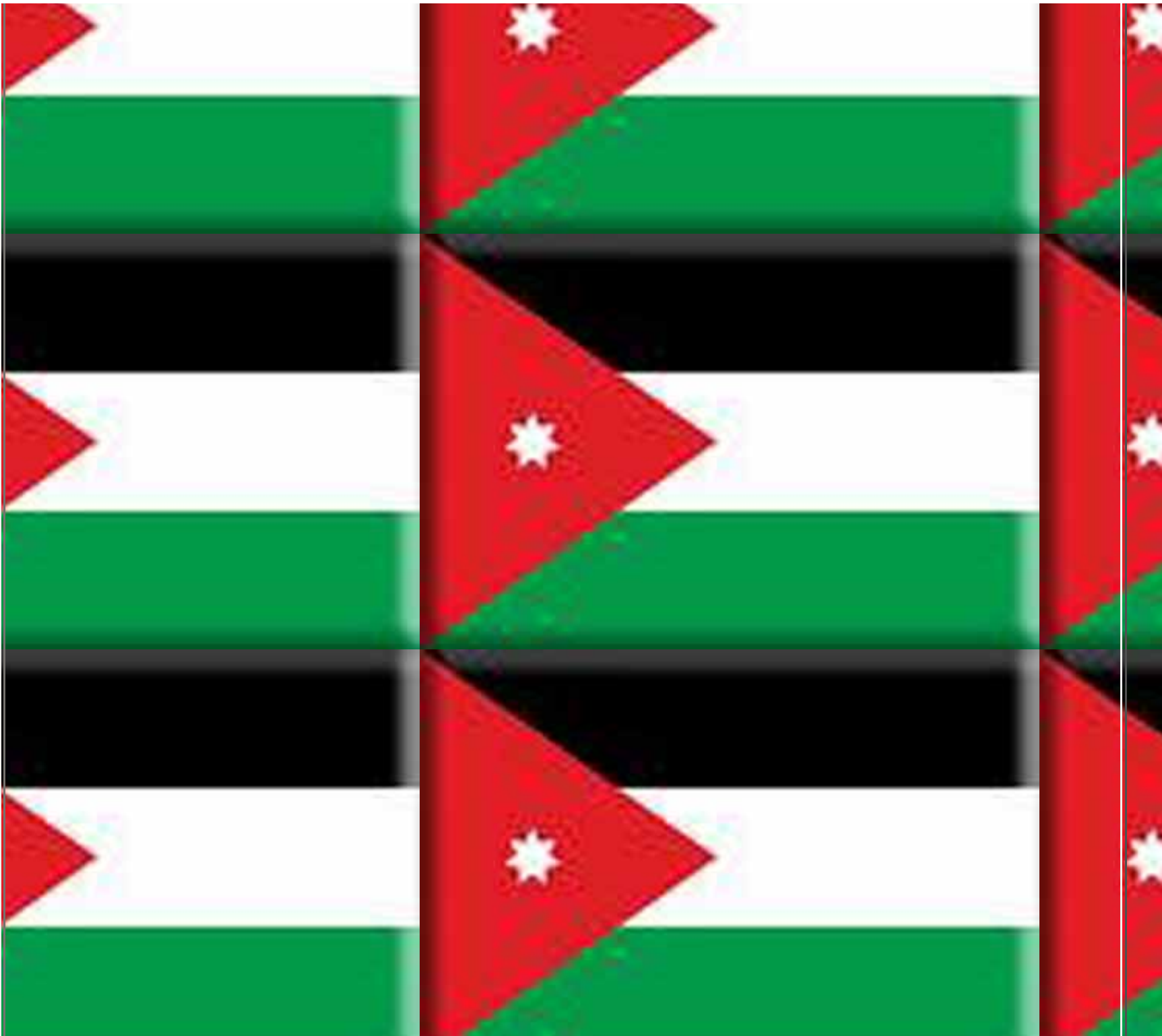
Emirate of Transjordan, ruled by the Hashemite Prince Abdullah, while continuing the administration of Palestine under a British High Commissioner. The mandate over Transjordan ended on May 22, 1946; on May 25, the country became the independent Hashemite Kingdom of Transjordan. It ended its special defense treaty relationship with the United Kingdom in 1957.

Transjordan was one of the Arab states which moved to assist Palestinian nationalists opposed to the creation of Israel in May 1948, and took



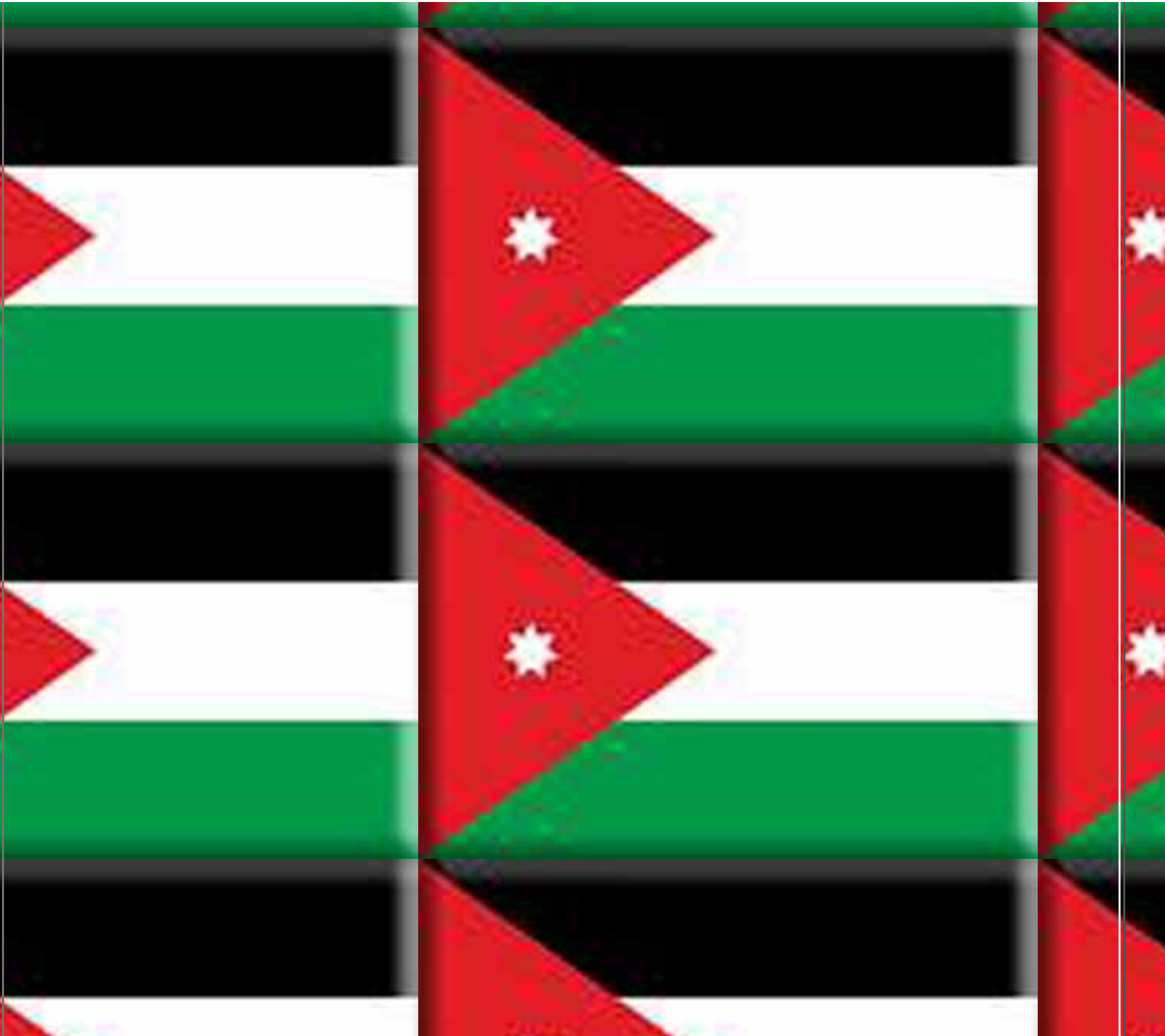
part in the warfare between the Arab states and the newly founded State of Israel. The armistice agreements of April 3, 1949 left Jordan in control of the West Bank and provided that the armistice demarcation lines were without prejudice to future territorial settlements or boundary lines.

In 1950, the country was renamed the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to include those portions of Palestine annexed by King Abdullah I. While recognizing Jordanian administration over the West Bank, the United



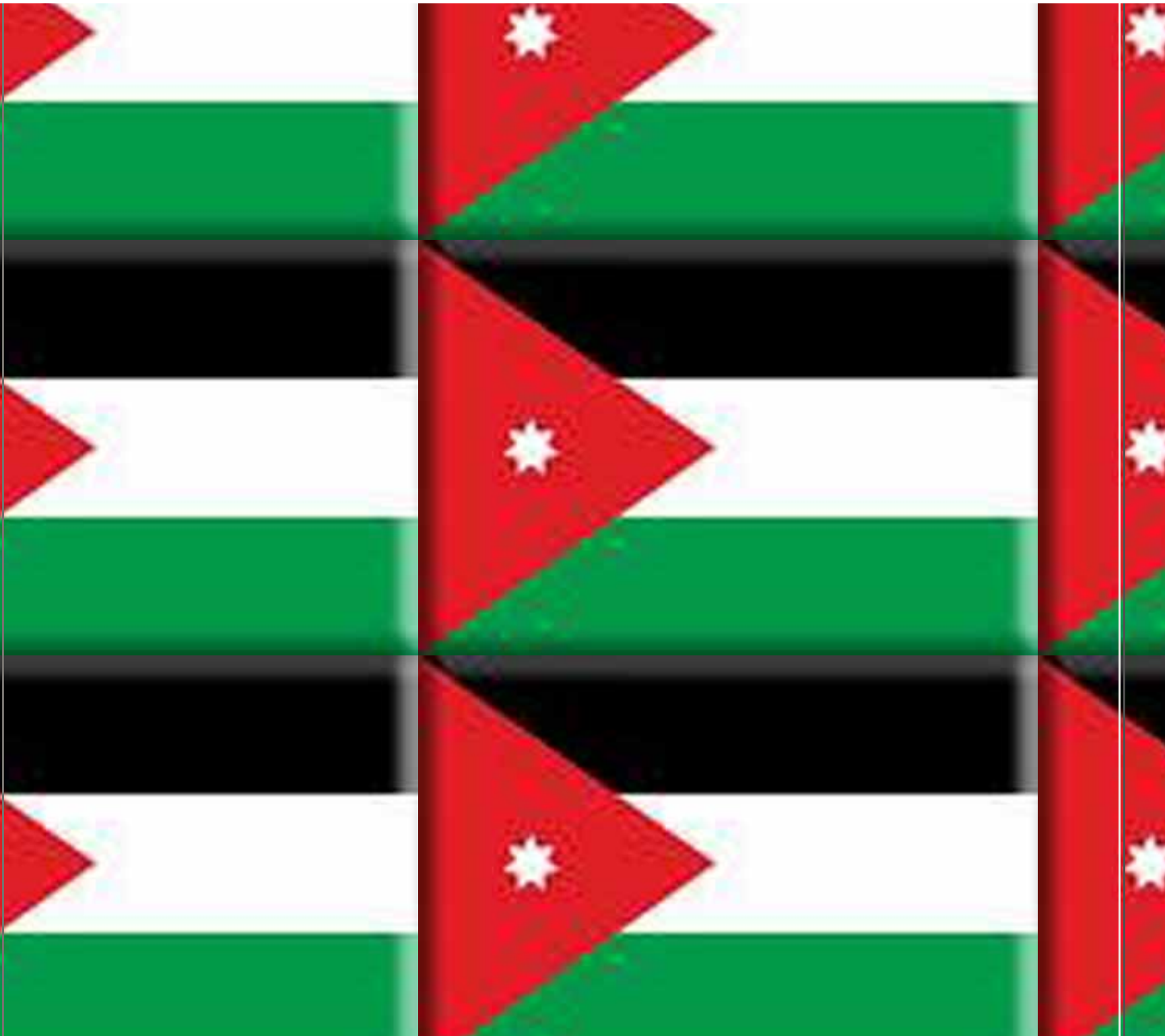
States maintained the position that ultimate sovereignty was subject to future agreement.

Jordan signed a mutual defense pact in May 1967 with Egypt, and it participated in the June 1967 war between Israel and the Arab states of Syria, Egypt, and Iraq. During the war, Israel gained control of the West Bank and all of Jerusalem. In 1988, Jordan renounced all claims to the West Bank but retained an administrative role pending a final settlement, and its 1994 treaty with Israel allowed for a continuing Jordanian role in Muslim holy



places in Jerusalem. The U.S. Government considers the West Bank to be territory occupied by Israel and believes that its final status should be determined through direct negotiations among the parties concerned on the basis of UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

The 1967 war led to a dramatic increase in the number of Palestinians living in Jordan. Its Palestinian refugee population--700,000 in 1966--grew by another 300,000 from the West Bank. The period following



the 1967 war saw an upsurge in the power and importance of Palestinian resistance elements (fedayeen) in Jordan. The heavily armed fedayeen constituted a growing threat to the sovereignty and security of the Hashemite state, and open fighting erupted in June 1970.

No fighting occurred along the 1967 Jordan River cease-fire line during the October 1973 Arab-Israeli war, but Jordan sent a brigade to Syria to fight Israeli units on Syrian territory. Jordan did not participate in the Gulf war of 1990-91. In 1991, Jordan agreed, along with Syria,



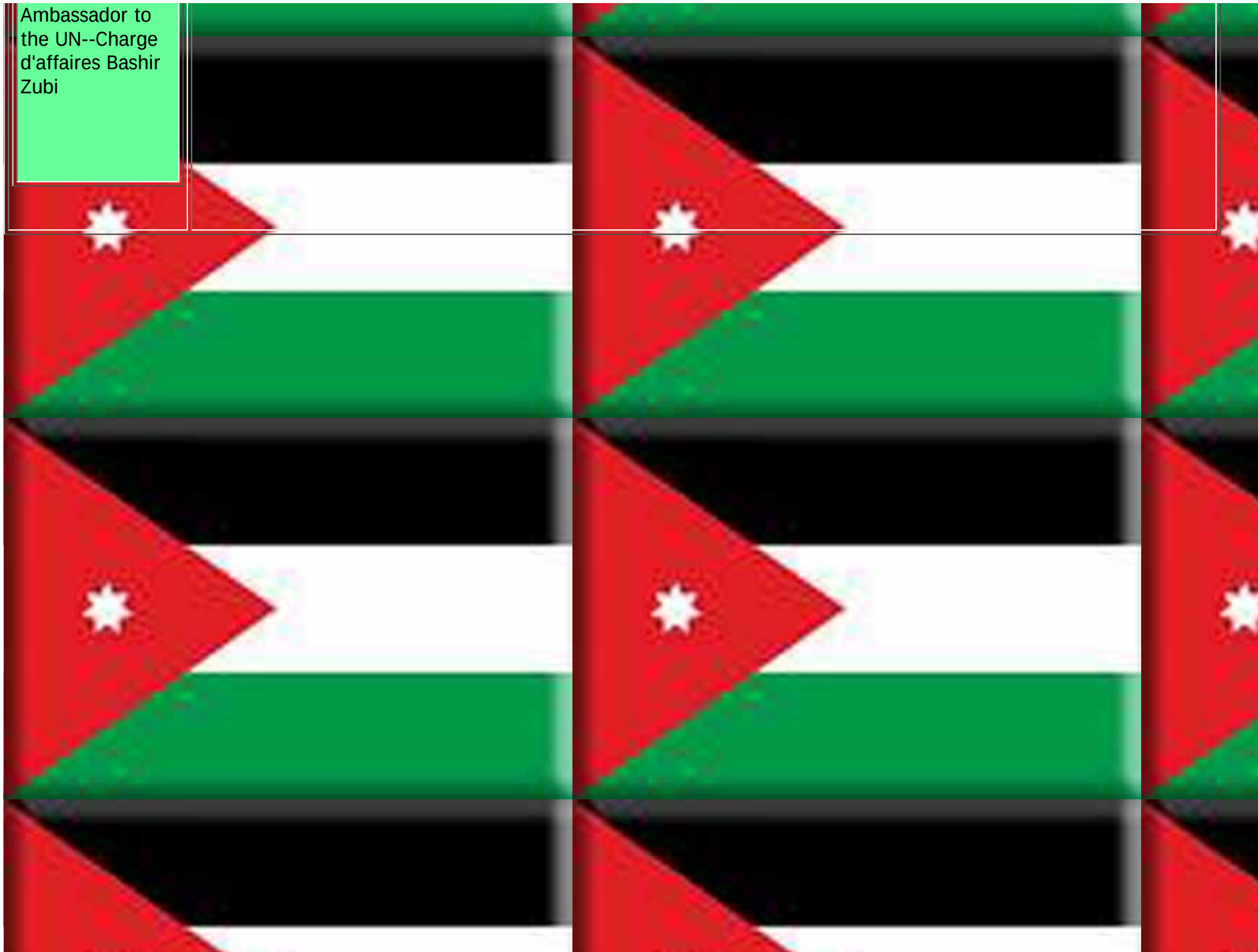
Lebanon, and Palestinian representatives, to participate in direct peace negotiations with Israel sponsored by the U.S. and Russia. It negotiated an end to hostilities with Israel and signed a peace treaty in 1994. Jordan has since sought to remain at peace with all of its neighbors.

**Principal
Government
Officials**

Chief of State--
King Abdullah
bin al-Hussein II
Prime Minister--
Marouf Bakhit
Minister of
Defense--Marouf
Bakhit
Foreign
Minister--
Abdelelah al-
Khatib
Ambassador to
the U.S.--Prince
Zeid bin Ra'ad



Ambassador to
the UN--Charge
d'affaires Bashir
Zubi





Jerusalem Letter / Viewpoints

No. 472 3 Adar 5762 / 15 February 2002

THE WAY TO PEACE EMERGED AT MADRID: A DECADE SINCE THE 1991 MADRID CONFERENCE

Eytan Bentsur

*The Successes of Madrid / Preparing for Madrid / The
Vision of a Comprehensive Peace / In the Aftermath of the
Gulf War / The Principles of Madrid / A New Era of
Normalization / Oslo Derails the Comprehensive Track / A
Code of Conduct for Negotiations*

The Successes of Madrid

The October 1991 Madrid Peace Conference represented a breakthrough in relations between the State of Israel and the Arab world. For the first time, Israel engaged in direct, face-to-face negotiations with all its immediate neighbors, and not just with Egypt, with whom Israel had signed a peace treaty in 1979. These talks were between the political leaders of the region, unlike the armistice discussions that Israel undertook in the late 1940s and 1950s. Madrid also launched a multilateral process that brought Israeli diplomats into contact with representatives of Arab states from North Africa and the Persian Gulf.

The Madrid process sought to take into account the aspirations of the parties, their security requirements, their readiness for mutual reconciliation, and, most of all, their reciprocal need to compromise. It

also institutionalized regular contact between Israel and the Arab states that created bridges for eventual understandings in the future.

More importantly, **it created the framework for direct negotiations and, thereby, launched the Middle East peace process.** Such regular lines of communication were the best guarantee for regional stability and the avoidance of miscalculation in the future. Unfortunately, for now the successes of Madrid have been swept away by the collapse of the Oslo process. But Madrid's careful approach should be recalled and even re-established in the future, taking into account the new conditions that have arisen in the Middle East.

Preparing for Madrid

The diplomatic arena was active before the convening of the Madrid Conference but yielded no concrete results. The main point of contention was over the composition of the Palestinian delegation that would negotiate with Israel, against the backdrop of the end of the first "intifada."

The diplomatic discussions before Madrid focused on the content of procedure and the procedure of content. Every procedural concession was viewed by both sides to imply a concession in substance. Israel demanded exclusion from the Palestinian delegation of PLO representatives, Arabs from east Jerusalem, and Palestinian exiles. Jerusalem, Washington, and Cairo dealt with this problem, and the argument extended to the Israeli government, resulting in the Labor party leaving the coalition.

The U.S., for its part -- particularly Secretary of State George Shultz by way of interlocutors -- acted to remove from the PLO its tiger's stripes and portray it as a body that no longer carried the weapon of terror to advance the peace process. Indeed, it was during the final days of the Reagan administration, in December 1988, that the U.S. formally opened a dialogue with the PLO after Yasser Arafat announced his renunciation of violence and accepted UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. This happened while opinion was growing in Israel that the PLO was losing its grip on the territories and a new local leadership was emerging that was not dependent on the PLO and would be free of its 1964 covenant calling for Israel's elimination.

This pre-Madrid diplomatic activity had trouble rising above the content of procedure. Moreover, by May 1990, the U.S. was compelled to cut off its dialogue with the PLO, after one of its constituent organizations, the Iraqi-based Palestinian Liberation Front, launched an attack on Israeli beaches from the sea.

The Vision of a Comprehensive Peace

All these efforts were missing a vision -- and moved further and further away from a vision -- of what might be beyond the procedural disputes: a comprehensive peace settlement between Israel and the Palestinians and between Israel and the Arab states. In order to create momentum and break the procedural deadlocks of the pre-Madrid period, a more far-sighted approach was needed which had the full potential to bring the *entire* Middle East to a gradual resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the creation of a stable peace.

After the outbreak of the intifada in December 1987, it had become increasingly accepted to define the Arab-Israel conflict as an Israeli-Palestinian dispute alone. After all, most observers witnessed the drama of the Palestinian clash with Israel on their televisions; network camera crews enjoyed free access to Khan Yunis or Ramallah, but *not* to the pictures that defined the wider Arab-Israel conflict: Iraqi missile preparations, Syrian armored maneuvers, and Hizbullah training camps in Lebanon. Diplomatic initiatives naturally followed this Palestinian-centered definition of the Arab-Israeli conflict -- the wider issues that constituted the real threats to Israel have unfortunately been ignored.

A new initiative to correct this diplomatic myopia came from papers that I prepared in the Foreign Ministry during the period when David Levy served as its minister. At his initiative, the Foreign Ministry developed ideas for combining progress on the Palestinian track with recognition and normalization in relations between Israel and the Arab states.

The essence of this diplomatic approach was to develop a two-track peace process in which progress on the Palestinian front would correspond to progress in relations with the Arab states. The two-track process was supposed to be wrapped in a third track -- the multilateral track -- whose basis was a vision of regional development and finding solutions to major problems (arms control, ecology, water, etc.) that accompany the path to peace. The basic idea was to pursue a full

regional peace in order for Israel to avoid becoming bogged-down in the Palestinian track alone, with no change in its relations with the Arab world.

In the Aftermath of the Gulf War

The full diplomatic initiative was presented to Secretary of State James Baker and his people by Foreign Minister Levy and myself in a series of conversations that, in retrospect, became absorbed into American thinking. This occurred before the Americans launched their own initiative. At the end of the Gulf War, Baker skillfully used the momentum from the formation of an international coalition that included Arab states to start up the peace process on a new basis.

The status of the U.S. after the Gulf War, now as the sole superpower, with determined leadership in the person of Baker, brought a new opportunity to the Middle East. The new global and regional historic setting for a breakthrough was evident first and foremost in the decline and eventual fall of the Soviet Union. This signaled the collapse of support for radicalism in the region and rejectionism of the peace process. The exhaustion of the peoples of the region from war, coupled with loss of military and economic maneuvering room by the Arab states, brought recognition that it was time for the peace process to set out on its way. Baker requested from the beginning that the Gulf War coalition be transformed into a peace coalition -- of which the Madrid Conference was a natural product.

Baker advanced the initiative through an intensive burst of shuttle diplomacy, aggressive and systematic negotiations, grappling with doubts and resistance, marshalling the few who supported this path in Israel, and with a panoply of guarantees, formulations, and formulas. Slowly, the U.S. created conditions for the convening of a conference designed to help the sides reach a lasting peace through direct negotiations both between Israel and the Palestinians and between Israel and the Arab states. These tracks were based on UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, and were in conjunction with multilateral negotiations designed to promote regional development and solve regional problems.

The Principles of Madrid

At the opening of the Madrid Conference on October 30, 1991, President George Bush set forth the principles to advance the Madrid process:

- Negotiations in the Madrid framework were directed toward peace agreements; diplomatic, economic, and cultural ties; and investment in development and tourism.
- Peace will only be achieved through direct negotiations based on give-and-take and territorial compromise.
- Peace cannot be imposed -- it can only come from within the region.
- The process will be two-tracked and the multilateral element will follow.
- The negotiations are supposed to allow the Palestinian people to control their lives and destiny, and, in parallel, ensure the security and recognition of Israel.
- Peace must be based on fairness toward Israel, giving Israel a chance to demonstrate its willingness to establish relations with its Palestinian neighbors on the basis of mutual respect and cooperation.
- President Bush noted that the U.S. would refrain from defining the meaning of a stable settlement in the Middle East or final borders -- but that these borders must promote security and fair diplomatic arrangements.

Prior to Madrid, Israel carefully negotiated a "letter of assurances" from the United States in order to protect its vital interests in any upcoming negotiations. This careful component of pre-Madrid diplomacy was not replicated by those who initiated the later Oslo path.

A New Era of Normalization

The Madrid Peace Conference and the peace process it initiated -- which was conducted with ups and downs until "Oslo" -- created a new reality in the Middle East. In reality, a new light shined on the Middle

East and for the first time the region came closer to the definition of a "New Middle East." "New" in this sense meant that the preoccupation with the details of the Palestinian dilemma was replaced by negotiations between Israel and Jordan, the Palestinians, and the Arab world generally in the widest sense.

The multilateral dimension created hope and a sense of achievable goals that could be reached through determined effort. The region was bursting with hope and ideas for giant projects for the benefit of all its peoples. The dialogue between Israel -- and Israelis -- with representatives of all Arab states accelerated and became commonplace.

The spirit of normalization reigned over everything -- despite difficulties, despite the tough diplomatic positions of our negotiating partners. Israelis were received as desired guests in most Arab capitals. In addition, Madrid strengthened Israel's international position beyond recognition. Diplomatic relations were established or restored between Israel and the Soviet Union, China, and India. Relations were established at different levels of intimacy and cooperation with many Arab countries. The vision of a comprehensive peace seemed to be approaching, even if the road to it was long, gradual, not without setbacks, and fraught with difficult negotiations.

Madrid's participants knew from the beginning that even if the journey down this road had begun, there were no shortcuts to peace. We knew that the Madrid Conference was the starting point of a long road that, on the horizon, would lead to the squaring of circles and the eventual bridging of presently polarized positions in order to forge a comprehensive peace.

Oslo Derails the Comprehensive Track

The Oslo agreement, to a great degree, returned the process to another track, one that placed the Palestinian aspect at the forefront at the expense of the general Arab-Israeli and multilateral tracks. With time, the momentum of normalization that accompanied the Madrid process weakened and then disappeared.

It was noteworthy that, as Israeli negotiators continued to implement Oslo with the September 1995 Interim Agreement, the 1997 Hebron

Protocol, and the 1998 Wye Agreement, the U.S. and Israel failed to generate new parallel breakthroughs between Israel and the Arab world. Israel did not open up new offices in the Gulf region, for example, beyond Qatar and Oman, in Kuwait, Bahrain, or in the UAE. Anti-Israel diplomatic activity continued at the United Nations and in international organizations. The multilateral initiatives begun at Madrid were undermined, withered, and reached a stalemate.

The architects of Oslo who led the negotiations at Camp David will no doubt be intellectually honest enough to note that it would have been better to insist on the spirit of normalization to create an atmosphere for making peace, such as was employed in the Helsinki Final Act and other well-known historic compromises.

A Code of Conduct for Negotiations

Today, as well, those who want peace and are ready for territorial compromise will work toward normalization, and economic, scientific, and medical cooperation. They will also push for joint projects that promote tolerance and mutual respect and that adopt an internationally supervised behavioral code prohibiting incitement, and advancing a peaceful settlement. They will also work to renew the multilateral track in the Madrid framework.

In retrospect, one of the shortcomings of the Oslo period was the absence of this sort of a "code of conduct" or set of rules governing the negotiating process. Clearly, it is unacceptable that violence be permitted to accompany *any* negotiation process, whether direct violence or violence by proxy, like Syria's use of Hizbullah. Moreover, it is unacceptable that Israel and its neighbors decide to resolve their differences *bilaterally*, while at the same time Arab states initiate resolutions in the UN General Assembly that prejudge the outcome of those very same negotiations. A code of conduct addressing these issues should be a part of any negotiating process in the future.

The slow train that started out from Madrid made sense. The peace process was carefully structured. It allowed the parties to stop along the way to verify whether its engine was operating correctly and to check the worthiness of the tracks down the line. This train was exchanged for the fast train of Oslo, that barreled ahead without sufficient attention to blockages and broken tracks along the way. In my view, the slow train

was preferable and would more reliably have reached the destination, while the fast train tended to careen off the tracks. At present, the Oslo train has reached a dead-end. When the negotiations continue, it behooves Israel to insist that many of the principles of Madrid be revived, and to work to restore the atmosphere of great hope that this process brought on its wings.

* * *

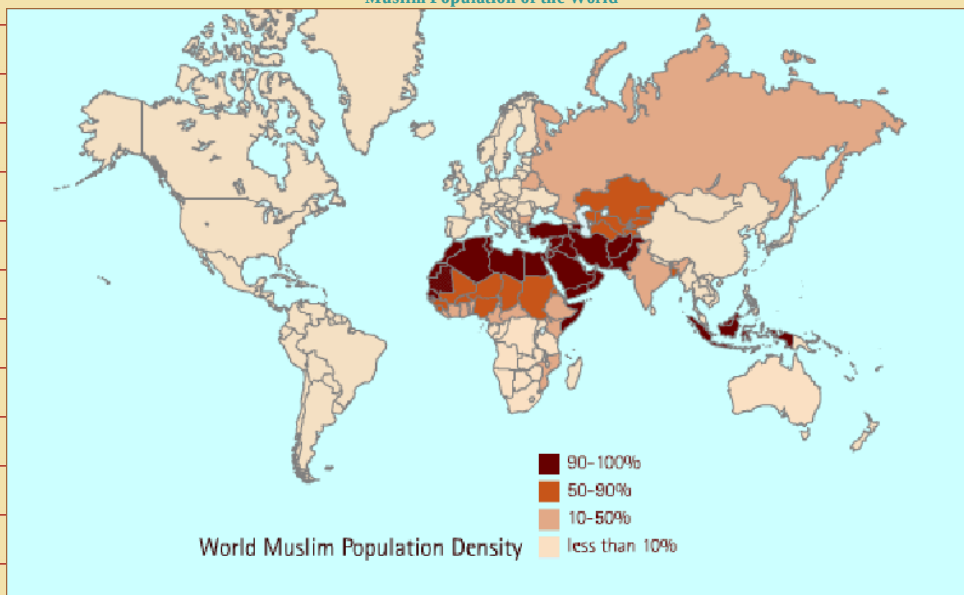
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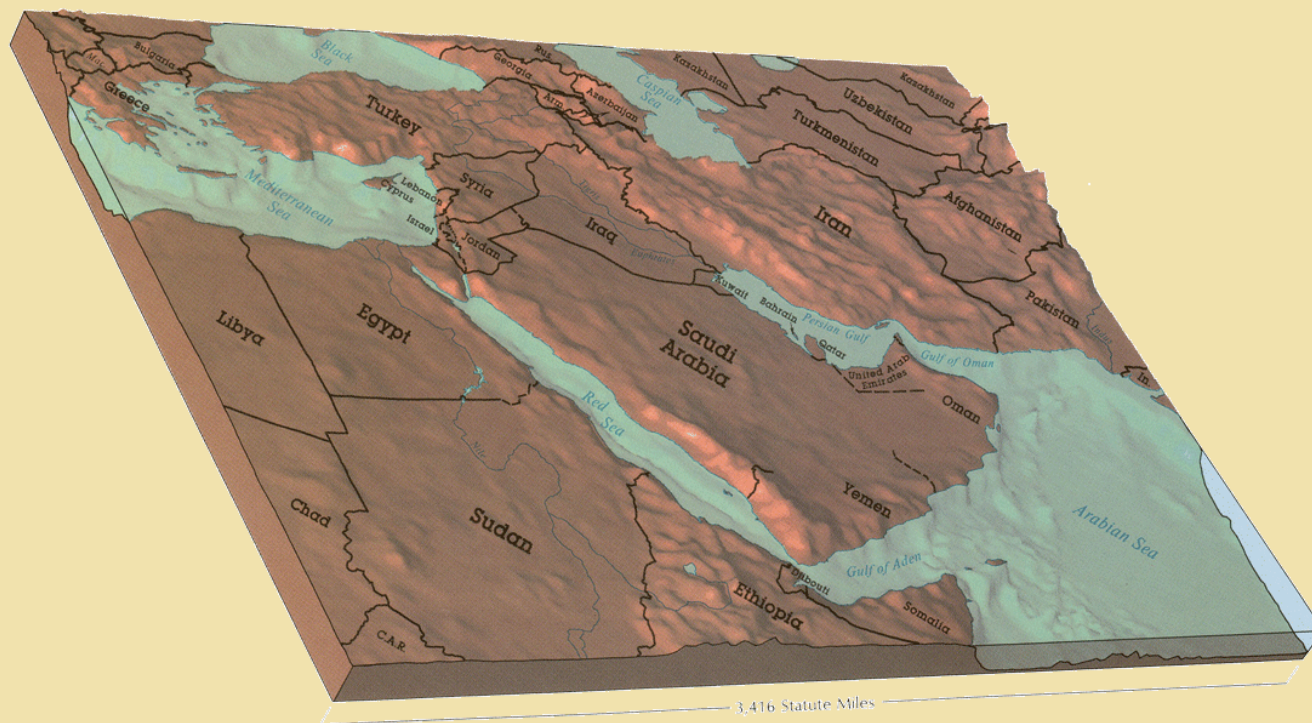
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LOOK AT THE MAPS BELOW TO SEE THE VARIOUS ANGLES OF THE MIDDLE EAST

Muslim Population of the World



3-D Raised Map of the Middle East Region







Israel
Lebanon



Jordan



Oil Fields in the Middle East



Syria



Topographic Map of the Middle East





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Madrid Letter of Invitation

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ON TO MADRID PEACE

LE The Arab Spring and the Gulf War reshaped the basic political
CO order. In an attempt to take advantage of this change, US
Oc Sec. George H.W. Bush made eight trips to the region in the eight
mon months. The Madrid Invitation, inviting Israel, Syria,
Leb. Palestinians to an opening conference represents the
resu The invitation, an outcome of compromises by all
side The Madrid process:

having no power to impose solutions
Arab states bordering Israel,
ans on 5-year interim self-rule, to be followed by
status
regional issues, like refugees.

The News Archive text of the invitation to the Madrid Peace
Con 1991, jointly issued by the U.S. and the Soviet Union:

TEXT:

After extensive consultations with Arab states, Israel and the Palestinians, the United States and the Soviet Union believe that an historic opportunity exists to advance the prospects for genuine peace throughout the region. The United States and the Soviet Union are prepared to assist the parties to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement, through direct negotiations along two tracks, between Israel and the Arab states, and between Israel and the Palestinians, based on United Nations Security Council Resolutions [242](#) and [338](#). The objective of this process is real peace.

Toward that end, the president of the U.S. and the president of the USSR invite you to a peace conference, which their countries will co-sponsor, followed immediately by direct negotiations. The conference will be convened in Madrid on October 30, 1991.

President Bush and President Gorbachev request your acceptance of this invitation no later than 6 P.M. Washington time, October 23, 1991, in order to ensure proper organization and preparation of the conference.

Direct bilateral negotiations will begin four days after the opening of the conference. Those parties who wish to attend multilateral negotiations will convene two weeks after the opening of the conference to organize those negotiations. The co-sponsors believe that those negotiations should focus on region-wide issues of water, refugee issues, environment, economic

development, and other subjects of mutual interest.

The co-sponsors will chair the conference which will be held at ministerial level. Governments to be invited include Israel, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. Palestinians will be invited and attend as part of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. Egypt will be invited to the conference as a participant. The European Community will be a participant in the conference, alongside the United States and the Soviet Union and will be represented by its presidency. The Gulf Cooperation Council will be invited to send its secretary-general to the conference as an observer, and GCC member states will be invited to participate in organizing the negotiations on multilateral issues. The United Nations will be invited to send an observer, representing the secretary-general.

The conference will have no power to impose solutions on the parties or veto agreements reached by them. It will have no authority to make decisions for the parties and no ability to vote on issues of results. The conference can reconvene only with the consent of all the parties.

With respect to negotiations between Israel and Palestinians who are part of the joint Jordanian- Palestinian delegation, negotiations will be conducted in phases, beginning with talks on interim self- government arrangements. These talks will be conducted with the objective of reaching agreement within one year. Once agreed, the interim self-government arrangements will last for a period of five years; beginning the third year of the period of interim self-government arrangements, negotiations will take place on permanent status. These permanent status negotiations, and the negotiations between Israel and the Arab states, will take place on the basis of Resolutions 242 and 338.

It is understood that the co-sponsors are committed to making this process succeed. It is their intention to convene the conference and negotiations with those parties who agree to attend.

The co-sponsors believe that this process offers the promise of ending decades of confrontation and conflict and the hope of a lasting peace. Thus, the co-sponsors hope that the parties will approach these negotiations in a spirit of good will and mutual respect. In this way, the peace process can begin to break down the mutual suspicions and mistrust that perpetuate the conflict and allow the parties to begin to resolve their differences. Indeed, only through such a process can real peace and reconciliation among the Arab states, Israel and the Palestinians be achieved. And only through this process can the peoples of the Middle East attain the peace and security they richly deserve.

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James A. Baker III

January 25, 1989-August 23, 1992

February 10, 1989

Canada

Ottawa

Accompanied President Bush on a working visit.

February 11, 1989

Iceland

Reykjavik

Met with Foreign Minister Hannibalsson.

February 11-12, 1989

United Kingdom

London

Met with Foreign Secretary Howe.

February 12- 14, 1989

Germany, Federal Republic of

Bonn

Discussed modernization of short-range NATO nuclear missiles with Foreign Minister Genscher.

February 13, 1989

Denmark

Copenhagen

Met with Foreign Minister Ellemann-Jensen.

February 13, 1989

Norway

Oslo

Met with Prime Minister Brundtland and Foreign Minister Stoltenberg.

February 14, 1989

Turkey

Ankara

Met with Prime Minister Ozal and Foreign Minister Yilmaz.

February 14, 1989

Greece

Athens

Met with Prime Minister Papandreou and Foreign Minister Papoulias.

February 14-15, 1989

Italy

Rome

Met with Foreign Minister Andreotti.

February 15, 1989

Spain

Madrid

Met with Foreign Minister Fernandez-Ordonez.

February 15, 1989

Portugal

Lisbon

Met with Prime Minister Cavaco Silva and Foreign Minister Pinheiro.

February 15-17, 1989

Belgium

Brussels

Met with Foreign Minister Tindemans and NATO officials.

February 16, 1989

Luxembourg

Luxembourg

Met with Prime Minister Santer and Foreign Minister Poos.

February 16, 1989

Netherlands

The Hague

Met with Foreign Minister van den Broek.

February 17, 1989

France

Paris

Met with Prime Minister Rocard and Foreign Minister Dumas.

February 23-25, 1989

Japan

Tokyo

Accompanied President Bush to the funeral of Emperor Hirohito, and to meetings with other attending heads of state and government.

February 25-27,

China, People's Republic of

Beijing

Accompanied President Bush.

February 27, 1989

Korea

Seoul

Accompanied President Bush on an official visit.

March 4-7, 1989

Austria

Vienna

Attended CSCE Meetings on confidence- and security-building measures and conventional armed forces in Europe. Met with Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze.

May 9-10, 1989

Finland

Helsinki

Overnight stop en route to Moscow.

May 10-11, 1989

U.S.S.R.

Moscow

Met with President Gorbachev, senior Soviet officials, and human rights activists.

May 11-12, 1989

Belgium

Brussels

Briefed NATO Foreign Ministers on his visit to Moscow.

May 26-28, 1989

Italy

Rome

Accompanied President Bush. Also met with South African Foreign Minister Botha.

May 27, 1989

Vatican City

Audience with Pope John Paul II.

May 28-30, 1989

Belgium

Brussels

Accompanied President Bush to NATO Summit Meeting.

May 30-31, 1989

Germany, Federal Republic of

Bonn

Accompanied President Bush.

May 31-June 2, 1989

United Kingdom

London

Accompanied President Bush.

July 4-5, 1989

Japan

Tokyo

Attended the Multilateral Assistance Initiative for the Philippines conference.

July 5-8, 1989

Brunei

Bandar Seri Begawan

Attended ASEAN Post-Ministerial Meeting.

July 8, 1989

Oman

Muscat

Stopped while traveling to Poland to join President Bush.

July 9-11, 1989

Poland

Warsaw, Gdansk

Accompanied President Bush.

July 11-13, 1989

Hungary

Budapest

Accompanied President Bush.

July 13-17, 1989

France

Paris

Accompanied President Bush to the Economic Summit Meeting.

July 17-18, 1989

The Netherlands

The Hague

Accompanied President Bush.

July 28-31, 1989

France

Paris

Attended the opening of the International Conference on Cambodia. Also met with Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze.

August 6-7, 1989

Mexico

Mexico, D.F.

Attended the 7th meeting of the U.S.-Mexico Binati

October 27-28, 1989

Costa Rica

San Jose

Accompanied President Bush to Hemispheric Summit Meeting.

November 1-8, 1989

Australia

Sydney, Canberra

Attended U.S.-Australian Bilateral Ministerial Meeting and Conference on Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation.

December 1-3, 1989

Malta

Valletta, Marsaxlokk Bay
Accompanied President Bush to meetings with Soviet President Gorbachev.

December 3-4, 1989
Belgium
Brussels
Accompanied President Bush to meetings with NATO heads of state and government.

December 11, 1989
United Kingdom
London
Met with Prime Minister Thatcher and Foreign Secretary Hurd.

December 11-12, 1989
Germany
West Berlin
Met with West German Chancellor Kohl; delivered a public address.

December 12, 1989
German Democratic Republic
Potsdam
Met with East German Prime Minister Modrow and with religious leaders.

December 13-15, 1989
Belgium
Brussels
Discussed aid to Eastern Europe with representatives of the Group of 24; attended a NATO Foreign Ministers Meeting.

December 16, 1989
Netherlands (Antilles)
St. Maartin
Accompanied President Bush en route to meeting with French President Mitterrand.

December 16, 1989
France
St. Martin Island (West Indies)
Accompanied President Bush to an informal meeting with President Mitterrand.

February 6, 1990
Ireland
Shannon
Met with French Foreign Minister Dumas.

February 6, 1990
Czechoslovakia
Prague
Met with President Havel; delivered an address at Charles University.

February 7-10, 1990
U.S.S.R.
Moscow
Met with Soviet leaders; addressed the International Affairs Committee of the Supreme Soviet.

February 10-11, 1990

Bulgaria
Sofia
Met with Bulgarian officials and opposition leaders.

February 11, 1990
Romania
Bucharest
Met with Romanian officials and opposition leaders.

February 11-13, 1990
Canada
Ottawa
Attended Open Skies Ministerial Conference of NATO and Warsaw Pact Foreign Ministers.

February 15, 1990
Colombia
Cartagena
Accompanied President Bush to Drug Summit Meeting with the Presidents of Colombia, Bolivia, and Peru.

March 19-22, 1990
Namibia
Windhoek
Attended Namibian independence ceremonies. Met with Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze.

March 22-23, 1990
South Africa
Cape Town Johannesburg, Soweto
Met with President De Klerk, South African officials, and leaders of the African National Congress (ANC).

March 23-24, 1990
Zaire
Kinshasa
Met with President Mobutu and with UNITA leader Savimbi.

April 13-14, 1990
United Kingdom
Bermuda
Accompanied President Bush to an informal meeting with Prime Minister Thatcher.

May 3, 1990
Belgium
Brussels
Met with NATO and European Community Foreign Ministers.

May 4-6, 1990
Germany, Federal Republic of
Bonn
Attended Two-Plus-Four Ministerial Meeting on German reunification.

May 6, 1990
Poland
Warsaw
Met with Polish officials and leaders of Solidarity.

May 15-19, 1990

U.S.S.R.

Moscow, Zagorsk, Radonezh

Attended pre-summit and arms reduction negotiations with senior Soviet officials. Also met with Egyptian President Mubarak and Lithuanian Prime Minister Prunskiene.

June 5-6, 1990

Denmark

Copenhagen

Attended CSCE Meeting and met with Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze.

June 6-8, 1990

United Kingdom

Turnberry (Scotland)

Attended NATO Foreign Ministers meeting.

June 17-19, 1990

Guatemala

Guatemala City and Antigua Guatemala

Met with Presidents of the Central American Republics.

June 20-22, 1990

German Democratic Republic

East Berlin

Attended Two-Plus-Four Foreign Ministers Meeting.

June 23, 1990

Ireland

Shannon

Met with Foreign Minister Collins.

July 3-4, 1990

Belgium

Brussels

Attended meeting of the Group of 24.

July 5-6, 1990

United Kingdom

London

Accompanied President Bush to NATO Summit Meeting.

July 16-18, 1990

France

Paris

Attended Two-Plus-Four Foreign Ministers Meeting.

July 26-29, 1990

Indonesia

Jakarta

Attended ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference.

July 29-31, 1990

Singapore

Singapore

Attended Second Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Meeting.

July 31-August 2, 1990

U.S.S.R.

Irkutsk

Met with Foreign Minister Shevardnadze.

August 2-3, 1990

Mongolia

Ulaan Baatar

Met with President Ochirbat and Foreign Minister Gombosuren.

August 3, 1990

U.S.S.R.

Moscow

Met with Foreign Minister Shevardnadze; issued a joint statement on the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

August 8-9, 1990

Turkey

Ankara

Met with President Ozal and senior Turkish officials.

August 10, 1990

Belgium

Brussels

Attended a special session of the North Atlantic Council.

September 6-7, 1990

Saudi Arabia

Jeddah, Taif

Met with King Fahd and with Emir al-Sabah of Kuwait; discussed financing of U.S. military presence. Visited U.S. military personnel.

September 7, 1990

United Arab Emirates

Abu Dhabi

Met with Sheikh al-Nahyan.

September 7-8, 1990

Egypt

Cairo, Alexandria

Met with President Mubarak. Discussed increased Egyptian military commitment in the Persian Gulf.

September 8-10, 1990

Finland

Helsinki

Accompanied President Bush to summit meeting with Soviet President Gorbachev.

September 10, 1990

Belgium

Brussels

Briefed NATO Foreign Ministers on the U.S.-Soviet summit meeting and the Persian Gulf crisis.

September 10-13, 1990

U.S.S.R.

Moscow

Met with President Gorbachev and Foreign Minister Shevardnadze. Attended Two-Plus-Four Foreign Ministers Meeting. Signed Treaty on the Final Settlement With Respect to Germany.

September 13-14, 1990

Syria

Damascus

Met with President Assad and Foreign Minister Sharaa.

September 15, 1990

Italy

Rome

Met with senior Italian officials.

September 15, 1990

Federal Republic of Germany

Bonn, Ludwigshafen

Met with Chancellor Kohl and Foreign Minister Genscher.

November 4-5, 1990

Bahrain

Manama

Met with Amir Sheikh Isa bin Sulman al-Khalifa.

November 4, 5-6, 1990

Saudi Arabia

Jeddah, Taif

Met with King Fahd, Foreign Minister Prince Saud, and the Emir of Kuwait. Addressed U.S. military personnel.

November 6-7, 1990

Egypt

Cairo

Met with President Mubarak and Chinese Foreign Minister Qian.

November 7, 1990

Turkey

Ankara

Met with President Ozal.

November 7-9, 1990

U.S.S.R.

Moscow

Met with President Gorbachev.

November 9-10, 1990

United Kingdom

London

Met with Prime Minister Thatcher.

November 10, 1990

France

Paris

Met with President Mitterrand.

November 13, 1990

United Kingdom

Bermuda

Met with Canadian External Affairs Secretary Clark.

November 16-17, 1990

Belgium

Brussels

Attended U.S.-European Community Meeting.

November 17, 1990

Switzerland

Geneva

Discussed the Persian Gulf crisis with the Foreign Ministers of Ethiopia, Cote d'Ivoire, and Zaire.

November 17-21, 1990

France

Paris

Discussed the Persian Gulf crisis with the Foreign Ministers of Romania, Finland, France, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union.

Joined President Bush for meetings with Soviet President Gorbachev, CSCE Summit meeting, and signing of the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty.

November 21-22, 1990

Saudi Arabia

Jeddah

Accompanied President Bush to meetings with King Fahd and the Amir of Kuwait.

November 22, 1990

Yemen

Sanaa

Discussed the Persian Gulf crisis with President Salih.

November 23, 1990

Egypt

Cairo

Accompanied President Bush to meeting with President Mubarak.

November 24, 1990

Colombia

Bogota

Discussed the Persian Gulf crisis with President Gaviria and Foreign Minister Jaramillo.

December 16-18, 1990

Belgium

Brussels

Attended NATO Ministerial Meeting.

January 6-8, 1991

United Kingdom

London

Discussed the Persian Gulf crisis with Foreign Secretary Hurd, EC Chairman Poos, Spanish Foreign Minister Fernandez Ordonez, and NATO Secretary General Woerner.

January 8, 1991

France

Paris

Discussed the Persian Gulf crisis with President Mitterrand and Foreign Minister Dumas.

January 8, 1991

Germany

Bonn

Discussed the Persian Gulf crisis with Chancellor Kohl.

January 8, 1991

Italy

Milan

Discussed the Persian Gulf crisis with Foreign Minister DeMichelis.

January 8-10, 1991

Switzerland

Geneva

Discussed the Persian Gulf crisis with Iraqi Foreign Minister Aziz.

January 10-11, 1991

Saudi Arabia

Riyadh

Discussed the Persian Gulf crisis with King Fahd and Foreign Minister Prince Saud.

January 11, 1991

United Arab Emirates

Abu Dhabi

Discussed the Persian Gulf Emirates crisis with Sheikh Zayed.

January 11, 1991

Saudi Arabia

Taif

Discussed the Persian Gulf crisis with the Amir of Kuwait. Addressed U.S. military personnel in eastern Saudi Arabia.

January 11-12, 1991

Egypt

Cairo

Discussed the Persian Gulf crisis with President Mubarak and Foreign Minister Abdel-Meguid.

January 12, 1991

Syria

Damascus

Discussed the Persian Gulf crisis with President Assad and Foreign Minister Sharaa.

January 12-13, 1991

Turkey

Incirlik, Ankara

Discussed the Persian Gulf crisis with President Ozal and Foreign Minister Alptemocin.

January 13, 1991

United Kingdom

Alconbury

Discussed the Persian Gulf crisis with Prime Minister Major.

January 13-14, 1991

Canada

Ottawa

Discussed the Persian Gulf crisis with Prime Minister Mulroney.

March 8-10, 1991

Saudi Arabia

Taif, Riyadh

Met with the Amir of Kuwait and with the Foreign Ministers of Egypt, Syria, and the Gulf Cooperation Council.

March 10-11, 1991

Egypt

Cairo

Met with President Mubarak.

March 11-13, 1991

Israel

Jerusalem, Karmeil

Discussed the Middle East peace process with President Herzog, Prime Minister Shamir, Foreign Minister Levy, and Palestinian representatives.

March 13-14, 1991

Syria

Damascus

Discussed the Middle East peace process with President Assad and Foreign Minister Sharaa.

March 14-16, 1991

U.S.S.R.

Moscow

Met with President Gorbachev and Foreign Minister Bessmertnkyh.

March 16, 1991

Turkey

Ankara

Met with President Ozal and senior Turkish officials.

April 7-8, 1991

Turkey

Ankara, Diyarbakir, Cukurca, Uzumlu

Discussed emergency aid to Kurdish refugees with President Ozal; visited refugee camps.

April 8-10, 1991

Israel

Jerusalem

Discussed the Middle East peace process with Prime Minister Shamir, Israeli officials, and a Palestinian delegation.

April 10-11, 1991

Egypt

Cairo

Discussed the Middle East peace process with President Mubarak, Foreign Minister Abdel-Meguid, and Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud.

April 11-12, 1991

Syria

Damascus

Discussed the Middle East peace process with President Assad, Foreign Minister Sharaa, and Tunisian Foreign Minister Ben Yahya.

April 12, 1991

Switzerland

Geneva

Discussed the Middle East peace process with Jordanian Foreign Minister Masri. Also discussed aid to Kurdish refugees with heads of international relief agencies.

April 17-18, 1991

Luxembourg

Luxembourg

Discussed aid to Kurdish refugees and the Middle East peace process with European Community Foreign Ministers.

April 18-20, 1991

Israel

Jerusalem

Discussed the Middle East peace process with senior Israeli officials and Palestinian representatives.

April 20, 1991

Jordan

Aqaba

Discussed the Middle East peace process with King Hussein.

April 20-21, 1991

Egypt

Cairo

Discussed the Middle East peace process with President Mubarak and Foreign Minister Abdel-Meguid.

April 21-22, 1991

Saudi Arabia

Jeddah

Discussed the Middle East peace process with King Fahd and Foreign Minister Prince Saud.

April 22, 1991

Kuwait

Kuwait City

Discussed postwar economic assistance with the Amir and Crown Prince.

April 22-24, 1991

Syria

Damascus

Discussed the Middle East peace process with Foreign Minister Sharaa.

April 24-25, 1991

U.S.S.R.

Kislovodsk

Discussed the Middle East peace process and implementation of the CFE Treaty with Foreign Minister Bessmertnykh.

April 25-26, 1991

Israel

Jerusalem

Discussed the Middle East peace process with Prime Minister Shamir.

May 11-12, 1991

Syria

Damascus

Discussed the Middle East peace process with President Assad.

May 12-14, 1991

Egypt

Cairo

Discussed the Middle East peace process with President Mubarak and Soviet Foreign Minister Bessmertnykh.

May 14, 1991

Jordan

Amman

Discussed the Middle East peace process with King Hussein.

May 14-16, 1991

Israel

Jerusalem

Discussed the Middle East peace process with Prime Minister Shamir and senior Israeli officials.

May 31-June 1, 1991

Portugal

Lisbon

Witnessed the signing of the Angola Peace Accords.

June 5-7, 1991

Denmark

Copenhagen

Attended NATO Ministerial Meeting.

June 7, 1991

Switzerland

Geneva

Met with Soviet Foreign Minister Bessmertnykh.

June 17-21, 1991

Germany

Berlin, Halle

Attended CSCE Foreign Ministers' Meeting and discussed strategic arms reductions with Soviet Foreign Minister Bessmertnykh.

June 21-22, 1991

Yugoslavia

Belgrade

Met with Prime Minister Markovic and with the presidents of the 6 republics.

June 22, 1991

Albania

Tirane

Met with President Alia and senior officials; addressed the Albanian Parliament.

July 15-18, 1991

United Kingdom

London

Attended Economic Summit Meeting and accompanied President Bush to meetings with Soviet President Gorbachev.

July 18-19, 1991

Syria

Damascus

Discussed a Middle East peace conference with President Assad.

July 19-20, 1991

Egypt

Cairo, Alexandria

Discussed a Middle East peace conference with President Mubarak.

July 20-21, 1991

Saudi Arabia

Jeddah

Discussed a Middle East peace conference with King Fahd.

July 21, 1991

Jordan

Amman

Discussed a Middle East peace conference with King Hussein.

July 21-22, 1991

Israel

Jerusalem

Discussed a Middle East peace conference with Prime Minister Shamir, senior Israeli officials, and Palestinian representatives.

July 23-25, 1991

Malaysia

Kuala Lumpur

Attended meeting of ASEAN Foreign Ministers.

July 25-29, 1991

Mongolia

Ulaanbaatar

Met with senior Mongolian officials, addressed the Mongolian Parliament, and observed wildlife in the Gobi Desert.

July 29-August 1, 1991

U.S.S.R.

Moscow

Attended U.S.-Soviet Summit Meeting.

August 1-2, 1991

Israel

Jerusalem

Discussed a Middle East peace conference with senior Israeli officials and Palestinian representatives.

August 2-3, 1991

Jordan

Amman

Discussed a Middle East peace conference with King Hussein and Foreign Minister Masri.

August 3-4, 1991

Morocco

Rabat

Discussed a Middle East peace conference with King Hassan II and Foreign Minister Filali.

August 4, 1991

Tunisia

Tunis

Discussed a Middle East peace conference with President Ben Ali and Foreign Minister Benyahia. Returned to Morocco afterwards.

August 5, 1991

Algeria

Algiers

Discussed a Middle East peace conference with President Benjedid and Foreign Minister Ghozali.

August 21-22, 1991

Belgium

Brussels

Met with NATO Foreign Ministers to discuss the coup in the Soviet Union.

September 8-9, 1991

Mexico

Mexico, D.F.

Attended meeting of the U.S.-Mexico Binational Commission.

September 10-16, 1991

U.S.S.R.

Moscow, St. Petersburg, Alma Ata

Met with senior officials of the Soviet Union, the Russian Republic, and Kazakhstan. Attended the CSCE Conference on the Human Dimension.

September 14, 1991

Estonia

Tallinn

Met with Chairman Ruutel and Prime Minister Savisaar.

September 14, 1991

Latvia

Riga

Met with President Gorbunovs and Prime Minister Godmanis.

September 14, 1991

Lithuania

Vilnius

Met with President Landsbergis and Prime Minister Vagnorius.

September 16-17, 1991

Israel

Jerusalem

Discussed a Middle East peace conference with senior Israeli officials and Palestinian representatives.

September 17-18, 1991

Egypt

Cairo

Discussed a Middle East peace conference with President Mubarak and Foreign Minister Amr Moussa.

September 18-19, 1991

Syria

Damascus

Discussed a Middle East peace conference with President Assad and Foreign Minister Sharaa.

September 19-20, 1991

Jordan

Amman

Discussed a Middle East peace conference with King Hussein.

September 20, 1991

Syria

Damascus

Discussed a Middle East peace conference with President Assad.

October 13-14, 1991

Egypt

Cairo

Discussed a Middle East peace conference with President Mubarak.

October 14-15, 1991

Jordan

Amman

Discussed a Middle East peace conference with King Hussein.

October 15-16, 1991

Syria

Damascus

Discussed a Middle East peace conference with President Assad.

October 16-19, 1991

Israel

Jerusalem

Discussed a Middle East peace conference with senior Israeli officials and Palestinian representatives. Also met with Soviet Foreign Minister Pankin and announced a Middle East Peace Conference.

October 19, 1991

Spain

Madrid

Discussed arrangements for a Middle East Peace Conference with senior Spanish officials.

October 22-23, 1991

France

Paris

Attended the signing of the Cambodian Comprehensive Peace Accords and discussed normalization of relations with Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguenyn.

October 29- November 3, 1991

Spain

Madrid

Accompanied President Bush to a meeting with Soviet President Gorbachev and to the opening session of the Middle East Peace Conference.

November 6-8, 1991

Italy

Rome

Accompanied President Bush to a NATO Summit Meeting.

November 8-9, 1991

Netherlands

The Hague

Accompanied President Bush to an European Community Summit Meeting.

November 10-12, 1991

Japan

Tokyo

Met with Prime Minister Miyazawa and Foreign Minister Watanabe.

November 12-15, 1991

South Korea

Seoul

Attended Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Conference.

November 15-17, 1991

China, People's Republic of

Beijing

Met with President Yang and senior Chinese officials.

December 15-17, 1991

U.S.S.R.

Moscow

Met with senior Soviet and Russian officials.

December 17, 1991

Kirghizia

Bishkek

Met with President Akiev.

December 17, 1991

Kazakhstan

Alma Ata

Met with President Nazarbayev.

December 18, 1991

Byelorussia

Minsk

Soviet Chairman Shuskevich and Foreign Minister Kravchenko.

December 18-19, 1991

Ukraine

Kiev

Met with President Kravchuk.

December 19-21, 1991

Belgium

Brussels

Attended NATO Ministerial Meeting and met with Foreign Ministers of the European Community.

January 16, 1992

Mexico

Mexico, D.F.

Attended the signing of the Salvadoran Peace Treaty.

January 16-17, 1992

El Salvador

San Salvador

Addressed the Salvadoran National Assembly.

January 17, 1992

Nicaragua

Managua

Met with President Chamorro.

January 27-29, 1992

Russia

Moscow

Attended Middle East peace conference.

January 30, 1992

Czechoslovakia

Prague

Attended CSCE Council of Ministers Meeting.

February 9-10, 1992

Germany

Frankfurt

Attended ceremonies inaugurating emergency aid to the former Soviet republics.

February 11, 1992

Moldova

Kishenev

Met with President Snegur.

February 11-12, 1992

Armenia

Yerevan

Met with President Ter-Petrossian.

February 12, 1992

Azerbaijan

Baku

Met with President Mutalibov and discussed possible establishment of diplomatic relations.

February 12, 1992

Tajikistan

Dushanbe

Met with President Nabiyeu and discussed possible establishment of diplomatic relations.

February 12-13, 1992

Turkmenistan

Ashkhabad

Met with President Niyazov.

February 14-15, 1992

Russia

Yekaterinburg Chelyabinsk-70
Met with former Soviet nuclear scientists.

February 15-16, 1992
Uzbekistan
Tashkent, Samarkand
Met with President Karimov and Uzbek political leaders.

February 16-18, 1992
Russia
Moscow
Discussed strategic arms reductions with President Yeltsin and Foreign Minister Kozyrev.

March 9-11, 1992
Belgium
Brussels
Attended NATO Ministerial Meeting and met with North Atlantic Cooperation Council Foreign Ministers. Discussed peace-keeping efforts in Yugoslavia with European Community Foreign Ministers, and strategic arms reductions with Russian Foreign Minister Kozyrev.

May 22-23, 1992
United Kingdom
London
Met with Prime Minister Major.

May 23-24, 1992
Portugal
Lisbon
Attended Conference on Assistance to the New Independent States. Signed protocol making Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine parties to the START Treaty.

May 25-26, 1992
Georgia
Tbilisi
Met with State Council Chairman Shevardnadze and Prime Minister Sigua.

June 11-12, 1992
United Kingdom
London
Discussed strategic arms reductions with Russian Foreign Minister Kozyrev.

July 5, 1992
Poland
Warsaw
Accompanied President Bush on a visit.

July 5-8, 1992
Germany
Munich
Accompanied President Bush to the Economic Summit Meeting and to meetings with Russian President Yeltsin.

July 8-10, 1992
Finland
Helsinki
Accompanied President Bush to the CSCE Summit Meeting.

July 19-21, 1992

Israel
Jerusalem

Discussed the Middle East peace process with Prime Minister Rabin, Israeli officials, and Palestinian representatives.

July 21, 1992

Jordan
Amman

Discussed the Middle East peace process and the Iraq crisis with King Hussein.

July 21-22, 1992

Syria
Damascus

Discussed the Middle East peace process and the Iraq crisis with President Assad.

July 22, 1992

Egypt
Cairo

Discussed the Middle East peace process and the Iraq crisis with President Mubarak.

July 22-23, 1992

Syria
Damascus

Discussed the Middle East peace process and the Iraq crisis with President Assad.

July 23, 1992

Lebanon
Zahle

Discussed the Middle East peace process and the Taif Accord with President Hrawi.

July 23-24, 1992

Saudi Arabia
Jeddah

Discussed the Middle East peace process and the Iraq crisis with King Fahd and Foreign Minister Prince Saud.

July 24, 1992

Maldives
Male

Met with President Gayoom en route to the Philippines.

July 25-26, 1992

Philippines
Manila

Attended ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference.



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By THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN

Published: October 20, 1991

With an Arab-Israeli peace conference now virtually certain to take place, what are the prospects that it will actually produce something?

American, Arab and Israeli diplomats are not hiding the fact that they really have no answer to that question. Their attention has been so focused on the exhausting effort to organize the conference that little original or in-depth thought has been given to what can realistically be achieved once the parties get to the table.

Few diplomats doubt that when the conference opens here on Oct. 30, it will appear at first blush to be a breakthrough to a dead end. Syria, Jordan, the Palestinians and Lebanon are expected to demand territory occupied by Israel. Israel will decline. The Arabs will call for American pressure on Israel. Israel will say this is not what the conference was supposed to be about, and the whole enterprise will explode in a cacophony of conflicting demands and finger-pointing. A One-Act Play?

So Act One is already written. The question, American officials say, is whether there can be an Act Two.

"One should not predict the demise of this conference too quickly," said Stephen P. Cohen of the Montreal-based Center for Middle East Peace. "The same combination of international pressures which forced the parties to the table in the first place will apply to keeping them there after it starts. It is not going to be easy for anybody to just walk away."

In seeking to organize the conference, the United States was initially driven by President Bush's desire to prove that the Persian Gulf war could produce something beyond the destruction of half of the Iraqi Army and the restoration of the Kuwaiti monarchy, American officials say.

The peace conference, which Secretary of State James A. Baker 3d discussed with Spanish officials today on a stop here on his way home from the Middle East, has been arranged totally at the initiative of Washington, and not through the efforts of the Middle East parties themselves.

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After nearly eight months, the United States appears to have succeeded in persuading Arabs and Israelis to come to the table by manipulating pressures on the participants that grew out of the end of the cold war and the end of the gulf war.

The splintering of the Soviet Union left Syria an orphan, desperately interested in a new relationship with Washington and ready to pay for it by agreeing to direct talks with Israel. Pressures on Israel

An influx of Soviet Jewish emigres left Israel so strapped for cash to take care of them that it could not afford to spurn the Bush Administration's demand for a peace conference. The Iraqi missile attacks on Israeli cities during the gulf war drove home to Israelis as never before the need to end the regional conflict.

Jordan and the Palestinians were left economically impoverished and diplomatically isolated by their support for Iraq in the gulf war. When the Bush Administration offered them a parole on the condition that they attend the conference on the United States' terms, they seized the opportunity.

Adding to the pressures were the end of the cold war and the new relationship between President Bush and President Mikhail S. Gorbachev of the Soviet Union, who are expected to meet in Madrid before the conference convenes. The new cooperation between Moscow and Washington in the gulf war also gave Mr. Baker unparalleled tools for diplomatic maneuvering in the Middle East.

The Soviet Union, for instance, was ready to squeeze the Syrians and Palestinians on Washington's behalf and to restore relations with Israel to promote the conference. The Saudis, who were beholden to Washington for the American role in the gulf war, used their influence with Damascus.

Such tools can build a conference. Can they build peace agreements?

Neither Lebanon nor Syria, nor Jordan or the Palestinians, is approaching the talks with the philosophy that inspired President Anwar Sadat of Egypt to make peace with Israel in the late 1970's. That philosophy was based first on a gesture of complete reconciliation -- which in Mr. Sadat's case meant coming to Jerusalem -- and then an offer of full security guarantees in return for an Israeli withdrawal from all lands occupied in the 1967 war. The Least Contact Possible

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Tuesday, December 4, 2007

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THE MIDDLE EAST TALKS; Rocket Hits Embassy in Lebanon

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Published: October 30, 1991

A rocket fired from a hillside blasted the wall of the United States Embassy compound in East Beirut today, on the eve of the Arab-Israeli peace conference in Madrid.

The explosion caused no casualties or serious damage to the embassy building, which is in the Christian suburb of Aukur, said a Lebanese guard who answered the telephone at the embassy.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack. But Iranian and Arab extremists have promised to attack targets of the United States, which is a sponsor of the conference, and others taking part in it. Extremists oppose the meeting because it could lead to Arab recognition for Israel.

Minutes after the blast, Lebanese army troops and police officers set up a cordon around the embassy and turned away reporters and photographers. No embassy officials were available for comment. The Ambassador to Lebanon, Ryan Crocker, was in Madrid with the American delegation to the conference.

All embassy functions were moved to east Beirut site after the American compound in Muslim west Beirut was destroyed by two truck bombs in 1983 and 1984. The suicide attacks by the Islamic Holy War organization left 74 people dead, including 21 Americans, and 196 wounded.

Islamic Holy War is one of the Shiite Muslim factions holding kidnapped Western hostages in

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Lebanon. The groups are believed to be under the loose control of the Party of God.

Sheik Abbas Musawi, secretary general of the Party of God, proclaimed a day of mourning for Wednesday to mark the opening of the peace talks, which he denounced as an effort by Israel to buy time to "bring in more Jewish immigrants and create more settlements in occupied territories."

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THE MIDDLE EAST TALKS; MIDEAST FOES LIST DEMANDS AND TRADE ANGRY CHARGES ACROSS CONFERENCE TABLE

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By R. W. APPLE JR.,
Published: November 1, 1991

In salvos of intransigent oratory, Israel and its Arab neighbors said today that they all hoped to end the bloodshed in their region, but disagreed about almost everything else -- who was at fault, what to do about it, even where further peace talks should be held.

On a day when the Palestinians at last found their place at a major Middle East peace conference, the Arabs demanded that Israel stop creating settlements in occupied territories and give up territory it had taken from Arabs in 1967. The Israelis in turn demanded that the Arabs recognize Israel's right to exist.

Each accused the other of deception, brutality, treachery and aggression, exactly as they have done for most of the 43 years that they have been at each other's throats. Both Sides Listen

But for the first time, representatives of much of the Arab world listened across the same table to an Israeli leader denouncing them, remaining in their chairs throughout, and the Israeli leader, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, listened to their replies. He stayed put even though the Palestinian delegates identified themselves in so many words with the Palestine Liberation Organization, something the Israelis had said could prompt them to walk out.

In one especially heated passage, Farouk al-Sharaa, the Syrian Foreign Minister, accused Mr. Shamir of "faking facts and history." [Excerpts from speeches, pages A10 and A11.]

In reply, at a later news conference, Benjamin Netanyahu, an Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister, accused the Arabs of complicity with Hitler, Himmler, Ribbentrop and Eichmann in planning the Holocaust, and said Syria had spoken in terms of "vituperation, slander and condescension." Less Rigidity Expected

"These are just their opening statements, maximalist bargaining positions," a senior American official said. "A lot of it is for television and the political audiences back home. People will start to soften their ideological rigidity once face-to-face negotiations get under

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Brazilians Giving Up Their American Dream

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way."

But other top-level Americans who have worked for months to bring Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and the Palestinians together in Madrid expressed disappointment at what one called the "truculent tone" of today's speeches. None could point to any overt sign that the participants were ready to yield ground in the private, direct talks scheduled to start Sunday.

Indeed, it was unclear when, where and even whether those talks would begin. The Israelis and the Arabs remained deadlocked tonight, despite mediation efforts by Secretary of State James A. Baker 3d, over Mr. Shamir's demand that they be held in the Middle East, with a first round in Israel. The Arabs insisted that the plan had always been to negotiate in Madrid and argued that they would be recognizing Israel, in effect, by going there.

There was even some doubt expressed that the single organizational session that everyone had agreed to for Sunday at the Royal Palace in Madrid would go forward as planned.

The Palestinians said explicitly for the first time that they would accept limited self-rule in the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip as an interim stop on the way to statehood. In accepting the terms of invitation to the conference, they had implicitly said the same thing, but some saw an incremental step forward.

Israel accepts the idea of limited autonomy, which it had agreed to in the 1978 Camp David agreement with Egypt and the United States, but rejects the idea of Palestinian sovereignty. Nonetheless, there has been very tentative talk among the Palestinian delegates and others here in the last 48 hours of some form of eventual confederation, possibly economic, possibly economic and political, involving Jordan, Israel and some sort of Palestinian entity. Jordan Faults Radicals

There was also a small conciliatory note from Jordan. Its delegate urged both sides to work for "the dawn of a new era" and pointedly called on Arab radicals to shed their rigid ideologies.

So the initial two days of the conference here, the first of which was dominated by speeches by Presidents Bush and Mikhail S. Gorbachev, have developed into a microcosm of the Middle East, marked by hopeful words from the great powers, hateful words from the countries of the region and fragile theorizing about what might be. So far, Madrid has been spared the physical violence that has long disfigured the eastern end of the Mediterranean.

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Madrid, Spain- Climate and Weather Information

Below is the weather from Oct. 31, 1996-
the closest year I could find to that of the
conference.

Spring and fall are ideal times to visit nearly all of Spain, with the possible exception of the Atlantic coast, which experiences heavy rains in October and November. May and October are the best months, in terms of both weather and crowds.

In summer it's hot, hot, and hotter still, with the cities in Castile (Madrid) and Andalusia (Seville and Córdoba) heating up the most. Madrid has dry heat; the average temperature can hover around 84°F (29°C) in July and 75°F (24°C) in September. Seville has the dubious reputation of being about the hottest part of Spain in July and August, often baking under average temperatures of 93°F (34°C).

Barcelona, cooler in temperature, is often quite humid. Midsummer temperatures in Majorca often reach 91°F (33°C). The overcrowded Costa Brava has temperatures around 81°F (27°C) in July and August. The Costa del Sol has an average of 77°F (25°C) in summer. The coolest spot in Spain is the Atlantic coast from San Sebastián to La Coruña, with temperatures in the 70s in July and August.

August remains the major vacation month in Europe. The traffic from France, the Netherlands, and Germany to Spain becomes a veritable migration, and low-cost hotels along the coastal areas are virtually impossible to find. To compound the problem, many restaurants and shops also decide it's time for a vacation, thereby limiting the visitors' selections for both dining and shopping.

In winter, the coast from Algeciras to Málaga is the most popular, with temperatures reaching a warm 60°F to 63° F (16°C-17°C). Madrid gets cold, as low as 34°F (1°C). Majorca is warmer, usually in the 50s, but it often dips into the 40s. Some mountain resorts can experience extreme cold.

Below is a photo taken of the beach in San Sebastian, Spain

October311996Go»

DailyWeeklyMonthlyCustom

Actual:Average :Record :

Temperature:

Mean50°F

Temperature/10°C

Max68°F

Temperature/20°C

Min32°F

Temperature/0°C

Degree Days:

Heating15

Degree Days

Moisture:

Dew Point34°F

/1°C

AverageHumidity64

MaximumHumidity100

MinimumHumidity33

Precipitation:

Precipitation0.00 in

/0.0 cm

Sea Level Pressure:

Sea Level30.42 in

Pressure1030 hPa

Wind:

1 mph

Wind Speed/2 km/h

Max Wind7 mph

Speed/11 km/h



Max Gust Speed T = Trace of Precipitation, MM = Missing Value	Source: Averaged Metar Reports	



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United States of America

George H.W. Bush, President
James A. Baker III, Secretary of State

Egypt

Amre Moussa, Minister of Foreign Affairs

The Netherlands

Hans Van Den Broek, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Israel

Yitzhak Shamir, Prime Minister

Palestine

Yasser Arafat, President
Dr. Haider Abdul Shafi, Head of Delegation

Syria

Farouk Al-Shara, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Jordan

Dr.Kamel Abu Jaber, Foreign Minister

Lebanon

Fares Boueiz, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Soviet Union

Mikhail Gorbachev, President
Boris D. Pankin, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Spain

Felipe Gonzalez





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The Madrid Peace Talks: A Place of History-Past and Present

The date was Oct. 30, 1991 and the venue was Madrid, Spain. American New World Order diplomacy eventually succeeded in bringing Muslim Arab countries to their knees. They were forced to negotiate a peace agreement with the Jewish occupied state of Israel. now LET'S GO 500 YEARS BACK IN

HISTORY. It was on Nov. 25, 1491, in the same land of Spain, where a similar "Peace Agreement" was brokered at Gharnata, which is situated 200 miles South of Madrid. Here too, a Muslim Arab leader, Abu Abdullah Muhammad, ruler of the last Spanish Muslim state, succumbed to pressure because of constant siege, fear of hunger and starvation. The Muslim Arab ruler affixing his signature on an agreement to bring peace, agreed to lay down arms before armies of Ferdinand and Isabella, then rulers of Christian Spain. By virtue of this agreement, Abu Abdullah promised to hand over Gharnata, the castle of Al-Hamra and all weapons to Christians within 60 days.

Interestingly, all talks that took place between Abu Abdullah and his advisers regarding the peace agreement were kept secret as was done in the recent Madrid talks.

On seeing the conquering armies enter Gharnata, Abu Abdullah

got down from his horse, held its reins in his hands and most humbly handed over the keys of the city to the Christians, saying, "these keys are the last symbols of Muslim power in Spain. Take them because according to God's pre-determination, our lives, our country and our possessions are all yours. I hope you will deal with us in the manner you promised." Ferdinand assured Abu Abdullah that "He will fulfill all promises made to the Muslims"

(Ehsan-ul-Haq in *Muslim Europe*, pp. 293)

A silver cross was displayed on the highest point of Al-Hamra and a gradual but discreet process was initiated to remove vestiges of 781-year-old Muslim rule over Spain. The peace agreement had guaranteed Muslims:

- . Protection of person and property;
- . Their right to practice their religion;
- . To wear their local costume;
- . To speak their own language;
- . To adopt their own rites and celebrate their festivals;
- . To decide their matters according to the Shari'ah;
- . Their custody shall remain over Mosques and Auqaf; and
- . No tax will be deducted from Muslims for Urce years and even after that no new tax will be imposed

The Christian rulers never intended to fulfill promises they had made to one as loyal and faithful as Abu Abdullah. He had been promised rule over the area of Al-Basharat, but instead was banished to Morocco. Muslims were given options either to embrace Christianity or face extermination, as cruelty towards them had become order of the day. In 1499, Muslims who refused to change faith were ordered to leave Spain. In 1502, all

rogue Muslims were ordered to be executed. This way, all Muslims, excepting those who adopted Christianity, were either burnt alive, murdered, or expelled from Spain. In short span of a few years following the 1491 Peace Agreement, not a soul in Spain professed faith in Allah and the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). The agreement had thus annihilated remains of Muslims from territory where they had magnanimously ruled for over 781 years.

The Madrid Conference of 1991-Time to Reconcile?

Why was the 1991 Middle East Peace Conference held in Spain? A definite answer to this question is difficult. There may be many factors behind the choice of this venue. However, it would not be mere wishful thinking that those who fixed the venue had Spain's 500th anniversary in their mind commemorating the time when Muslims were wiped off Spain. It would not be gainsaying, keeping human psychology in view, that there was mockery in selecting this site as a venue for peace talks between pro-Israeli Western powers and the Muslim Arabs. It becomes all the more crystallized when one considers how meticulously birthdays are celebrated in Western culture. In this background, was it a message adapted from history which the West wanted to convey to the Muslim Arab participants to the peace talks? Or, was it the intention of vested interests to put psychological pressure on them? Were the peace talks, harbinger of

vengeance, an example of which was the fall of Gharnata?

We will find no difference if we compare the situation that prevailed in 1491 and the Muslims' circumstances in 1991. Arabs are against Turks, Iraq against Kuwait, Egyptians against Yemenis, Punjabis against Bengalis – they are all Muslims up in arms against their brethren. The deplorable Muslim condition centuries before is what we find even today. Western secular Christian powers have always been instrumental in keeping Muslims polarized with a view to keep them under their dominance. The Madrid Conference started in the aftermath of the Gulf War. What actually happened there? Arabs fought Arabs, or precisely Muslims killed their Muslim brethren. The Western countries first jointly armed Iraq. When it became a power to reckon with, it was destroyed. In Jordan, Palestinians were killed en-masse in *Black September*, an offensive was launched by Syria in Lebanon, Palestinians were murdered in Beirut's refugee camps, while a large number of Palestinians were arrested by Jordanians in the Gaza Strip. Who were the perpetrators of these onslaughts and who were the victims. Were they all not Muslims? Why should the Palestinians not adopt similar policies if Egypt can go to Camp David with out them and if Saudi Arabia and Kuwait openly announce they are ready for peace with Israel, whether Palestinians come to the talks table or not.

Information taken from: *Islam and the West: Middle East Peace Talks* by Khurram Murad

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The Madrid Framework

Today's Middle East peace negotiations are being carried out within the structure of the Madrid Framework. This framework, described in the Letter of Invitation to the Madrid Conference, is the product of intensive diplomatic efforts carried out in the region immediately following the [Gulf War](#).

The framework consists of three basic elements:

1. The Opening Conference

The [Madrid invitation](#) called for the convening of an opening conference, in order to inaugurate two separate yet parallel negotiating tracks -- the bilateral track and the multilateral track. The conference was designed to serve as a opening forum for all the participants, having no power to impose solutions or veto agreements. The Madrid Conference, hosted by the Government of Spain and co-sponsored by the U.S. and Russia (then the USSR), opened on October 30, 1991 and lasted for three days.

The opening addresses by hosts, co-sponsors and participating delegations reflect the aspirations of each. This conference may only be reconvened with the agreement of all participants.

2. The Bilateral Track

The bilateral negotiations are meant to resolve the conflicts of the past. The first_ever direct talks between Israel and her immediate

Arab neighbors opened in Madrid on November 3, 1991, immediately following the Madrid Conference. Over a dozen formal rounds of bilateral talks were subsequently hosted by the US Department of State in Washington.

These talks are, in fact, four separate sets of bilateral negotiations. While the talks with the three Arab states are aimed at achieving peace treaties, the negotiations between [Israel and the Palestinians](#) are based on a two-stage formula: 5-year interim self-government arrangements, to be followed by negotiations on the permanent status issues.

- [Israel-Jordan](#)
- [Israel-Palestinians](#)
- [Israel-Syria](#)
- [Israel-Lebanon](#)

3. The Multilateral Track

The [multilateral negotiations](#) are meant to build the Middle East of the future, while building confidence among the regional parties. These talks, which opened in Moscow in January 1992, include five separate forums attended by delegations from countries in the region as well as representatives of the international community. The negotiations focus on key issues that concern the entire Middle East -- water, environment, arms control, refugees and economic development. The talks have taken place in working groups which meet periodically in venues throughout the world, including the Middle East.

The Madrid Framework

Inaugurated at the
MADRID CONFERENCE
October 30 - November 1, 1991
October 30 - November 1, 1991

BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS

Israel-Palestinians	Israel-Jordan	Israel-Syria	Israel-Lebanon
Interim Self-Government Arrangements for 5 years			
Permanent Status	Peace Treaty Signed: Oct 26, 1994	Peace Treaty	Peace Treaty
• The purpose of the bilateral negotiations is to resolve the conflicts of the past. • The goal of the talks with the Arab states is to conclude bilateral peace treaties. • The talks with the Palestinians are aimed at achieving a settlement in two stages, over five years.			

MULTILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS				
Steering Committee				
Working Groups				
Economic Cooperation & Development	Environment	Water	Refugees	Arms Control & Regional Security
• The purpose of the multilateral talks is to build the Middle East of the future. • Issues of regional concern are discussed in a forum which fosters cooperation and builds confidence between the parties.				

Source: [Israeli Foreign Ministry](http://www.mfa.gov.il/)

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MIDDLE EAST PEACE CHRONOLOGY

FROM 1978-PRESENT



2002-2007

November 20, 2007

The United States invites 49 nations, organizations and individuals to attend the [November 26-28 Middle East Peace Conference](#) at the U.S. Naval Academy campus in Annapolis, Maryland, about 80.5 kilometers outside Washington.

July 16, 2007

President Bush calls for a [Middle East Peace Conference](#) in the fall to be led by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and to include Palestinians, Israelis and regional neighbors who support creation of a Palestinian state, as well as new aid measures to support the West Bank-based government of Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad.

June 27, 2007

Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair becomes the first special representative for the Quartet. He will represent the diplomatic grouping and support Palestinian state-building efforts.

September 20, 2006

President Bush meets with the Palestinian president on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly, reiterating U.S. support for a two-state solution.

March 1, 2005

Members of the Quartet — the United Nations, Russia, the European Union and the United States — convene in London for the Meeting on Supporting the Palestinian Authority. The Quartet calls for continued financial support from the international community and encourages preparations for a future pledging conference.

February 8, 2005

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas — also known as Abu Mazen — agree to a ceasefire at the summit at Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt. The summit, which was hosted by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Jordan's King Abdullah II, is the first high-level meeting between Palestinian and Israeli leaders in over four years.

January 9, 2005

Mahmoud Abbas wins the Palestinian presidential elections with 62.3 percent of the votes cast.

November 11, 2004

Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat dies at age 75.

April 14, 2004

President Bush [sends a letter](#) to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon welcoming Israel's plan to withdraw settlements from Gaza and parts of the West Bank and reaffirming the United States' commitment to the road map.

June 3 - 4, 2003

Red Sea Summit held in Aqaba, Jordan.

May 10 - 13, 2003

Secretary Powell travels to the Middle East to discuss implementing President Bush's road map for peace between Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

May 1, 2003

Mahmoud Abbas is confirmed as the first Palestinian Prime Minister.

April 30, 2003

The [road map](#) to a permanent solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is released. The road map sets forth a sequence of steps toward the goals outlined by President Bush during his [June 24, 2002, speech](#).

1997-2002

October 1, 2002

President Bush signs the Foreign Affairs Authorization Act for fiscal year 2003 and maintains that the status of Jerusalem must be negotiated by the Israelis and Palestinians.

September 12, 2002

President Bush, addressing the United Nations General Assembly, underscored his commitment to the establishment of an independent and democratic Palestinian state "living side by side with Israel in peace and security."

August 8, 2002

Secretary of State Powell met in Washington with a Palestinian delegation including Chief Negotiator Saeb Erekat, Interior Minister Abdel Razak Yehiyeh and Economic and Trade Minister Maher Masri.

August 1, 2002

President Bush meets with Jordan's King Abdullah in Washington. Bush also met briefly with Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, who was at the White House for discussion with National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice.

June 24, 2002

President Bush, speaking from the White House, [calls for new Palestinian leadership](#) and pledges that, "when the Palestinian people have new leaders, new institutions, and new security arrangements with their neighbors, the United States of America will support the creation of a Palestinian state whose borders and certain aspects of its sovereignty will be provisional until resolved as part of a final settlement in the Middle East." Bush also calls for an end to terrorism, increased humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people, and the normalization of relations between Israel and the Arab World.

May 2, 2002

The United States, United Nations, European Union, and Russia announce plans to arrange for the distribution of humanitarian aid and establish more effective security arrangements in the region.

April 4, 2002

President Bush, speaking from the White House, outlines his vision for a resolution of the Palestinian/Israeli conflict and announces Secretary of State Powell will travel to the region, seeking an end to terrorism and violence.

March 27, 2002

The Arab League, meeting in Beirut, adopts the proposal of Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah endorsing a peaceful two-state settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

March 12, 2002

The United Nations Security Council adopts Resolution 1397, endorsing a "vision of a region where two states, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders." The resolution, introduced by the United States, is the first Security Council resolution to refer to Palestinian statehood.

February 18, 2002

President Bush supports a Saudi proposal to normalize Arab relations with Israel in exchange for withdrawal to its 1967 borders. The proposal first appeared February 17, 2002, in "The New York Times".

November 19, 2001

Secretary Powell, in a speech delivered at University of Louisville, Kentucky, outlines U.S. policy to help achieve peace between Arabs and Israelis. He underscores U.S. support for a vision of a region where two states, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders.

November 10, 2001

Speaking before the United Nations General Assembly, President Bush states the U.S. will work "toward a day when two states, Israel and Palestine, live peacefully together within secure and recognize borders as called for by the Security Council resolutions."

September 26, 2001

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Palestinian Chairman Arafat agree to a ceasefire and promise to resume joint security initiatives.

July 19, 2001

The Group of Eight (G-8) foreign ministers, meeting in Genoa, issue a statement calling for the implementation of the Mitchell Report recommendations.

June 26, 2001

President Bush and Prime Minister Sharon meet in Washington to discuss implementation of the Mitchell Report.

April 30, 2001

The Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee, chaired by former U.S. Senator George J. Mitchell, issues its [final report](#) on how the Israeli-Palestinian conflict might be solved. The report calls for an immediate cease-fire, a renunciation of terrorism and a resumption of peace

talks, as well as a freeze on construction of Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza.

February 25, 2001

Secretary of State Powell meets with Prime Minister Sharon in Jerusalem and Chairman Arafat in Ramallah.

November 7, 2000

Former U.S. Senator George Mitchell is asked by President Clinton to chair a fact-finding commission to look into the causes of recent violence between Israelis and Palestinians.

October 17, 2000

Arafat and Barak attend meeting in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt arranged by president Clinton and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to discuss a cease-fire and pullback of Israeli forces.

October 4, 2000

Israeli PM Barak and Palestinian leader Arafat meet with Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and French President Jacques Chirac in Paris.

July 11-25, 2000

President Clinton hosts meeting between Israeli and Palestinian leadership to address the most difficult of final status issues, including Jerusalem and the return of Palestinian refugees.

March 21, 2000

Palestinian-Israeli talks commence at Bolling Air Force Base near Washington, DC and last one week. The U.S. facilitates discussion of permanent status issues in an effort to help the parties reach a comprehensive agreement by September 13, 2000.

January 3, 2000

Delegations from Israel and Syria, again led by PM Barak and Foreign Minister Al-Shara, gather in Shepherdstown, West Virginia for a further week of talks. Differences remain, and Secretary Albright announces the postponement of a third round of talks.

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December 15, 1999

President Clinton welcomes Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq Al-Shara to the White House prior to the resumption of direct negotiations suspended in 1996. The parties hold two days of talks and agree to a second round in January.

September 24, 1999

Representatives of regional and international parties, led by Secretary of State Albright, gather in New York as Partners in Peace to demonstrate their strong and unwavering support for the Middle East Peace Process.

July 14 - 20, 1999

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak visits the U.S. for the first time since taking office July 6. He and President Clinton pledge to make peace a top priority. PM Barak also meets in Washington with Secretary of State Albright, Secretary of Defense Cohen and other U.S.

May 17, 1999

Ehud Barak is elected Prime Minister of Israel, defeating Benjamin Netanyahu 56% to 44% in direct voting.

May 17 - 20, 1999

King Abdullah II of Jordan makes his first visit to the United States since succeeding his father, the late King Hussein.

February 7, 1999

King Hussein of Jordan dies of cancer in Amman. His son, King Abdullah II, succeeds him. President Clinton issues a proclamation honoring the legacy of King Hussein, and joins world leaders at the late king's funeral in Amman February 8.

December 12 - 15, 1998

President Clinton visits the Palestinian Authority and Israel. Following an historic address to the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) in Gaza, the President witnesses a PLC vote "fully and forever" rejecting conflict with Israel and revoking articles of the Palestinian Charter calling for the destruction of Israel.

November 30, 1998

President Clinton hosts a Middle East Donors Conference in Washington at which some 40 nations pledge over \$3 billion in economic assistance to the Palestinian Authority. The President will seek Congress' approval for an additional U.S. contribution of \$400 million over the next five years.

October 15 - 23, 1998

President Clinton, Secretary Albright and other U.S. officials broker intensive negotiations

between Israel and the Palestinian Authority at the Wye River Conference Center on Maryland's Eastern Shore. A final, all-night session results in agreement upon the Wye River Memorandum, which is signed at the White House on October 23.

September 28, 1998

Prime Minister Netanyahu and Chairman Arafat meet at the White House with President Clinton, who announces that Secretary Albright will return to the region for a further push to get direct Israeli-Palestinian negotiations back on track.

January 20 - 22, 1998

President Clinton meets separately with Prime Minister Netanyahu and Chairman Arafat in Washington in an attempt to re-energize the peace process.

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1991-1997

May 31, 1996

Likud Party leader Benjamin Netanyahu becomes prime minister of Israel, having defeated Labor's Shimon Peres in early elections called after the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin.

April 30, 1996

President Clinton and Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres sign a U.S.-Israeli Counterterrorism Accord at the White House.

March 13, 1996

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak hosts a "Summit of the Peacemakers" in Sharm El-Sheikh to call for a halt to extremism and violence.

November 4, 1995

Israeli Prime Minister Yizhak Rabin is assassinated following a peace rally in Tel Aviv by an Israeli university student, Yigal Amir.

September 28, 1995

The Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip is signed in Washington, DC. The agreement contains 31 articles and seven annexes (redeployment and security, elections, civil affairs, legal matters, economic relations, cooperation programs, and prisoner release). Following the signing, President Clinton hosts a summit attended by King Hussein, President Mubarak, Prime Minister Rabin, and Chairman Arafat. The leaders review progress toward a comprehensive peace and ways to reinforce and accelerate that progress.

May 24, 1995

Secretary of State Christopher announces that Israel and Syria have reached a set of understandings on security arrangements.

October 26, 1994

The Treaty of Peace between the State of Israel and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, which had been initialed on October 17 by Israeli Prime Minister Rabin and Jordanian Prime Minister Majali, is signed at the White House. President Clinton's participation in the signing ceremony underscores the U.S. commitment to the peace process.

August 29, 1994

The Agreement on the Preparatory Transfer of Powers and Responsibilities is signed at Erez, a checkpoint between Israel and the Gaza Strip. The expansion of Palestinian self-rule in the West Bank over education, taxation, social welfare, tourism, and health was completed by December 1994.

July 25, 1994

The Washington Declaration, embracing the underlying principles of the Israel-Jordan Common Agenda, is signed in Washington, DC.

May 4, 1994

At a ceremony in Cairo, Prime Minister Rabin and Chairman Arafat sign the Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area. The new agreement sets out terms for implementation of the Declaration of Principles and includes annexes on withdrawal of Israeli military forces and security arrangements, civil affairs, legal matters, and economic relations.

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September 14, 1993

The Israel-Jordan Common Agenda is agreed in Washington, DC, marking the end of the state of war between the two nations and paving the way for talks leading to a formal peace treaty.

September 13, 1993

A new page in the history of the Middle East is turned at the White House, as Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat meet and watch Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres PLO Executive Council Member Abou Abbas sign the agreement. President Bill Clinton, former presidents George Bush and Jimmy Carter, and 3,000 dignitaries witness the signing — on the same desk used in the signing of the Camp David accords 15 years earlier.

September 10, 1993

- Arafat letter is hand-carried to Israel by Norwegian Foreign Minister Johan Joergen Holst, whose country brokered the PLO-Israel pact.
- Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin signs a document recognizing the PLO, and opens the way to a signing ceremony August 13 in Washington.
- President Clinton calls the Oslo agreement "a bold breakthrough." "Today marks a shining moment of hope for the people of the Middle East; indeed, of the entire world," he says, pledging continued direct engagement of the United States in the peace process.
- European leaders, including French president Francois Mitterrand and British Prime Minister John Major give strong endorsements to the Israel-PLO mutual recognition accord, but caution that much remains to be done.
- Belgian Foreign Minister Willy Claes, representing the European Community's (EC) current presidency, says he will immediately start consultations with his EC counterparts and the executive European Commission to intensify the Community's contribution to the Middle East peace process. The EC is already the largest donor of aid to the Palestinians.

September 9, 1993

- Israel and the PLO agree to recognize each other after 45 years of conflict, building on a pact already initialed on Palestinian self-rule in the Israeli-occupied Gaza Strip and in Jericho.
- PLO leader Yasser Arafat signs a letter recognizing Israel and renouncing violence.

August 31, 1993

Eleventh round opens with the Israelis announcement on secret talks with PLO in Oslo and an initialed accord on self-rule for Palestinians in Gaza Strip and Jericho.

August 29, 1993

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres tells his cabinet that he has reached an agreement with the PLO on Palestinian autonomy in Gaza and Jericho.

August 26, 1993

PLO says it has reached provisional agreement in secret talks with Israel on partial autonomy in occupied territories.

January 28 - 29, 1992

The organizational meeting for multilateral talks on regional issues such as arms control, refugees and the environment is held in Moscow. Rounds one, two and three convene in 1992 in Lisbon and London.

January 7 - 16, 1992

The United States hails as another "step forward" when Israeli and Jordanian/Palestinian delegates resolve procedural differences that allow the third round of talks to resume. Israeli representatives meet separately with Lebanese, Syrian and Jordanian/Palestinian delegations.

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1988-1991

December 11, 1991

Direct bilateral negotiations between Israel and separate delegations from Syria and Lebanon proceed; Israeli and Lebanese delegations characterize two sessions of talks as "substantive"; but negotiations have not begun between Israel and a joint Palestinian delegation.

December 4, 1991

Palestinian, Jordanian, Lebanese and Syrian delegations arrive on time at the three designated sites to resume direct Middle East negotiations in Washington. The Israeli delegates are absent.

November 29, 1991

Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the Palestinians agree to a joint U.S.-Soviet proposal to resume bilateral talks in Washington on December 4, but Israel says it will not be ready to resume bilateral talks until December 9.

November 1, 1991

Secretary of State Baker in remarks closing the Madrid conference says a breakthrough was achieved with the start of "direct bilateral negotiations." Baker and conference co-sponsor Soviet Foreign Minister Pankin call for direct bilateral negotiations to start immediately.

October 31, 1991

Palestinians, in a joint delegation with Jordan, attend the Madrid talks between Jordan, Syria, Israel and Lebanon. Direct bilateral talks begin among Israel and Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and participants from the occupied territories. Multilateral negotiations begin on arms control,

security, water, refugees, the environment and economic development.

October 30, 1991

Opening the Madrid conference, President Bush says the objective is "to achieve "real peace... security, diplomatic relations, economic relations, trade, investment, cultural exchange, even tourism. We seek a Middle East, where vast resources are no longer devoted to armaments." Outsiders can assist, he says, "but in the end, it is up to the peoples and the governments of the Middle East to shape the future of the Middle East."

October 18, 1991

Secretary of State Baker, at a news conference in Jerusalem, says President Bush and Soviet President Gorbachev are inviting Israel, the Arab states, and the Palestinians to attend a Middle East peace conference to be held beginning October 30 in Madrid. Baker says the conference is to be followed by "direct negotiations to achieve real peace."

March, 1991

President Bush says that Gulf War victory opens "window of opportunity" for resolution of Arab-Israeli conflict. Secretary of State Baker travels to Middle East on first of eight peace missions.

August 2, 1990

Iraq invades and occupies Kuwait. Yasser Arafat's support for Saddam Hussein leads Persian Gulf states to cut off funds to the PLO. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians are forced out of the Gulf states.

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1978-1988

December 1988

Palestine National Council accepts original U.N. partition plan (U.N. General Assembly Resolution 181), Israel's right to exist, and U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 and renounces terrorism. The U.S. opens dialogue with the PLO, the first formal contacts with the PLO in 13 years. The PLO charter is not revised, however. The dialogue lasts two years.

July 30, 1988

King Hussein surrenders Jordan's claim to the West Bank, cuts legal and administrative ties.

February - April 1988

Secretary of State Shultz, in a letter to Prime Minister Shamir, launches shuttle mediation effort, sets a timetable for talks on transitional arrangements and a permanent solution in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The proposal calls for bilateral Arab-Israeli talks following an international conference. It fails to gain support from all parties.

December 9, 1987

Palestinian uprising -- the intifada -- erupts in Gaza, spreads to West Bank.

September 1986

Yitzhak Shamir replaces Shimon Peres as prime minister of Israel.

February 19, 1986

Frustrated by Yasser Arafat's refusal to accept U.N. resolutions as a basis for peace talks, Jordan's King Hussein severs links with the PLO.

September 1985

Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres launches peace initiative centered on Jordan which includes proposal for an international conference; the United States encourages Israeli, Egyptian, and Jordanian diplomatic efforts; Yitzhak Shamir and Likud party oppose conference.

June 1985

Israel completes withdrawal from most of Lebanon, retaining effective control over 12-mile-wide "security zone" in southern Lebanon.

March 5, 1984

Lebanon abrogates Lebanese-Israeli agreement.

February 21, 1984

U.S. forces in Beirut withdraw from Lebanon.

October 1983

U.S. Marine headquarters in Beirut destroyed by terrorist bomb.

May 17, 1983

Israel-Lebanon peace and withdrawal agreement signed, mediated by Secretary of State Shultz and Ambassador Philip Habib.

April 18, 1983

U.S. embassy in Beirut destroyed by terrorist bomb.

September 16, 1982

Lebanese President Bachir Gemayel assassinated; Israeli forces occupy West Beirut; Christian Phalange militia massacre civilian Palestinians near Beirut.

September 9, 1982

The 12th Arab League Summit meeting in Fez, Morocco, calls for Israel's withdrawal from all Arab territories occupied since 1967 including Arab Jerusalem, the removal of Israeli settlements in Arab territories, and confirms the right of self-determination of the Palestinian people under the leadership of the PLO.

September 1, 1982

President Reagan announces U.S. initiative to settle Arab-Israeli conflict, based on earlier Camp David Accords and **UN Resolution 42**

June - August 1982

Lebanon War: Israel attacks Syrian and PLO forces threatening its northern border in Lebanon. Yasser Arafat and PLO followers are forced to evacuate Beirut strongholds. Philip Habib mediates PLO withdrawal agreement. U.S., French, and Italian forces deployed in Beirut to facilitate PLO evacuation.

April 1982

Israel completes withdrawal of forces and civilians from Sinai.

December 14, 1981

Government of Israel extends its law, jurisdiction, and administration to the Golan Heights.

October 6, 1981

Egyptian president Anwar Sadat is assassinated.

March - June 1981

U.S. mediator Philip Habib attempts to defuse Israeli-Syrian confrontation over Syrian SAM missiles in Lebanon; clashes between Israel and PLO elements in Lebanon.

March 1979

Israel and Egypt sign a bilateral peace treaty in Washington under which Israel agrees to hand back Sinai to Egypt. It keeps the Gaza Strip. Arab states impose boycott on Egypt.

September 17, 1978

Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin, with the help of President Jimmy Carter, agree at [Camp David](#) to a framework for peace in the Middle East which offers limited autonomy to Palestinians in occupied territories and sets the framework for an Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty.

The Israel-Jordan Negotiations

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, U.S. President Bill Clinton, and Jordan's King Hussein.



The bilateral talks between Israel and [Jordan](#), initiated at the [Madrid Conference](#), continued for almost two years in Washington until the signing of the [Israeli-Jordanian Common Agenda](#) on September 14, 1993. The Common Agenda constituted the blueprint for the peace treaty, comprising the following components: security, water, refugees and displaced persons, borders and territorial matters.

The first public meeting between [King Hussein](#) and [Prime Minister Rabin](#) took place in Washington, on July 25, 1994. Out of this meeting emerged [The Washington Declaration](#), signed by Prime Minister Rabin and King Hussein, with President Clinton serving as a witness.

The major achievements of the Washington Declaration were a series of agreements and concrete steps symbolizing the new era:





- The state of belligerency between Jordan and Israel was terminated.
- Both states agreed to seek a just, lasting and comprehensive peace based on UN Resolutions [242](#) and [338](#).
- Israel will respect the special role of the Hashemite Kingdom over Muslim holy shrines in [Jerusalem](#).

Concrete steps included the establishment of direct telephone links, joint electricity grids, new border crossings, free access to third country tourists, and cooperation between the police forces in combating crime, with special emphasis on drug smuggling. It was also decided to continue negotiations on bilateral economic cooperation and abolishing economic boycotts, as well as on the opening of an international air corridor between the two countries.

The first meeting in the region of the Israeli and Jordanian bilateral delegations took place on July 18-19, 1994 at Ein Avrona, located in the boundary area north of Aqaba and Eilat. The parties agreed to hold talks on a continuous basis, alternately on the Israeli and Jordanian sides of the border. These talks culminated in the signing of a [Treaty of Peace](#) between Israel and Jordan on October 26, 1994.

With the ratification of the peace treaty full diplomatic relations were established between Israel and Jordan on November 27, 1994. Since that time, relations between Israel and Jordan have been steadily progressing. The Jordanian parliament's action in August 1995 to rescind its adherence to the Arab boycott on Israel, as well as the regional economic conference in Amman in November 1995, served as significant positive indicators for the future.

The open border crossings between the two countries have facilitated the normalization of relations. Joint business ventures are being consistently initiated and the free movement of businessmen, by both land and air, has created an atmosphere of cooperation and open communication. Tourism between the two countries has been on the rise.

The basis for the implementation of the peace treaty with Jordan was set with the 15 bilateral agreements which have since been signed and ratified. These agreements cover the following areas: Environmental Protection, Commerce and Trade, Transportation, Air Transport, Water, Agriculture, Combating Crime and Illicit Drugs, Communications and Mail, Science and Culture, Education, Health, Borders, The Eilat-Aqaba Region, Tourism and Energy. These treaties are to serve as the foundation of the peaceful, normal relationship between Israel and the Hashemite Kingdom.

These are some of the recent highlights of activity:

Commerce and Trade: Since trade began between Jordan and Israel in July 1996, the figures indicate a steady growth in Jordanian-Israeli commerce. In 1996 Israel exported some 9 million dollars' worth of goods to Jordan, while importing products valued at 5 million dollars. In 1997 the value of exports rose to about 20 million dollars, and imports from Jordan amounted to 12.5 million. Estimates for the period January-September 1998 alone show exports and imports at more than 29 million dollars.

Economic Cooperation: An important part of the economic cooperation between Jordan and Israel is taking place in the Hassan Industrial Park in Irbid — the first area to be granted the status of duty-free export to the USA (QIZ). Cooperation in this region is mainly in the areas of textiles and the manufacture of jewelry and electronic equipment. Thousands of Jordanians are employed in these industries, as well as in other industrial areas throughout the country. The success of the joint industrial park in Irbid has given rise to a decision reached by the Ministers of Industry and Trade of the two countries with regard to the expansion of this move to additional industrial parks in the border area between Jordan and Israel subject to approval by the United States.

International Cooperation and Agriculture: In October 1995 an agreement on cooperation in these areas was signed between Jordan and Israel. Under the terms of this agreement, the Israel Foreign Ministry's Center for International Cooperation (MASHAV) works together with several government ministries in Jordan and with a number of non-governmental organizations for the promotion of economic and social development for the benefit of both peoples. The two countries have established a joint enterprise for the marketing of agricultural produce, with a view to developing new markets for the agricultural produce being grown in the eastern Jordan River Valley with the help of Israeli technologies.

Air Transport: A "pilot project" has been activated involving the use of Aqaba Airport for flights from Europe bringing tourists to Eilat. With the completion of the new terminal on the Israeli side, all international flights currently landing at Ovda and Eilat Airports will be transferred to the Aqaba-Eilat Peace Airport. Moreover, the number of flights between Amman and Ben-Gurion Airport have been stepped up this year to 14, and a new line has been put in, linking Amman with Haifa twice a week.

Tourism: In 1996, and again in 1997, some 125,000 Israeli tourists visited Jordan. The number of Jordanian tourists visiting Israel came to about 50,000 annually (not counting family visits). There has been an increase in the level of cooperation between the tourist agencies of the two countries in the matter of marketing package tours for Israel and Jordan. There is agreement, too, between the two countries concerning cooperation with the approach of the year 2000 and the expected stream of tourists to the Holy Land from all over the world.

Water: Under the terms of the peace treaty, Israel today provides Jordan with nearly 75 million cubic meters of water per year. Work is to begin soon on the erection of a dam deigned to divert water from the Yarmouk River: another aspect of the cooperation between Jordan and Israel in this domain.

Trilateral Israel-Jordan-U.S. Economic Committee:

A Trilateral Israel-Jordan-U.S. Economic Committee was established at the October 1993 White House meeting between President Clinton, Crown Prince Hassan and [Foreign Minister Peres](#) to discuss economic cooperation and development. This forum first convened in Washington D.C. on November 30, 1993, and then periodically in the region. Sub-groups were established to discuss specific issues, such as: trade, finance and banking; Jordan Valley cooperative projects; and civil aviation. The outcome of these talks have

been incorporated in the Peace Treaty between Israel and Jordan.

The convening of the fifth meeting of the Trilateral Economic Committee at the Dead Sea Spa Hotel in Jordan on July 20-21, 1994 was the occasion for the first public meeting of Israeli and Jordanian leaders in the region — Jordanian Prime Minister Majali and Israeli Foreign Minister Peres.

Common Agenda Washington, D.C. - September 14, 1993	
Trilateral US-Jordan-Israel Economic Committee Washington, D.C. October 1, 1993 Established by Pres. Clinton-Crown Prince Hassan-FM Peres	Washington Declaration Washington, D.C. July 25, 1994
Treaty of Peace Arava - October 26, 1994 • Full diplomatic relations. • Agreed international boundary with minor modifications. • End to belligerency; cooperation in prevention of terrorism. • Agreement on allocations of water and the development of new water resources. • Freedom of access to religious sites; recognition of special role of Hashemite Kingdom over Muslim holy shrines in Jerusalem. • Freedom of passage by land, sea and air. • Cooperation in such areas as the economy, transportation, telecommunications, tourism, environment, energy, health, agriculture, war against crime and drugs. • The problem of refugees and displaced persons will be resolved in agreed-upon negotiating frameworks.	



Israel-Palestinian Negotiations

Background - Israel-PLO Recognition

Recent years have witnessed a series of landmarks in negotiations between [Israel and the Palestinians](#). Following intense behind-the-scenes contacts between Israeli and Palestinian negotiators in Oslo, an agreement was achieved between Foreign Minister [Shimon Peres](#) and [PLO](#) Chairman [Yasser Arafat](#). On *September 9, 1993*, Chairman Arafat sent a [letter](#) to [Prime Minister Rabin](#), in which he stated unequivocally that the [PLO](#):

- Recognizes the right of Israel to exist in peace and security;
- Accepts UN Security Council Resolutions [242](#) and [338](#);
- Commits itself to a peaceful resolution of the conflict;
- Renounces the use of terrorism and other acts of violence;
- Assumes responsibility over all PLO elements to ensure their compliance, prevent violations, and discipline violators;
- Affirms that those [articles of the PLO Covenant](#) which deny Israel's right to exist are now inoperative and no longer valid;
- Undertakes to submit to the Palestinian National Council for formal approval the necessary changes to the Covenant.

In reply, Israel recognized the PLO as the representative of the Palestinians in the peace negotiations.

On *September 13, 1993*, a joint Israeli-Palestinian [Declaration of Principles](#) (DOP), based on the agreement worked out in Oslo, was signed by the two parties in Washington, outlining the proposed interim self-government arrangements, as envisioned and agreed by both sides. The arrangements contained in the DOP include immediate Palestinian self-rule in Gaza and Jericho, early empowerment for the Palestinians in West Bank, and an agreement on self-government and the election of a Palestinian council. Additionally, extensive economic cooperation between Israel and the Palestinians plays an important role in the DOP.

The Interim Agreement

Shortly after the signing of the Declaration of Principles, negotiations commenced between Israeli and PLO delegations on the implementation of the interim agreement, which was accomplished in three stages:

1. The [Gaza-Jericho Agreement](#) was signed in Cairo on *May 4, 1994*, and applies to the Gaza Strip and to a defined area of about 65 square kilometers including Jericho and its environs. While the Declaration of Principles is a short document, consisting of approximately 20 pages, the Gaza-Jericho Agreement is a document containing almost 300 pages (the agreement itself and four annexes) with six maps attached. The Gaza-Jericho agreement addresses four main issues -- security arrangements, civil affairs, legal matters, and economic relations. The document includes agreement to a withdrawal of Israeli military forces from Gaza and Jericho, a transfer of authority from the Israeli Civil Administration to a Palestinian Authority, the structure and composition of the Palestinian Authority, its jurisdiction and legislative powers, a Palestinian police force, and relations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

2. On *August 29, 1994*, the [Agreement on Preparatory Transfer of Powers and Responsibilities](#) was signed by Israel and the Palestinians. The Agreement puts into effect the next phase (early empowerment) of the Declaration of Principles.

In accordance with the DOP, the Agreement provides for the transfer of powers to the Palestinian Authority within five specified spheres:

- a. Education & Culture (carried out on August 29, 1994);
- b. Social Welfare;
- c. Tourism (both carried out on November 13-14, 1994);
- d. Health;
- e. Taxation (both carried out on December 1, 1994).

On *August 27, 1995*, an protocol was signed transferring additional spheres to the Palestinian Authority: labor, trade and industry, gas and gasoline, insurance, postal services, statistics, agriculture, and local government.

3. On *September 28, 1995*, the [Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip](#) was signed in Washington, D.C. This agreement, which marks the conclusion of the first stage in negotiations between Israel and the PLO, incorporates and supersedes the Gaza-Jericho and Early Empowerment agreements.

The main object of the Interim Agreement is to broaden Palestinian self-government in the West Bank by means of an elected self-governing authority -- the Palestinian Council -- for an interim period not to exceed five years from the signing of the Gaza-Jericho Agreement (i.e. no later than May 1999). This will allow the Palestinians to conduct their own internal affairs, reduce points of friction between Israelis and Palestinians, and open a new era of cooperation and co-existence based on common interest, dignity and mutual respect. At the same time it protects Israel's vital interests, and in particular its security interests, both with regard to external security as well as the personal security of its citizens in the West Bank.

The Interim Agreement sets forth the future relations between Israel and the Palestinians. To the main body of the agreement are appended seven annexes dealing with: security arrangements, elections, civil affairs (transfer of powers), legal matters, economic relations, Israeli-Palestinian cooperation, and the release of Palestinian prisoners.

Milestones in the Implementation of the Interim Agreement

On *January 20, 1996*, following completion of the first stage of [IDF](#) redeployment (with the exception of Hebron), elections were held to the Palestinian Council and for the Head of the Palestinian Authority. Yasser Arafat was elected Ra'ees (head) of the Authority.

On *April 24, 1996*, the Palestinian National Council, convening in Gaza, voted 504 to 54, with 14 abstentions, as follows:

1. "The Palestinian National Charter is hereby amended by canceling the articles that are contrary to the letters exchanged between the P.L.O. and the Government of Israel 9-10 September 1993.
2. Assigns its legal committee with the task of redrafting the Palestinian National Charter in order to present it to the first session of the Palestinian central council." (24/04/96)

On *December 14, 1998*, the Palestinian National Council, in accordance with the [Wye River Memorandum](#), convened in Gaza in the presence of U.S. President Clinton and voted to reaffirm this decision.

An agreement on a [Temporary International Presence in Hebron](#) was signed on *May 9, 1996*.

The [Protocol Concerning the Redeployment in Hebron](#) was signed on *January 17, 1997*. The Protocol was accompanied by a [Note for the Record](#) prepared by the US Special Middle East Coordinator, confirming a series of agreements between the sides on non-Hebron issues and reaffirming their commitment to implement the Interim Agreement on the basis of reciprocity.

On *October 23, 1998*, The [Wye River Memorandum](#) was signed at the White House, Washington D.C., between Israel and the PLO, following a nine-day summit hosted by U.S. President Mr. Bill Clinton in Wye Plantation, Maryland.

On *September 4, 1999*, the [Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum](#) was signed by representatives of Israel and the PLO. Restating the commitment of the two sides to full implementation of all agreements reached since September 1993, the Memorandum sets out to resolve the outstanding issues of the present interim status, in particular those set out in the [Wye River Memorandum](#) of October 23, 1998.

The sides also restated their commitment to the Interim Agreement's prohibition regarding initiating or taking any step that will change the status of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip prior to the conclusion of the permanent status agreement.

Stages of Sharm el-Sheikh implementation:

Release of prisoners: *Sep 9, 1999; Oct 15, 1999.*

Additional prisoners released for Ramadan: *Dec 1999; Jan 2000.*

Further redeployments: *Sep 10, 1999 (7%); Jan 5-7, 2000 (5%);*

Mar 21, 2000 (6.1%)

[Safe passage](#): southern route - *Oct 25, 1999*

Shuhada Street opened: *Oct 31, 1999*

[Displaced persons committee](#) convenes: *February 6, 2000*

Permanent Status Negotiations

The negotiations on the permanent status arrangements commenced in Taba on *May 5, 1996*. These negotiations will deal with the remaining issues to be resolved, including Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, security arrangements, borders, relations and cooperation with neighboring countries.

In a joint communique issued on May 6 at the close of the first session of talks, the two sides reaffirmed the principles guiding these negotiations.

In the [Wye Memorandum](#) of October 23, 1998 both sides agreed to immediately resume permanent status negotiations on an accelerated basis and to make a determined effort to reach agreement by May 4, 1999. A first meeting between Foreign Minister Sharon and Abu Mazen took place on November 18, 1998.

Following the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum, the permanent status negotiations were formally resumed on *September 13, 1999*, at the Erez checkpoint. Foreign Minister [David Levy](#) was appointed to head the Israeli negotiating team with the Palestinians, and Abu-Mazen heads the Palestinian team.

In his speech at the opening of the talks, Foreign Minister Levy summarized the basic principles by which Israel will be guided up in negotiating a permanent status agreement: we will not return to the 1967 lines; united [Jerusalem](#) will remain the capital of Israel; settlement blocs in the territories will remain under Israeli sovereignty; there will be no foreign army west of the Jordan River.

Talks between Israeli and Palestinian negotiating teams, headed by Oded Eran and Yasser Abed Rabbo, were resumed at Bolling Air Force Base in Washington D.C. on March 21, 2000.



Israel-Syria Negotiations

Following the [Madrid Conference](#), talks between [Israeli and Syrian delegations](#) commenced in Washington under the framework of the Madrid formula. During 1994, negotiations were held on the ambassadorial level in Washington. These talks led to focused discussions on security arrangements and the convening of two meetings between the Israeli and Syrian chiefs-of-staff in December 1994 and June 1995.

These negotiations were supported by the involvement of high-ranking U.S. officials, including two meetings between President Clinton and President Assad and a number of visits by Secretary of State Warren Christopher to the region.

The Israeli negotiators have stated to the Syrians that Israel accepts the principle of withdrawal on the [Golan Heights](#), in the context of a peace settlement which simultaneously addresses four key issues:

Key Issues:

- the depth of the withdrawal;
- the schedule and duration for withdrawal;
- the stages of the withdrawal and the linkage between them and normalization;
here, as with Egypt, we insist that there be a protracted phase of normalization -- open borders and embassies

-- before we complete our withdrawal to a yet undetermined line, and;

- agreement over security arrangement.

Topics of Discussion:

Israel feels that direct and public high-level meetings between Israeli and Syrian leaders will promote the negotiations and bolster public confidence in Syria's desire for peace.

The late [Prime Minister Rabin](#) stated that should a peace treaty including a significant withdrawal on the [Golan Heights](#) be negotiated with Syria, the proposed treaty will be put to a national referendum before it is signed.

In December 1995, Syria agreed to resume the negotiations without preconditions and with elements of flexibility in the form of those negotiations. The Syrians decided not to raise the level of negotiators to a political level, but to empower and increase the authority of Ambassador Mualem and give him and his colleagues a larger mandate, both in terms of substance and in terms of atmosphere. The Syrians agreed now to deal with those elements that make up the notion of full peace: quality of peace, normalization, water. Two rounds of Syrian-Israeli peace talks were conducted under U.S. auspices at the Aspen Institute's Wye River Conference Center in December 1995 and January 1996, focusing on both security and other issues. The discussions were highly detailed and comprehensive in scope.

The discussion of security arrangements identified important areas of conceptual agreement and convergence. Not unexpectedly, it also revealed differences of substance or perspective. Ideas for dealing with some of the differences were referred to leaderships in Israel and Syria for consideration.

All participants in this session agreed that it had significantly advanced the discussion of key issues in a future peace treaty, and clarified each side's views and needs. They agreed that the talks laid a solid basis for further discussions.

Although there have been no direct talks since January 1996, former Prime Minister [Benjamin Netanyahu](#) repeatedly called upon Syria to return to the negotiating table, without preconditions.

The guidelines of the government established by Prime Minister [Ehud Barak](#) in July 1999 reiterate: "The Government will resume the negotiations with Syria with a view toward concluding a peace treaty therewith -- full peace that bolsters the security of Israel, grounded in UN Security Council Resolutions [242](#) and [338](#) and on the existence of a normal relationship between two neighboring states, living side by side in peace. The peace treaty with Syria will be submitted for approval in a referendum."

On December 8, 1999, President Clinton announced that Prime Minister [Barak](#) and President Assad agreed that the Israel-Syrian peace negotiations would be resumed from the point that they were halted since January 1996. The talks were launched at a summit meeting with President Clinton in Washington on December 15, with Prime Minister [Barak](#) and Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk a-Shara, followed by a round of talks held in Shepherdstown, West Virginia from January 3-11, 2000



Israel-Lebanon Negotiations

The Israel-Lebanon Negotiations

From the beginning of the peace process, negotiations with Lebanon have been overshadowed by Syrian control over Lebanon's policies and decision-making process. Over a dozen rounds of bilateral talks were held between Israel and Lebanon in the framework of the Washington talks. These negotiations have been stalled since February 1994, and there is currently no contact between the two sides.

Israel has clarified to the Lebanese that it makes no claims to Lebanese land or resources, and that its primary concern is for security on its northern border. Israel has suggested a settlement based on the following principles:

The Principles:

- The Lebanese Army will be deployed north of the security zone and, for a period of six months, will prevent any terror activities against the security zone and Israel. Three months following that initial period, Israel will be prepared to sign a peace agreement with Lebanon.
- Prior to any change in its redeployment on the Lebanese front, Israel must be convinced that the military organs of all terrorist groups currently operating out of Lebanon will be irreversibly disbanded.
- The government of Israel must receive practical and valid guarantees that no harm will be inflicted upon Lebanese citizens and Southern Lebanese Army personnel currently residing in the security zone and that they will be absorbed in the governmental and societal fabric of Lebanon.

In April 1996, following months of provocations by Iranian-backed Hizbullah terrorists based in Lebanon,

Israel initiated "[Operation Grapes of Wrath](#)" directed against these terrorist elements.

On April 26, 1996, through U.S. mediation, a [document of understanding](#) was achieved in consultation with Syria, Lebanon and Israel. In addition to establishing what it is hoped will be a lasting end to hostilities, the document recognizes that a comprehensive peace can be achieved only on the basis of negotiations:

"It is recognized that the understanding to bring the current crisis between Lebanon and Israel to an end cannot substitute for a permanent solution. The United States understands the importance of achieving a comprehensive peace in the region.

Toward this end, the United States proposes the resumption of negotiations between Syria and Israel and between Lebanon and Israel at a time to be agreed upon, with the objective of reaching comprehensive peace.

The United states understands that it is desirable that these negotiations be conducted in a climate of stability and tranquility."

On April 1, 1998, the Israeli government adopted a decision "accepting UN Security Council Resolution 425, so that the IDF will leave Lebanon with appropriate security arrangements, and so that the Lebanese government can restore its effective control over Southern Lebanon and assume responsibility for guaranteeing that its territory will not be used as a base for terrorist activity against Israel." In addition, the government "calls on the Lebanese government to begin negotiations, on the basis of UN Security Council Resolution 425 to restore its effective control over territories currently under IDF control, and to prevent terrorist activities from its territory against Israel's northern border."

The guidelines of the government established by Prime Minister Barak in July 1999 reiterate: "The Government will act toward bringing the IDF out of Lebanon, while guaranteeing the welfare and security of residents of the north, and aspiring to conclude a peace treaty with Lebanon."

On March 5, 2000, the Israeli government passed a [resolution](#) to redeploy the IDF forces on the border with Lebanon by July 2000, preferably in the framework of an agreement.

On May 24, 2000, Israel completed the [unilateral withdrawal](#) of all IDF forces from southern Lebanon, in accordance with [UN Security Council Resolution 425](#), and the Israel government decisions of April 1, 1998 and March 5, 2000, ending an 18-year presence there.

On June 18, 2000, the [UN Security Council endorsed the Secretary-General's conclusion](#) that, as of 16 June, Israel had withdrawn its forces from Lebanon in accordance with Security Council Resolution 425.

The viewpoints of Israel and Palestine

Information taken from *The Road to Peace*, csmonitor.com

Statehood:

Though neighbors have challenged its right to exist, Israel seems assured of its sovereignty. The more pressing question of statehood refers to the Palestinian homeland. Three million Palestinians currently live in "autonomous regions" within the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, areas which Israel occupied in 1967. Agreements between Israel and the Palestinians created a Palestinian Authority which has varying degrees of control over these areas, but not full self-determination. The agreements left Palestinian statehood to "final status" negotiations, which have never begun.



Israeli position:

For most of its history, Israel perceived the creation of a Palestinian state as a direct threat to its security. (Arabs have declared war on Israel three times since its founding in 1947.) Though former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak made an unprecedented offer to support a state of Palestine, current leader Ariel Sharon remains opposed to the idea. Pressure from the Bush administration – which has now started to advocate a two-state solution to the Mideast conflict – might compel Israel to recognize Palestine. But borders are important. Israel will insist on a map that preserves its security, its settlements, its control of Jerusalem, and its access to water – much of which comes from the West Bank.

Palestinian position:

The Arabs rejected the original UN plan for Palestinian statehood, and the Palestinians never made much progress towards their goal until Palestinian Authority leader Yasser Arafat signed peace agreements with the Israelis. The 1964 Palestine Liberation Organization charter called for Israel's destruction, and replacement with a Palestinian state. Now disavowing this claim, Palestinian leaders insist that



their state should include only the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel in the 1967 war – Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. But Palestinians themselves are divided over their aims and methods. And so long as militants mount their campaign of terror, Israel will be more inclined to wipe out Palestinian infrastructure rather than support statehood.

Refugees:

In the Holy Land, exodus follows genesis. Israel was founded by refugees returning to an ancestral home. In the process, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians fled, or were ousted, from the new state. Today, millions of Palestinians living outside Israel (often in refugee camps in neighboring Arab countries) claim land or property inside the pre-1948 borders of the Jewish state. A United Nations resolution recognizes this right-of-return, but Israeli law does not. The question of how to resolve this claim remains a chief obstacle to Mideast peace.

Israeli position:

Aside from being a logistical nightmare, granting right-of-return would dilute the Jewish population and threaten Israel's identity as a Jewish state. Though saying their refusal is "nonnegotiable,"

Israeli leaders have floated the idea of repatriating a symbolic number of refugees, and compensating the rest. Israelis also point out that after 1948, Arab states expelled their Jewish populations, and Israel resettled the refugees instead of putting them in camps.

Palestinian position:

Many Palestinians have maintained old deeds to property as family heirlooms, passing down the dream of returning from generation to generation. The issue goes deeper than individual property claims for the Palestinians, who feel a collective right to their ancestral homeland and a deep anger at those who drove them from it.

Jerusalem:

Jerusalem is sacred ground for three major religions – Christianity, Judaism, and Islam – making discussion about control over the city particularly testy. The United Nations originally called for Jerusalem to be an international city shared by Israelis and Palestinians. Arabs and Israelis fought bitterly over the city in 1948, and the Jordanian army conquered East Jerusalem (and the city's holiest areas) and expelled its Jewish population, while the Israeli army held on to West Jerusalem. In 1967, the

Israelis conquered East Jerusalem and later annexed it to Israel proper. At the 2000 Camp David talks, there were for the first time direct negotiations over the fate of the city, but each side is adamant that the city must be its capital.

Israeli position:

Jerusalem is far and away the holiest city for Jews. Israelis consider the whole of Jerusalem to be the symbolic heart of their state. Israel claims Jerusalem as its capital, though most countries instead recognize Tel Aviv as the seat of government. For most Israelis, the option of partitioning the city again is totally unacceptable.

Palestinian position:

Jerusalem is Islam's third-holiest city and the idealized future capital of the Palestinian state. Palestinian historical and religious claims on parts of the city are deeply rooted. But Yasser Arafat has recently suggested that East Jerusalem could serve as the compromise capital.

Settlements:

Close to 400,000 Israelis live in Gaza, the West Bank, and Arab East Jerusalem. These illegal outposts developed after Israel seized Arab land in the 1967 war. Originally seen as a bargaining chip for peace and a security buffer for Israel, they've become an aggravating factor in the

Palestinian intifada, and often the scene of violence. A US commission led by former US Sen. George Mitchell recommended in 2001 that Israel freeze all settlement activity. Neither side is willing to consider Jewish settlers living under Palestinian rule.

Israeli position:

For Israelis, settlements have helped both absorb Jewish refugees (from the Soviet Union, for example) and provided a first line of defense against the Palestinians. Israel has retained authority over 60 percent of West Bank territory. Many Israelis consider the settlements perfectly legal: they say no one has the right to stop Jews from living within Israel's biblical borders.

Palestinian position:

Settlements are a sore point. These Jewish oases in the middle of Arab territory, developed illegally and tacitly condoned by the United States, are seen as an instrument of ongoing occupation and threat to the Palestinians. The settlement question becomes even more crucial within the framework of a proposed Palestinian state, as it will either have to exclude the settlements, or include provisions for the Israelis to leave their new homes.

Key Terms : The Israeli- Palestinian Conflict

See a descriptive
[map](#) of the
disputed territory

Information taken from *The
Road to Peace*, csmonitor.com



The Road Map:

A plan developed by the US, the United Nations, the European Union, and Russia that calls for the establishment of a permanent Palestinian state and a full settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by 2005. The seven-page plan, discussed in broad strokes throughout 2002, was delivered to both Israeli and Palestinian officials after the Palestinian Authority appointed Mahmoud Abbas as its first prime minister on April 29, 2003. By the end of May, both sides had endorsed it – though the Israelis listed 14 concerns.



Right-of-return:

When Israel was created in 1948, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians fled or were evicted from the new state. Many wound up in refugee camps in neighboring Arab states. They passed down to new generations their dreams of returning, and in some cases even the actual deeds to property. Palestinian leaders have insisted that the "dispossessed" have a right to return to their former homes, while Israel has steadfastly refused to consider the issue. Such an influx of Palestinians would dilute the Jewish population within Israel, and challenge its identity as a Jewish state. One suggested compromise: allowing a token number to return and compensating the rest.

Jewish settlements:

In the 1967 war, Israel defeated a second Arab invasion and retained control of the Palestinian territories remaining after the 1948 war. Israel encouraged Jewish settlers to build on this newly occupied land. Many of the settlers were immigrants pouring in from the former Soviet Union after its collapse. Settlements became an expedient way of integrating the poor arrivals into the Israeli economy. However, the Palestinians have never accepted the post-1967 borders, and see the 400,000



settlers as encroaching on their land. The settlements have become extremely disruptive to the peace process, not only as frequent scenes of violence, but as sticking points in any potential border negotiations.

Intifada:

Literally meaning "uprising," intifada is the name given to two widespread Palestinian resistance movements. The first intifada started in 1987 and mostly involved Palestinian youth throwing rocks at Israeli troops, who sometimes shot back with deadly force. Badly outgunned, many more Palestinians were killed than Israelis. The second intifada began in 2000 as a hopeful phase in the peace process began to lose momentum and Israeli politician Ariel Sharon made a provocative visit to the al-Aqsa Mosque. This time, suicide bombers are the weapon of choice, resulting in a much bloodier conflict for the Israelis.

Palestinian Authority:

The Oslo Accords created a limited Palestinian self-government with Yasser Arafat at its head. The PA has jurisdiction in much of the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. While the PA is not an internationally recognized sovereign state able to conduct foreign policy, it does

have substantial domestic powers including its own armed police force. The PA headquarters are in the West Bank city of Ramallah.

The Oslo Accords:

In 1993, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat arrived at this landmark agreement. Known as "land for peace," Israel agreed to withdraw troops from Gaza and parts of the West Bank, where Palestinians would be given self-rule. In exchange, the Palestinian Liberation Organization agreed to recognize Israel and renounce terrorism. The Accords left the Jewish settlements and all highways in Israeli control, and did not resolve the issue of Jerusalem. However, they became the foundation for the peace process. Arafat gained leadership over the new Palestinian Authority government and new status as a peace partner in the eyes of Israel and the US. Rabin was later assassinated by a Jewish militant.

The Wye River Accord:

The 1993 Oslo Accords set a five-year timetable for the implementation of many key issues only agreed upon in principle. In order to hash out the details before that deadline, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority leader Yasser Arafat met in

Maryland in 1998. The perennial obstacles of Jewish settlements and Palestinian terror attacks hampered the talks. However a final deal was reached. The Palestinians agreed to revoke anti-Israeli provisions in the PLO charter and to arrest alleged terrorists; the Israelis agreed to an additional 13 percent pullback from the West Bank and to free hundreds of Palestinian prisoners.

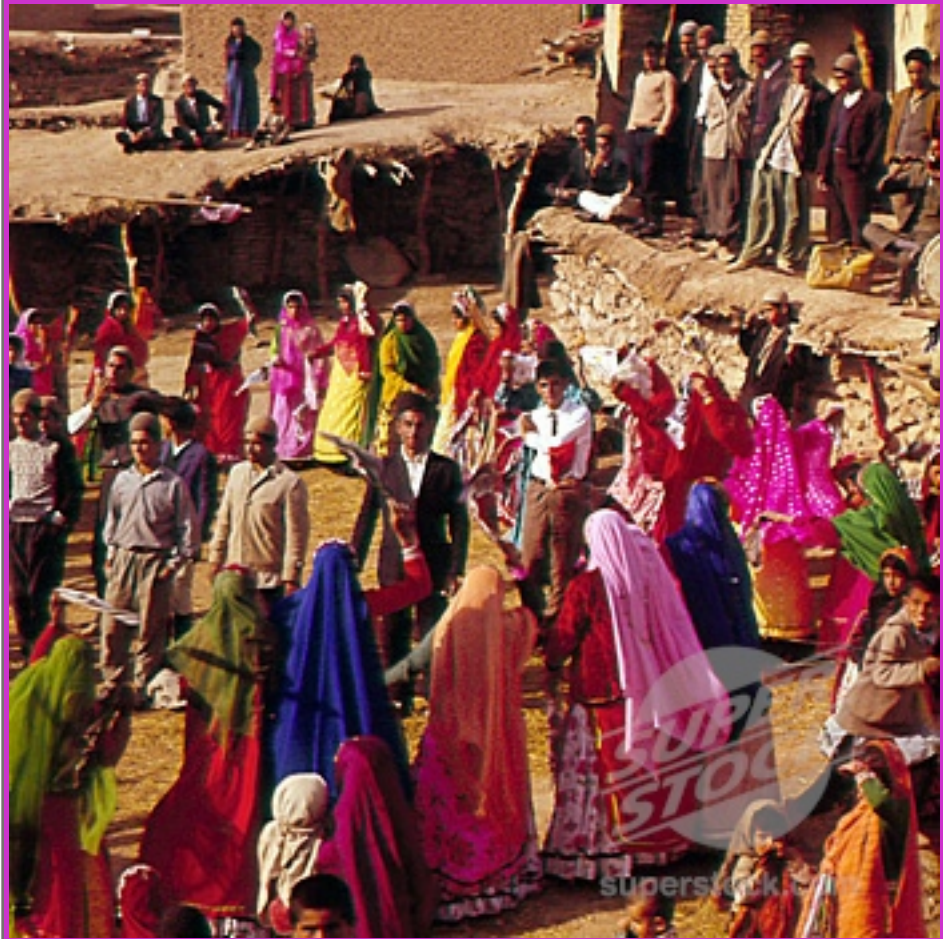
The Taba talks:

Named for a town in Egypt, the Taba talks were a failed last-ditch effort by President Bill Clinton to broker an historic peace agreement between Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak. Months earlier at a Camp David summit, the two sides came extremely close to a final peace settlement between the two parties. Barak was more flexible than past Israeli leaders to put "non-negotiable" topics on the table, but his all-or-nothing approach is said to have spooked Arafat. The failure to reach agreement left deep bitterness on both sides. The Israelis claim that Barak offered Arafat the moon and he still wasn't satisfied, insisting on an unrealistic right-of-return. The Palestinians say momentum for a deal with Barak was lost when he allowed Ariel Sharon to visit the Al Aqsa mosque.

A closer look: The Road Map

Explore the
long history of
[Peace Efforts](#)

Information taken from *The
Road to Peace*, csmonitor.
com



The Road Map:

Sponsored by the US, the European Union, the United Nations, and Russia (known as the "quartet"), the road map is meant to achieve a final settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by 2005. The plan is divided into 3 phases. To build momentum, road map planners shifted the most difficult decisions to the last phase. However, each phase requires moves by both sides that have frustrated negotiators for decades.

Phase 1: End of violence

Palestinian leaders implement an unconditional official cease-fire and acknowledge Israel's right to exist in peace. The Palestinian Authority (PA) security force reorganizes and confronts those who violently attack Israelis. It also reestablishes cooperation with the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). The PA takes steps to establish a strong parliamentary democracy



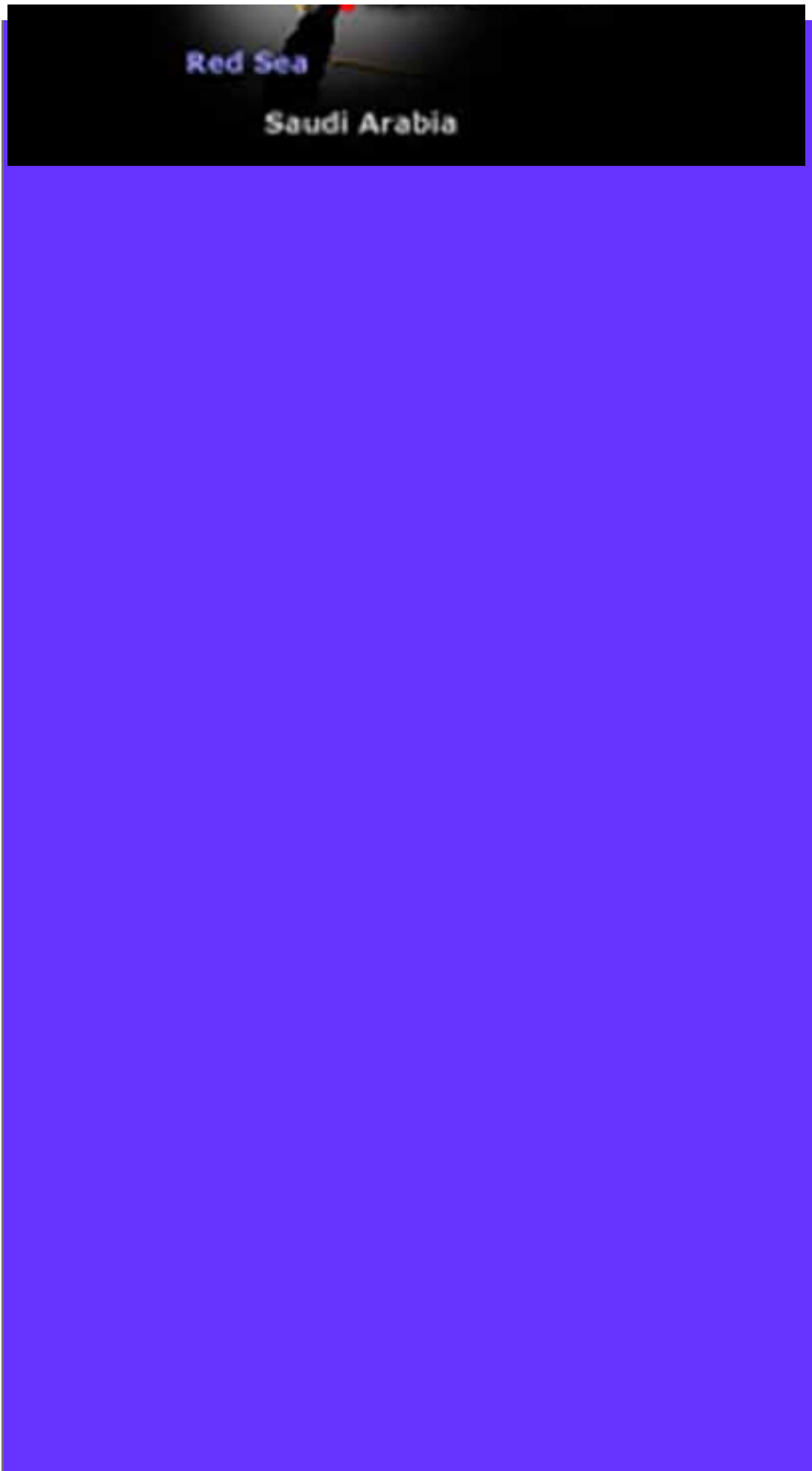
with separation of powers.

Israel states a commitment to a viable sovereign Palestinian state and calls for the end of violence against Palestinians. Israel takes no actions undermining trust, including deportations, attacks on civilians, or house demolitions. Israel must dismantle settlement outposts erected since March 2001 and freeze further settlement activity. IDF withdraws from areas occupied since Sept. 28, 2000. Restrictions on Palestinian movement are eased.

Road bumps: The Palestinian Authority will have difficulty curbing the militant organizations like Hamas and Islamic Jihad which do not support the peace process. Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, meanwhile, will face tough opposition from right-wing Israelis who equate giving up land – even small outposts – with giving up security.

Phase 2: Transition to separate states

The next phase begins after "free, open, and fair"



Palestinian elections and ends with the possible creation of an independent Palestinian state with provisional borders. A democratic state would be based on a new constitution finalized and approved by Palestinian institutions.

Road bumps: Actual free and fair elections will require Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat to loosen his grip on power. And what if Hamas and Islamic Jihad put forth political candidates? Expect sharp disagreement from the Palestinians with any provisional borders that take into account larger Israeli settlements and other "facts on the ground."

Phase 3: Permanent status agreement

Talks convened by the quartet lead to a permanent-status resolution in 2005 to end the Israel-Palestinian conflict. The toughest disputes, back-loaded to jumpstart the peace process, now need to be resolved. Final decisions are required on borders, Jerusalem, refugees, and settlements. The quartet

nudges Israel, Lebanon, and Syria to arrive at a settlement as well. Arab states accept full normal relations with Israel.

Road bumps: While there are many thorny issues, Jerusalem may be the trickiest. The religious claims to the city by both the Jewish and Muslim communities make a Solomonic division extremely controversial. Jewish settlements ringing around East Jerusalem further complicate the situation.



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was born at the Madrid Conference in October 1992. While the bilateral track is the past, the multilateral track focuses on the future, addressing problems on a regional level in a broader context, so as to promote long-term stability.

The network is twofold -- to find solutions for key issues as a confidence building measure (CBM) to formalized relations among the nations of the region. Shared concerns are discussed in a forum which can build confidence between the parties. Shared issues and water pipelines, shared development and trade, and cooperation in preserving the environment are among the realities envisioned. Economic and economic partnership will bring about a peace that constitutes more than merely an end to war.

The multilateral negotiations commenced on January 28-29, 1992 at the Moscow Multilateral Middle-East Conference. Opening presentations were made by the co-sponsors and the participants -- thirty-six parties in all -- with former Foreign Minister [David Levy](#) representing Israel.

The Steering Committee, comprised of representatives of the key delegations, coordinates the multilateral talks and sets dates and venues for the various working groups. The committee hears reports of the working groups, confirms their decisions and sets priorities for the allocation of resources. The Steering Committee also discusses such broader issues as the overall vision of the future of the Middle East, integrating the work of the individual working groups.

The five working groups deal with different areas of common regional concern:

- [environment](#),
- [arms control and regional security](#),
- [refugees](#),
- [water](#), and
- [economic development](#).

Formal talks in the multilateral track, frozen for several years, resumed on January 31, 2000 with a meeting of the Steering Committee in Moscow, to be followed in the coming months by meetings of the working groups.

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The Environment Working Group

The Environment Working Group endeavors to enhance the ability of the region to deal with environmental problems such as maritime pollution, wastewater treatment, desertification. The seventh meeting met in Amman, Jordan, 1995, in conjunction with the Water Working Group. The Environment Working Group has participated and continued discussion on the following projects:

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Oil Spill Contingency Project: Significant progress in implementing the project on fighting pollution in the framework of this project, three stations have been identified in Eilat and Nuweiba, to be linked by a joint project. The project is being financed by the European Union and the Israeli government. Joint teams from Israel, Egypt and Jordan are working for intensive training.

World Bank Project: The World Bank is overseeing a project to address natural resource degradation of arid lands in the Middle East, which was discussed and launched at the working group meeting in Cairo. This project includes the establishment of grazing lands, wildlife, forestation and planting of orchards, introducing varieties of vegetation appropriate for arid climates, and the purification of brackish water, to be implemented through five regional centers, each dealing with a specific aspect.

- **Environmental Management:** At the informal consultation meeting held in Oman in June 1996, it was agreed to establish a regional training center on environmental management in Amman, Jordan. In November 1998 the regional parties convened there to establish an agreed-upon work plan for the center, which included the formulation of a cooperative training program to meet regional human resource requirements. The parties have called upon the international donor community to support the implementation of the training program in the framework of the regional training center.
- **Effective Use of Pesticides Project:** The object of this project is to reduce the hazards to the population as a result of the use of pesticides. The project deals with monitoring levels of pesticides being used in identified areas and checking the effects on the health of the communities in the vicinity. In addition, it aims at improving techniques for administering pesticides by reducing the quantity of pesticides used, supplementing them with environmentally friendly methods. The project is led by the U.S.D.A. with the participation of Jordan, Israel, and the P.A.

The Bahrain Environmental Code of Conduct for the Middle East:

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This document was endorsed by the Middle East Peace Process Environmental Working Group on October 25th, 1994 in Bahrain. In the [Bahrain Code of Conduct](#), the following principles were agreed upon by all the regional parties:

- Natural resources of region must be preserved and all activities that would have an adverse effect must be avoided.
- A comprehensive peace in the region and environment protection are interdependent, and the regional parties will cooperate on environmental issues.
- The parties will facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by training and education
- The regional parties will join forces for environmental protection and conservation and begin working in the following fields: water, marine and coastal environment, air, waste management, and desertification.

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The Arms Control and Regional Security Working Group

This conference dealt with national and conceptual issues pertaining to arms control measures, as well as regional security and disarmament. A plenary meeting was held in Tunis on December 13-14, 1995. 15 of them from the region.

Since its establishment, the working group has held three intersessional meetings to discuss national and conceptual issues, in preparation for the next plenary meeting.

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The temporary communications network began operation in the Hague in March 1995. A discussion was held on the elements of the permanent center to be established in Egypt. In order to expand the data base and subsequently the use of the network, a list of topics was distributed (administrative issues, working group papers, CBM's and general information on arms control). It was agreed to continue the discussion at the next plenary meeting.

b. Maritime CBM's:

- The drafting of the agreement on the prevention of incidents at sea (INCSEA) has been completed.
- A series of activities within the agreement in principle to cooperate in search and rescue (SAR) were discussed.
- An agenda was agreed upon for a meeting of senior naval officers from the region.
- Tunisia reiterated its consent to conduct a naval exercise.

c. Information Exchange and Prenotification of Military Exercises:

Agreement was reached on several issues and activities whose implementation can begin within one month after the next plenary session:

- prenotification of certain military exercises;
- Exchange of curriculum vitae of senior military officers;
- Exchange of unclassified military publications, and

- military training and education; and
- Voluntary invitations to visit defense installations.

2. Conceptual issues were discussed in Helsinki on May 29-June 1, 1995, with the participation of delegations from all the states in the region participating in the working group, the gavel holders, the host country Finland, as well as experts from Australia, India, France and the United Nations.

During the meeting, the following issues were discussed:

- A statement on arms control and regional security.
- The definition of long-term goals in arms control and regional security.
- The delineation of the Middle East region for purposes of regional security and arms control.
- Elements needed to begin negotiations on arms control.

It was decided to hold a seminar on military doctrines, to be organized by the French, to take place in Amman at the end of December 1995.

3. An experts meeting was held in Amman on September 20-21, 1995 to discuss the establishment of a Regional Security Center (RSC). The discussion followed the decision taken at the plenary meeting in Tunis to establish a Regional Security Center in Jordan, with secondary centers in Qatar and Tunisia.

It was agreed that the primary objective of the RSC will be to enhance security and stability in the Middle East. The centers will engaged in a range of activities, including:

- the organization of seminars on arms control and regional security;
- the encouragement of education and training on issues related to the peace process;
- the support of issues relating to arms control and regional security arrangements; and
- the functioning of the three centers as an integral part of the regional communications network which began operation in March 1995.

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The Refugee Working Group

This is the sensitive issue of Middle East refugees. Far from being a purely humanitarian issue, it is a complex one. The subjects addressed by this group are among the subjects addressed by this group. The members of the refugee working group are working on the appropriate frameworks for standing on the appropriate frameworks for the Palestinian refugee problem, in accordance with the Declaration of Principles and the Israel-Jordan Declaration of Principles, as follows:

1. The re-admission of former Palestinian residents of the West Bank and Gaza who had overstayed their permits abroad will be discussed in the bilateral negotiations with Jordan.

2. The re-admission of former Palestinian residents of the West Bank and Gaza who had overstayed their permits abroad will be discussed in the bilateral negotiations with Jordan.

3. The re-admission of former Palestinian residents of the West Bank and Gaza who had overstayed their permits abroad will be discussed in the bilateral negotiations with Jordan.

The above understanding, achieved in Tunis at the fourth round of talks, enabled the working group to focus on the humanitarian aspects of the refugee issue -- family reunification and improving living conditions. In this context, Israel agreed to approve 2,000 family reunification requests annually, thus according permanent resident status to an additional 6,000 persons who had entered the territories as visitors. In a further humanitarian act, Israel has permitted a number of individuals deported in the early 1970's due to prior terrorist activities, to return to the territories, together with their families.

In the round of talks which took place in Cairo (May 1994), more concrete plans were developed to ensure a real and positive impact on the lives of the refugees. A substantial portion of the World Bank's emergency assistance program will be directed toward this effort. The following activities were agreed upon:

- *Human Resources and Development:* Several countries including Israel, the US, the Netherlands, Germany, Turkey and China will be conducting courses for the refugees as follows: paramedic training, a drylands agricultural seminar, a public sector management training course, an animal health workshop, 'employment guaranteed' skills training program (to develop small and medium scale enterprises in Gaza and the West

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Bank), agricultural training, public health, community planning and education.

- *Child Welfare:* Sweden has agreed to make available \$2 million for child welfare programs. A conference on assistance to Palestinian children in the West Bank, Gaza and neighboring countries will also be convened.
- *Social and Economic Infrastructure:* The U.S. is providing aid to develop housing facilities and rehabilitation for refugees in Syria and Lebanon.
- *Public Health:* A regional laboratory is to be established in one of the West Bank cities in order to compliment a Medical center already in place.

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The Water Resources Working Group

The Water Resources Working Group (WGWR), for which the United States, Japan and the European Union serve as co-organizers, is currently focusing four broad agenda items to address some of the most pressing water issues in the region:

- **Water Data Availability:** The water resources of the region are already fully utilized, and as demand is rising rapidly, the issue of water has become a top priority. The WGWR is working to improve the quality of life and the environment by focusing on water data availability, water management and cooperation.
- **Water Quality:** The quality of water is becoming an increasingly important issue, and the WGWR is working to improve water quality by focusing on water management and cooperation.
- **Water Conservation:** The quality of water is becoming an increasingly important issue, and the WGWR is working to improve water quality by focusing on water management and cooperation.
- **Water Desalination:** The quality of water is becoming an increasingly important issue, and the WGWR is working to improve water quality by focusing on water management and cooperation.

Since its inception, the WGWR has been implementing a variety of projects under its four agenda items. Each project enjoys the support, both technical and financial, of one or more of the WGWR's extra-regional donor delegations. The multilateral framework has been a successful mechanism for addressing regional problems. The WGWR in particular has been successful in developing a cadre of high-level water decision-makers that now can effectively work together on regional water issues.

Following are several projects carried out to date:

The *Regional Water Data Banks Project* is organized to improve the availability and applicability of water data information. The project goal is to enable the exchange of consistent, compatible, and reliable water data and information to support decision making at both local and regional scales. As a result of continuous collaborative work since January 1995, the Regional Water Data Banks Project has achieved some remarkable successes. Water data collection, storage, and retrieval capabilities have been established within the Palestinian Water Authority and those of the Israeli Hydrological Service and the Jordanian Ministry of Water and Irrigation were improved and enhanced. Among the donor countries taking part in the initiative are Canada, France, the Netherlands, and Australia. The Water Data Banks Project has a web site located at: <http://www.exact-me.org>.

The *Middle East Desalination Research Center* (MEDRC) - The Center, established in Oman in December 1996, coordinates and sponsors basic and applied research in the area of desalination. The U.S., Israel, Japan, Oman, the

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E.U. and Korea are the founding members of this first regional center, and comprise its board of directors. A number of training courses have been held for regional participants.

The objectives of MEDRC are:

- Discovering, developing, and improving methods of desalination through basic and applied research;
- Initiating training programs in the field of desalination to develop expertise as well as technical and scientific skills;
- Promoting electronic networking communications to improve the dissemination of technical information on desalination;
- Establishing regional cooperation and work to foster progress in the development, improvement, and use of water desalination and related technical areas.

The *Public Awareness and Water Conservation Project*, established in 1996, is managed by the United States. The first activity completed by the regional participants was the design and preparation of a video aimed at youth that highlights the importance of water issues from a regional perspective. The second major activity underway, WaterCare, is the preparation of a Student Resource Book, Teacher's Guide, and complimentary Web Page focused on regional water conservation issues that are regional. The materials are being prepared jointly by educational writers from each of the regional participants and are being written for students between 12 and 15 years old. The major topics addressed by the materials include water resources, water use, water pollution and life/health, water management for conservation, and water care for the future, all from a regional perspective. The materials are scheduled for implementation in schools throughout the region in January 2001.

The Middle East Regional Study on Water Supply and Demand Development - The German Government undertook a study of the long-term strategic development of water resources in the region. The objectives of the study were to elaborate specific proposals for the provision of additional water resources on the basis of a comprehensive demand forecast, and develop a concept for coordinated future management of all regional water resources. The study was completed in 1998.

The data show a significant gap between water supply and demand throughout the region, even when using conservative estimates of future population growth and water use. In addition, deteriorating water quality already is a serious issue in some parts of the region, and increasing pollution and salinization threaten to make more and more regional water resources nonutilizable in the future. The five activities considered to be the highest priority are:

- Joint development of prototype desalination plant(s) at the Mediterranean and/or the Red Sea;
- Prefeasibility study of large-scale coastal desalination plants;
- Comparative study of intersea schemes (Med-Dead; Red-Dead);
- Prefeasibility study of intraregional conveyance systems;
- Study on regional institutional setups.

Comparative Survey of regulatory and legal frameworks of water laws, pricing and management - A comparative study outlining these issues has been conducted by the Norwegian government through CESAR. In June 1996, the Israeli, Jordanian, and Palestinian (Core Party) participants adopted a [Declaration of Principles for Cooperation on Water-Related Matters and New and Additional Water Resources](#) identifying principles for regional cooperation.

The first result of this survey was the establishment of the *Waternet project*, designed to develop a computerized information system for water related issues to serve as a tool for researchers in the region and to enhance regional cooperation. The project has three main parts: Waternet-Local assists the Core Parties to develop a computerized water information system to display relevant local water information. Waternet-Regional assists the participating parties to link local nodes to form a shared regional computer information network. The third part is the establishment of a Regional Waternet and Research Center in Amman, Jordan, to begin operation in 2000.

Optimization of Intensive Agriculture under Varying Water Quality Conditions -

This project, established in 1996, is managed by the Government of Luxembourg. The primary focus of the project is to demonstrate how brackish and saline water can be used to support sustainable farming. A demonstration farm, established in Gaza at Beit-Hanoun, is used to support technology transfer in the field of water use. Project implementation is led by Al-Azhar University of Gaza.

Water Sector Training Program - The importance of the water issues in the region led the Working Group on Water Resources in April 1994 to accept a joint United States/European Union proposal for a Regional Training Program in the water sector. The program consisted of 14 courses, although some were offered twice so 20 sessions were presented. The topics covered included water related aspects of planning, management, administration, technical, legal, financial, and institutional subjects. A total of 275 people participated in the program, including: Palestinians (91), Jordanians (70), Egyptians (47), Israelis (38), Omanis (14), Yemenis (8), Tunisians (4), Moroccans (2), and Saudi Arabians (1). Participants ranged from scientists, planners, and managers, to policy level decision makers.

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What role have natural resources played in the politics and economy of the Middle East?

Lesson 2: Got Water?

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MIDDLE EAST WATER. TIME RUNNING OUT.

A 4-part series

Middle East's Cup Runneth Dry

Part 1, March 8, 1990

George D. Moffett III, Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor
Dateline: Jerusalem

ALREADY troubled by economic woes and sectarian conflict, the Middle East is facing an imminent new danger that could plunge the region into famine and war.

Water resources, historically in short supply, are on the verge of being overwhelmed by runaway population growth, placing a huge strain on fragile political and ecological systems.

Experts and government officials in half a dozen Middle East countries say that, together with the proliferation of chemical and nuclear weapons, over-taxed rivers and falling water tables are creating the most worrisome long-term trend in the region.

"Sometime around the beginning of the century, the problem of water scarcity will break out into an acute crisis," says Meir Ben Meir, a former water commissioner of Israel.

"The Middle East is living on a time bomb," adds Elias Salameh, director of the University of Jordan's Water Research and Study Center. "It could explode at any time."

The effects of a prolonged water shortage, experts say, could include a deterioration in water quality, a dramatic reduction in living standards, the loss of food security, huge food import bills leading to crushing foreign debts, and political instability.

"This issue could decide the fate of the region," says Usama al-Baz, a senior advisor to Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak. "If the water problem is not solved you will have famine. And this will destabilize big countries and instability will move to neighboring countries."

Experts attribute the gathering crisis primarily to the pressures of population growth, which

What role have natural resources played in the politics and economy of the Middle East?

Lesson 2: Got Water? (cont'd.)

have stretched available resources to the breaking point in the region's three main river basins - the Nile, the Jordan, and the Tigris-Euphrates. Unless population growth rates, now averaging 3 percent in the Middle East, are curbed, excess population will wipe out all projected gains in water development and conservation within 30 years. If conservation efforts falter, the crisis could come much sooner.

Worsening water shortages are also a function of climatic changes which have intensified drought cycles, and of inefficient water management. In Saudi Arabia, for example, irrigation for growing wheat, which the country could import far more inexpensively, could deplete underground aquifers – the source of 90 percent of the kingdom's water - within 20 years.

Regional politics also contributes to the growing water problem, as the nations that share the region's main river systems have been unable to rise above historic rivalries to cooperate in the development and allocation of precious water supplies.

Experts warn that in the foreseeable future there will be no panacea in dealing with the impending water shortage. Desalinating seawater for mass irrigation will remain prohibitively expensive until the technology is advanced and energy costs are lowered by breakthroughs in solar energy or nuclear fusion.

Impressive recent advances in biotechnology, which have produced more water-efficient crops, are not keeping pace with growing food demands.

As a result, unless population growth rates are curbed, irrigated agriculture restricted, and conservation efforts dramatically expanded, the supply and demand lines on the Middle East water graph could soon cross, with potentially disastrous consequences.

The growing likelihood that water disputes could fuel regional tensions stems from three factors:

*Fifteen nations now compete for the dwindling resources of the Euphrates, Jordan, and Nile each controlled by a non-Arab state (Turkey, Israel, and Ethiopia).

*Because of existing political tensions, none of the three basins is governed by a comprehensive water-sharing agreement.

GLOBAL CONNECTIONS *the Middle East*

What role have natural resources played in the politics and economy of the Middle East?

Lesson 2: Got Water? (cont'd.)

*International law, which is contradictory, has not provided a clear basis for such agreements.

Throughout the region, water is replacing oil as the most prized and contested commodity.

Since the days of the pharaohs, life along the Nile has conformed to the inexorable cycles that ensured an eventual flood after every drought. But for reasons that remain unclear, the amount of water in the Nile has decreased over the past century, according to a study by Princeton University expert John Waterbury. If the trend continues as the country's population soars, Egypt will fall further behind in food production.

"Whatever the explanation, we'd do better to plan on decreasing discharges," says Dr. Waterbury of the Nile's yield. "It would be foolish for planners to assume they are going to increase."

Elsewhere in the Middle East, Turkey's plans to tap into the Euphrates for its massive southeastern Anatolia development project have sounded alarm bells in Syria and Iraq, which both rely on the river for agriculture and power generation. Competition over the Euphrates could exacerbate existing tensions created by raids on Turkish territory by Kurdish guerrillas operating from Syria and Iraq.

The biggest problem lies in the smallest river basin, the Jordan, where competition for water resources between Israel, Jordan, and Syria has already led to bloodshed and now threatens to put peace between Israelis and Palestinians living in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip beyond reach.

Experts say the incipient water crisis could serve as a catalyst for political cooperation, spurring the fractious nations of the region to find ways to develop and share common water resources.

But if water is the best way to peace, it could also prove the shortest route to conflict in a region already beset by old feuds and now armed to the hilt with sophisticated weapons.

"The politics of the Middle East after 2000 will be a struggle over water," says former Egyptian diplomat Tahsin Bashir.

Adds a Syrian official: "No region on earth is as vulnerable to war because of conflicts over water between neighboring states."

GLOBAL CONNECTIONS *the Middle East*

What role have natural resources played in the politics and economy of the Middle East?

Lesson 2: Got Water? (cont'd.)

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MIDDLE EAST WATER. TIME RUNNING OUT.

A 4-part series

Downstream Fears Feed Tensions

Part 2, March 13, 1990

George D. Moffett III, Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor
Dateline: By the Ataturk Dam, Turkey

STRETCHED across the fog-enshrouded Euphrates River, the massive stone mountain that will soon be the world's ninth-largest dam stands in defiance of nature - and of protests downstream.

Now nearing completion, Turkey's Ataturk Dam will be the crown jewel in an ambitious project to harness the Euphrates to produce electric power and irrigate 46,000 acres of arid land in the country's southeastern provinces.

But for Syria and Iraq, which share the waters of the Euphrates with Turkey, the implications of the \$21 billion Southeastern Anatolia Project seem ominous. If the three nations fail to negotiate a water-sharing agreement by the time the Anatolia project is fully developed, Syria could lose 40 percent of its Euphrates water and Iraq up to 90 percent, according to Thomas Naff of the University of Pennsylvania, director of Associates for Middle East Research (AMER).

Such catastrophic reductions are not inevitable, says AMER, a group of international water experts. Even so, one year before its giant turbines begin spinning out electricity, the Ataturk Dam has emerged as the most disquieting symbol of the potentially dangerous competition for water that most experts believe will soon dominate the politics of the Middle East.

"The Ataturk Dam makes an implicit problem explicit," says Elias Salameh, director of the Water Research and Study Center at the University of Jordan. "This is the beginning of water conflict in the Middle East."

Under the terms of two international conventions, the Helsinki Rules of 1966 and a United

GLOBAL CONNECTIONS *the Middle East*

What role have natural resources played in the politics and economy of the Middle East?

Lesson 2: Got Water? (cont'd.)

Nations' convention of 1972, water rights are to be shared according to population and need, with historical allocation taken into account.

But international law also acknowledges the absolute sovereignty of nations over the resources they control.

Thus, upstream countries like Turkey insist that they are under no more obligation to give away their water than, say, Saudi Arabia is to give away its oil.

"We have no international obligations," says Turkey's State Minister Kamran Inan, who points instead to a 1987 "gentlemen's agreement" with Syria and Iraq "to do our best not to harm our neighbors."

Despite pressure from Syria and Iraq, Turkey has been unwilling to commit itself to a basin-wide water-sharing agreement.

The case of the Euphrates also illustrates the complex synergism found elsewhere in the Middle East over water issues and other regional conflicts.

Tensions generated by the infiltration of Kurdish guerrillas into Turkey from Iraq and Syrian-controlled east Lebanon have been a major obstacle to a basinwide water sharing agreement, and have provoked fears downstream that Turkey might choke off the river in retaliation.

"We give them water, they give us terrorists," grumbles an official in Ankara who, nevertheless, insists that Turkey will never exploit its control of the Euphrates for political purposes.

On the other hand, reaching an agreement on water rights could pave the way for cooperation on such political issues as Kurdish terrorism and provide a catalyst to regional peace.

"Water can unite or divide the region," says Professor Naff. "It can be a catalyst for cooperation and peace or for conflict."

CONCERN over water rights in the region reached critical mass when Turkey closed off the Euphrates for one month in January to begin filling the huge reservoir behind the Ataturk Dam. It is one of 21 dams that will help irrigate an area of southeastern Turkey the size of East Germany.

Turkey compensated by increasing the flow downstream for 50 days starting late last year to

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What role have natural resources played in the politics and economy of the Middle East?

Lesson 2: Got Water? (cont'd.)

blunt the effect of the closure. Meanwhile Turkish officials, members of a tripartite technical committee, have sought to allay concerns in Syria and Iraq, which will have to endure months more of such closures over the next five years before the reservoir is topped off.

But Damascus and Baghdad worry that the dam and the Anatolia project could pose big long-term problems in a region that is just coming out of the worst drought in 15 years, and that is heavily dependent on the Euphrates for irrigation to cut food import bills that in Syria alone last year claimed 6 percent of the national budget.

To meet the food needs of a population expected to swell from 13 to 22 million in 20 years, Syria plans to irrigate 100,000 acres of new land along the Euphrates. One official in Damascus calculates that because of extra demands on the river upstream, plus the rapid depletion of groundwater in Syria, the 15 million cubic meters of water needed for Syria to avoid severe food shortages by the year 2000 may be unavailable.

"It is a problem of 'to be or not to be' for Syria," says the Syrian official of the consequences of excess demand on the Euphrates. "You are dealing with a very hot problem."

Matters are even worse for Iraq, which is at the end of the Euphrates water line.

Iraqi officials say that while the Ataturk reservoir is being filled, the country's electric power generation on the Euphrates could be cut by 40 percent, while water supplies to 5 million users in northwestern Iraq will be disrupted. Wheat and rice production could also suffer.

Without some form of trilateral sharing agreement, construction of the Ataturk Dam "will have severe repercussions on the amount of water and the quality of water that reaches Iraq," warns Nizar Hamdoon, Iraq's deputy foreign minister.

Adding to Iraq's troubles is the prospect that Syria will trap most of the remaining Euphrates flow behind its Tabaqah Dam, reducing the downstream flow to a trickle.

The two countries nearly went to war 15 years ago when the filling of new Turkish and Syrian dams temporarily cut the Euphrates to a third of its normal volume at the Iraqi border. If Turkey and Syria implement additional development plans, led by the Anatolia project, relations could be strained to the limit.

"We're heading towards a war, unless there is intervention by the United Nations," grimly predicts a Western diplomat in Damascus. "It must be done now."

What role have natural resources played in the politics and economy of the Middle East?

Lesson 2: Got Water? (cont'd.)

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MIDDLE EAST WATER. TIME RUNNING OUT.

A 4-part series

If Jordan Valley Wells Run Dry...

Part 3, March 14, 1990

George D. Moffett III, Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor
Dateline: Jerusalem

IN the politically volatile Jordan Valley, competition for water, not land, is becoming the biggest obstacle to peace. For 6 million Israelis and Palestinians, the future will be dominated by the question of how to allocate the region's most precious resource.

Israel, whose water-efficient farmers made the desert bloom, is now living beyond its means. With all of its renewable water supplies already being over-exploited by 15 percent a year and with no new sources to turn to, the country is on the verge of one of its most severe crises.

With water already being shifted away from agriculture to meet urban needs and with a 30 percent water deficit looming within a decade, Israel's security is at risk.

"Israel is on the threshold of a catastrophe," warns Arnon Soffer, a Haifa University geographer who, in a recent unpublished report to Israel's Foreign Ministry, cautioned that the combination of arid lands and exploding populations was a "formula for disaster" throughout the Middle East.

For Palestinians living under Israeli military occupation, water shortages are not so much a function of nature as of politics. Although the West Bank is the source of 600-700 million cubic meters (mcm) of water annually, Israel has limited West Bank residents to one-fifth of that amount, stunting agriculture and retarding development.

In Gaza, meanwhile, overpopulation has produced the most acute water shortages in the Middle East. At stake for Palestinians: the political and economic viability of a state now demanded by West Bank and Gaza Arabs. "For Palestinians under occupation, time has ceased since 1967," says Palestinian economist Ibrahim Matar. "Palestinians have been pre-

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Lesson 2: Got Water? (cont'd.)

vented from expanding their own water supplies since the occupation began."

In Israel, the issue of water has become a potent tool in the hands of conservatives opposed to relinquishing the territories. In a recent advertisement, under a menacing photo of Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat, the right-wing Israeli Tsomet Party warned that "Israeli withdrawal from Judea and Samaria (the West Bank) means that this man will have the power to determine the quality and quantity of water you and your children drink."

Palestinians, meanwhile, have their own worst-case scenario: the influx of hundreds of thousands of Jewish immigrants from the Soviet Union. Whether the 'emigr'es settle in the occupied territories or not, they will strain available resources and leave less water for Palestinian farmers.

Of combined water resources available in Israel and the territories, Israel consumes 86 percent, including more than 80 percent of the West Bank water table.

Meanwhile, competition for the dwindling resources of the Jordan Valley is joined by two other thirsty countries, Jordan and Syria. Despite United States mediation efforts, an agreement to share the Yarmuk River, one of the Jordan's main tributaries, has proved elusive, leaving officials on both sides increasingly concerned.

Competition over the Jordan River and its tributaries has already prompted the region to take up arms. Syria protested to the United Nations when Israel began construction of a pipeline during the 1950s which now diverts Jordan River water to its southern Negev Desert. (With water in the Sea of Galilee (Lake Kinneret) at the northern end of the pipeline at the lowest level ever recorded at this time of year, its continued use is now in jeopardy).

A 1964 Arab League decision to attempt to divert the Jordan's headwaters produced border skirmishes and later contributed to the outbreak of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. After seizing the Golan Heights from Syria, Israel gained effective control of the Jordan.

Pressure for a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip now raises new questions. Palestinians say they have a right to control their own water supplies. They argue that like any two states, "Palestine" and Israel can negotiate an equitable sharing of water resources.

Israel says if it loses control of West Bank waters, its coastal cities and farmland in northern and central Israel will be at risk. Whatever the case, unrestrained competition between two

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sovereign states in the region could prove lethal.

“If there's competition, that means drilling deeper and that means causing an ecological disaster with our mutual resource,” says Meir Ben Meir, a former Israeli water commissioner. “Nobody can win this war.”

In the future, Israel plans to use more reclaimed wastewater for irrigation, freeing fresh water for domestic use.

But such news is small solace for Palestinians, whose water now accounts for one-third of Israel's annual consumption. After the occupation began, Israel quickly took control of West Bank water resources. Under military order, Palestinians were prohibited from digging all but a handful of new wells for drinking and irrigation, while limits were placed on the amount of water that could be pumped from existing wells.

Access to the Jordan River, once the source of 200 mcm of water for irrigation, was completely cut off. Meanwhile, Israel began drilling the first of more than 40 deep-bore wells with powerful motors that now pull up to 40 percent more water from West Bank aquifers than the 300 shallower pre-1967 sinkholes used by Palestinians.

Some of the new Israeli wells, used to provide water for Jewish settlements in the West Bank, were placed close to local Palestinian springs, causing the wells of many Palestinian farmers to run dry.

With no restrictions on pumping and with big subsidies from the World Zionist Organization, the settlers were soon using an average of four times more water per capita than Palestinians.

Responding to international pressure, Israel has agreed to compensate Palestinians for water shortages by providing, and in some cases charging for, limited supplies from some of its deep wells. But the arrangement has deprived local Arabs of their water independence and, in the opinion of many legal experts, violated international law governing military occupations.

“Palestinian farmers are now completely dependent on the Israelis for their water needs,” says Mr. Matar. “Their status has been changed from owners to renters of their own water resources.”

The situation is worse in the Gaza Strip, where population growth has overtaxed water sup-

What role have natural resources played in the politics and economy of the Middle East?

Lesson 2: Got Water? (cont'd.)

plies at an alarming rate. Underground aquifers in Gaza are capable of providing up to 60 mcm of renewable water each year for Gaza's 650,000 inhabitants. But 150 mcm are now being pumped annually, lowering the water table and causing seepage of salty sea water into the aquifer.

To allow the water table to replenish, usage will have to be dramatically cut even as Gaza's population dramatically increases. Palestinian and Israeli experts agree that if the present overpumping continues, agriculture and living standards will deteriorate catastrophically.

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MIDDLE EAST WATER. TIME RUNNING OUT.

A 4-part series

Pouring Oil on Troubled Middle East Water

Part 4, March 16, 1990

George D. Moffett III, Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor
Dateline: Aleppo, Syria

DEFYING the chill winds of a bleak winter day, the small green shoots of a chickpea plant venture out of the black Syrian soil.

Highly sensitive to cold and humidity, these protein-rich legumes - one of the staple food items in the the Middle East - have usually been planted in spring, too late to avoid the wilting, crop-stunting heat of summer.

But with a little genetic toughening, the plants on this experimental farm near Aleppo have learned to cope with winter, taking full advantage of limited seasonal rains, and thus prospering on the kind of semi-arid land prevalent in the region.

The new strain of chickpea, developed by agronomists at the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), is one way the Middle East is preparing for a future in which there will be less water to go around. For a region that relies heavily on irrigation to grow food, coaxing bigger harvests out of rain-fed land has become a top priority.

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What role have natural resources played in the politics and economy of the Middle East?

Lesson 2: Got Water? (cont'd.)

Greater farm output and more-aggressive water-conservation efforts may not rescue the region from a drier future. Indeed, the Middle East is merely borrowing against the day, not far distant in the opinion of many experts, when spiraling population growth creates food demands that will be impossible to meet with available water resources.

But in a region that was largely excluded because of its dry soil from the benefits of the "Green Revolution" of the 1960s, the prospect of doubling output on some rain-fed lands has generated considerable enthusiasm among farmers and government officials alike.

"In these marginal lands you can make fantastic contributions," says Aart Van Schoonhoven, ICARDA's research director. "By doubling the efficiency of water use, you have the equivalent of two times as much rain."

One obvious way to control consumption of what is fast becoming the Middle East's most valuable resource is to charge more for water to effect rationing by price.

But few governments in the region are eager to risk the violence that has greeted price hikes in another basic commodity, bread. As a result, millions of gallons of valuable water continue to be squandered each year watering golf courses and washing cars.

In countries like Jordan, where up to a quarter of the water used for domestic and industrial needs is illegally siphoned off before reaching the meter, the effect of price increases would be blunted in any case.

"Because it's (practically) free, it's freely used," says ICARDA director Nasrat Fadda.

Instead, Middle East states have chosen less drastic means of improving water management and conservation in an effort some experts worry may be too little, too late.

In Israel, a growing network of treatment plants purifies waste water for agricultural use, making more fresh water available for domestic use.

In Egypt, where rain-fed agriculture is virtually nonexistent, an inefficient 20,000-mile network of public canals used to irrigate crop lands bordering the Nile is being upgraded. Some canals are being lined to minimize seepage, while 300,000 acres of new lands east and west of the Nile Delta are being fitted with more efficient "drip" irrigation systems, according to Egyptian government sources. Plans are also under way to capture more than 2 million cubic meters of irrigation runoff a year in Egypt's northern lakes before it drains into the

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Lesson 2: Got Water? (cont'd.)

Mediterranean Sea.

In Syria, farmers are being taught how to manage rain-fed crops more efficiently to maximize harvests and decrease reliance on irrigation. One technique: "harvesting" sparse rainwater by concentrating it in limited growing areas.

ICARDA agronomists are also teaching farmers how to use fertilizers more effectively, how to till croplands to minimize runoff, and how to rotate crops to intensify production.

Meanwhile, scientists around the world are seizing the last brief respite before the water crisis hits to develop and implement new technologies to make available water supplies stretch further.

By developing food crops with greater resistance to salt and viruses, an incipient revolution in biotechnology is opening the door to more water-efficient agriculture.

The ultimate technological challenge is finding a practical way to desalinate sea water.

"Desalination is the foremost challenge to the human race," says Meir Ben Meir, a former Israeli water commissioner. "The sea will be our main salvation in the future."

Less promising in the context of the Middle East have been schemes for regional cooperation in using water.

One technically feasible proposal is a canal that would link the Yarmuk River, which forms the border between Syria and Jordan and between Jordan and Israel, with the Sea of Galilee (Lake Kinneret) in Israel. During the winter months, the canal would funnel rains, that would otherwise be lost, downstream into the sea. Some of this water could then be used to replenish underground aquifers in Israel and the occupied West Bank. During the dry summer months, water could be pumped back through the Yarmuk into the 42-mile long Ghor Canal that irrigates the Jordanian side of the Jordan River.

"It is the most attractive water-resources development scheme in the region, both in terms of cost and the quantities of water involved," says Israeli water engineer Elisha Kally.

Another proposal, first put forward by former Egyptian President Anwar Sadat at the time of the Camp David negotiations in 1978, is to divert Nile waters across the Sinai Peninsula into the Israeli-occupied Gaza Strip, and perhaps even into southern Jordan and Israel's Negev

What role have natural resources played in the politics and economy of the Middle East?

Lesson 2: Got Water? (cont'd.)

Desert. But these and other propositions have run afoul of the hard realities of Middle East politics.

The absence of relations between Israel and Jordan precludes even technical cooperation. Meanwhile, the kind of water-basin transfers that have proved so successful in the United States are considered unworkable between states that are real or potential adversaries. Israel is unwilling to place its water security in the hands of an Arab country. At the same time, Egyptian officials have long since pronounced Sadat's proposal a dead letter.

"We have no intention now or in the future of transferring water outside Egyptian territory," says a well-placed government source in Cairo flatly. "It will never happen."

In the end, the biggest obstacle to water self-sufficiency is not politics but population growth. Few experts say a solution to that problem is anywhere in sight.

Until inroads are made on birth rates, even the most ambitious conservation plans are bound to be inadequate in the long run.

"We're merely delaying the crisis," says Mr. Fadda about ICARDA's success in improving dry-land productivity. "We're buying time to make the adjustment either until population growth is brought down or until technological advances are made."

"This will postpone for a time the onset of the crisis," adds the Damascus-based director of a Western development agency, referring to water-saving measures now being instituted throughout the Middle East. "But it may not prevent the crisis from happening."

This is the last in a four-part series. The first three parts ran March 8, 13, and 14. Editor of series: Susan Llewelyn Leach.



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Regional Economic Development Working Group

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Development Working Group

The working group heard progress reports on specific projects in the areas of transportation (highway infrastructure, railways and ports, motor transportation and civil aviation); energy (linking the electricity grids of Israel, the autonomy, Egypt and Jordan, and the alternatives of a Mediterranean-Dead Sea or Red Sea-Dead Sea hydroelectric project); tourism (regional consultation, cooperation and priorities); agriculture (veterinary services and plant protection); finance (financial markets and stock exchanges, training of banking personnel in the autonomy); regional trade; and training programs.

The Middle East-Mediterranean Travel and Tourist Association (MEMTTA) was initiated in Casablanca in September 1995.

Parallel with these developments, the World Bank is considering holding a regional workshop to study ways to integrate the private sector in infrastructure projects.

First Middle East/North Africa Economic Summit - Casablanca

Oct 30 - Nov 1, 1994



At the invitation of King Hassan II of Morocco and with the support and endorsement of Presidents Bill Clinton of the United States and Boris Yeltsin of the Russian Federation, the representatives of 61 countries and 1,114 business leaders from all regions of the world gathered for a Middle East/North Africa Economic Summit in Casablanca from October 30 to November 1, 1994. Among the accomplishments of the conference were:

1. the endorsement of the decision by the Council for Cooperation of the Gulf States to ignore the secondary and tertiary aspects of the Arab boycott;
2. the move towards ending the primary boycott;
3. an agreement to establish four regional centers:
 - a. a Middle East and North Africa Development Bank,
 - b. a Tourist Board to facilitate tourism,
 - c. a regional Chamber of Commerce and Business Council to facilitate intra-regional trade relations, and
 - d. a Steering Committee charged with following up all issues raised at the conference.

Second Middle East/North Africa Economic Summit - Amman

October 29-31, 1995

On October 29-31, 1995, the second Middle East/ North Africa Economic Summit was held in Amman.

The goals of the Summit were to facilitate the expansion of private sector investment in the region, to cement a public-private partnership which will ensure that end, and to work to enhance regional cooperation and development.

In this spirit, business leaders were able to conclude a number of significant commercial and business transactions at the Summit that will help augment the productive capacity of the region and contribute to its broad-based economic development. These ventures involved projects in the fields of tourism, telecommunications, and transportation. Reflecting this public-private partnership, a number of these ventures will benefit from government guarantees, technical assistance, and other support from the international community.

As a result of negotiations over the past year on institutional arrangements called for in the [Casablanca Declaration](#) which would help underpin the peace process, the following agreements have been reached:

- A Bank for Economic Cooperation and Development in the Middle East and North Africa to be established in Cairo, to promote development of the private sector, support regional infrastructure projects, and provide a Forum to promote regional economic cooperation.
- The establishment of a Regional Tourism Board, the Middle East-Mediterranean Travel and Tourism Association (MEMTTA), to facilitate tourism and promote the region as a unique and attractive tourist destination.

- The establishment of a Regional Business Council to promote cooperation and trade among the private sectors of the countries of the region.
- The formal inauguration of the [Economic Summit Executive Secretariat](#), located in Rabat, which is working to advance the public-private partnership, promote contacts, share data, and foster private sector investment in the region.

As a complement to the regional institutions called for at Casablanca, the Steering Group of the Multilateral Peace Negotiations has decided to establish the [REDWG Monitoring Committee Secretariat](#) as a permanent regional economic institution to be based in Amman, to promote and strengthen regional economic cooperation in the Middle East and North Africa.

The participants at the Summit expressed their intention to meet again next year for a third annual [Middle East/ North Africa Economic Summit in Cairo](#).

Third Middle East/North Africa Economic Summit - Cairo November 12-14, 1996

As in the previous two conferences, the Cairo MENA summit presented businessmen from the Arab countries, Israel, Western Europe, North America and other parts of the world with an excellent opportunity to meet, form professional and personal connections, establish business contacts and launch specific ventures.

Fourth Middle East/North Africa Economic Summit - Doha November 16-18, 1997

The fourth MENA Conference was held in Doha, Qatar, with the participation of businessmen, state officials and journalists.

One of the concrete results of this conference was the signing of an agreement between Israel and Jordan on the establishment of the [Irbid Qualifying Industrial Zone](#).

The MENA conferences are an integral part of the peace process. Even if no progress occurs in other aspects of the process, there is no justification for failing to advance in its non-political spheres. Like all regional activities, participation in this conference reflects joint interests, rather than private ones, and addresses the economic interests of all participants. This is made evident by the businesslike atmosphere of the conferences and by the numerous multi-national corporations and leading international businessmen who chose to take part in them.

In a process of transition from conflict to reconciliation, it is of great importance that normal ties be established between countries and peoples in a variety of areas (economic, social, "People-to-People" projects and others).

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Amr Mussa (front), secretary general of the Arab League, attends the opening of a meeting of Middle Eastern foreign ministers in Beirut, March 25, 2002.

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Politics: From Royalty to Democracy

Politics in the Middle East, far from being solely an issue of Islamic resurgence as is often presented by Western media, actually reflects a complex mixture of issues that include nationalism, religion, social and economic concerns, anti-colonialist sentiments, tribal loyalties, and ethnic identities.

Political regimes in the Middle East have different forms of government. There are

- parliamentary republics in Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Tunisia, Turkey, Yemen, and post-Taliban Afghanistan;
- traditional monarchies in Oman, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia;
- constitutional monarchies in Jordan and Morocco.

There are also several unique governing structures, including

- Libya's *jamahiriya*, where local councils are supposed to govern (although Libya is in fact a military dictatorship);
- the United Arab Emirates, where several traditionally chosen rulers collaborate in a federation;
- the Islamic Republic of Iran, where religious scholars oversee an elected parliament and president.

Related Video

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All political bodies are a compromise between an individual and a group. How that compromise is negotiated, and by whom, varies a great deal. Some institutions that reflect greater personal liberty are freedom of the press; free, fair and inclusive elections; multiple political parties; and the fair treatment of minority groups, whether ethnic or religious.

The role of religion in politics

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The late King Hussein I of Jordan and Queen Noor arriving for a visit to the United States [[enlarge](#)]

Religion plays a role in political decision-making in virtually all Middle Eastern countries, but in very different ways. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, for example, the government is run by religious leaders, with a subordinate elected [parliament](#) (candidates to which must be approved by the religious leadership). In Jordan and Morocco, the king bases his legitimacy on direct descent from the Prophet, but the king is not a religious leader per se.

In Lebanon, parliamentary representation is divided up according to religious affiliation, with proportions reflecting an outdated census of the population of Lebanon in 1932. Maintaining a tenuous balance of power among the 18 officially recognized religions is an important governmental concern, but the Lebanese government itself is not composed of religious leaders.

Even in strong democracies, like Turkey and Israel, the support of influential religious parties is often needed by major parties to form a [coalition government](#). When religious parties are key members or leaders of a coalition, their political clout can push the government to mold policies in a religious direction.

Pressures for and against democracy in the Middle East

There are both internal and external pressures on Middle Eastern countries for democratic reform, which would allow free and open political systems to develop. The existing governments, however, have resisted this pressure for a number of reasons. Some governments and leaders simply want to hold on to power themselves; others fear political instability if they loosen political control too quickly.



A crowd of Kurdish refugees in northern Iraq. The Kurds are an ethnic minority in the Middle East. [[enlarge](#)]

Many regimes oppose the struggles of internal minorities for [autonomy](#) or independence and restrict political activity related to those efforts. Others face an internal religious critique, particularly from [Islamists](#). Many fear that if an Islamist political party were legitimately elected, that party would refuse to relinquish power in future elections. These pressures against democratization often lead to a cycle of political repression, revolts (sometimes violent), and then further oppression.

In Egypt, as in many other countries in the Middle East, pressures for real democratization have come from internal opposition groups (both leftist and Islamist), international observers like the United States, and non-governmental organizations. To date, though, the governing party allows only a small, controlled group to function as the official political opposition.



Kurdish men, armed with portable rocket launchers [[enlarge](#)]

Egypt has followed an uneven policy of economic liberalization over the past 25 years or so. This policy has created a backlash, as Egyptians judge growing globalization to be damaging to local cultures, witness a growing gap between rich and poor, and decide that Western-style democracy undermines local control. Since responses to these political and economic pressures cannot be expressed freely within the political system, there are frequently popular demonstrations and the formation of radical underground opposition groups.

Both Israel and Turkey are Western-style democracies with regularly scheduled elections. But Israeli Arabs and Turkish Kurds experience political restrictions, as these groups are seen as threatening to both the security and the identity of the state.

Turkey's efforts to join an even larger political and economic body, the European Union, has motivated many domestic reforms and may lead to even more. Peer pressure from that group requires that Turkey uphold a standard of

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human rights that is comparable to the nations of Western Europe.

Israel is debating a looming political and demographic crisis. The birthrate of Israel's Arab population continues to outpace that of its Jewish population. Can Israel remain a Jewish state and a democracy if Arabs eventually outnumber Jews in the society? More fundamentally, how can Israel reconcile its democratic ideals with unequal treatment of Israeli Arabs?

The cult of personality



Iraqi soldiers posing by a mural of President Saddam Hussein
[[enlarge](#)]

Some leaders and political families have been in power for so long that they have integrated themselves into the nation's identity. These leaders tend to reach their position based on a charismatic personality rather than on specific policies, and once in power, they can overwhelm any potential rivals. Examples of Middle Eastern demagoguery include Muammar al-Qaddafi in Libya, the late Hafez al-Asad in Syria, Saddam Hussein in Iraq, and the late Gamal Abd al-Nasser in Egypt. All of these leaders came to power in military coups, and many used their national military to monitor and attack opposition groups.

Identifying enemies as domestic policy

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Like politicians throughout history and across the globe, political leaders in the Middle East often try to deflect public criticism of internal issues by focusing on external "enemies." This strategy can be effective for diffusing popular anger at the oppression, corruption, or bad governance of a regime.

As a prime example, many Iraqis oppose Saddam Hussein's repression of all political opposition, his economic policies, and his concentration of national resources on military expenditure. If, however, the U.S.-led bombing and U.S. policies are more of a threat to them than Saddam's internal policies, then the Iraqis will support Saddam against the outside enemy. This strategy can be particularly effective when the state controls all media sources and can give its own interpretation of events without competing explanations.

The government of post-revolutionary Iran similarly used the long war with Iraq and anger at the United States to maintain a focus on external rather than internal affairs. Since the end of the Iran-Iraq War and a break with relations with the U.S., internal pressures for reform have begun to mount within Iranian society.

Effect of U.S. policies on public opinion

U.S. policies are often a source of tension for many countries in the region. Opposition groups in many Middle Eastern countries say that U.S. support of authoritarian regimes (such as in Egypt or Saudi Arabia) has prevented the development of any real democracy. They therefore find the U.S. to be hypocritical and fickle when it demands that groups like the Palestinian Authority institute democratic changes, or that Saddam Hussein, who was once a U.S. ally, be removed from power. More hypocrisy is seen in American statements about defending Kuwait on the basis of international law and the right of self-determination, while denying the same rights to the Palestinians.



U.S. and Saudi Arabian personnel on the tarmac at Prince Sultan Air Base, Al Kharj, Saudi Arabia
[[enlarge](#)]

The strong U.S.-Israeli relationship is seen by some as continued Western colonialism in the region. Many observers in the Middle East think the U.S. seeks to control events in the Middle East. They point to the American military presence during the Gulf War, the continued presence of troops in Saudi Arabia (the birthplace of Islam), and the use by Israel of American-made weapons against the Palestinians.

The U.S. does have positive relationships with the governments of many countries in the region. Israel and Turkey (a partner in [NATO](#)) are obvious examples, but the U.S. also has strong diplomatic ties with Egypt, Jordan, and others. But growing popular opposition to the U.S. policy vis-à-vis Palestine is making it difficult for moderate regimes in the region to continue positive and mutually beneficial relationships with the U.S.

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In this report, the *New Yorker* looks at the vulnerability of the Saudi royal family.

King Hussein:

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As King Hussein of Jordan was near death at his palace in Amman, Jordan, after undergoing cancer treatments at the Mayo Clinic, *NewsHour* led a discussion about his 46-year reign. (February 1996)

The Transformation of Turkey: From Islamic Empire to Modern State:

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Think Tank asks, "Can an Islamic nation be modern, democratic, secular, pro-Western -- and still be Islamic?"

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The research division of the Library of Congress provides extensive overviews of various nations.

The World Factbook 2001:

<http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>

The Central Intelligence Agency publishes information on the geography, people, government, and economy of each Middle Eastern country.

Hunting Bin Laden: Interview with Bin Laden:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/binladen/who/interview.html>

Osama bin Laden answers questions posed to him by some of his followers at his mountaintop camp in southern Afghanistan. Later, ABC reporter John Miller is asking the questions.

A Middle East History:

<http://www.theworld.org/archive/mideast/mideast.htm>

The World tells the history of the Middle East in an effort to understand the current conflict and tension.

Secrets of History: The CIA in Iran:

<http://www.nytimes.com/library/world/mideast/041600iran-cia-index.html>

A CIA document and *New York Times* articles and photographs depict the clumsy yet successful 1953 overthrow of Iran's government.

Commanding Heights Web Site:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/commandingheights/>

An economist's look at world history and development from 1910 to the present

Arab Human Development Report 2002:

<http://www.undp.org/rbas/ahdr/>

A report on the Arab world's attempts to advance human development

Understanding History, Religion, and Politics in Jerusalem and Beyond:

<http://www.pbs.org/pov/pov2001/promises/intheclassroom.html>

Students will acquire historical knowledge of the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians in the region, learn how to interpret a conflict from multiple perspectives, advocate for a point of view, and develop greater conflict resolution skills.

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In Egypt, merchant ships sit tied up along the shore as they wait to complete their transit of the Suez Canal.

DOD, Defense Visual Information Center, March Air Force Base, CA

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Economics: It's More Than Oil

National economies throughout the Middle East struggled in the 19th and 20th centuries to develop their natural and human resources, to modernize their societies, and to raise their standards of living. They have made significant, hard-won progress on many fronts (like broad-based education), and some countries are blessed with abundant natural resources (oil, natural gas, phosphates, and other minerals, for example). In general, however, Middle Eastern economies have faced significant obstacles to successful development.

One major obstacle has been Western efforts to control the region's resources. Other challenges include rapidly increasing populations, uneven distribution of resources like water and oil, protracted armed conflicts and the resultant high military spending, rapid urbanization, and incorporation into a global economy. How has the Middle East tried to deal with these challenges?

Capitulations lead to European influence

In 1526, Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent (known as the "Lawgiver" to the Ottomans) granted the first of what came to be called the "[capitulations](#)" to the French. The agreements gave France, and later other European powers, the right to trade within the Ottoman Empire without paying taxes and other economic concessions -- a sort of pre-modern free-trade agreement.



A painting of Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent, who ruled the Ottoman Empire from 1520 until his death in 1566 [[enlarge](#)]

The Ottomans granted the capitulations from a position of strength. They were eager to encourage imports to supply their population with goods and could afford to do so without heavy import duties. The Europeans wanted markets in which to sell their exports. In the beginning, it was a win-win situation.

Three hundred years later, however, the capitulations gave Europeans an enormous advantage over local merchants in the Ottoman market. Not only were Europeans (and any local protégés they hired, especially local Christians) still exempt from taxation, but they were also now mass-producing cheap manufactured goods that were displacing local products. The Ottomans no longer had the political power to rescind the capitulations which had helped the European powers gain control over the economy of the Empire, and thus control over its political and economic decisions.

Borrowing and bankruptcy

As Egypt and the Ottoman Empire watched themselves fall behind Europe's military power, they tried to copy Europe's sources of strength. They began to borrow heavily from European banks, on bad terms, in order to finance the modernization of their armies, social institutions, infrastructure, and industry. The Ottomans took out the first major loan in 1854 at the outset of the [Crimean War](#).

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As time went on, expensive efforts at reform continued, and the Ottomans were unable to repay the loans on schedule. When they declared bankruptcy in 1875, the Western powers took direct control over parts of the economy.

A similar situation had developed in Egypt. Enormous efforts had been made to modernize the military and infrastructure and to begin industrialization throughout the 19th century.



Opened in 1869, Egypt's 100-mile-long Suez Canal connects the Red Sea with the eastern Mediterranean. [[enlarge](#)]

Egypt had two advantages: First, the American Civil War meant that cotton from the South was no longer available on the world market. Cotton prices rose, and Egyptian cotton became an extremely valuable export. Second, the [Suez Canal](#) opened in 1869.

Despite the potential represented by these developments, Egypt's expensive reform program, lavish royal spending, and European pressure led to bankruptcy. Partly to ensure economic stability and repayment of debt, and partly to squelch a nationalist uprising, Britain colonized the country in 1882.

Economic challenges of independence



British soldiers in formation before the ancient Sphinx and pyramids on Egypt's Giza Plateau, c. 1893 [[enlarge](#)]

Local forces resisted the imposition of European colonial rule across the Middle East. Even as Britain and France carved up what was left of the [Ottoman Empire](#) between themselves after World War I, pressure was growing for them to leave and allow the states of the Middle East to govern themselves.

The process of achieving independence was uneven: Egypt, for example, achieved nominal independence from Britain in 1922, but Britain retained enormous influence until the Free Officers' Coup under Gamal Abd al-Nasser deposed King Faruq in 1952. Syria achieved independence from France in 1946, while Britain unilaterally left Palestine in 1948, leading to the creation of a political division between Israel and the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza.

Nationalist regimes that came to power upon independence from the Western [mandates](#) tended to maintain significant control over their economies. Using a [socialist](#) economic model, countries like Egypt, Iraq, Algeria, and Syria wished to pool national resources and spend them centrally to spur economic development.

One common strategy in the 1960s was import-substituting industrialization (ISI). This was an attempt to build local industries that would create jobs, use local resources, and allow countries to stop importing Western goods. Governments raised trade barriers and heavily subsidized infant industries (often owning them outright) to stimulate rapid economic development.

ISI failed when these industries became bloated, inefficient enterprises riddled with bureaucracy and corruption. They couldn't meet local demands and were a drain on national resources.

By the late 1970s, Egypt, under President Anwar Sadat, abandoned the strategy of ISI in favor of [infitah](#), opening up the economy to foreign investment. More and more countries decided to encourage foreign investment in order to stimulate their economies this way.

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Outside an Iranian McDonald's restaurant
[[enlarge](#)]

The strategy of infitah, however, has also been a disappointment. Much of the sought-after foreign investment has been in Western consumer goods and luxuries, like McDonald's and name-brand clothing, rather than in local industry. This importation of Western culture does little to raise the general standard of living in the region. Instead, it tends to increase the cultural and economic gap between a wealthy class that has benefited from Western investment and adopted a more Western lifestyle, and a much larger population of the poor.

Many feel that the importation of Western goods and cultural values challenges important social traditions. This is one factor in the rise of resentment against the West and the increasing popularity of Islamic opposition groups that promise to restore cultural and economic independence to the region.

The economy of oil



An Iraqi oil refinery from the air [[enlarge](#)]

The discovery of enormous oil deposits in the Middle East coincided with increasing dependence upon oil in the West in the early 20th century. Money from oil has created enormous opportunities for development in those countries where it is concentrated, such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Iraq, Iran, and Algeria.

States without significant oil resources have benefited by sending laborers to work in the richer states. The money these workers send home has contributed to the economies of places like the West Bank and Gaza, Egypt, and Jordan.

The financial benefits from oil, however, have been offset by other problems associated with the economy of a rentier state. A rentier state is one that gets most of its income from selling its natural resources to outside buyers.

Because the government gets its income directly from selling this resource, there is no need to tax its citizens. Nor is there a need to give them a voice in running the country. Rentier states in the Middle East usually have strong, [autocratic](#) governments that buy off political dissent by distributing the wealth derived from oil through extensive social programs.

In some ways, money comes in too easily in rentier economies. There is little incentive to increase efficiency in resource production or to diversify the sources of wealth. The state [bureaucracy](#) and public industries become bloated. The population may develop unrealistic social expectations, but at the same time has no way to express opposition to those in power. Connections to the source of wealth come to count for more than individual ability.

The consequences of unequal distribution of wealth

In addition, the gap between rich and poor countries can be a source of tension. While guest workers earn good money working in oil-rich nations, they are often treated as second-class members of society.

Another major source of tension in the region is foreign aid. People on the street may be suspicious of the motives behind foreign aid, whether it comes from the U.S. to Egypt and Israel or from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to poorer Arab countries in the region.

U.S. aid to Israel is an especially great bone of contention in the Middle East. Many in the region believe that the current state of Israel is simply an extension of earlier Western colonialism: After all, the original Zionists came from Europe, and Israel's economy and military receive financial support from the U.S. Many Arabs believe that the U.S. cannot be a fair broker of the peace process while it

is tied so closely to Israel by massive aid.

The economic effect of political crisis



Kuwaiti buildings bomb-damaged during Iraq's 1990 occupation, under skies darkened by the smoke of burning oil wells [[enlarge](#)]

Political turmoil has had a devastating effect on economies in the Middle East. Iraq, for example, had been using its oil wealth to provide a high level of education and health care to its population, among other benefits. But military expenditures during the Iran-Iraq War (1980-88) put a significant strain on Iraq's resources, reducing social spending. Saddam Hussein's decision to invade Kuwait in 1990, the U.S.-led bombing and U.N. embargo on Iraqi oil that ensued, and the continued use by the government of oil revenues for military purposes have reversed many of the social gains that had been made earlier.

The Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza have faced extraordinarily difficult economic conditions since Israel has occupied these regions as a result of the 1967 Six-Day War. Some families have lived in crowded refugee camps since they fled or were expelled from Israel in 1948 during Israel's war of independence. Gaza has one of the highest population densities in the world. Unemployment is extremely high, particularly since many Palestinians have been unable to get to their jobs in Israel after Israel closed its borders to Palestinians for security reasons during the first [intifada](#).

Other economic challenges



A crowded street in Cairo, Egypt [[enlarge](#)]

A further strain on Middle Eastern economies is a rapidly rising population. The introduction of modern medicine and public health and sanitation in the 19th century caused the population of the Middle East to double in only a century (the previous population doubling had taken thousands of years). Now it takes only about 25 years for the region's population to double.

Unfortunately, most of the countries with the highest population growth rates do not enjoy significant oil revenue -- only Iraq, Iran, and Algeria are exceptions. How the region's governments will provide jobs, education, and health care to a fast-growing population is a matter of global concern.

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Country Briefings:

<http://www.economist.com/countries/>

These country profiles from *The Economist* include economic structure, outlook, and basic data.

Middle East Studies Report: Stability and Instability in the Gulf:

<http://www.csis.org/mideast/reports/EconNME.html>

These reports summarize economic, demographic, energy, military spending, and arms-transfer trends.

Is America Stuck in the Middle East?:

http://www.pbs.org/thinktank/show_978.html

Is Middle East oil still crucial to American security?

Commanding Heights Web Site:

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The Palestinian Perspective:

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/middle_east/july-dec02/almasri_8-09.html

Maher al-Masri, the Palestinian economy, industry, and trade minister, laments the negative effects of Israeli occupation.

Creating a Textile Museum Piece from the Islamic Empire:

<http://www.pbs.org/empires/islam/lesson4.html>

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The Nile River is a prominent feature of the modern cityscape of Cairo, Egypt.

DOD, Defense Visual Information Center, March Air Force Base, CA

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A fertile bank of the Nile River in Egypt [[enlarge](#)]

Geography: An Ancient and Modern Crossroads

Location, location, location

The Middle East is at the junction of trade routes connecting Europe and China, India and Africa, and all the cultures of the Mediterranean basin. Many of these routes have been documented from as early as 5,000 years ago, and the presence of so many different people and products over the years has had a profound effect on the region's culture, politics, and economy.

More than deserts and camels

The landscape of the Middle East is more diverse than the deserts that dominate movie screens and novels would suggest. Rivers allowing for productive agriculture were the key factor in the settling of cities. Mountain ranges kept cultures in separate areas, providing natural barriers to imperialist agendas.

The rich, fertile soil of the Middle East led early civilizations to settle, domesticate plants and animals, and thrive. The [Fertile Crescent](#) between the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers known as [Mesopotamia](#) (now modern Iraq, and extending north into Syria and Turkey) was the home of the world's first urban culture, the Sumerians, 6,000 years ago. The Sumerians' Egyptian rivals took advantage of the annual flooding of the Nile for their regular harvest, later exporting a large portion of their produce to the Roman Empire. Some time later, the Hittites settled in the golden, rolling hills of [Anatolia](#) (modern Turkey) and the Phoenicians of the eastern Mediterranean loaded olive oil and spices into their merchant ships to trade throughout the Mediterranean.

This region introduced many staples into the kitchens of the world, including olives, figs, lemons, coffee, chickpeas, lentils, pomegranates, and asparagus. The cedar trees covering the hills of Lebanon were forested in ancient times for their fragrant and structurally reliable wood.

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Lebanon's Bcharre Village sits at the base of a picturesque mountain range. [[enlarge](#)]

The mountain ranges in the Middle East helped isolate various cultures from each other as much as, if not more than, bodies of water. The Taurus Mountains of southern Turkey separate Anatolia, also known as [Asia Minor](#), from the rest of Asia, just as the Atlas Mountains separate Morocco from the rest of Africa. Iran's Elburz and Zagros Mountains are high enough to host ski resorts.

In tumultuous times, mountains have also provided refuge for oppressed minorities, such as the Ismailis in Afghanistan; the Alawites in Syria; the Christians in Lebanon; the Kurds in Turkey, Syria, Iran, and Iraq; and the Berbers in North Africa.

A well-traveled route

The [Silk Route](#) refers to the trading routes stretching from China through Central Asia to the Middle East. (Even when Europe participated in this overland exchange, traders continued through the Middle East to avoid having to cross the Caspian Sea to the north.) Silk Route merchants were the first to introduce Chinese products like paper and gunpowder to the West. The people who traveled these roads exchanged not only products, but, maybe even more importantly, ideas -- scientific, religious, and artistic -- that would challenge and change institutions in China as well as in the Middle East.

Perhaps the most significant movement of people on this route was the Turks' migration into Anatolia. The Christian Byzantines had ruled Byzantine from Constantinople in western Anatolia for four centuries, with the Taurus Mountains providing a natural barrier against their Muslim neighbors to the south and east. The victory by the Seljuk Turks over the Byzantines at the [Battle of Manzikert](#) in 1071 in southeastern Anatolia opened the way for Turkish tribes to settle in Anatolia and provoked the first European [Crusade](#).



Ships make their way in an orderly fashion through the Suez Canal, which connects the Red Sea with the eastern Mediterranean. [[enlarge](#)]

Although it was religious wars that first introduced European armies into the region, the strategic location of the Middle East was the motivation for a continued European presence in the 19th and 20th centuries. The British and French both coveted a route to India and Southeast Asia. The building of the [Suez Canal](#) in Egypt (completed in 1869) allowed military and commercial ships to pass between the Mediterranean and Red Seas and into the Indian Ocean, rendering the long and dangerous trip around Africa unnecessary.

Geographical features bring economic and political riches

Geography and natural resources have always influenced political power in this region. The Nile and Mesopotamian Rivers can support a rich agricultural base, but only if the water distribution can be sustained and controlled through irrigation systems. And the prosperity of these regions has depended on a government's ability to maintain irrigation systems over the long term. If a central government can keep the irrigation systems in good working order, then well-irrigated fields produce more crops, which can then be taxed to support the government. Conversely, when local populations do not cooperate to maintain a stable government, their crop yields may drop.

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Cultivated land near
Turkey's border with Iraq
[[enlarge](#)]

Mesopotamian farmers used [Persian Gulf](#) seawater to irrigate for centuries, and now, as a result, much of southern Iraq's soil is too salty to grow crops. Agriculture in the region now relies on modern practices like fresh water irrigation, rotating crops each year, and technologically sophisticated dam projects.

Today, the wealth in Middle Eastern soil comes not from crops, but from petroleum. This region contains about two-thirds of the world's known petroleum reserves, the geological remnants of lush tropical forests of eons past. When the United States and Europe increased their consumption of oil drastically during World War II, the oil reserves in the Middle East became critically important to U.S. foreign policy, and have remained so ever since.

Human geography

The ethnic and cultural diversity of the population of the Middle East is as varied as any place on earth, save the New World. People in the Middle East live a variety of lifestyles -- nomadic and semi-nomadic, farming and fishing, and, increasingly, urban.



Shepherds move their
flocks along a desert road
in Israel. [[enlarge](#)]

How people put food on their tables is intimately tied to their physical surroundings. While the herding lifestyle of the nomadic peoples of the Middle East may have captured the romantic imagination of Europeans and Americans, in reality, pure [nomads](#) have always been a small minority in this region. In fact, many so-called nomads were simply seasonal migrants who grazed their livestock in one region in the summer and moved elsewhere in the winter. These migratory populations gained a reputation for breeding fine horses and camels, although most supported themselves raising sheep and goats. This system of seasonal migration functioned well until modern states established exclusive ideas of property and land ownership.

Most states in the region with large nomadic or semi-nomadic populations have pursued a settlement policy in order to better track and control the historically independent tribes. Clan and family relationships are still a vital part of their social structure.

Other families depend on the sea, or rivers, for their sustenance. The long Mediterranean, Persian Gulf, and Red Sea coastlines and large river systems of the region support many communities through both fishing and water-borne trade. The pearl industry of the Persian Gulf spawned a specialized economy there.

Productive areas of both rain-fed and irrigated agriculture support rural farming populations, which are usually organized as tight-knit villages rather than isolated farms. Village identity is extremely strong, so much so that when people migrate to the city or even abroad, they often settle in communities of their co-villagers. A neighborhood in Detroit, for example, may be made up of immigrants from one particular village in Lebanon. Immigrants often aspire to earn enough money to return to their village, buy land, and build a large home.



The Nile River is a prominent feature of the modern cityscape of Cairo, Egypt. [[enlarge](#)]

Rapid urbanization has been a marked feature of the Middle East in the late 20th century. Cairo, Istanbul, and Tehran each have more than 10 million residents and continue to grow. While migration to the cities offers attractive opportunities of employment and modern amenities to poor villagers, the rapid rise in urban populations has strained water resources, transportation facilities, and other public services as well as contributing to pollution.

What's in a name

Many different terms have been used to describe this area of the world, and although various geographic and cultural descriptions have major overlaps, each may significantly exclude different regions.

The region can be referred to most neutrally by continental terms, such as "West Asia" or "Southwest Asia and North Africa."

Linguistically, the "Arab world" includes the Arabic-speaking countries from North Africa, Southwest Asia, and the Arabian Peninsula, but excludes Iran, Turkey, and Israel.

The "Islamic world" includes all of the Arabic countries, as well as neighboring Turkey and Iran. Other nations that are predominantly Muslim, like Indonesia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and many sub-Saharan African countries, *should* be considered as integral parts of the Islamic world, but terminology for the region often omits them. In addition, there are significant populations of Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, and other religious groups that live in these same nations that make up the so-called Islamic world.

The "Middle East" is a term derived from a European perspective. For 19th-century Europeans, the Middle East was differentiated from India and the Far East (Southeast Asia and China). Originally, the [Near East](#) referred to areas under Ottoman control, from the Balkans to the border of Iran. The term Middle East was introduced in the early 20th century to include the area around the Persian Gulf, and the Near East was used to refer to the Ottoman Balkans. After World War II, Middle East became the dominant term for the whole region.

Because "Middle East" is an outsider's term describing neither geography nor culture, it is an ambiguously applied name. For some, it refers to the area bounded by the Mediterranean Sea, the Arabian Peninsula, and the Taurus and Zagros Mountains. For others, Egypt, Arabia, and the Persian Gulf states fall under their description of the Middle East. Still others use the term as a synonym for the Arab world, sometimes including Turkey and Iran based on their proximity and linguistic and religious affinities to the region. Despite its foreign origins, the term "Middle East" has been translated and adopted into many Middle Eastern languages, including Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, and Turkish.

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Afghans Battle:

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/military/july-dec01/reporters_12-7.html

Two reporters discuss the latest military action in Afghanistan, including the fall of Kandahar and the continuing search for Osama bin Laden. (December 2001)

The World Factbook 2001:

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An explanation of the terms "Near East" and "Middle East"

Physical Features of the Middle East:

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Photographs of the Middle East taken by satellite

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An essay on the history of oil production

Historical Maps of Islam:

<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/~brvs/pages/maps.html>

Historical maps of Islam

Map of Israel and the Occupied Territories:

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/middle_east/conflict/map.html

A map of Israel and the Occupied Territories

Getting to Know Iran:

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Religion: Three Religions, One God

Three of the world's major religions -- the [monotheist](#) traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam -- were all born in the Middle East and are all inextricably linked to one another. Christianity was born from within the Jewish tradition, and Islam developed from both Christianity and Judaism.

While there have been differences among these religions, there was a rich cultural interchange between Jews, Christians, and Muslims that took place in Islamic Spain and other places over centuries.

Judaism

A brief history of Judaism

Judaism is the oldest surviving monotheistic religion, arising in the eastern Mediterranean in the second millennium [B.C.E.](#) Abraham is traditionally considered to be the first Jew and to have made a covenant with God. Because Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all recognize Abraham as their first prophet, they are also called the Abrahamic religions.

While there was always a small community of Jews in historic [Palestine](#), in 73 [C.E.](#) the Roman Empire dispersed the Jews after an insurrection against Roman authority. Most Jews then lived in [Diaspora](#), as minorities in their communities, until the founding of the state of Israel in 1948.

When Jews from all over the world came to settle in modern Israel, they found that various subcultures had developed in different areas with distinctive histories, languages, religious practices, customs, and cuisine.

Jewish cultural groups

Jews from Germany and Eastern Europe were known as Ashkenazim (from "Ashkenazic" the Hebrew word for Germany). Yiddish, a fusion of German and Hebrew, was the spoken language of the Ashkenazi. In Europe, Jews had tended to be segregated -- voluntarily or not -- from the Christian population. From the late 19th and through first half of the 20th century, many Ashkenazi Jews came to Palestine to escape the persecution and discrimination they faced because of their religion.

Sephardic Jews trace their ancestry to the Iberian Peninsula (modern-day Spain and Portugal; "Sephardic" comes from the Hebrew word for Spain). They once spoke Ladino, a mixture of Hebrew and Spanish.

Mizrahi Jews (from the Hebrew word for Eastern, also sometimes called Oriental Jews) trace their origin to North Africa and Asia. Mizrahi and Sephardic

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The Wailing Wall in Jerusalem, with the gold Dome of the Rock sitting just behind.

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An ancient wall relief depicting a religious scene [[enlarge](#)]



Homeless Jews arrive in search of a new life, Haifa, Palestine, July 21, 1947. [[enlarge](#)]

Jewish communities tended to be integrated into their respective societies.

Judaism in Israel and America

There is great difference of opinion among Israeli Jews over the role Jewish religious law should play in the state. Until recently, Orthodox Judaism was the only form of the religion formally and legally recognized in Israel. Although less conservative branches of Judaism now have partial recognition, Orthodoxy remains dominant politically and legally.



An Orthodox Jewish man prays at the Western Wall in Jerusalem. [[enlarge](#)]

Many Israeli Jews describe themselves in terms of their degree of observance of Jewish law. About half call themselves **secular**; about 15 to 20 percent see themselves as Orthodox or ultra-Orthodox; and the rest describe themselves as traditionally observant, but not as strict as the Orthodox.

In the United States, debate over the necessity of observing Jewish law has led to the development of three major movements. Orthodox Jews believe that Jewish law is unchanging and mandatory. Conservative Jews argue that God's laws change and evolve over time. Reform and Reconstructionist Jews believe that these laws are merely guidelines that individuals can choose to follow or not. In addition, there are many Jews in the United States who are secular or atheist. For them, their Judaism is a culture rather than a religion.

What Jews believe



Reading from the Torah [[enlarge](#)]

Jews believe in one god and his prophets, with special respect for Moses as the prophet to whom God gave the law. Jewish law is embodied in the **Torah** (also known as the Pentateuch) and the Talmud (collected commentary on the Torah completed in the fifth-century C.E.).

Judaism is more concerned with actions than dogma. In other words, observance of rules regulating human behavior has been of more concern than debates over beliefs in the Jewish tradition. According to Orthodox Judaism, Jewish law, or *halakhah*, includes 613 commandments given by God in the Torah, as well as rules and practices elaborated by scholars and custom. Jewish law covers matters such as prayer and ritual, diet, rules regulating personal status (marriage, divorce, birth, death, inheritance, etc.), and observance of holidays (like Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement; and Passover, the feast celebrating the exodus of the Jews from slavery in Egypt).

Judaism's views of Christianity and Islam

Jews do not believe in the prophets after the Jewish prophets, including Jesus and Muhammad. Therefore, they do not subscribe to the idea that Jesus was the Messiah and the son of God, nor do they believe in the teachings of Islam.

Christianity

A brief history of Christianity

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An aerial view of Istanbul, Turkey, formerly Constantinople [[enlarge](#)]

Christianity started as an offshoot of Judaism in the first century C.E. Until the emperor Constantine converted to Christianity in 324 C.E., early Christian communities were often persecuted. It was then that the Roman Empire became the Holy Roman Empire, and its capital relocated from Rome to Constantinople (formerly Byzantium and now Istanbul). The development of Christian groups derived from major and minor splits.

The Orthodox Church and its patriarch split away from the Roman Catholic Church and the Pope in 1054 C.E. because of political and doctrinal differences. In the 16th century, Martin Luther, upset at the corruption of the Catholic papacy, spearheaded a reformation movement that led to the development of Protestantism.

Christian missionaries proselytize all over the world, and there are large populations of Christians on every continent on Earth, although the forms of Christianity practiced vary.

Christianity in the Middle East

Many early Christian saints lived in the Middle East. The tradition of asceticism (denial of physical pleasures in order to come closer to God) developed first in the Middle East, and the monastic tradition has its roots there.

Christians in the Middle East today include Copts, Maronites, Russian Orthodox, Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholics, Armenian Orthodox, Armenian Catholics, Assyrians, and Protestants. These groups have different liturgical languages, rituals, and customs, and different leaders who direct their faith.

The Coptic Church, the dominant form of Christianity in Egypt, arose from a doctrinal split in the Church at the Council of Chalcedon in 451. The Egyptian government supports the Copts' rights to worship and maintain their culture, but there has been some violence against the community by extremist Muslims.



The establishment of Lebanon as an independent state is announced on the steps of a Maronite church, Lebanon, 1920. [[enlarge](#)]

The Maronite Church was started in the fifth century by followers of a Syrian priest named Maroun. The Maronite Patriarch, based in Lebanon, guides his followers in the teachings of Maroun and other saints. Maronites are still one of the most powerful political communities in Lebanon.

There are also Christian communities of different sects living today in Syria (10 percent of the population), Jordan (6 percent), the West Bank (8 percent), and Iraq (3 percent), with smaller percentages in other Middle Eastern countries.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, many Christians from what is now Syria and Lebanon (then the Ottoman Empire) emigrated to the United States and other countries. Although Christians are a minority in the Middle East today, more than 75 percent of Americans of Arab descent are Christian.

What Christians believe

Christianity developed out of the monotheistic tradition of Judaism; Jesus, its founder, was a member of the Jewish community in Roman Palestine. Its holy scriptures are the Old Testament (the Jewish Torah with additions), and the New Testament (written by the followers of Jesus after his death and containing the life story of Jesus and other early Christian writings).



A Christian painting depicting Mary with the baby Jesus [[enlarge](#)]

Christians believe that God is revealed through three dimensions: the Father, the Son (Jesus Christ), and the Holy Spirit. Jesus is considered the son of God, born to the virgin Mary and come to Earth to offer redemption for mankind's sins. After Jesus was crucified and executed by the Romans, he rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. This event is celebrated at Easter, while the birth of Jesus is celebrated at Christmas.

Christians believe in an afterlife where those who have lived a good life will reside in heaven with God, and those who have lived an unrepentant life of sin will be punished in hell.

Christianity's views of Judaism and Islam

Although Christianity developed out of Judaic texts, Christians do not follow Jewish law. Instead, they believe that the ritualistic Jewish law was abrogated in favor of a universal gospel for all of humanity and the Christian teaching, "Love thy neighbor as thyself."

Relationships between Jewish and Christian communities have often been difficult, particularly in Christian Europe. There, Jewish communities were often subject to discrimination and violence at the hands of Christians.



An artist's depiction of Christian Crusaders [[enlarge](#)]

Christianity has also had a problematic relationship with Islam. Christians do not accept Muhammad as a prophet. While many Christians in the Middle East converted to Islam during and after the seventh century, the Church hierarchy in Rome and Constantinople considered Islam to be both a political and theological threat. The Crusades were an unsuccessful attempt to reverse the Islamic conquest of the eastern Mediterranean and the holy places of all three monotheistic religions.

Islam

A brief history of Islam



Pilgrims surround Kaaba, the holiest temple in Islam, at the center of the ancient shrine of Mecca. [[enlarge](#)]

Islam arose in the early seventh century C.E. in the settled desert community of Mecca (in present-day Saudi Arabia). It developed from both the Judeo-Christian tradition and the cultural values of the nomadic Bedouin tribes of Arabia.

Islam expanded into areas controlled by the Byzantine Empire (largely Greek-speaking and Orthodox Christian, but with a diverse population) and the Sassanian Empire (officially Zoroastrian and Persian-speaking, but also diverse). By the mid-eighth century, Islam had spread west into North Africa and Europe, and east into Central Asia. Over the centuries, Islam continued to grow in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and Southeast Asia.

As Islam expanded, the new Islamic societies adapted and synthesized many of the customs they encountered. As a result, Muslims in different areas of the world created for themselves a wide array of cultural traditions.

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Islamist v. Islamic
(3:06) [Watch](#)

The culture of Islamic Spain, for example, was so cosmopolitan that some

Christian and Jewish parents complained that their children were more interested in developing their knowledge of Arabic than in learning Latin or Hebrew, respectively. Many elements of Islamic society became integral parts of medieval and Renaissance European culture, like the notion of chivalry, and certain forms of music (the lute, the arabesque) and poetry.

On the eastern end of the Islamic world, many Indonesians converted to Islam between the 15th and 17th centuries. Preexisting [animist](#) beliefs were often incorporated into the local practice of Islam.

Islamic communities

Within Islam, there are many different communities. Many of these divisions, like the Sunnis, Shiis, Ismailis, Alevis/Alawites, and Druze, originate in political and doctrinal differences in the community. Adherents of Islam may be more or less observant, conservative or liberal.



Whirling dervishes playing musical instruments and dancing, Istanbul, photograph c. 1922

[\[enlarge \]](#)

Sufism is the mystical tradition of Islam, where direct experience of the divine is emphasized. The 13th-century poet Jalaluddin Rumi is a well-known Sufi figure whose work has become popular in the United States today. Whirling dervishes are dancers who are entranced in their experience of Sufism.

What Muslims believe

Muslims believe that Allah (the Arabic word for God) sent his revelation, the [Quran](#), to the prophet Muhammad in the seventh century C.E. to proclaim it to mankind. The Quran contains verses (*surahs*) in Arabic that tell Muslims to worship one god, and explains how they should treat others properly.

Another historical text, the Hadith, written by scholars after the death of Muhammad, describes Muhammad's life as an example of pious behavior, proscribes law for the community based on the Quran and the example of Muhammad, and explains how certain rituals should be performed.

Observant Muslims practice five principles (pillars) of Islam: orally declaring their faith (*shahadah*); praying five times a day (*salat*); fasting in the daylight hours during the month of Ramadan (*sawm*); giving a share of their income for charity (*zakat*); and making a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in their lifetime if they can afford it (*hajj*). Many Muslims also observe dietary rules, in origin similar to those of Judaism, that forbid certain foods (like pork), outlaw alcohol, and dictate how animals should be slaughtered for food.

The Muslim calendar is lunar, and shifts in relation to the solar calendar. Just as Christians count years starting with the year of Jesus's birth, Muslims count years beginning with Muhammad's move from Mecca to Medina in 622 C.E. Muslim years are labeled as A.H., *Anno Hegirae*, or "year of the Hijra."

Major Muslim festivals include Id al-Fitr (the Fast-Breaking Festival, celebrated at the end of Ramadan) and Id al-Adha (the Festival of Sacrifice, the commemoration of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Ishmail which takes place during the month of pilgrimage).

Muslims believe in a Day of Judgment, when righteous souls will go to heaven and wrongdoers will go to hell.

Islam's views of Judaism and Christianity

Islam sees Judaism and Christianity as earlier versions of Islam, revelations given within the same tradition by Allah but misunderstood over time by their followers. Muslims see Islam as the final, complete, and correct revelation in the monotheistic tradition of the three faiths.



A 19th-century copy of Islam's holy book, the Quran, hand-copied in Arabic, open to its first chapter, the Fatiha
[[enlarge](#)]

The Islamic tradition recognizes many of the Jewish and Christian prophets, including Abraham, Moses, and Jesus (although he is not considered to be the son of God). Many non-Muslims mistakenly believe that Muhammad is the equivalent of Jesus in the Islamic tradition; in fact, it is the Quran that stands in the same central position in Islam as Jesus does in Christianity. Muhammad himself is not divine, but a prophet chosen by God to deliver his message and an example of piety to emulate.

Jews and Christians are specifically protected in the Quran as Peoples of the Book, reinforcing their spiritual connection to Islam by virtue of having been given revelations from God. The Islamic legal tradition has upheld the rights of Jews and Christians to maintain their beliefs and practices within their communities in Islamic lands, and this policy of tolerance has generally been upheld.

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http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/middle_east/jan-june02/saudi_2-15.html

NewsHour explores the debate over Islam, education, and culture in Saudi Arabia.

Christians in the Middle East:

<http://search.npr.org/cf/cmn/cmnpd01fm.cfm?PrgDate=04/23/2002&PrgID=5>

Talk of the Nation looks at the role of Christians who live in Israel and the West Bank. This story was aired during the military standoff at Bethlehem's Church of the Nativity.

The Pope's Journey:

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/religion/jan-june01/pope_5-8.html

NewsHour conducts a discussion on Pope John Paul II's journey of reconciliation to Greece, Syria, and Malta.

Islam: Empire of Faith:

<http://www.pbs.org/empires/islam/index.html>

The companion Web site for *Islam: Empire of Faith*, a PBS film about the world's fastest growing religion

Observing Islam:

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/religion/july-dec01/islam_11-16.html

Islamic scholars discuss the future of Islam as Ramadan begins amid curiosity and concern. (November 2001)

Inside Out: Revolutionary Islam:

<http://insideout.wbur.org/documentaries/revolutionaryislam/>

This radio documentary examines the manifestations of political Islam around the world.

Guide to Religions of the World:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/people/features/world_religions/

A guide to six world religions: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam,

Judaism, and Sikhism

Beliefnet Web Site:

<http://www.belief.net/>

A Web site on religion

Judaism 101 Web Site:

<http://www.jewfaq.org/index.htm>

An online encyclopedia on Judaism

Lexicon of Israeli "English":

<http://www.iyba.co.il/lexicon.htm>

A glossary of Israeli terms, acronyms, and abbreviations found in English-language publications

Exploring Religions:

<http://uwacadweb.uwyo.edu/religionet/er/default.htm>

Information on Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism

Who Are Eastern Christians?:

<http://www.arimathea.co.uk/whoare.htm>

The origin and definition of Eastern Christianity

Syria and Christianity:

http://atheism.about.com/library/world/KZ/bl_SyriaChristianity.htm

The history of Eastern Christianity in Syria

Islam:

http://www.cqpress.com/context/articles/epr_islam.html

An encyclopedia entry on Islam

Islam: A Worldwide Religion:

<http://www.seasite.niu.edu/crossroads/russell/islam.htm>

Islam's impact on Southeast Asia

Persian Poet Top Seller in America:

<http://www.csmonitor.com/durable/1997/11/25/us/us.3.html>

An article on the popularity of mystic Islamic poet Jalaluddin Rumi

Historical Maps of Islam:

<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/~brvs/pages/maps.html>

Historical maps of Islam

Islam in Iran:

http://www.pbs.org/visavis/islam_in_iran_mstr.html

Vis •is explores the origins of Islam and its evolution in Iran.

Saudi Time Bomb?:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/saudi/>

Frontline investigates the hidden undercurrents of Islamic extremism, its far-flung reach, and its threat to the kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Religion & Culture:

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/wideangle/classroom/lp5.html>

Students will consider the theme of religion and culture as they learn about the Hindu-Muslim conflict in the province of Gujarat, India.

Understanding History, Religion, and Politics in Jerusalem and Beyond:

<http://www.pbs.org/pov/pov2001/promises/intheclassroom.html>

Students will acquire historical knowledge of the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians in the region, learn how to interpret a conflict from multiple perspectives, advocate for a point of view, and develop greater conflict resolution skills.

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Students will compare and contrast the roles of men and women with regard to various topics in the six countries featured in the film.

Great Thinkers and Accomplishments of Islam:

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God Fights Back: 1978-1992:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/peoplescentury/teachers/tggod.html>

In the 1970s, alienated Iranians flock to the promises of Islamic fundamentalism and Egyptians and Algerians soon follow. In the 1980s, alienated Americans flock to the promises of Christian fundamentalism.

The Fascinating World of Islam:

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Students will research the people, places, and events that have shaped the history of Islam.

An Introduction to Islam and Muhammad:

<http://www.pbs.org/empires/islam/lesson1.html>

Students will compare the major monotheistic belief systems of the world.

Middle East: Crossroads of Faith and Conflict (map):

Supplement to *National Geographic*, October 2002

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A Muslim Palestinian woman and her children prepare traditional foods in their home during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

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A fruit vendor at a market in Alexandria, Egypt
[[enlarge](#)]

Culture: A Rich Mosaic

The many cultures of the Middle East

Culture, a shared set of traditions, belief systems, and behaviors, is shaped by history, religion, ethnic identity, language, and nationality, among other factors. The Middle East consists of approximately 20 countries, with many different religions and a variety of ethnic and linguistic groups. Given this diversity, we should not be surprised to find a multitude of different cultures coexisting in the region.

Stereotypes about the Middle East

During the 19th century, translations of the *Arabian Nights* and archaeological discoveries in Egypt dominated the imaginations of people in the West who had never visited the Middle East. These armchair explorers conjured up competing images of a desert region populated by nomads and camels and, of course, pyramids, but also brimming with all manner of sweet and savory treats in bustling urban bazaars. During the 20th century, stories about the Middle East have tended to focus on oil wealth, territorial wars, and religious conflicts. All of these do exist, but there is much more to life in this area.

Daily life in the region is too complex to be summarized on a Web page; we can only begin to suggest the multiple variables involved in the lives of people there. A common thread that runs through many lives is the importance of family and the values that derive from having a strong extended family: respect, honor, and loyalty.

Religion in the cultures of the Middle East

The Middle East is the birthplace of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, all [monotheistic](#) religions that grew from the same tradition. Each religion used the texts from earlier groups, and so they share many rules and beliefs. For example, Islam and Judaism observe the same dietary rules and have a similar focus on religion as a foundation for civil law. All three share a tradition of prophets, from Adam and Abraham to Solomon and Joseph. Jesus is significant for both Christianity and Islam, and Muslims in addition follow the teachings of [Muhammad](#).

Religion plays a large part in the rhythm of daily life, not only through prayer and study, but also in determining the end of the work week. Shops in different neighborhoods close down on Fridays for the Muslim holy day, Saturdays for the Jewish Sabbath, and Sundays for the Christian day of rest. Religious festivals and remembrances, like Id al-Fitr (the Festival of Fast-Breaking, celebrated at the end of Ramadan), or the Jewish Passover holiday, or Easter Sunday as determined by the Roman or Eastern Orthodox Christian churches, are all recognized as national holidays in different countries.

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An awareness of God (Arabic: *Allah*) is exhibited in common Arabic expressions that are used throughout the region -- even in Turkey and Iran, where Arabic is not the local language. A common response to "How are you?" is "*Ilhamdillah!*" -- "Praise be to God." When expressing hope for a future event, one might say "*Inshallah*" -- "God willing." The exclamation "*Mashallah*" -- "What God wills!" -- is often heard as an expression of delight, at the sight of a new baby, for example. While there are those for whom these phrases reflect the divine, others use them the way many English speakers use "Good-bye" (literally, "God be with ye").

Religion plays a role in national and international politics as well. Turkey has a Muslim majority, but is officially a secular nation. Other countries in the region identify themselves with a specific religion, mostly Islam. Lebanon's constitution attempted to provide for power sharing among 18 officially recognized religions, including [Maronite](#) and [Orthodox Christians](#), [Sunni](#) and [Shii](#) Muslims, and [Druze](#). But because the populations of the various groups grew at different rates, this system eventually became less representative of the nation as a whole and civil war broke out.

The poor relations between Israel and most of its Arab neighbors are sometimes described in terms of a perpetual religious conflict between Jews and Muslims. This reading, however, is too simplistic. Although control over important historical sites of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam is a factor in the disagreements, many of the details that stall negotiations have to do with control of land and access to water resources. Furthermore, many Palestinians who demand restitution for their property are Christian, not Muslim, and Egypt's historic treaty with Israel provides a model for how Muslim and Jewish neighbors can live peaceably.

Ethnic diversity at the crossroads of civilizations

Situated between Africa, Asia, and Europe, the Middle East has been a crossroads for traders, travelers, and empire builders for thousands of years. Africans, Central Asians, and Celts have all added to the ethnic mix. Major ethnic groups in the Middle East today include Arabs, Iranians (also known as Persians), Turks, Jews, Kurds, Berbers, Armenians, Nubians, Azeris, and Greeks.



Kurdish refugees in northern Iraq [[enlarge](#)]

Most of the countries in this region are multiethnic. But even as diversity enhances the cultural richness of a society, it unfortunately may also lead to political conflict. The Kurds, for example, do not have their own nation-state, but are instead spread across Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria. Their political and military attempts to create an autonomous Kurdistan have been strongly resisted by those states.

Many languages, three families

The multiplicity of languages spoken in the Middle East reflects its ethnic diversity. Most of these languages come from three major language "families":

- Semitic (including Arabic, Hebrew, and Aramaic)
- Indo-European (Kurdish, Persian, Armenian)
- Turkic (Turkish, Azeri)

These language families reflect the successive migrations of different peoples into the region. A quick examination of these languages reveals the influence they have had on each other. Persian, for example, is written in Arabic script, while Turkish incorporates vocabulary words from Persian and Arabic. Arabic

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itself is spoken in regional dialectics that are not always mutually understood. Some ethnic and religious communities have preserved "native" languages for religious use, such as [Coptic](#) and Greek.

Culture: Family, city, and the globe

The family is an important part of culture in the Middle East, as is evident in the Arabic honorific names that are often used in preference to given names. A man may be called *Ibn* ("son of") followed by his father's name or *Abu* ("father of") followed by his child's name.

In traditional Arab societies the family unit is an extended family -- cousins, grandparents, second cousins, cousins-in-law, nieces, nephews, and more -- all living together. This remains true in rural areas particularly. Migration to the cities has broken up some of these extended families, and the number of people living only with their nuclear family in urban areas is increasing.



Tea drinkers at a cafe in Turkey [[enlarge](#)]

The difference between life in the village and life in the city sometimes seems to be as great or greater than the difference between living in the Middle East and living in America. Two men in Egypt, for example, may share the same language (Arabic), religion (Islam), and nationality (Egyptian), but one may live in an air-conditioned apartment building with his wife and two children and wear a suit to his government job, while the other may live in a naturally cool mud-brick house surrounded by three generations of relatives and wear a traditional robe, called a galabiya, to work a plot of land.

These differences are eroding, however, with the introduction of inexpensive cellular phone service and the ubiquity of television. Even some mud-brick houses are now equipped with satellite dishes that bring news, entertainment, and fashions not only from the capital city, but from around the world as well.

The Middle East in a globalized world



A busy street in Cairo, Egypt [[enlarge](#)]

Over the past 200 years, and increasingly in the contemporary age of globalization, more and more Western goods -- everything from clothing to food to computers -- have appeared in Middle Eastern markets. Not only goods, but culture as well, have been imported from the West. Western books and movies are popular, especially (but not exclusively) among the urban elite.

In fashion, Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey, banished the [fez](#) and other aspects of Ottoman dress in favor of European three-piece suits. Today, one might see young people clad in jeans and T-shirts that advertise their fondness for Britney Spears or *Titanic* walking down the same street as their peers who are wearing traditional [hijab](#) or galibiyas.



Outside an Iranian
McDonald's restaurant
[[enlarge](#)]

There is an active debate in most Middle Eastern communities about how much Western culture and technology can and should be adopted before such influences begin to compromise their culture, traditions, and identity. This discussion will require defining that identity to some degree. Will they characterize themselves as Egyptian? Muslim? Arab? a resident of a particular village? a member of a particular tribe? Most importantly, in what order would they prioritize these qualities? These are not easy questions, but the encroachment of Western influences requires some answers.

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A Saudi Arabian sociologist talks to *NewsHour* about women's issues, religion, and politics.

Life in Israel and the West Bank:

<http://search.npr.org/cf/cmn/cmnpd01fm.cfm?PrgDate=04/08/2002&PrgID=5>

Talk of the Nation speaks with Palestinians and Israelis about what life is like. Can kids go out and play? Can adults have dinner with friends? How do people make it to religious services?

Fiesta Bowl:

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/poems/jan-june01/middleeast_06-13.html

NewsHour presents poems from Israeli and Palestinian poets.

Fashion Slideshow:

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This slide show exhibits Iranian women wearing different kinds of veils.

Observing Islam:

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/religion/july-dec01/islam_11-16.html

Islamic scholars discuss the future of Islam as Ramadan begins amid curiosity and concern. (November 2001)

Crescent and Star: Turkey Between Two Worlds:

<http://freshair.npr.org/guestInfoFA.cfm?name=stephenkinzer>

Writer Stephen Kinzer describes a country caught between the entrenched ruling elite and its younger, well-educated population who wants democracy.

Pari Zanganeh: Prima Folk/Opera Diva:

<http://www.pbs.org/adventuredivas/iran/divas/zanganeh.html>

Singer Pari Zanganeh speaks about women and music.

Beauty Shop Bop:

http://www.pbs.org/adventuredivas/iran/dispatches/beauty_video.html

This page links to streaming video of an Iranian beauty parlor and offers a clandestine peek underneath the veil.

Iranian Culture:

http://www.pbs.org/visavis/culture_mstr.html

Vis •is looks at Iran's rich traditions of cinema, literature, and music.

Religion & Culture:

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/wideangle/classroom/lp5.html>

Students will consider the theme of religion and culture as they learn about the Hindu-Muslim conflict in the province of Gujarat, India.

Arab Americans: In the Aftermath of the Terrorist Attacks on the U.S.:
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Students will begin to understand who Arab Americans are, where they come from, and the cultural diversity and complexity of what it means to be Arab American.

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Students will learn about both the Sultan Suleyman (b. 1494 C.E.) and another Renaissance character and make comparisons.

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In October 2001, Dubai hosted Gitex, the Middle East's largest annual information technology exhibition.
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Science & Technology: Historic Innovation, Modern Solutions

Cutting-edge science in the Middle East

Following the rise of Islam in the seventh century [C.E.](#), science and technology flourished in the Islamic world to a far greater extent than they did in the West. Muslim rulers promoted the translation of Greek philosophy and science texts, and then encouraged further scientific exploration in numerous fields, among them mathematics, astronomy, medicine, pharmacology, optics, chemistry, botany, philosophy, and physics.

In mathematics, Muslim scholars introduced the use of zero, solutions to quadratic equations -- even the Arabic word "algebra."

Muslim astronomers knew the Earth was round and calculated its diameter. Ibn al-Haytham (965-1040) explored momentum, gravity, and optics 600 years before Galileo was accused of heresy for arguing that the Earth orbited the Sun.

Medicine was one of the most important fields of endeavor. Muslim doctors were surgically removing cataracts and treating kidney and gallstones while Europeans were still using leeches on their patients. Ibn Sina (known in the West as Avicenna, 980-1037) wrote *al-Qanun fi al-Tibb*, or the *Canons of Medicine*, a seminal volume that was the first to recognize the contagious nature of tuberculosis, identify meningitis, and describe all the minute parts of the eye. By the 12th century, the *Canons* had been translated into Latin, and European medicine relied on this text until well into the 1700s.



An engraving of Muslim pioneer astronomer Ibn al-Haytham (965-1040)
[[enlarge](#)]

Much of the knowledge developed by the Muslims and transmitted to the Europeans enabled Europe to emerge from the [Dark Ages](#) into the [Renaissance](#).

The technological advance of the West

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A page from Avicenna's seminal tome of medical learning, *Canons of Medicine* [[enlarge](#)]

During the 16th century, the Ottoman astronomer Taqi al-Din made astronomical tables that were considered at least as accurate as those of fellow 16th-century astronomer Tycho Brahe of Denmark, whose observations of the planets served as the basis for Kepler's Laws of planetary motion. Only a century later, though, the [Ottomans](#) and their Muslim contemporaries in [Mughal India](#) and the [Persian Safavid Empire](#) ceased to support scientific research and innovations.

This change was due in part to the shifting priorities and educational systems of these empires. Not unlike Europe in previous centuries, groups wanting to protect the status quo became more powerful than those advocating growth and experimentation. Meanwhile, building on the earlier accomplishments of Muslim scientists, Europe's scientific and industrial revolutions began to give the West a military and economic advantage over the Islamic world.

By the 19th century, when Middle Eastern states like Egypt, Iran, and the Ottoman Empire decided to develop modern infrastructure, including railroads and telegraph lines, the work had to be contracted to foreign firms. The cash-strapped Middle Eastern governments sold concessions -- the right to develop and then profit from these infrastructure development projects -- to European companies. These opportunities gave European governments an interest in influencing Middle Eastern regimes, in order to both win the contracts and then protect their investments. In this way, the technological and industrial capabilities of the West reinforced its political and economic power in the region. Technological dependence on the West, however, was seen as a threat to the independence of the Islamic world, and resentment against Western power began to rise.

Technological advances in the modern Middle East

Historically, some of the most important technological achievements in the Middle East were related to the use of water, from the ancient Iranian qanats (underground canals that brought water from the mountains to the arid plain) to the modern dam systems on the Nile and Euphrates Rivers.



Begun in 1898, Egypt's Aswan Dam was expanded with Soviet support in the 1960s. [[enlarge](#)]

In 1898, the Aswan Dam became the first major modern dam project, resulting in the successful damming of the Nile. In the 1960s, an expansion of the Aswan Dam was built with Soviet support.

Unfortunately, while these Nile dams regulated the water flow to cropland, generated vital electricity, and shielded Egypt from years of drought, they also introduced environmental problems that have cast a shadow on their overall success. Since the Nile no longer floods, the rich [silt](#) that used to fertilize Egyptian fields is instead accumulating in Lake Nasser behind the Aswan Dam. As a result, farmers downstream are forced to use massive amounts of artificial fertilizers, which in turn run off into, and pollute, the Nile.



Workmen in this undated photo use a water screw to help in irrigating fields in Egypt's Nile Delta.

[[enlarge](#)]

The overall aridity of the region has motivated some of the richer countries to search for technological solutions to their water requirements. Through sustained investment in research, they have become experts in water [desalination](#), water recycling, and solar energy. The region's oil-poor countries, however, Egypt among them, cannot afford such advanced technologies and remain dependent on more traditional water resources.

Scientific discovery and technological implementation varies widely in the Middle East today. Israel's current position as a technological leader and its close economic relationship with the West stand in sharp contrast to its Arab neighbors. Israel, for example, is a world leader in the development of voice-recognition software for computers.

Access to technology

As in other regions of the world, access to technology parallels the disparity in lifestyles throughout the region. Some people are scarcely aware of the Internet, while others make their living from it. Even so, cheap, portable technologies are transforming the Middle East.



A young woman pauses from shopping to talk on a cellular telephone in a Kuwaiti shop, c. 2000.

[[enlarge](#)]

Cellular phones, for example, are increasingly popular in the Middle East, providing telephone access in more remote communities as well as in crowded urban areas. Wireless service bypasses the difficult and expensive requirements for laying out and maintaining telephone cables.

Satellite television news stations like Al-Jazeera provide new and varied sources of information to people in the Middle East who once had access only to government-controlled media. The Internet may have a similar effect.

Internet cafes have sprung up in major cities and in regional centers throughout the Middle East, providing access to news and information for people who cannot afford to buy a computer themselves. In some nations, however, the government is the only Internet provider and may censor the available content.

Oil-poor countries do not have the economic resources to take advantage of these new technologies. The ability to access new technology is related to both economic resources and political openness.

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An article on Muslim contributions to the fields of math and astronomy

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This article talks about addressing the digital divide with government-sponsored computer centers in Jordan.

Arab Information Project:

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Information on Muslim contributions to mathematics, engineering, astronomy, and medicine from the PBS special *Islam: Empire of Faith*.

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THE MIDDLE EAST TALKS; MIDEAST FOES LIST DEMANDS AND TRADE ANGRY CHARGES ACROSS CONFERENCE TABLE

By R. W. APPLE JR.,
Published: November 1, 1991

In salvos of intransigent oratory, Israel and its Arab neighbors said today that they all hoped to end the bloodshed in their region, but disagreed about almost everything else -- who was at fault, what to do about it, even where further peace talks should be held.

On a day when the Palestinians at last found their place at a major Middle East peace conference, the Arabs demanded that Israel stop creating settlements in occupied territories and give up territory it had taken from Arabs in 1967. The Israelis in turn demanded that the Arabs recognize Israel's right to exist.

Each accused the other of deception, brutality, treachery and aggression, exactly as they have done for most of the 43 years that they have been at each other's throats. Both Sides Listen

But for the first time, representatives of much of the Arab world listened across the same table to an Israeli leader denouncing them, remaining in their chairs throughout, and the Israeli leader, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, listened to their replies. He stayed put even though the Palestinian delegates identified themselves in so many words with the Palestine Liberation Organization, something the Israelis had said could prompt them to walk out.

In one especially heated passage, Farouk al-Sharaa, the Syrian Foreign Minister, accused Mr. Shamir of "faking facts and history." [Excerpts from speeches, pages A10 and A11.]

In reply, at a later news conference, Benjamin Netanyahu, an Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister, accused the Arabs of complicity with Hitler, Himmler, Ribbentrop and Eichmann in planning the Holocaust, and said Syria had spoken in terms of "vituperation, slander and condescension." Less Rigidity Expected

"These are just their opening statements, maximalist bargaining positions," a senior American official said. "A lot of it is for television and the political audiences back home. People will start to soften their ideological rigidity once face-to-face negotiations get under way."

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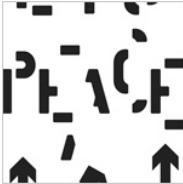
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But other top-level Americans who have worked for months to bring Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and the Palestinians together in Madrid expressed disappointment at what one called the "truculent tone" of today's speeches. None could point to any overt sign that the participants were ready to yield ground in the private, direct talks scheduled to start Sunday.

Indeed, it was unclear when, where and even whether those talks would begin. The Israelis and the Arabs remained deadlocked tonight, despite mediation efforts by Secretary of State James A. Baker 3d, over Mr. Shamir's demand that they be held in the Middle East, with a first round in Israel. The Arabs insisted that the plan had always been to negotiate in Madrid and argued that they would be recognizing Israel, in effect, by going there.

There was even some doubt expressed that the single organizational session that everyone had agreed to for Sunday at the Royal Palace in Madrid would go forward as planned.

The Palestinians said explicitly for the first time that they would accept limited self-rule in the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip as an interim stop on the way to statehood. In accepting the terms of invitation to the conference, they had implicitly said the same thing, but some saw an incremental step forward.

Israel accepts the idea of limited autonomy, which it had agreed to in the 1978 Camp David agreement with Egypt and the United States, but rejects the idea of Palestinian sovereignty. Nonetheless, there has been very tentative talk among the Palestinian delegates and others here in the last 48 hours of some form of eventual confederation, possibly economic, possibly economic and political, involving Jordan, Israel and some sort of Palestinian entity. Jordan Faults Radicals

There was also a small conciliatory note from Jordan. Its delegate urged both sides to work for "the dawn of a new era" and pointedly called on Arab radicals to shed their rigid ideologies.

So the initial two days of the conference here, the first of which was dominated by speeches by Presidents Bush and Mikhail S. Gorbachev, have developed into a microcosm of the Middle East, marked by hopeful words from the great powers, hateful words from the countries of the region and fragile theorizing about what might be. So far, Madrid has been spared the physical violence that has long disfigured the eastern end of the Mediterranean.

The mood inside the 18th-century conference hall, with its marble columns and pilasters, its glittering chandeliers and immense Renaissance tapestries, was somber and businesslike. There was little applause after the day's five speeches, ranging in length from 30 to the full 45 minutes allowed.

Mr. Shamir opened this morning's session with a blunt warning that Arabs would lead negotiations into an impasse if they proceeded immediately to demand the return of the remaining land Israel captured in the 1967 Middle East war -- the West Bank, the Golan Heights and East Jerusalem. Israel returned all of the Sinai captured from Egypt in 1967 as part of the 1979 peace treaty with Egypt. Earlier Hostility Noted

"We know our partners will make territorial demands on Israel, but an examination of the conflict's long history makes clear its nature is not territorial," Mr. Shamir said. He argued that the Arabs had been equally hostile to Israel in the years when Israel was within its

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original borders, after the 1948 war and the truces of the next year, and he made no mention at all of the United Nations resolutions calling upon Israel to virtually return to the pre-1967 borders.

Nor did the grim-faced Prime Minister, who spoke in English, offer any hint of a concession to the Arabs on East Jerusalem, site of Arab as well as Jewish holy places, which is now occupied by Israel, or on the rapidly expanding Israeli settlements on captured Arab land. The Palestinians fear that the settlements will soon be so extensive that there will be no room for a Palestinian state.

Mr. Bush's appeal on Tuesday for territorial compromise appeared to have left Mr. Shamir unmoved, although some Israeli doves said the Prime Minister at least had not made what one called a "not one inch" speech.

Jordan came next, and its Foreign Minister, Kamal Abu Jaber, a onetime professor of politics, opened with the same word as Mr. Shamir: "Peace." That is a traditional greeting in both Hebrew and Arabic. Conquest Is Challenged

The Jordanian delegate focused sharply on United Nations resolutions embodying the principle that land must not be acquired by force of arms.

Apparently frustrated by Mr. Shamir's hard line, Mr. Abu Jaber later demanded at a news conference, "If we can't talk about Jerusalem, if we can't talk about withdrawal, what on earth are we doing here?"

Mr. Shamir had invited the delegations to begin the face-to-face talks in Israel, remarking, "There is no better way to make peace than to talk in each other's home."

Mr. Abu Jaber replied, "The momentum in Madrid is good, the spirit in Madrid is good, and we should keep the talks here."

The Israel Ambassador to the United States, Zalman Shoval, told Reuters, "One meeting and one meeting only can take place in Madrid." Arabs Insist on Madrid

But the Syrian Foreign Minister, Mr. Sharaa, said, "The conference opened here and will continue here."

A Palestinian spokeswoman, Hanan Ashrawi, said, "The Palestinian position is that there can be no bilateral negotiations in Israel as long as Israel occupies Palestinian territory."

It was not clear whether or not the Israelis were bluffing, but several times they threatened to break up the conference. Mr. Shamir said on the "MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour," for instance, that if the Arabs persisted in their view, "we will not have bilateral negotiations, and there will not be any continuation and there won't be any practical results."

But the day's high drama came in the appearance of the Palestinians, and the chief Palestinian negotiator, Dr. Haidar Abdel-Shafi, played the moment for all it was worth, speaking not only to those listening in person but also to a global television audience.

"We come to you from a tortured land and a proud though captive people, having been asked to negotiate with our occupiers," said the 72-year-old physician, a lean and aristocratic man who was briefly expelled from his native Gaza in 1967 by the Israelis.

out, "Set them free!" Arafat Is Invoked

Dr. Abdel-Shafi all but dared the Israelis to walk out, not only invoking the name of Yasir Arafat, the Palestine Liberation Organization leader with whom Mr. Shamir refuses to deal, but also referring to "our acknowledged leadership, clearly and unequivocally recognized by the community of nations, with only a few exceptions." The speech was reportedly approved by Mr. Arafat in telephone conversations with Dr. Abdel-Shafi Wednesday.

Mr. Shamir just sat there, now drumming his fingers, now closing his eyes. He wrote notes furiously and passed them to aides sitting behind him.

A new state of Palestine "must be born on the land of Palestine to redeem the injustice and destruction of its historical reality and to free our people from the shackles of victimization," Dr. Abdel-Shafi declared.

"The people of Palestine look at you with a straightforward, direct gaze, seeking to touch your heart, for you have dared to stir up hopes that cannot be abandoned," he said to the conference organizers. "You cannot afford to let us down, for we have lived up to the values you espouse."

For his part, the Lebanese Foreign Minister, Faris Bouez, renewed his Government's demand that Israel pull its troops out of the 400-square-mile section of Lebanon that lies along Israel's northern border, an area he compared to "a vital limb." The occupation and the fighting accompanying it "have cost Lebanon and the world dearly," the 36-year-old official said. Toughest Line by Syria

The toughest line was taken by Syria's chief delegate, Mr. Sharaa, who said it was Israel's bellicosity that had kept the Middle East at war or on the brink of it for decades. He also accused the Israeli Government of inhumane treatment of Palestinians who live in the occupied territories.

"It is no exaggeration," the minister said, according to the official translation of his Arabic text, "to state that the continuing intransigence is a position which is bereft of any justification and is the one thing that places the world on the brink of incalculable danger."

He added: "Peace and the usurpation of the land of others cannot co-exist. Every inch of Arab land occupied by the Israelis by war and force -- the Golan, the West Bank, Jerusalem -- must be returned in their entirety to their legitimate owners."

On Friday, each of the five delegations will make a rebuttal speech.

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Palestinians Refuse to Attend Moscow Peace Talks

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REUTERS

Published: January 28, 1992

Middle East peace talks opened in Moscow today without a Palestinian delegation.

Secretary of State James A. Baker 3d read a prepared opening speech and made no mention of the Palestinians' refusal to attend.

The leader of the Palestinian delegation, Faisal al-Husseini, told reporters: "We decided not to go because the Americans did not accept our formula."

The Palestinian formula included having people from Jerusalem and from outside the Israeli-occupied territories in their negotiating team, which would have been a change in the ground rules set before peace talks began last October. Jordan's Role Disputed

Israel has insisted that it would talk only to Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, ruling out delegates from Arab East Jerusalem and representatives of Palestinians in exile.

Arab sources said Jordan was also locked in a dispute with the Russians over the number of seats allocated to them.

The Russian hosts offered four seats, the sources said. The Jordanians said they wanted eight, like every other delegation.

Reporters at the conference hall later saw three delegates sitting at seats allocated to the Jordanians.

Most of the other Arab delegations which accepted invitations to the two-day conference appeared to be in the hall.

Yazid al-Sayegh, one of a nine-member Palestinian team which arrived in Moscow on Monday, said: outside his hotel: "All the Americans were willing to do was make vague futuristic nice noises, nothing substantial at all."

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He said the Palestinians had no special formula, adding that they just presented a list of names and never received their accreditation badges allowing them to join the conference.

Only three members of the group were reported to be acceptable to the Israelis. Signs Changed

A few minutes before the talks were due to start, an official removed a printed sign from the conference table saying "Jordanian-Palestinian delegation." He replaced it with a hand-written one saying "Jordanian delegation."

Mr. Baker arrived in the conference hall about 30 minutes after the talks were supposed to have begun.

Russia and the United States, co-sponsors of the multilateral conference, said the composition of the Palestinian team broke ground rules set before peace talks were begun in Madrid.

The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is excluded from the Middle East process, but it advises the Palestinian team from behind the scenes.

The P.L.O. leadership authorized the expanded delegation to Moscow after two days of argument at its Tunis headquarters.



Saudis Pay the Bill

Special to The New York Times -- The conference, most of which is being paid for by Saudi Arabia since the Russians are strapped for cash, was part of the peace process begun in Madrid last October.

While the Madrid conference brought together Israel and its immediate Arab neighbors to settle their longstanding territorial disputes, the Moscow talks sought to bring together Israel and more than 20 other Arab, European and Asian nations to discuss broad regional issues. These were scheduled to include arms control, water rights, the environment and economic development.

Whether or not the Palestinian negotiators take their places at the conference's opening session, the talks will mark a series of "firsts" in both Middle Eastern diplomacy and international relations.



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For the first time, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the other Arab countries will enter into a set of direct negotiations with Israel. For the first time the North African nations of Morocco, Tunisia and Mauritania will engage in talks involving the Israelis. For the first time Japan and China, which just established diplomatic relations with Israel, will take part in a Middle East peace negotiation.

And for the first time Russia's Foreign Minister, Andrei Kozyrev, who will be co-chairman of the conference with Mr. Baker 3d, will assume the role previously held by the Soviet Foreign Minister at a major international conference.

The conference is to be held at the House of Unions, near the Kremlin. Although the Russians are themselves short of food, money and energy, and needed their own international conference to assist in economic development, they insisted on holding this meeting in Moscow as originally scheduled -- before the collapse of the Soviet Union -- by Mr. Baker and Eduard A. Shevardnadze.

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Amre Moussa



"Our common objective must be a consensus on how to coexist as equals. This will no doubt entail many difficult decisions for all sides. We

must
learn to
reconcile
ourselves
with
reality.

There
cannot be
peace if we
allow our
dreams to
cloud our
vision."

--Amre
Moussa

Read his

speeches

at Madrid!

Amre M. Moussa: A Nationalist Vision for Egypt

Middle East Quarterly
September 1996

Amre M. Moussa has been Egypt's minister of foreign affairs since 1991, during which time he has attracted much notice in the United States due to his outspokenness on questions relating to the Arab-Israeli peace process and the forcefulness with which he expresses his views. Mr. Moussa is a career diplomat, having joined the foreign ministry in 1958 and been posted in Switzerland, India, and the United Nations. Robert Satloff and Daniel Pipes interviewed him in his Cairo office on July 20, 1996.

VISION

Middle East Quarterly: Do you have a vision for Egypt?

Amre Moussa: I aim to close the file of confrontation and animosity between the countries of this region. This would be a major achievement. It is an especially appropriate goal for we Egyptians, for the peace process started under President Anwar as-Sadat, making the whole initiative an Egyptian one. When it reaches its end and peace prevails, it will be a great achievement for President Husni Mubarak, for Egyptian diplomacy, and for Arab diplomacy.

An era has come to an end; let us move ahead now, and leave all this conflict behind. We have the possibility to achieve peace before the end of the century -- if the Israeli government really cooperates and goes ahead in accordance with the Madrid conference, in accordance with land-for-peace, and in accordance with the agreements that have been achieved. The Israeli government must understand and believe that security cannot be attained without peace, and that peace is really the guarantee for generations to come. In Israel, fortunately, a substantial portion of the body politic does believe in this possibility and can push things to realize that result.

MEQ: What, beyond a comprehensive peace with Israel, would you like your legacy as foreign minister to be?

Moussa: My wider vision is to develop this region to become a productive one and a full participant in international politics and economics. This will come with peace; its full realization will not precede peace because peace will open doors. What [former Israeli prime minister] Shimon Peres says about the need for prosperity is correct; we want to put it into effect by creating the appropriate circumstances, not to leave it as only talk.

MEQ: So you're a believer in the "new Middle East"?

Moussa: Yes, but not preceding peace. It cannot be a carrot to lead people to peace if peace is not there. It must be the reward of peace. The reverse is nonsense; that would mean asking everyone to enter into the new Middle

East before peace is achieved. The Palestinians are now living in closure and the Syrians have got nothing; that's not the new Middle East. If you want to advance, you have to advance in a fair way. Israeli negotiations with Syria must resume, Palestinians must feel the benefits of peace in their standard of living, in their security. Israelis must not harass them every day, nor build new settlements. The new Middle East can't just benefit some and not others.

I am still concerned about pressures to reach a peace that benefits one party at the expense of the other. This cannot work. It would never lead to a comprehensive peace acceptable to the people. In other words, we want an Arab-Israeli peace, not an Israeli peace.

MEQ: Can you foresee an end to the peace process other than full Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza and the establishment of a Palestinian state?

Moussa: No, it cannot but be that way. Whoever believes that Israel can get peace and security along with the land is absolutely mistaken. Nobody will play that game. To give peace but abandon Palestinian rights, the territories, the Golan Heights, and southern Lebanon . . . who would play such a game?

MEQ: What about something in between . . .

Moussa: What we are in now is the in-between. The process can't move any more except if Prime Minister Netanyahu moves; when he does, then the whole thing moves.

SOVIET COLLAPSE

MEQ: What is your assessment of the Soviet bloc's collapse? Was that a good thing for Egypt?

Moussa: It has its positive side, definitely. The communism they gave the Third World contributed to the underdevelopment of so many countries, in particular in the Middle East.

MEQ: Including Egypt?

Moussa: In the Middle East in general. It killed the feeling of competitiveness and so stymied personal initiative. The dependence on the state and the economic collapse in this region results from this. Its collapse has freed the economies of the Middle East from the shackles of communism.

MEQ: And the negative side?

Moussa: Its negative aspects center around the lack of international balance. If you are now looking for a balance to help the Arab-Israeli negotiations, sometimes you can't find it.

MEQ: You're telling us that the United States is too strong?

Moussa: You can take it as you like. The United States, for its policy to succeed and be productive, must play the honest broker. Less than that and negotiations won't be fruitful.

MEQ: This is a remarkable comment; America's foremost Arab partner says it misses the balance provided by the Soviet Union!

Moussa: No, I am talking about the international balance. The Soviet Union was not in the peace game. The American role enabled Egypt and Israel to reach a peace agreement. Had it not been for the United States, there would have been no agreement between Egypt and Israel because of the difficulties we encountered in negotiations. As an honest broker, the United States understood exactly what Egypt wanted and exactly what

Israel wanted. That's what we need now.

NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION

MEQ: You are urgent for Israel sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, the NPT, which would place its nuclear program under international inspection. Israel said it is too early to discuss the NPT, citing ongoing threats from rogues states and the uselessness of its inspections in Iraq. Although Israelis view Egypt as a partner and friend, and direct their nuclear potential only against such adversaries as Iraq and Iran, you seem to view it as threatening Egypt. Is there anything the Israelis could do, while keeping a nuclear option, to assuage Egypt's concerns?

Moussa: If Israel is afraid of this or that country, it cannot deal with the problem with nuclear weapons. Once Israel has it, how can you deny any other country from acquiring it? By now, any country can easily acquire the nuclear option. It would help to put the Israelis' nuclear facilities under international inspection. They can keep what they have in terms of a peaceful nuclear capability, but within the framework of the international legal system. We cannot live with Israel hiding it and seeking the approval of certain powers to keep the nuclear option. This undermines our efforts to restrict nuclear proliferation; if this goes for Israel, why not for any other country?

MEQ: Could Egypt recognize that Israel has legitimate security concerns about the rogue states that necessitate its maintaining the nuclear option?

Moussa: I don't believe in the notion of rogue states. There might be rogue governments and rogue ministers, and they could wreak havoc through using wrong policies, but not rogue states.

MEQ: But there is a difference between Israel -- a stable, democratic state -- and Iran, which is not. Similarly, France and England are . . .

Moussa: But France and England put themselves in the framework of the international legal system. Why should a democracy be outside that system? Why does Israel have this exceptional status? Why should we be ignorant about what goes on in Israel? The rules have to apply to democracies; go and place your facilities under international inspection. Then it is fine.

MEQ: Given what we now know about the Iraqi nuclear efforts, do you now think that what the Israelis did in June 1981, when they bombed the Iraqi nuclear installation at Osirak, was the right thing to do?

Moussa: No. Our opposition remains exactly as it was then; we remain committed to what we said in the circumstances of that time. Why revisit now something that happened fifteen years ago?

MEQ: The reason is that Prime Minister Netanyahu, in his address to Congress, spoke almost exactly the same words about Iran in 1996 as his predecessor said about Iraq in early 1981, six months before the attack on Osirak.¹ Does this give you reason also to deal urgently with the Iranian nuclear program?

Moussa: The Iranian nuclear program is under the inspection of the International Atomic Energy Agency, which can at any time inspect it.

MEQ: But that's a weak and flawed inspection system.

Moussa: This is no reason for Israel to keep a nuclear option outside the IAEA framework.

MEQ: Fair enough. But the IAEA inspection regimen not being effective gives us few assurances about Iran, right?

Moussa: Then go and ask the Iranians for more inspection rights. We do not understand why Israel develops a

nuclear option out of fear that Iran will acquire a nuclear option -- when Iran so far does not have one. Israeli policy makes it hard to argue with the Iranians. If we ask them, "What are you doing, why are you building a nuclear option?" they can point to Israel. This prevents us from arguing strongly against the proliferation of nuclear weapons in this region.

FUNDAMENTALIST ISLAM

MEQ: What does the term fundamentalist Muslim or Islamist mean?

Moussa: It applies only to someone engaged in ideas and discussion; anyone who resorts to violence is automatically not an Islamist.

MEQ: Even if the person who resorts to violence talks in an Islamic vernacular and asserts that "Islam is the solution"?

Moussa: "Islam is the solution" is a belief; he has to convince me of it. And he has to listen to me in turn. Perhaps he'll be convinced. But if he uses a gun, it's a different story.

MEQ: If he uses a gun, that automatically means he's not a sincere Muslim?

Moussa: It means that he has moved from being a sincere Muslim to being a terrorist.

MEQ: And a terrorist cannot be a sincere Muslim?

Moussa: He cannot be. Such a terrorist cannot be a good Muslim, nor can he be defending Islam. How might a sincere Muslim kill somebody just because he has a different point of view? Islam deplores killing of this sort. If you commit a crime, punishment follows; but why punish a person for believing in a different way of applying Islam? Who is to be the judge? Who permits such an act?

MEQ: Do you fear that Islamist movements outside Egypt may have a harmful impact inside Egypt?

Moussa: No, the Middle East is predominately Islamic and we cannot stop religious trends afoot. Nor do we wish to; let people believe as they would. Fundamentalists go back several centuries and engage in a very active discussion of ways to order society, to apply Islamic tenets, and so on. This goes on in all religions and is no concern of ours.

Our concern is terrorism. We must pay attention when a "religious" or political group becomes an armed force that resorts to violence against society. We are concerned with all kinds and sorts of terrorism, whatever the motive, whatever the organization, whatever the country, because it is detrimental to the society's security and interests. This has nothing to do with Islam.

MEQ: But violence comes out of the fundamentalist discussion.

Moussa: No, not from that discussion. This violence started already in the 1940s, when terrorists killed prime ministers, and later attacked Abdel Nasser and murdered Sadat.² So it is not a product of today, but something we've lived with for decades. This trend is very deep in Middle Eastern society, and must be faced.

It requires three responses. Number one, make a success of the peace process, so people feel that justice has been done. Number two, improve economic conditions, so that these fundamentalist organizations cannot exploit frustrations. The more jobs you create, the less terrorists you have. Number three, each country must vigilantly maintain security against terrorists.

MEQ: What about engaging in the battle of ideas?

Moussa: There must be a free flow of ideas. In Israel, religious parties are doing whatever they want and making their own demands. We'll have to deal with them.

MEQ: Not long ago, President Mubarak and other Egyptian officials criticized America for being solicitous and maybe even too soft on fundamentalist Muslims, specifically the New Jersey sheikh, `Umar `Abd ar-Rahman, but also as a general approach.³

Moussa: No, you have it wrong. He did not discuss fundamentalists but the radicals who themselves or whose organizations have engaged in violence.

MEQ: `Umar `Abd ar-Rahman is not a fundamentalist?

Moussa: What do you mean by fundamentalist? He uses Islam and preaches violence -- a contradiction in terms. `Abd ar-Rahman was calling for violence and leading a certain group into violence. This is what we oppose. If he were just preaching Islam, and offering a point of view without encouraging violence, we would have no problem with him.

MEQ: Do you still criticize the U.S. government for engaging in a dialogue with what we might call Islamically oriented terrorists? Do you think U.S. policy has improved in the past year or so?

Moussa: I believe American officials understand the situation much better in recent months due to developments that have affected American interests.

FUNDAMENTALIST REGIMES

MEQ: Do you believe that the Islamic nature of the Iranian government is now a permanent feature of that country?

Moussa: I don't know if it's a permanent feature, but it's quite solid.

MEQ: Do you worry about developments in Algeria?

Moussa: No. In fact, they are going in the right direction because Algeria is very much hopeful and determined and confident that the terrorist challenge is declining.

MEQ: What about the Sudan? Hasan at-Turabi, the eminence grise there, is now speaker of the parliament and officially a very powerful figure.

Moussa: The Sudanese will understand that their way of doing things cannot be sustained. They will have to change their attitude or will suffer from isolation.

HANDING OVER TERROSITS

MEQ: Do you support American initiatives at the United Nations to isolate the Sudan?

Moussa: The Security Council finds that Sudan is harboring, protecting, and even unleashing terrorists, among them the three who attacked President Mubarak in Ethiopia last year. These have to be handed over. The sanctions relate to this case is particular and have nothing to do with isolating the country.

MEQ: Do you favor isolating the Sudan?

Moussa: It depends on what you mean by isolation. The Sudanese have to put an end to their present policies. But as a general principle, we do not favor isolation, so why should we favor this policy in the case of the Sudan? If the Sudan implements the Security Council resolution and is honest in its dealing about the terrorists they shelter, they will hand them over to the country that requested them.

MEQ: And if it does not?

Moussa: If not, the Security Council will address that issue.

MEQ: If we apply that same principle to Libya, they have to hand over the terrorists they harbor from the Pan Am 103 explosion in 1988.

Moussa: Absolutely, you are right.

MEQ: The final communiqué you read out following the Arab League summit meeting last month called for a different approach on Libya. It deemed Libya's offer to hand the terrorists to a third country or the United Nations "an appropriate and practical solution that will end the crisis" and demanded the lifting of sanctions against Libya.⁴ Bluntly put, it declares that if the U.N. Security Council does not accept the Libyan offer, the Arab League will consider circumventing sanctions to assist the Libyan people. Aren't you being inconsistent?

Moussa: This is exactly the same principle. The Libyans have said they are ready to hand over the suspects to a third country; this resolves that matter. Libya has moved from "No, we cannot hand them over" to a different position, "Yes, we are going to hand them over, but not to the U.S., only to a third country." That is a major change in the Libyans' position: they were adamantly against handing the suspects over, now they agree to it.

MEQ: Would you accept the Sudanese's handing the suspects over to the United Nations or a third country?

Moussa: We would certainly seriously consider such an offer.

A NASSERIST?

MEQ: It's said in the United States that you are the last Nasserist.⁵ Is there any truth to that?

Moussa: No, I don't believe in people being Nasserists or Sadatists. I am an Egyptian, a nationalist. I believe we should do what we have to do and at the same time I am for peace. I participated in all phases of the peace process and firmly believe in peace. My goal is to close the file of animosity and confrontation between Israel and Arabs, but in a way that will benefit both, and that will result in actually putting an end to this conflict.

It does not work to play diplomatically, to hide things about security and explain things falsely. For the Arabs to agree to something and then discover that they were deceived is a recipe for problems. You have to be very firm now, not tomorrow. We should negotiate honestly, in a balanced way, and reach an agreement that future generations will endorse.

MEQ: Is the idea wrong that you have fond memories for the Abdel Nasser period?

Moussa: This is not a question of wrong or right; I don't have to defend myself. Abdel Nasser was one of the leaders of this country, and his era was one of the most active in the region's political development. He made mistakes, definitely, but he also had a leadership and a charisma that should not be forgotten. Abdel Nasser was among the leaders who tried to do things in a way that would enable the Arabs to feel that they are a people and

to be respected.

At the same time, his charisma, leadership, and policy worked in the sixties and would not work in the nineties. Politics must change. President Jacques Chirac was a Gaullist but his policies are much different from those of Charles de Gaulle. De Gaulle lived in the sixties; Chirac in the nineties pursues a different policy from the one he pursued at the beginning of his career. You cannot follow the same policy.

MEQ: Abdel Nasser was the right leader for Egypt at the time?

Moussa: He definitely was one of the region's major leaders in his time. He was one of the important leaders even before the revolution of 1952. How can we ignore, for example, Sa`d Zaghlul and Mustafa an-Nahhas. They are two major figures in our history, and so is Abdel Nasser. And before him was General Muhammad Neguib.⁶ We do not ignore any of these leaders under King Faruq or under the revolution.

I don't have to be harsh on Abdel Nasser to please some circles, but if you want to categorize me as Nasserist you are wrong. Nor am I a Sadatist. I am not following this or that tradition. I do say we have to serve Egypt and the Arabs and the region at this juncture, and not follow policies of the sixties.

CAREER

MEQ: You have a reputation of being one of the most popular politicians in Egypt. Can you tell us why that might be?

Moussa: I don't know. Perhaps because of the frankness, the direct talk about issues of major importance to the people. In particular, the peace process, Middle Eastern relations, and the future of this region.

MEQ: You're saying things the way that people want to hear them?

Moussa: No, that's not the issue. I am saying things as they are.

MEQ: Perhaps one of the characteristics about you that wins the most support is your seeming to act as Egypt's foreign minister to the Arabs and the Arabs' foreign minister to the rest of the world. Is that an accurate description?

Moussa: I don't know whether it is right or not. If it is, I welcome it; in fact, I would be proud.

MEQ: It's common to ask this of American leaders, so we'd like to close by asking it of you: Do you have ambitions to serve your country as president?

Moussa: (Laughter) Well, this question should be addressed to an American, since your elections are coming very soon. No, I don't, if you are asking me, I don't. I already suffer from being minister. My private life is totally gone and the burden on me is so heavy that I don't have time to read, to relax, and the like. It is quite enough to be foreign minister, and it's my intention to stay this way, and that's it.

James Addison Baker III



Read his [speeches](#) at Madrid!

"When you walk out these doors, you carry with you great responsibilities. You carry with you the responsibility to your peoples to seek peace. You carry with you the responsibility to the world to build a comprehensive and just peace. You carry with you

*the
responsibility
to yourselves
to break with
the past and
pursue a new
future." -
James Baker*

Description

The James A. Baker III Papers document nearly every aspect of Baker's long career in politics and public service, including his time as White House Chief of Staff and Secretary of the Treasury under President Ronald Reagan, his term as Secretary of State under George H.W. Bush, and his work leading the presidential campaigns of Presidents Ford, Reagan, and Bush. Little documentation of Baker's time as Chief of Staff to President Bush from August 1992 to January 1993 is present in the papers.

The collection includes a variety of correspondence, memos, handwritten notes, speech transcripts, video and audio tapes, and other material related to Baker's positions in government and on political campaigns. The collection also includes material documenting Baker's legal career and early political efforts, including a substantial amount of correspondence with future President George H.W. Bush, written between Baker and Bush in the 1960s and 1970s. Substantial documentation of the 1978 Texas Attorney General Campaign, the only time Baker ran for political office himself, also exists.

A full finding aid, including descriptions of each series and a folder-level contents list, is available at the library.

Biography

James Addison Baker III was a central figure in the presidential administrations of Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush. Baker served as Reagan's White House Chief of Staff from 1980 to 1985 and Secretary of the Treasury from 1985 to 1988, and as Bush's Secretary of State from 1989-1992. Baker also led presidential campaigns for both Bush and Reagan, as well as Gerald Ford, over the course of five consecutive presidential elections from 1976 to 1992. Along with Bush, he was one of the few people to retain high level government positions for all twelve years of the Reagan-Bush era. He ended the Reagan-Bush years in the same position as he started, as Chief of Staff and Executive Assistant to the President.

Baker was born on April 28, 1930, into an established Houston, Texas family. Both his great-grandfather and his grandfather, Captain James

Permission to access the

papers must be granted by James A. Baker III. Collection will open to the public on April 28, 2030 or upon Baker's death.

Arrangement

Organized into the following series:

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- [Subseries 1A. Correspondence, 1957-1975](#)
- [Subseries 1B. Diaries and Datebooks 1957-1992](#)
- [Subseries 1C. Financial Records, 1969-1980](#)
- [Subseries 1D. Legal Career, 1957-1975](#)
- [Subseries 1E. Subject Files, 1957-1975](#)
- [Series 2. Early Political Career, 1957-1977](#)
- [Series 3. Undersecretary of Commerce, 1975-1976](#)
- [Series 4. Post-1976 Election, 1977-1979](#)
- [Series 5. 1978 Texas Attorney General Campaign, 1976-1981](#)
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- [Subseries 6K. Subject Files](#)
- [Series 7. Secretary of the Treasury, 1985-1988](#)

Baker, joined the venerable Baker Botts law firm in the 19th century. Captain Baker, who played a prominent role in the history of Rice University and was also member of the Rice Institute Board of Trustees in 1891, eventually became Chairman of the Board. Baker's grandfather is reported to have advised his grandson, and other young lawyers, to "work hard, study hard, and stay out of politics." Baker's father, James A. Baker Jr., also joined Baker Botts, after graduating from Princeton University in 1915 and serving in World War I.

James A. Baker III, like his father, attended the Hill School in Pennsylvania and Princeton University. He studied classics at Princeton and graduated in 1952. While on a trip to Bermuda with the Princeton rugby team he met Mary Stuart McHenry, whom he married in 1953. After two years of active duty as a Lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps, Baker entered the University of Texas School of Law at Austin. He received his J.D. with honors in 1957 and practiced law with the Houston firm of Andrews and Kurth from 1957 to 1975. Baker has said that he was "apolitical" during his early law career; he told the New Yorker that he was "too busy trying to make it in competitive law practice" to become heavily involved in politics and that he often voted Democratic (Newhouse, p. 62).

Baker and others have remarked that he would not have become involved in politics if not for the influence of his first wife, Mary Stuart, who was active in the Republican Party and had worked on George H. W. Bush's congressional campaigns. Baker and

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Bush had become friendly by the late 1950s and were often tennis partners at the Houston Country Club. When Bush decided to run for the Senate in 1969, Baker considered running for his friend's vacated congressional seat. Bush strongly endorsed the idea, but Baker decided against the campaign when his wife was diagnosed with cancer. She died in February 1970.

Baker's first political experience came when he served as Harris County Campaign Chairman for Bush's Senate campaign. Bush had encouraged his friend to become active in the campaign in part to help relieve his grief over the loss of his wife. Lloyd Bentsen defeated Bush in the election, but Baker's work led to roles as State Finance Chairman for the Republican Party of Texas in 1971 and Gulf Coast Regional Chairman for the Nixon campaign in 1972. Baker returned to the full-time practice of law in 1973 and 1974. He also remarried in 1973. His second wife, Susan Garrett Winston, had been a close friend of his first wife.

In the summer of 1975 President Ford nominated Baker to be Under-Secretary of Commerce. Although he has never acknowledged it, Bush, who was then serving as United States Ambassador to China, is widely believed to have lobbied Commerce Secretary Rogers Morton to find a place for Baker in the administration. Baker stayed at the Commerce Department for only nine months, but served as Acting Secretary of the department for three of those months.

In the spring of 1976 Ford asked Baker to leave the Commerce Department to work on his presidential campaign. In May Baker

Secretary James Baker

- Following the Gulf War in early 1991, Secretary of State James Baker embarked on an intensive course of shuttle diplomacy in the Middle East. With the United States firmly established to be the world's sole superpower, Baker saw a new era of opportunity for a region exhausted by war.
- In March of 1991, Baker traveled to the Middle East on the first of what would later become a series of eight peace missions.
- The Madrid Conference, lasting from Oct. 30 to Nov. 1, 1991, was a direct result of Baker's shuttle diplomacy earlier in the year. The conference set up two separate tracks of negotiations: a bilateral track, between Israel and each of its immediate neighbors (Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and the Palestinians), and a multilateral track to resolve issues pertaining to the region as a whole.
- Bilateral talks began two days after the conference on Nov. 3, while multilateral negotiations opened in January of the following year.
- The bilateral talks between Israel and Jordan led directly to the historic 1994 peace agreement between the two nations, as well as the Oslo Accords between Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

resigned and became Deputy Campaign Chairman for delegate operations for the Ford Campaign. In the close primary race between Ford and Ronald Reagan, the position of chief delegate hunter was more important than in most campaigns, and Baker was considered extremely efficient and effective. Ford won the nomination by a few delegate votes at the last contested convention of either major political party to date.

In August 1976, just a few weeks after the convention and despite his limited experience running campaigns at a national level, Baker was appointed National Campaign Chairman of the Ford Campaign. At the time the campaign was struggling. Ford trailed Jimmy Carter by 30 points in the polls and Baker was the third campaign chairman in five months. When Ford made up large deficits in the polls, eventually losing by only one percent of the total vote, Baker was considered to have done a remarkable job.

Baker returned to Andrews, Kurth, Campbell, and Jones in 1977 and briefly resumed law practice. Coming off the experience of running a presidential campaign Baker was, in his words, "bitten by the political bug" (Newhouse, p. 65). Baker briefly considered running for governor of Texas, but eventually set his sights on the attorney general's office. The 1978 Texas attorney general race is the only time Baker has himself run as a candidate for political office. Though Baker lost the race to conservative Democrat Mark White (who would later become governor of Texas) Baker's 44 percent of the vote was a more than credible showing; only two Republican candidates since Reconstruction had done as well in

a "down-ballot" (any state office below the level of Governor or Senator) Texas race.

When George Bush began organizing a run for the Republican presidential nomination in 1979, Baker was intimately involved. Even before his campaign for attorney general Baker had established a political action committee, the Fund for Limited Government, to help explore a possible Bush campaign, and in 1978 Baker and Bush had flown to California to inform Ronald Reagan that Bush would be running against him. With well-known opponents such as Reagan, Senate minority leader Howard Baker, and fellow Texan John Connally, Bush was met with skepticism until an unexpected win in the 1980 Iowa primary.

Despite Bush's early successes, including victories in Michigan and Pennsylvania, by May 1980 it was clear that Reagan would win the nomination. Baker is credited with accurately reading the situation and, eventually, helping to secure a spot for Bush on the Republican ticket as Reagan's running mate. Earlier in the campaign, in an effort to avoid offending the Reagan camp, Baker had discouraged use of the term "voodoo-economics" to describe Reagan's economic policies. In May, when the press questioned Baker about what he later described as "a decoy operation" in California, he admitted that the Bush Campaign had no real organization in the state. Although Bush would still deliberate whether to contest other upcoming primaries before leaving the race, the move essentially signaled the end of the campaign. Many believed that if Bush had contested Reagan's home state of California he would not have been

selected as the vice-presidential nominee. Baker was asked to work on the Reagan-Bush campaign as a senior campaign advisor and was given responsibility for negotiating the format and number of the Reagan and Carter debates.

During the campaign, Baker's abilities caught the attention of key Reagan aides, including Mike Deaver. The day after the Reagan victory in November 1980, Reagan and Deaver told longtime aide Ed Meese, who had been Reagan's Chief of Staff in California, that Baker and not Meese would be Chief of Staff at the White House, with Meese serving as Reagan's counselor. Baker negotiated an agreement with Meese, even drafting a typed agreement which both men signed, that split the duties of the Chief of Staff and Counselor. Meese was given cabinet rank and supervision of the operations of the National Security Council staff and Domestic Policy staff, while Baker controlled the President's daily schedule and the flow of paper in and out of the White House. Although Baker's responsibilities seemed administrative on the surface, it soon became apparent that the agreement gave Baker a great deal of influence in political areas. Baker controlled liaison units, the political affairs office and the congressional affairs unit, and his early morning staff meetings became crucial to defining the daily agenda of the administration.

Baker is credited with creating and running an efficient and organized White House operation. Although he was sometimes criticized by the more conservative elements of the Republican Party, including some long-time Reagan supporters, he

was often viewed as a steady and moderating influence on the Reagan White House. He recruited and hired talented people from outside of the Reagan circle, including his deputy, Richard Darman. As during campaigns, he was credited with developing excellent relationships with the press. He also worked toward establishing strong relationships with key Congressional leaders; Baker has said he instituted a personal rule that by the end of each day, he would return every phone he received from any member of Congress. The Legislative Strategy Group created and led by Baker played a key role in the administration's early legislative victories, including the 1981 federal tax cut proposal and budget and congressional approval for the sale of Airborne Warning and Control System (AWAC) planes to Saudi Arabia.

Baker headed Reagan's reelection efforts in 1984 in a campaign that was essentially run from the Chief of Staff's office in the White House. Following Reagan's landslide victory over Walter Mondale, Baker and Treasury Secretary Donald Regan engineered a job switch, arguing the switch would reinvigorate both men, while keeping both in key positions within the administration.

At the Treasury Department, Baker, along with Darman, whom Baker had brought from the White House, was heavily involved in the tax reform and deficit cutting measures of Reagan's second term. Late in 1985 he met with economic leaders of Great Britain, West Germany, France, and Japan, in order to discuss ways to jointly address problems resulting from an inflated value of the dollar. The meeting,

which was initiated by Baker, was a departure from the more relaxed style of Regan and his staff, and resulted in an agreement to devalue the dollar, let other currencies rise, and coordinate regulation of interest rates. Canada and Italy also subsequently agreed to the same measures. The following year the ad hoc process was formalized and evolved into regularized "Group of Seven" (G7) meetings and efforts to discuss economic policy and other political issues.

The most dramatic occurrence of Baker's tenure at the Treasury Department centered on the Reagan Administration's efforts to enact tax reform legislation. Through negotiations with key members of Congress Baker and Darman were able to push forward legislation that was seen as strewn with political traps.

Toward the end of Reagan's second term, speculation began that Baker would leave the Treasury Department to take over George Bush's 1988 presidential campaign. Baker stayed at the department through the primary season. He later said that although he "would have preferred to help my pal by keeping the economy on track rather than by requiring the patina of the pol," Bush always knew that Baker would be available to help his campaign in the general election. He left the Treasury Department on August 5 and took over the Bush Campaign shortly before the Republican Convention. A few days before the end of a sometimes bitter campaign, with Bush leading comfortably in the polls, Bush asked Baker to become his Secretary of State if he won the election. After Bush's victory Baker was easily confirmed by the Senate, and was

sworn in as the 61st Secretary of State in January 1989.

As Secretary of State Baker traveled to 90 foreign countries as the United States confronted a number of unprecedented challenges and opportunities. As in his previous high level positions, Baker worked closely with a key group of trusted advisors and made it an early priority to establish good working relationships with Congress, efforts that paid off in his early attempts to forge a bipartisan agreement on aid to the Nicaraguan Contras. Baker's close relationship with Bush worked to Baker's advantage during his years at the State Department. He later wrote, while serving as Secretary of State, "I never worried about being undercut. I could operate without ever having to worry about looking over my shoulder or worry about my backside." (Baker, p. 21).

Baker's years as Secretary of State included some of the most important world events of the second half of the 20th century. Most of these events are chronicled in a wide variety of published sources, including Baker's own book, *The Politics of Diplomacy*. The book records Baker's reactions to, and efforts to manage, world events, including the Chinese repression in Tiananmen Square, the United States invasion of Panama and arrest of Manuel Noriega, the release of Nelson Mandela and beginning of the end of Apartheid in South Africa, free elections in Nicaragua, and a peace agreement in El Salvador. Baker's efforts towards establishing peace in the Middle East led to a historic meeting between Palestinian and Israeli representatives at the Madrid Peace Conference of 1991.

Foreign policy during the Bush years was dominated by historic changes in relations between the United States and Soviet Union. During Baker's time at the State Department the Berlin Wall was dismantled, Germany was reunified and brought into NATO, and the Soviet Union itself dissolved. Baker played a key role in the development of the "two plus four" plan and the talks that led to German reunification. He also established a personal rapport with Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze. In 1989 the two met at a historic ministerial in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, a meeting which Baker would later say was a key towards developing a "new atmosphere of trust." Baker and Shevardnadze's working relationship is also considered to have been instrumental in Shevardnadze's willingness to issue a joint statement condemning Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and agreeing to an arms embargo without first clearing the position with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. The two men also worked towards nuclear and strategic arms reduction agreements, which culminated in the signing of the Strategic Arms Reduction Agreement (START) in July of 1991.

Baker was a central figure in negotiating and gaining support from a worldwide coalition of nations joined in opposition to Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's 1990 invasion of Kuwait. In January 1991, Baker met with Iraqi foreign minister Tariq Aziz in Geneva in a last ditch effort to convince the Iraqis to withdraw. On January 16, the U.S. and Allied forces began Operation Desert Storm by launching massive air strikes on

military targets in Iraq and Kuwait. Thirty-seven countries contributed militarily or financially to the operation.

In the summer of 1992, with his campaign struggling, Bush asked Baker to return to the White House as Chief of Staff in order to manage his reelection efforts. Baker remained in the position until Bill Clinton assumed the presidency in January 1993.

Since leaving Washington Baker has held a number of positions in both public service and the private sector. From 1997 to 2004, Baker served as the Personal Envoy of United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan to seek a political solution to the conflict over Western Sahara. In 2003, Baker was appointed Special Presidential Envoy for President George W. Bush on the issue of Iraqi debt. In perhaps his most visible role since leaving Washington, Baker served as a chief spokesman and led George W. Bush's legal team during the recount of votes in Florida during the 2000 presidential election.

As of January 2005 Baker was a senior partner in the law firm of Baker Botts and Senior Counselor to The Carlyle Group, a merchant banking firm in Washington, D.C. Baker also established and served as Honorary Chairman of the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy at Rice University, a non-partisan organization dedicated to the goal of helping bridge the gap between the theory and practice of public policy by drawing together experts from academia, government, the media, business, and non-governmental organizations.

Dr. Kamel Abu Jaber



"We have not come to Madrid, the venue of this historic international conference, simply to debate, discuss, or score points against each other. We came here with the intention of seriously

considering the elements of a comprehensive peace settlement. Our approach remains constructive, and our faith and confidence in the seriousness and commitment of the co-sponsors is unshakable."

--Dr.Kamel
Abu Jaber

Read his
speeches at
M adrid

Dr. Abdul Malik Al Jaber
Chief Executive Officer
Paltel Group

Dr. Abul Malik Al-Jaber returned to Palestine with the onset of the Peace Process in 1993, during which he joined the Peace Negotiations as part of the Palestinian Technical Committees headed by the then late Faisal Husseini.

Dr. Al-Jaber established the first Palestinian Energy Research Center, which was tasked with providing strategic plans for the Energy Sector in Palestine. Under Presidential Decree Dr. Al-Jaber became Head of the Center, after which he also acted as principal advisor for the Ministry of Planning. Dr. Al-Al-Jaber's tenure in the Public sector also included assuming responsibility for the Palestinian Industrial Estate Authority as Director General.

In the year 2000 Dr. Al-Jaber moved to the private sector and held several senior positions. He became the CEO for the Palestinian Industrial Estates Development Company, during which he supervised the establishment of Palestine's first Industrial Estate in Gaza.

Hans Van Den Broek



"A bold and imaginative approach is called for.

We will be putting forward our own ideas. We will share with you our own experience in this regard to the benefit of all nations of the Middle East"

--Hans Van Den Broek

Hans van den Broek (born 11 December 1936 in Paris) is a Dutch politician.

He is most known for being a Netherlands minister of the foreign affairs between 1982 and 1993, when he took a job as a member of the European Commission.

Hans Van Den Broek started his career as a lawyer. He joined the Katholieke Volkspartij (KVP) and was member of the municipality council of Rheden between 1970 and 1974. Between 1976 and 1981 he was member of Tweede Kamer, the lower house of the Dutch parliament, as representative of KVP and later of the Christen-Democratisch Appèl (CDA).

He was Netherlands minister for foreign affairs in Ruud Lubbers governments three times and was in 1991 one of the EU negotiators in Brioni Agreement that ended ten day war in Slovenia. On 6 January 1993 he became member of the European Commission and has been once again charged for the foreign relations, especially the Enlargement of the European Union. He remained on that position until March 1999, when he retired from European politics.

Hans van den Broek is nowadays president of the Netherlands Institute of

International Relations (Clingendael)
and president of the Radio Netherlands.

Hans van den Broek is married and has two daughters, one of them is Marilène van den Broek, the wife of Prince Maurits of Orange-Nassau, van Vollenhoven.

Member of the Commission

External relations with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, Mongolia, Turkey, Cyprus, Malta and other European countries; Common foreign and security policy and human rights (in agreement with the President); External missions , European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO)

■ Born in Paris, France, on 11 December 1936.

■ Married, two daughters.

■ Doctor of Law, Utrecht; Postgraduate course in senior management at "De Baak", Noordwijk.

■ *1965-68*

Lawyer

■ *1969-73*

Secretary of the managing board of ENKA BV, Arnhem

■ *1970-74*

Member of Rheden municipal council

■ *1973-76*

Commercial manager with ENKA BV

■ *1976-81*

Member of the Lower House of Parliament

■ *1978*

Member of the executive of the Christian Democratic Party

■ *1981-82*

State Secretary for Foreign Affairs

■ *1982*

Minister of Foreign Affairs (reappointed in 1986 and 1989)

■ *1993-94*

Member of the European Commission, responsible for external political relations, common foreign and security policy and enlargement negotiations

Yitzhak Shamir



“I stand
before you
today in
yet another
quest for
peaace, not
only on
behalf of
the State of
Israel, but
in the
name of the
entire
Jewish

people, that
has
maintained
an
unbreakable
bond with
the Land of
Israel for
almost
4,000
years."

--Yitzhak
Shamir

Read his

speeches at Madrid!

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Yitzhak Shamir-underground leader, spymaster, parliamentarian and the seventh Prime Minister of the State of Israel. Was born Yizhak Yzemitzky in Ruzinoy, Polan in 1915. He attended Bialystok Hebrew secondary school and at age 14 joined the Betar Youth movement. In 1935 he left Warsaw, where he was studying law, moved to Palestine and enrolled at the Hebrew University.

In 1937, opposing the mainstream Zionist policy of restraint vis-à-vis the British Mandatory administration, Shamir joined the Irgun Tzeva'i Le'umi (Etzel) - the Revisionist underground organization - and in 1940 became a member of the small, but more militant, faction led by Avraham Stern, the Lehi (Lohamei Herut Israel - Fighters for the Freedom of Israel), that broke away from the larger body. There, as part of the leadership troika, he coordinated organizational and operational activities.

Twice arrested by the British - during and after World War II - Shamir escaped both times, the second time in 1947 from the British prison camp in Eritrea to neighboring French Djibouti. Granted political asylum in France, he returned to Palestine in 1948 and resumed command of the Lehi until it was disbanded following the establishment of the State of Israel.

After several years during which he managed commercial enterprises, Shamir joined Israel's security services in the mid-1950s and held senior positions in the Mossad. He returned to private commercial activity in the mid-1960s and became involved in the struggle to free Soviet Jewry. In 1970 he joined Menachem Begin's opposition Herut party and became a member of its Executive. In 1973 he was elected a Member of Knesset for the Likud party - a position he held for the next 23 years. During his first decade as a parliamentarian, Shamir was a member of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee and, in 1977, became Speaker of the Knesset. In this capacity he presided over the historic appearance of Egyptian President Sadat in the Knesset and the debate over ratifying the Camp David Accords two years later. He abstained in the vote on the Accords, primarily because of the requirement to dismantle settlements. Yitzhak Shamir served as Minister of Foreign Affairs between 1980 and 1983. Among his achievements were closer ties with Washington - reflected in the Memorandum of Understanding on strategic cooperation with the United States and the agreement in principle on free trade between the two nations. Shamir also initiated diplomatic contacts with many African countries which had severed diplomatic ties during the 1973 oil crisis. After the 1982 "Operation Peace for Galilee," Yitzhak

Shamir directed negotiations with Lebanon which led to the 1983 peace agreement (which was, however, never ratified by the Lebanese government).

Following the resignation of Menachem Begin in October 1983, Yitzhak Shamir became Prime Minister until the general elections in the fall of 1984. During this year, Shamir concentrated on economic matters - the economy was suffering from hyper-inflation - while also nurturing closer strategic ties with the United States.

Indecisive results in the 1984 general elections led to the formation of a National Unity Government based on a rotation agreement between Shamir and Labor leader Shimon Peres. Shamir served as Vice-Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs for two years, while Shimon Peres was Prime Minister. Subsequently, Shamir served for six years as Prime Minister - from 1986 to 1992 - first heading a National Unity Government, and then as head of a narrow coalition government.

Yitzhak Shamir's second term as Prime Minister was marked by two major events: the 1991 Gulf War, in which Shamir - despite Iraqi missile attacks on Israel's civilian population - chose a policy of restraint; and the October 1991 Middle East Peace Conference in Madrid that inaugurated direct talks between Israel and the neighboring Arab states as well as multilateral regional talks. Two momentous events overshadowed other issues on the public agenda. The first, beginning in 1989, was the victory in the long struggle for Jewish emigration from the USSR, which brought 450,000 immigrants to Israel in the next two years; the second was "Operation Solomon," in May 1991, in which 15,000 Ethiopian Jews were rescued and brought to Israel in a massive airlift.

After his party lost the 1992 elections, Shamir stepped down from the party leadership and in 1996 also retired from the Knesset.

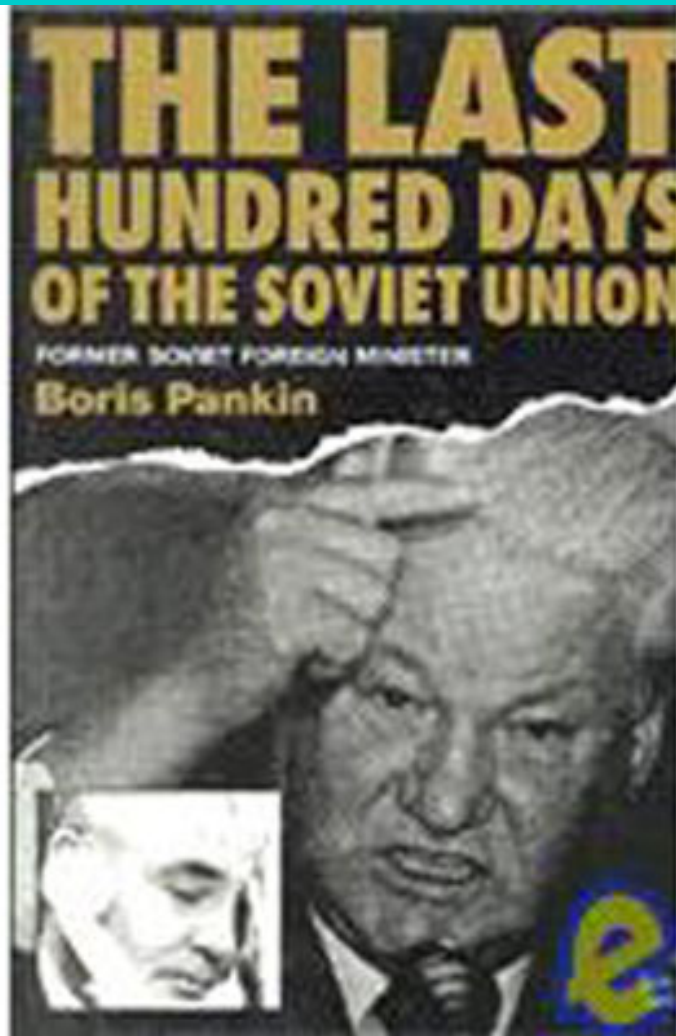
BIOGRAPHY

born 20 February 1931, he was Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union for a brief period in 1991. A reformer and journalist, Pankin had only 100 days to serve as Foreign Minister before the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991. In that short period, he established diplomatic relations with the State of Israel, managed the collapse of the GDR, began the Soviet-US disarmament process, brought the Soviet Union closer to the European Union and purged the KGB from the ranks of the Soviet Foreign Ministry.

Pankin is best known for being the highest-ranking diplomat to stand against the August putsch which sought to bring down Mikael Gorbachev, the last Soviet leader and promulgator of Glasnost and Perestroika.

Pankin was Soviet Ambassador to Sweden for eight years from 1982-1990. He was brought-in to clean-up after the Soviet Union's reputation was seriously tarnished in the aftermath of a diplomatic scandal in which

Boris Dimitrievich Pankin



"The broad range of views which surfaced in the course of initial and,

a Soviet Whiskey class submarine became marooned in Swedish territorial waters outside of Stockholm. The incident became widely-known as "Whiskey on the Rocks." Pankin became, and remains, very popular in Sweden, and was the Soviet Union's longest-serving Swedish envoy.

Pankin was the last Soviet Ambassador to Czechoslovakia (1990-1991).

Pankin is credited with preventing the Communist-Czechoslovak government from interfering in the Velvet Revolution- which led to playwright and dissident Vaclav Havel's rise to the presidency. Pankin was later recalled to Moscow to become Gorbachev's Foreign Minister after standing against the putsch which attempted to topple the reform-minded Soviet leader.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Pankin was named Russian Ambassador to the Court of St. James (UK), where he served until 1994. He resigned in protest over Russia's invasion of Chechnya.

Pankin now lives in Bromma borough outside Stockholm, Sweden and works as a

***so far, indirect discussions
does not overshadow the common
feature in the positions of
all the
parties - the desire to have a durable
and just peace in the
Middle East
and to solve the most difficult
problems that have
turned this region into the global
powderkeg."***

--Boris Dimitrievich Pankin

lecturer and writer. In January 2005 he was given the "Stockholm Citizen of the Month Award" by the city government, recognizing his dedication and loyalty to his adopted home - the city of Stockholm. Boris Pankin sits on the Board of Advisors of the Global Panel Foundation.

Comments By Baker and
Pankin

Published: October 19,
1991

**Following are
excerpts from
remarks today by
Secretary of State
James A. Baker 3d
and Foreign
Minister Boris D.
Pankin of the
Soviet Union on
invitations to a
Middle East peace
conference :**

MR. BAKER

*An American Secretary of
State and a Soviet Foreign
Minister are together in
Jerusalem for the first time*

in history.

What's more, the Soviet Union has today restored full relations with Israel after a break of 24 years.

But I think that our joint presence here today represents something more.

Foreign Minister Pankin and I are pleased to announce that President Bush and President Gorbachev are today inviting Israel, Arab states and Palestinians to attend a Middle East peace conference to be held beginning Oct. 30 in Madrid. That conference is to be followed by direct negotiations designed to achieve real peace.

We have witnessed new beginnings in other parts of the world. The negotiating process that we are seeking

to launch with this invitation holds the hope of a new era in the Middle East. The hope of an era marked by acceptance and not by rejection, the hope of an era marked by dialogue and not by violence, the hope of an era marked by cooperation and not by conflict, and the hope of an era marked by hope itself and not despair.

This invitation offers the peoples in this region a pathway to ending an era of confrontation, and it offers a basis for a new future.

The road to peace, and I think we both understand this exceedingly well, will not be simple. To the contrary, it will be extremely difficult, with many problems, many hitches and probably many interruptions along the

way. Old suspicions will not disappear quickly. The gaps are real, and the gaps will not be easily overcome. So we have no illusions about the hard work that lies ahead.

But we take encouragement from the issuance of these invitations, which is the product of work of the last eight months. As we have all along, we intend to take this one step at a time. And so if we receive positive responses to this invitation, we will be taking one more step forward toward achieving the peace and security that the peoples of the Middle East have so long been denied. MR.

PANKIN

Ladies and gentlemen, the Secretary of State James Baker has just informed you of the joint Soviet-

American statement.

Therefore I have no other papers to read out to you. I can only say that I fully share what has just been said by Secretary Baker. However, I'd like to add a few comments.

The stage that we have now come to represents a very important turning point for the entire situation in the Middle East. We have come a long way, and we have come a long way together. We made an important contribution to the convening of this conference in our capacity as future co-chairmen of the conference, just as important contributions have been made by all the other sides in their hard and untiring efforts.

We are convinced that history is now holding out

an opportunity that we must not pass up. And I urge all the participants of the conference to take this opportunity.

As has just been mentioned by Secretary Baker, we have restored full diplomatic relations with the State of Israel, and we signed a joint Soviet-Israeli statement together with my counterpart, Foreign Minister David Levy, to that effect.

1990 Nobel Prize Winner

Mikhail Gorbachev



"This task is an extremely difficult one."

Biography

- 1931: March 2, born, Privolnoye, Krasnogvardeisky District, Stavropol territory in the North Caucasus, to a peasant family in a small village, his father an agricultural mechanic on a collective farm.
- 1942: German army occupies the Privolnoye area.
- 1945: Begins work as assistant to combine harvest operator.
- 1949: Awarded Order of Red Banner of Labour.
- 1950: Enrolled in Faculty of Law, Moscow University.

1952:	After having been a member of Komsomol (Communist Youth Organisation), now joined the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU).
1955:	Marries Raisa Maximovna Titorenko, philosophy student. Receives degree in law.
1955-60:	Appointed First Secretary, Komsomol Territorial Committee, then moves up to higher posts, finally becoming top Komsomol official in Stavropol.
1956:	Daughter Irina born.
1961:	Delegate from Stavropol to 22nd Communist Party Congress in Moscow.

1962:	Appointed to key position in Stavropol Communist Party, responsible for personnel in administration, farms and industry.
1964-67:	Studies for second degree at Stavropol Agricultural Institute.
1970:	Appointed First Secretary for Stavropol territory, governing an area of 2.4 million people.
1971:	Member CPSU Central Committee.
1978:	Moves to Moscow as Secretary of Agriculture in Central Committee.
1980:	Becomes youngest full member of Politburo.
1985:	March, Elected by Central Committee as General Secretary of CPSU.

	1989: Elected by new parliament as Executive President of Soviet Union. 1991: August, abortive coup of hardliners, resigns as General Secretary of CPSU, dissolves Central Committee. 1991: December 25, resigns as President when Soviet Union disintegrates. 1992: Head of Foundation for Social, Economic and Political Research, think-tank founded after August coup.

Profile on Gorbachev

The man credited with helping end the Cold War was born into a peasant family on March 2, 1931, near Stavropol. As a boy, he did farm work along with his studies. He joined the Communist Party in 1952 and completed a law degree at Moscow University the following year. During the early 1960s he became head of the agriculture department for the Stavropol region. By the end of the decade he had risen to top of the party hierarchy in the region. He came to the attention of Politburo members Mikhail Suslov and Yuri Andropov, who got him elected to the Central Committee in 1971 and arranged foreign trips for their rising star. In 1978 he was back in Moscow, and the next year he was chosen as a candidate member of the Politburo. His stewardship of Soviet agriculture was not a success. As he came to realize, the collective system was fundamentally flawed in more than one way.

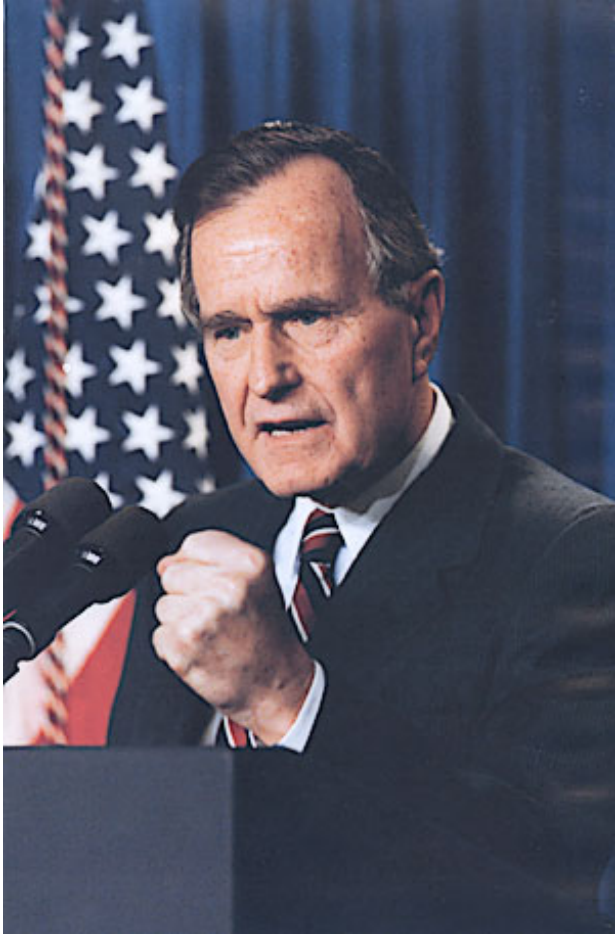
A full Politburo member since 1980, Gorbachev became more influential in 1982 when his mentor, Andropov, succeeded Leonid Brezhnev. He built a reputation as an enemy of corruption and inefficiency. Gorbachev finally rose to the top party spot in March 1985. Almost from the start, he strove for significant reforms, so that the system would work more efficiently and more democratically. Hence the two key phrases of the Gorbachev era: "glasnost" (openness) and "perestroika" (reform). Hoping to shift resources to the civilian sector of the Soviet economy, Gorbachev also began to argue in favor of an end to the arms race with the West.

Throughout his six years in office, Gorbachev always seemed to be moving too fast for the party establishment, which saw its privileges threatened, and too slow for more radical reformers, who hoped to do away with the one-party state and the command economy. Desperately trying to stay in control of the reform process, he seemed to have underestimated the depth of the economic crisis. He also seemed to have had a blind spot for the power of the nationality issue: Glasnost created ever-louder calls for independence from the Baltics and other Soviet republics. He was successful in foreign policy, but primarily from an international perspective. While his arms control agreements with the United States could be seen as in the Soviet interest too, the peaceful breakaway of the countries of Eastern Europe, followed by German unification and NATO membership for the new Germany, appeared to old-line Communists more a sell-out.

In August 1991 hard-liners had had enough. With Gorbachev on vacation in the Crimea, they staged a coup. However, they failed because of incompetence, lack of support from the military and massive street protests in Moscow. After the coup, Gorbachev lost the political initiative. This now belonged to the leaders of the various Soviet republics, in particular the president of Russia, Boris Yeltsin. At the end of the year, Gorbachev was forced to resign as president of a Soviet Union no longer in existence. Since that time, he has been blamed by many Russians for their current political and economic predicament. In the West, he remains the 1990 Nobel Peace Prize winner who helped end the Cold War.

George H. W. Bush

An exciting video of a [crazy adventure](#) of former President Bush!



"I am
com mitted to
strengthening
our
relationship
with the
democratic
nations in
this
hemisphere.
I will
continue to
seek
solutions to
the problems
of this region
through
dialog and
multilateral
diplomacy."
George H.W.

Bibliography

George Herbert Walker Bush was the 41st president of the United States, from January 20, 1989 to January 20, 1993. He was born on June 12, 1924, in Milton, Massachusetts, to Dorothy Walker Bush and Senator Prescott Bush ([Republican](#) of Connecticut 1952-1962). Bush graduated from Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, on his 18th birthday, June 12, 1942. That day, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy as a Seaman Second Class. Receiving his wings and commission in June 1943, while still 18 years old, he was the youngest pilot in the Navy at that time.

The war years



.. Navy pilot George H.W. Bush

On active duty from August 1942 to September 1945 during [World War II](#), Bush flew torpedo bombers off the carrier USS *San Jacinto*. On September 2, 1944, Bush's plane was hit by anti-aircraft fire while making a bombing run over the Bonin Island of Chichi Jima, 600 miles south of Japan. Although the plane was afire and severely damaged, he completed his strafing run on a Japanese installation before flying towards the sea to bail out. Bush managed to bail out and was rescued by a Navy submarine, the USS *Finback*. Tragically, his two crew members were killed. Bush flew 58 missions. For his courageous service in the Pacific Theater, Bush was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and three Air Medals.

Education and marriage

On January 6, 1945, Bush married Barbara Pierce of Rye, New York. Today they are the parents of five children: [George](#), John (Jeb), Neil, Marvin, and Dorothy Bush Koch. Their second child, Robin, died of leukemia in 1953. The Bushes have 14 grandchildren. Following World War II, Bush entered [Yale](#)

[University](#), where he pursued a degree in economics and served as captain of the varsity [baseball](#) team. He graduated Phi Beta Kappa in 1948.

Entrepreneurial years

Following his graduation, George and bride Barbara Bush moved to Texas, where he worked as an oil field supply salesman for Dresser Industries. In 1951, he co-founded a small royalty firm, the Bush-Overbey Oil Development Company. Two years later, he co-founded the Zapata¹ Petroleum Corporation. In 1954, at the age of 30, he became the co-founder and president of a third firm, Zapata Off-Shore. Zapata pioneered in experimental offshore drilling equipment.

Government and politics

Following an unsuccessful bid for a Senate seat in 1964, Bush was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1966 from Texas' Seventh District. One of the few freshman members of Congress elected to serve on the Ways and Means Committee, he was reelected to the House two years later without opposition. Bush lost a second campaign for the Senate in 1970.

During the 1970s, Bush held a number of leadership positions. In 1971, he was named U.S. Ambassador to the [United Nations](#). He served there until 1973, when he became chairman of the Republican National Committee. In October 1974, Bush traveled to Beijing, China, where he served as chief of the U.S. Liaison Office during the critical period when the United States was renewing ties with that country.

Director of the CIA

In 1976, Bush was appointed director of the [Central Intelligence Agency](#). He was credited with strengthening the intelligence community and helping to restore morale at the agency.

The Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1999 was signed into law by then President [Bill Clinton](#) on October 20, 1998. Among its provisions, the law directed that the new headquarters compound of the Central Intelligence Agency located in Langley, Virginia, be known as the George Bush Center for Intelligence. In a dedication ceremony, a letter from then President Clinton was read. Clinton wrote in part,

"As you know, in my time as president, I have turned to you more than once for your wise counsel, and I have benefited greatly from it. And I have been well served by the talented and dedicated men and women who make up the intelligence community that you did so much to preserve and strengthen."

Bush was director of Central Intelligence and head of the Central Intelligence Agency from January 30, 1976, to January 20, 1977.

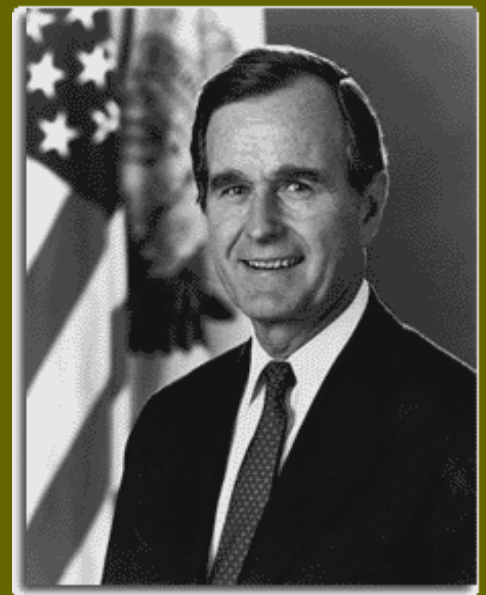
Vice President Bush

In [1980](#), [Ronald Reagan](#) chose George Bush to be his running mate. On January 20, 1981, Bush was sworn in for the first of two terms as vice president. In that office, Bush coordinated administration efforts to combat international terrorism and wage the international war on drugs. Vice President Bush also piloted a task force on regulatory relief, aimed at reducing government size and increasing American competitiveness. In [1988](#), George H.W. Bush became his party's nominee and the American people's choice to be the 41st President of the United States.

President Bush

Bush's initial [Cabinet](#) choices reflected a balanced choice for an efficient, nonideological government. With his usual cautious instinct, in 1990 he nominated to the Supreme Court the erudite [David H. Souter](#), known to have broadly conservative views.

In his first year, Bush was confronted with the Lebanese hostage crisis, the [Exxon Valdez](#) oil spill in Alaska, and the continuing War on Drugs. His public approval soared following the invasion of Panama in late 1989, but a spectacular budget [deficit](#) and the savings and loan crisis caused the president's popularity to dip sharply in his second year. That decline followed Bush's relinquishment of his famed campaign "no new taxes" pledge as he sat down with congressional leaders to tame the budget deficit and deal with a flagging economy.



George H.W. Bush

Operation Desert Storm

President Bush marshaled a 30-nation coalition of Western democracies, Japan, and even some Arab states to free Kuwait following an invasion by Iraqi dictator [Saddam Hussein](#) in August 1990. [Operation Desert Storm](#) stands as an example of presidential leadership and American resolve in an uncertain and often dangerous world.

The coalition forces drove out the Iraqi invaders in little more than a month after Desert Storm was launched

on January 17, 1991, and a nation grateful for sensing the end of the "Vietnam syndrome" gave the president an 89 percent approval rating in the polls. However, the high rating fell as the year went on, as doubts persisted about the war's outcome. Iraqi president Saddam Hussein remained in power and persistently avoided complying with the terms of the peace treaty. In addition, concerns continued to grow about the faltering U.S. economy and other domestic problems.

A major Bush accomplishment in 1991 was the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty ([START](#)), signed in July with Soviet president [Mikhail Gorbachev](#) at their fourth summit conference, marking the end of the long weapons buildup.

President Bush's leadership proved critical to the resolution of some of the most daunting conflicts of the time. After 40 years of superpower stalemate, historic events became nearly commonplace: the fall of the [Berlin Wall](#) and the reunification of Germany, the end of the [Cold War](#) and the flowering of democracy in Eastern Europe, the emergence of a new partnership with Russia, anchored by the historic arms reduction treaties; START I and START II — the first-ever agreements to dismantle and destroy strategic weapons since the advent of the nuclear age.

On the international economic front

President Bush sought to seize new opportunities through a policy of free trade, pushing to lower trade restrictions and tariff barriers in the [GATT](#) talks. In this hemisphere, President Bush's free trade efforts culminated in the Enterprise for the Americas initiative and the [North American Free Trade Agreement](#), (NAFTA). With the passing of the Cold War came new challenges, including seeking to demonstrate the post-Cold War possibilities of collective security.

On the domestic scene

The Bush administration promoted new ideas for educational reform, home ownership, and environmental protection. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paved new ground for accommodating disabled people, and the revision of the Clean Air Act was deemed the most significant environmental legislation ever passed.

In the [1992 presidential election](#), Bush was defeated by Governor Bill Clinton of Arkansas.

Latter lives

The former president and Mrs. Bush are residents of [Houston](#), Texas, and serve on the Board of Visitors of M.D. Anderson Hospital. They are members of St. Martin's Episcopal Church, where President Bush has been a vestryman. He is currently on the board of the Episcopal Church Foundation and serves on the vestry of St. Ann's Episcopal Church in Kennebunkport, Maine.

In 2005, former president Bush appeared on national television with former president Clinton to beseech American citizens and the world to generously contribute to the December 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami relief effort, where more than 100,000 people died.



Former U.S. President George H.W. Bush



Former U.S. President George H.W. Bush comes in for a landing after performing a tandem parachute jump June 12, 2004 in celebration of his 80th birthday.

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DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES ON INTERIM SELF-GOVERNMENT ARRANGEMENTS

September 13, 1993

The Government of the State of Israel and the P.L.O. team (in the Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to the Middle East Peace Conference) (the "Palestinian Delegation"), representing the Palestinian people, agree that it is time to put an end to decades of confrontation and conflict, recognize their mutual legitimate and political rights, and strive to live in peaceful coexistence and mutual dignity and security and achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement and historic reconciliation through the agreed political process. Accordingly, the, two sides agree to the following principles:

ARTICLE I

AIM OF THE NEGOTIATIONS The aim of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations within the current Middle East peace process is, among other things, to establish a Palestinian Interim Self-Government Authority, the elected Council (the "Council"), for the Palestinian people in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, for a transitional period not exceeding five years, leading to a permanent settlement based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

It is understood that the interim arrangements are an integral part of the whole peace process and that the negotiations on the permanent status will lead to the implementation of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

ARTICLE II

FRAMEWORK FOR THE INTERIM PERIOD The agreed framework for the interim period is set forth in this Declaration of Principles.

ARTICLE III

ELECTIONS

In order that the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip may govern themselves according to democratic principles, direct, free and general political elections will be held for the Council under agreed supervision and international observation, while the Palestinian police will ensure public order.

An agreement will be concluded on the exact mode and conditions of the elections in accordance with the protocol attached as Annex I, with the goal of holding the elections not later than nine months after the entry into force of this Declaration of Principles.

These elections will constitute a significant interim preparatory step toward the realization of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and their just requirements.

ARTICLE IV

JURISDICTION Jurisdiction of the Council will cover West Bank and Gaza Strip territory, except for issues that will be negotiated in the permanent status negotiations. The two sides view the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as a single territorial unit, whose integrity will be preserved during the interim period.

ARTICLE V

TRANSITIONAL PERIOD AND PERMANENT STATUS NEGOTIATIONS

The five-year transitional period will begin upon the withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and Jericho area.

Permanent status negotiations will commence as soon as possible, but not later than the beginning of the third year of the interim period, between the Government of Israel and the Palestinian people representatives.

It is understood that these negotiations shall cover remaining issues, including: Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, security arrangements, borders, relations and cooperation with other neighbors, and other issues of common interest.

The two parties agree that the outcome of the permanent status negotiations should not be prejudiced or preempted by agreements reached for the interim period.

ARTICLE VI

PREPARATORY TRANSFER OF POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Upon the entry into force of this Declaration of Principles and the withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area, a transfer of authority from the Israeli military government and its Civil Administration to the authorised Palestinians for this task, as detailed herein, will commence. This transfer of authority will be of a preparatory nature until the inauguration of the Council.

Immediately after the entry into force of this Declaration of Principles and the withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and Jericho area, with the view to promoting economic development in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, authority will be transferred to the Palestinians on the following spheres: education and culture, health, social welfare, direct taxation, and tourism. The Palestinian side will commence in building the Palestinian police force, as agreed upon. Pending the inauguration of the Council, the two parties may negotiate the transfer of additional powers and responsibilities, as agreed upon.

ARTICLE VII

INTERIM AGREEMENT

The Israeli and Palestinian delegations will negotiate an agreement on the interim period (the "Interim Agreement")

The Interim Agreement shall specify, among other things, the structure of the Council, the

number of its members, and the transfer of powers and responsibilities from the Israeli military government and its Civil Administration to the Council. The Interim Agreement shall also specify the Council's executive authority, legislative authority in accordance with Article IX below, and the independent Palestinian judicial organs.

The Interim Agreement shall include arrangements, to be implemented upon the inauguration of the Council, for the assumption by the Council of all of the powers and responsibilities transferred previously in accordance with Article VI above.

In order to enable the Council to promote economic growth, upon its inauguration, the Council will establish, among other things, a Palestinian Electricity Authority, a Gaza Sea Port Authority, a Palestinian Development Bank, a Palestinian Export Promotion Board, a Palestinian Environmental Authority, a Palestinian Land Authority and a Palestinian Water Administration Authority, and any other Authorities agreed upon, in accordance with the Interim Agreement that will specify their powers and responsibilities.

After the inauguration of the Council, the Civil Administration will be dissolved, and the Israeli military government will be withdrawn.

ARTICLE VIII

PUBLIC ORDER AND SECURITY In order to guarantee public order and internal security for the Palestinians of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the Council will establish a strong police force, while Israel will continue to carry the responsibility for defending against external threats, as well as the responsibility for overall security of Israelis for the purpose of safeguarding their internal security and public order.

ARTICLE IX

LAWS AND MILITARY ORDERS

The Council will be empowered to legislate, in accordance with the Interim Agreement, within all authorities transferred to it.

Both parties will review jointly laws and military orders presently in force in remaining spheres.

ARTICLE X

JOINT ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN LIAISON COMMITTEE In order to provide for a smooth implementation of this Declaration of Principles and any subsequent agreements pertaining to the interim period, upon the entry into force of this Declaration of Principles, a Joint Israeli-Palestinian Liaison Committee will be established in order to deal with issues requiring coordination, other issues of common interest, and disputes.

ARTICLE XI

ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN COOPERATION IN ECONOMIC FIELDS Recognizing the mutual benefit of cooperation in promoting the development of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Israel, upon the entry into force of this Declaration of Principles, an Israeli-Palestinian Economic Cooperation Committee will be established in order to develop and implement in a cooperative manner the programs identified in the protocols attached as Annex iii and Annex iv.

ARTICLE XII

LIAISON AND COOPERATION WITH JORDAN AND EGYPT The two parties will invite the Governments of Jordan and Egypt to participate in establishing further liaison and cooperation arrangements between the Government of Israel and the Palestinian representatives, on the one hand, and the Governments of Jordan and Egypt, on the other hand, to promote cooperation between them. These arrangements will include the constitution of a Continuing Committee that will decide by agreement on the modalities of admission of persons displaced from the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967, together with necessary measures to prevent disruption and disorder. Other matters of common concern will be dealt with by this Committee.

ARTICLE XIII

REDEPLOYMENT OF ISRAELI FORCES

After the entry into force of this Declaration of Principles, and not later than the eve of elections for the Council, a redeployment of Israeli military forces in the West Bank and

the Gaza Strip will take place, in addition to withdrawal of Israeli forces carried out in accordance with Article XIV.

In redeploying its military forces, Israel will be guided by the principle that its military forces should be redeployed outside populated areas.

Further redeployments to specified locations will be gradually implemented commensurate with the assumption of responsibility for public order and internal security by the Palestinian police force pursuant to Article VIII above.

ARTICLE XIV

ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM THE GAZA STRIP AND JERICHO AREA Israel will withdraw from the Gaza Strip and Jericho area, as detailed in the protocol attached as Annex ii.

ARTICLE XV

RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES

Disputes arising out of the application or interpretation of this Declaration of Principles, or any subsequent agreements pertaining to the interim period, shall be resolved by negotiations through the Joint Liaison Committee to be established pursuant to Article X above.

Disputes which cannot be settled by negotiations may be resolved by a mechanism of conciliation to be agreed upon by the parties.

The parties may agree to submit to arbitration disputes relating to the interim period, which cannot be settled through conciliation. To this end, upon the agreement of both parties, the parties will establish an Arbitration Committee.

ARTICLE XVI

ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN COOPERATION CONCERNING REGIONAL PROGRAMS Both parties

view the multilateral working groups as an appropriate instrument for promoting a "Marshall Plan", the regional programs and other programs, including special programs for the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as indicated in the protocol attached as Annex iv .

ARTICLE XVII

MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

This Declaration of Principles will enter into force one month after its signing.

All protocols annexed to this Declaration of Principles and Agreed Minutes pertaining thereto shall be regarded as an integral part hereof.

Done at Washington, D.C., this thirteenth day of September, 1993.

For the Government of Israel
For the P.L.O.

Witnessed By:

The United States of America
The Russian Federation

ANNEX I

PROTOCOL ON THE MODE AND CONDITIONS OF ELECTIONS

Palestinians of Jerusalem who live there will have the right to participate in the election process, according to an agreement between the two sides.

In addition, the election agreement should cover, among other things, the following issues:

the system of elections;

the mode of the agreed supervision and international observation and their personal composition; and

rules and regulations regarding election campaign, including agreed arrangements for the organizing of mass media, and the possibility of licensing a broadcasting and TV station.

The future status of displaced Palestinians who were registered on 4th June 1967 will not be prejudiced because they are unable to participate in the election process due to practical reasons.

ANNEX II

PROTOCOL ON WITHDRAWAL OF ISRAELI FORCES FROM THE GAZA STRIP AND JERICHO AREA

The two sides will conclude and sign within two months from the date of entry into force of this Declaration of Principles, an agreement on the withdrawal of Israeli military forces from the Gaza Strip and Jericho area. This agreement will include comprehensive arrangements to apply in the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area subsequent to the Israeli withdrawal.

Israel will implement an accelerated and scheduled withdrawal of Israeli military forces from the Gaza Strip and Jericho area, beginning immediately with the signing of the agreement on the Gaza Strip and Jericho area and to be completed within a period not exceeding four months after the signing of this agreement.

The above agreement will include, among other things:

Arrangements for a smooth and peaceful transfer of authority from the Israeli military government and its Civil Administration to the Palestinian representatives.

Structure, powers and responsibilities of the Palestinian authority in these areas, except: external security, settlements, Israelis, foreign relations, and other mutually agreed matters.

Arrangements for the assumption of internal security and public order by the Palestinian police force consisting of police officers recruited locally and from abroad holding Jordanian passports and Palestinian documents issued by Egypt). Those who will participate in the Palestinian police force coming from abroad should be trained as police and police officers.

A temporary international or foreign presence, as agreed upon.

Establishment of a joint Palestinian-Israeli Coordination and Cooperation Committee for mutual security purposes.

An economic development and stabilization program, including the establishment of an Emergency Fund, to encourage foreign investment, and financial and economic support. Both sides will coordinate and cooperate jointly and unilaterally with regional and international parties to support these aims.

Arrangements for a safe passage for persons and transportation between the Gaza Strip and Jericho area.

The above agreement will include arrangements for coordination between both parties regarding passages:

Gaza - Egypt; and

Jericho - Jordan.

The offices responsible for carrying out the powers and responsibilities of the Palestinian authority under this Annex II and Article VI of the Declaration of Principles will be located in the Gaza Strip and in the Jericho area pending the inauguration of the Council.

Other than these agreed arrangements, the status of the Gaza Strip and Jericho area will continue to be an integral part of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and will not be changed in the interim period.

ANNEX III

PROTOCOL ON ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN COOPERATION IN ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

The two sides agree to establish an Israeli-Palestinian continuing Committee for Economic Cooperation, focusing, among other things, on the following:

Cooperation in the field of water, including a Water Development Program prepared by

experts from both sides, which will also specify the mode of cooperation in the management of water resources in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and will include proposals for studies and plans on water rights of each party, as well as on the equitable utilization of joint water resources for implementation in and beyond the interim period.

Cooperation in the field of electricity, including an Electricity Development Program, which will also specify the mode of cooperation for the production, maintenance, purchase and sale of electricity resources.

Cooperation in the field of energy, including an Energy Development Program, which will provide for the exploitation of oil and gas for industrial purposes, particularly in the Gaza Strip and in the Negev, and will encourage further joint exploitation of other energy resources. This Program may also provide for the construction of a Petrochemical industrial complex in the Gaza Strip and the construction of oil and gas pipelines.

Cooperation in the field of finance, including a Financial Development and Action Program for the encouragement of international investment in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and in Israel, as well as the establishment of a Palestinian Development Bank.

Cooperation in the field of transport and communications, including a Program, which will define guidelines for the establishment of a Gaza Sea Port Area, and will provide for the establishing of transport and communications lines to and from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to Israel and to other countries. In addition, this Program will provide for carrying out the necessary construction of roads, railways, communications lines, etc.

Cooperation in the field of trade, including studies, and Trade Promotion Programs, which will encourage local, regional and inter-regional trade, as well as a feasibility study of creating free trade zones in the Gaza Strip and in Israel, mutual access to these zones, and cooperation in other areas related to trade and commerce.

Cooperation in the field of industry, including Industrial Development Programs, which will provide for the establishment of joint Israeli- Palestinian Industrial Research and Development Centers, will promote Palestinian-Israeli joint ventures, and provide guidelines for cooperation in the textile, food, pharmaceutical, electronics, diamonds, computer and science-based industries.

A program for cooperation in, and regulation of, labor relations and cooperation in social welfare issues.

A Human Resources Development and Cooperation Plan, providing for joint Israeli-Palestinian workshops and seminars, and for the establishment of joint vocational training centers, research institutes and data banks.

An Environmental Protection Plan, providing for joint and/or coordinated measures in this sphere.

A program for developing coordination and cooperation in the field of communication and media.

Any other programs of mutual interest.

ANNEX IV

PROTOCOL ON ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN COOPERATION CONCERNING REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

The two sides will cooperate in the context of the multilateral peace efforts in promoting a Development Program for the region, including the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, to be initiated by the G-7. The parties will request the G-7 to seek the participation in this program of other interested states, such as members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, regional Arab states and institutions, as well as members of the private sector.

The Development Program will consist of two elements:

- an Economic Development Program for the 'West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

- a Regional Economic Development Program.

The Economic Development Program for the West Bank and the Gaza strip will consist of the following elements:

- A Social Rehabilitation Program, including a Housing and Construction Program.

- A Small and Medium Business Development Plan.

- An Infrastructure Development Program (water, electricity, transportation and communications, etc.)

- A Human Resources Plan.

Other programs.

The Regional Economic Development Program may consist of the following elements:

The establishment of a Middle East Development Fund, as a first step, and a Middle East Development Bank, as a second step.

The development of a joint Israeli-Palestinian-Jordanian Plan for coordinated exploitation of the Dead Sea area.

The Mediterranean Sea (Gaza) - Dead Sea Canal.

Regional Desalinization and other water development projects.

A regional plan for agricultural development, including a coordinated regional effort for the prevention of desertification.

Interconnection of electricity grids.

Regional cooperation for the transfer, distribution and industrial exploitation of gas, oil and other energy resources.

A Regional Tourism, Transportation and Telecommunications Development Plan.

Regional cooperation in other spheres.

The two sides will encourage the multilateral working groups, and will coordinate towards their success. The two parties will encourage intersessional activities, as well as pre-feasibility and feasibility studies, within the various multilateral working groups.

AGREED MINUTES TO THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES ON INTERIM SELF-GOVERNMENT ARRANGEMENTS

A. GENERAL UNDERSTANDINGS AND AGREEMENTS Any powers and responsibilities transferred to the Palestinians pursuant to the Declaration of Principles prior to the inauguration of the

Council will be subject to the same principles pertaining to Article IV, as set out in these Agreed Minutes below.

B. SPECIFIC UNDERSTANDINGS AND AGREEMENTS

It is understood that:

Jurisdiction of the Council will cover West Bank and Gaza Strip territory, except for issues that will be negotiated in the permanent status negotiations: Jerusalem, settlements, military locations, and Israelis.

The Council's jurisdiction will apply with regard to the agreed powers, responsibilities, spheres and authorities transferred to it.

:It is agreed that the transfer of authority will be as follows

The Palestinian side will inform the Israeli side of the names of the authorised Palestinians who will assume the powers, authorities and responsibilities that will be transferred to the Palestinians according to the Declaration of Principles in the following fields: education and culture, health, social welfare, direct taxation, tourism, and any other authorities agreed upon.

It is understood that the rights and obligations of these offices will not be affected.

Each of the spheres described above will continue to enjoy existing budgetary allocations in accordance with arrangements to be mutually agreed upon. These arrangements also will provide for the necessary adjustments required in order to take into account the taxes collected by the direct taxation office.

Upon the execution of the Declaration of Principles, the Israeli and Palestinian delegations will immediately commence negotiations on a detailed plan for the transfer of authority on the above offices in accordance with the above understandings.

The Interim Agreement will also include arrangements for coordination and cooperation.

The withdrawal of the military government will not prevent Israel from exercising the powers and responsibilities not transferred to the Council.

It is understood that the Interim Agreement will include arrangements for cooperation and coordination between the two parties in this regard. It is also agreed that the transfer of powers and responsibilities to the Palestinian police will be accomplished in a phased manner, as agreed in the Interim Agreement.

It is agreed that, upon the entry into force of the Declaration of Principles, the Israeli and Palestinian delegations will exchange the names of the individuals designated by them as members of the Joint Israeli-Palestinian Liaison Committee.

It is further agreed that each side will have an equal number of members in the Joint Committee. The Joint Committee will reach decisions by agreement. The Joint Committee may add other technicians and experts, as necessary. The Joint Committee will decide on the frequency and place or places of its meetings.

It is understood that, subsequent to the Israeli withdrawal, Israel will continue to be responsible for external security, and for internal security and public order of settlements and Israelis. Israeli military forces and civilians may continue to use roads freely within the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area.

Done at Washington, D.C., this thirteenth day of September, 1993.

For the Government of Israel
For the P.L.O.

Witnessed By:

The United States of America
The Russian Federation



Peace and Aid In the Middle East



To the Editor:

"In Israel, a Ho-Hum Response to Peace" (World Markets, Oct. 30) was salutary. In questioning a so-called peace dividend, Paul Lewis took a step to correct grave misunderstandings about the peace process, a step that may help temper expectations in other areas.

Mr. Lewis, however, did not get to the root of the matter: the peace process itself is unlikely to advance economic reform in Israel. The talks in Casablanca aren't likely to help, either.

Mr. Lewis reports that reform of Israel's socialized economy is a key step to taking "advantage of the new economic opportunities that peace is creating." But changing the "sclerotic socialized economy" represents something far more fundamental than a mere step in Israel's would-be reforms. The economy is socialized and sclerotic because Israel is a socialist regime -- period.

The privatization success that Mr. Lewis cites is inconsequential -- 8 nonbank companies of the 160 Israel owns. Israel has no private sector in the Western sense; socialism based on aid is the highest policy of the Israeli state, for the Likud as well as the Labor Party. This is the heart of the matter.

Looking for the peace dividend in economic reforms turns reality on its head. The purpose of the peace process, in fact, is to make reform unnecessary. The aid that will now flow will go to Jordan and the P.L.O. as well as Israel. This serves Israel's socialist purposes: aid to the Arabs will find its way to Israel via the monopolies and cartels that the peace process is saving from privatization. This is the peace dividend. Of course, Syria is on the agenda; it is the hinge.

Thus the Golan: if Israel can persuade the Americans to send troops to the Golan, (convincing the Israelis will be much easier), the aid spigot will be wide open.

The United States will have become the protector of the peace, while the aid will be necessary to protect the troops. What surer way to guarantee continued Congressional appropriations than to put United States troops at risk if the appropriations stop? What better way to insure the troops remain than to make them responsible for the peace?

The Middle East peace process has arisen because of two factors: the balance-of-power vacuum created by demise of the Soviet Union and the Israeli socialist system's rapacious need for American aid, which is threatened by Soviet breakup. The peace process is supposed to bring about a balance of power by way of the implanting of United States troops on the Golan. In other words, when this unconventional aid-based peace is in place, the assistance will sustain Israel's socialism, making reform unnecessary. ROBERT J. LOEWENBERG Jerusalem, Oct. 31 The writer is president of the Institute for Advanced Strategic and Political Studies, based in Jerusalem.

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Saving Your Money For Life

Time Running Out

By ANTHONY LEWIS
Published: April 11, 1997

Dr. Eyad Sarraj is a Palestinian psychiatrist in Gaza and a campaigner for human rights. I wrote about him last year when he criticized the Palestinian Authority for mistreatment of prisoners and was then himself imprisoned for 25 days.

Dr. Sarraj is a longtime advocate of peace with Israel. He supported the Camp David agreement when the P.L.O. rejected it. He took part in the post-Madrid peace negotiations in Washington. But now he

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sees belief in the possibility of peace fading. So he said during a visit to Boston to receive an award from Physicians for Human Rights.

"People wanted to believe that this peace process would lead to something," he said, "that Netanyahu would go along with it, that he might even be better for it.

"Then came Har Homa \$(the Israeli settlement project in East Jerusalem\$). It undermined that thinking. It gave the opponents of peace the chance to say, 'We told you Israel didn't really want peace.'

"Netanyahu's shortsightedness is so painful. All he can see is his power. He plays on fear to build support. The result will be violence, repression, more violence. Everything will erupt, but Israelis will cling to him in the storm. He will survive -- on the bones of the dead."

Dr. Sarraj was talking about despair and bitterness in his own community in Gaza. But the feelings he described are widespread among Palestinians now. In a recent poll, taken by the Center for Palestine Research and Studies in Nablus in the West Bank, 52 percent agreed with the statement, "There is no possibility of reaching a solution acceptable to the two parties." It was the first time the poll had found a majority for that position.

No realist can doubt that Prime Minister Netanyahu's recent acts have caused an ominous loss of hope for peace among Palestinians. And not just Palestinians. The Financial Times of London summed up the wider significance:

"Arab governments have lost confidence in the peace process. They are themselves under varying degrees of challenge from Islamic revivalists, and every Israeli step back from peace undermines them."

The Clinton Administration's response to this crisis in one of its proudest achievements, the Middle East peace process, seems curiously low-key.

"We want to help," I was told in Washington this week, "but we can't unless the parties give us something to work with. Netanyahu will be Prime Minister for the next four years. Criticizing him openly would only build support for his policy."

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U.S. officials say they still hope that gestures from the two sides will let talks resume. Mr. Netanyahu, for example, could let the Palestinians open their airport. (Officials seem to have given up hope of persuading him to suspend work on Har Homa.) Yasir Arafat could talk tougher on terrorism.

But why would the Palestinians see any point in negotiations with an Israeli leader who thinks they are not even worth informing before he acts in the most sensitive area, Jerusalem? How can they have any hope of negotiating their minimum objective, a meaningful homeland, with a man who seems to rule it out?

President Clinton's description of his meeting with Mr. Netanyahu this week -- "very specific, frank, candid and long" -- made it plain enough that he was critical of what the Israeli Prime Minister has done. But can private disagreement be enough? And isn't the real reason for keeping it private concern about the reaction of Israel's American supporters?

Only a bold American demarche, I fear, can save the peace process from crumbling altogether now for lack of trust. Only an American President can make the dominant party in the conflict, our ally Israel, see again the truth that security lies not in particular bits of territory but in a peace that gives Palestinians the dignity to build a stable society.

Benjamin Netanyahu is a skillful politician. But he seems to lack the crucial ingredient for a leader who wants to settle an aching conflict. That is the ability to see the other side's needs and treat it with generosity.

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8 High Ex-U.S. Aides Ask Netanyahu to Shun Pre-emptive Acts

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By STEVEN ERLANGER
Published: December 16, 1996

Concerned that the Israeli Government's settlement policies are harming the chances for peace in the Middle East, eight former high-ranking American officials have written to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, urging him "not to take unilateral actions that would preclude a meaningful settlement and a comprehensive and lasting peace."

The letter, a copy of which was provided to The New York Times, was to be delivered today to Mr. Netanyahu, said one of the signers, Zbigniew Brzezinski, who was national security adviser under President Carter.



The other signers are James A. Baker 3d, Cyrus R. Vance and Lawrence S. Eagleburger, all former Secretaries of State; Frank C. Carlucci and Brent Scowcroft, former national security advisers, and Robert S. Strauss and Richard Fairbanks, former Middle East negotiators.

The letter urges all sides in the Middle East conflict to refrain from unilateral actions that could prejudice peace talks. But it is addressed to Mr. Netanyahu, and Mr. Brzezinski was explicit about what the group is criticizing.

"The letter is about settlements," he said. "It's precipitated by Mr. Netanyahu's policies, which seem to us inimical to the peace process and even dangerous."

Using more diplomatic language, the letter says: "We write because we are concerned that unilateral actions, such as the expansion of settlements, would be strongly counterproductive to the goal of a negotiated solution and, if carried forward, could halt progress made by the peace process over the last two decades. Such a tragic result would threaten the security of Israel, the Palestinians, friendly Arab states, and undermine U.S. interests in the Middle East."

Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State under Presidents Nixon and Ford, said today that he had chosen not to sign the letter, believing that Mr. Netanyahu's Likud Government needs a period to "form a strategy" and that he was elected with a mandate different from that of the previous Labor Party Government.

"I have not agreed with everything he's done," Mr. Kissinger said of Mr. Netanyahu. "But I have not disagreed sufficiently to make a joint public appeal with other former Secretaries."

The joint appeal to Mr. Netanyahu, while drafted earlier last week, comes at a time of increased concern in the Clinton Administration about Mr. Netanyahu's settlement policies. On Friday, the Israeli Cabinet voted to restore large subsidies, including tax concessions, for existing Jewish settlements in the West Bank.

The vote did not create any new settlements or authorize the expansion of existing ones, though many Palestinians and Israelis expect expansion to be an inevitable result. Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordecai would have to authorize any extensions, Israeli officials said. Mr. Netanyahu promised that no new settlements would be authorized before negotiations with the Palestinians on the final status of the land.



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Still, Yasir Arafat, the Palestinian leader, has called on Palestinians "to firmly confront with all possible means the Israeli settlement aggression in order to defend the land."

On Friday, the State Department spokesman, Nicholas Burns, called the Israeli Cabinet vote "troubling," and reiterated the department mantra that settlement activity is "complicating and unhelpful" to the peace process. But Mr. Burns also added an appeal to all sides not to do "things that are seen to pre-empt the outcome of a negotiation."

That American appeal, which Mr. Burns described as new, is the essence of the letter to Mr. Netanyahu by the former senior officials. Mr. Strauss said the process of drafting the letter began "because each of the signatories has been so intellectually and emotionally involved in the Middle East peace process for so many years, and we are concerned."

The letter is intended to fit current American policy, Mr. Brzezinski said, and "do nothing to offend the Administration or the Secretary of State," Warren Christopher, or his nominated successor, Madeleine K. Albright. "It has bipartisan support, and it was calculated to be of assistance," Mr. Brzezinski said.

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EXTRADE

With Mideast in Crisis, Albright Considers First Trip to Region

By STEVEN ERLANGER
Published: March 28, 1997

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Convinced that the Middle East peace process is at one of its most dangerous junctures since 1993, Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright is considering making her first trip to the region if it could help to bring the Israelis and Palestinians back to the negotiating table.

At a brief afternoon appearance with the Estonian Foreign Minister, Toomas Ilves, Ms. Albright said: "I will go to the region as it is appropriate. I suspect I will be deeply involved because the issue of the Middle East peace process is one of major national interest to the United States."

The final decision is to be made by President Clinton and his top foreign-policy aides after his special envoy, Dennis B. Ross, returns this weekend from the Middle East.

Mr. Ross met the Palestinian leader, Yasir Arafat, for two hours today in Morocco and then flew to Israel.

Upon his arrival in Israel tonight, Mr. Ross met for about three hours with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at his home in Jerusalem.

An Israeli official said Mr. Ross had reported on his meetings with Mr. Arafat and said that Israel

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would watch over the next two weeks to see what Mr. Arafat's statements and actions would be with regard to terrorism and violence. The official, however, would not say what the Israelis had been asked to do or whether they had made any pledges on their part. Mr. Ross will have further meetings with the Israelis on Friday before leaving Israel to return to the United States.

Mr. Ross said little in public, other than that his talks with Mr. Arafat had been "very thorough."

At the White House, President Clinton said of Mr. Ross, "I don't have anything else to tell you, but he was encouraged by the response of Chairman Arafat to the matters that we discussed here before he left."

But senior American officials here said Mr. Ross's prime message to Mr. Arafat had been the need for "an unambiguous signal, in words and deeds, that violence and terrorism are unacceptable."

The central issue, one official said, is the need to "re-establish a sense of trust and confidence" among Israelis and moderate Palestinians. Only then, the official said, can Mr. Arafat expect the United States to "move beyond that to help resume a meaningful process of negotiations."

The message for Mr. Arafat was that "for us to work with you, then there must be no question about your commitment on the issue of terrorism," the official added.

Another official added that American intelligence remained "ambiguous" about whether Mr. Arafat, as Mr. Netanyahu has charged, had given "a green light" to radical Palestinians like the suicide bomber who blew up a Tel Aviv cafe last week, killing three women.

"But to the extent there is a perception that an ambiguous message was sent, then that needs to be refuted immediately by an explicit, unambiguous message by words and deeds that violence is unacceptable," the official said. The Americans also want Mr. Arafat to return home immediately.

Ms. Albright has been careful not to engage herself too directly and visibly in the Middle East, conscious of the widespread criticism of her predecessor, Warren Christopher, who made many trips there without securing the comprehensive peace he sought.

She has been busy on the telephone with Middle East leaders and has met them in Washington, her aides say. But they say she recognizes that the current situation, which one senior official described as

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"a nadir in the process, where confidence has collapsed," may require her first visit to the region as Secretary of State.

Washington has made no secret of its annoyance with Mr. Netanyahu for breaking ground on a new Israeli housing project in Jerusalem despite American warnings not to do so. The construction was soon followed by the suicide bombing in Tel Aviv and eight days of sporadic clashes. Today, 200 Palestinians threw stones at Israeli troops near the West Bank town of Ramallah, and the troops responded with tear gas and rubber bullets. Mr. Arafat wants a halt to the construction.

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The Words of Clinton and Netanyahu: Trust but Little Movement

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Published: October 3, 1996

Following are excerpts from remarks today by President Clinton and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel, as transcribed by the Federal Document Clearing House, a private transcription agency. Mr. Clinton spoke at the White House after meeting with Mr. Netanyahu, Chairman Yasir Arafat of the Palestinian Authority and King Hussein of Jordan; Mr. Netanyahu spoke at the Israeli Embassy. Mr. Arafat issued no statement.

PRESIDENT CLINTON

I'd like to begin by thanking King Hussein, Prime Minister Netanyahu and Chairman Arafat for coming here to Washington at this critical and very difficult moment for the Middle East peace process. Their journey reflects a true commitment to peace and an understanding that there is no alternative to the path of peace their people have traveled so far along in the last few years.

I invited them here with three urgent goals in mind.

First, to seek to curb the terrible violence and death that we saw last week.

Second, to get the Israelis and the Palestinians talking again at the highest levels.

And third, to help both parties return to the hard work of building peace through negotiations.

Today, I can report progress on these goals. First, the Israelis and Palestinians clearly are talking again at the highest levels. I believe that calm, constructive, face-to-face meetings Prime Minister Netanyahu and Chairman Arafat have had here will help to build trust between them, and promote progress on the issues that still divide them.

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The Prime Minister and the chairman agree that they are partners in peace, understand that it is vital to take each other -- take into account each other's needs and concerns and realize the importance of removing the frictions between them.

Second, the Prime Minister and Chairman Arafat have recommitted themselves to a nonviolent future, to renouncing violence in the resolution of their disputes.

Third, they are ready to renew and intensify negotiations on implementing the interim agreement, with Hebron as the first priority.

They are committed to engaging immediately in talks. And to achieving tangible progress quickly. To assist them in this effort, I am sending Dennis Ross, our special Middle East coordinator, to the region now. The very first meeting will take place on Sunday morning at Erez. They want to resolve the problem of Israeli redeployment from Hebron, and they want to achieve this as soon as possible.

I might point out that these talks will be occurring continuously, and we will -- these will be the first continuous peace talks that have been held since the Prime Minister assumed office with the Palestinians.

Finally, the leaders also understand they need to make arrangements between their security forces so that cooperation is more reliable and the situation on the ground is stabilized.

They are prepared to do what is needed to achieve that, as well.

All of us have put the meetings we have had over the last few days into the proper perspective. The peace process did not start today and it will not be finished tomorrow.

For three years now, the Israelis and the Palestinians have been moving forward along the path to a lasting peace. Every step is hard. It requires both sides to make difficult decisions and to keep their eyes fixed on the prize of lasting peace.

But the progress they have made has proved to the world that progress is possible and peace is possible.

Both sides know there is no turning back. Just as there can be no peace without security, there can be no true security without peace.

MR. NETANYAHU

I think this was the first step to break down certain barriers that were there of lack of confidence in one another. I cannot say that we now know each other fully well and so on, but we did spend several hours together discussing a lot of the issues openly and in a very cordial environment.

And I think this will facilitate trust. I think we accomplished a significant improvement in that area.

I say that when you have trust, all sorts of things that are problematic can be solved. And when you

don't have trust, everything becomes a problem.

We've accomplished quite a few things. And I think the most important one is to cement the principle that the path to peace is through negotiations and not through violence. That is that the principle that we must cease any forms of violence and that if anyone has a grievance, he brings it to the negotiating table and nowhere else. I think that is a central principle by which we can guard peace.

I want to assure you about our commitment to peace. This is our compass. It's our map. It's our hope for our children and for the children of the Palestinians as well. We know that such a peace is inextricably bound with security and that peace can progress as long as security holds.

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A photograph of a modern, two-story house with a large balcony and a car parked in the driveway. The house has a light-colored exterior and a dark roof. The balcony is enclosed with glass and has a railing. A car is parked in the driveway in front of the house. The house is surrounded by greenery and a paved area.

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We are committed to the renewal of the peace process. It is our intention to move the process forward simultaneously on all tracks: bilateral, the Palestinian, the Syrians and the Lebanese, as well as the multilateral. We will leave no stone unturned in our efforts to reinvigorate the process, which must be based upon direct talks between the parties themselves and conducted in an atmosphere of mutual trust. Any unilateral steps, acts or threats of terrorism, violence or other forms of aggression have no place in the process of peace. The peace we seek to establish is only the one that will enhance the security of Israel. Only a strong and secure Israel is capable of making the difficult choices that the process requires. I will not shy away from those difficult choices but I have responsibility to the people of Israel to do all that I possibly can to minimize the risks and dangers involved. . . .

Q. Mr. President, the Prime Minister has committed himself to implementing the West Bank pullback agreed on at Wye River. You just talked about accelerating the peace process. Realistically speaking, looking ahead, how long before the final-status talks get under way on the tough issues like Jerusalem, the Palestinian hopes for a homeland, refugees and what specific steps can the United States do to facilitate this process?

CLINTON . . . We should support the security of Israel, the stability of the region, the economic development of the region, and we should help to work out any of the particular problems as they arise. In terms of the timing, I don't think it's for the United States to set the timetables here. . . .

BARAK . . . I would suggest a kind of framework of about 15 months within which we will know whether we have a breakthrough and are really going to put an end to the conflict, or, alternatively, I hope this will not be the case, we are stuck once again.

I use the kind of framework of 15 months to signal to all publics and us, the players, that we are not talking about a magic solution that will drop upon us from heaven in three weeks. And we do not intend to drag our foot for another three years. . . .

Q. What is your reaction to the meeting of [Syrian Vice President] Abdel-Halim Khaddam in Damascus with the few Palestinian organizations that are opposing the peace process? Do you think that it's a significant step for peace?

BARAK . . . I did not get a real report about this meeting but if there was such a meeting and the Syrians really asked the terror organizations to reduce the level of activity, it is, of course, good news for all of us. . . .

Q. You've said that when Mrs. Clinton expresses her opinions publicly she's just doing something in public which you've done in private before, that is have disagreements. That's the American way. But when she talks about an opinion in which she takes the Israeli position on Jerusalem, doesn't this make it more difficult for you to be that honest broker?

CLINTON -- No, no. For one thing, let me say, that issue is not one. That's not the public-private distinction. The Government of the United States, the Executive Branch, the President, is a sponsor of the peace process and a facilitator of it. In that context, those of us with positions of official responsibility who are all the time asking Israel and the Palestinians were all the time asking both sides not to do anything which prejudices final-status issues. I have taken the position that my Government should not prejudice final-status issues. There are many American citizens who consider, for example, Jerusalem to be the capital of Israel. . . .

Q. Do you see, Mr. President, and you, Prime Minister Barak, a Palestinian state at the end of this period of time?

BARAK -- I think it's too early to think of the results of the negotiations about permanent status that were hardly begun. And I don't think that you should interpret this 15-month framework as a kind of a deadline where everything should be either fully concluded and implemented or the whole thing is blown apart. . . .

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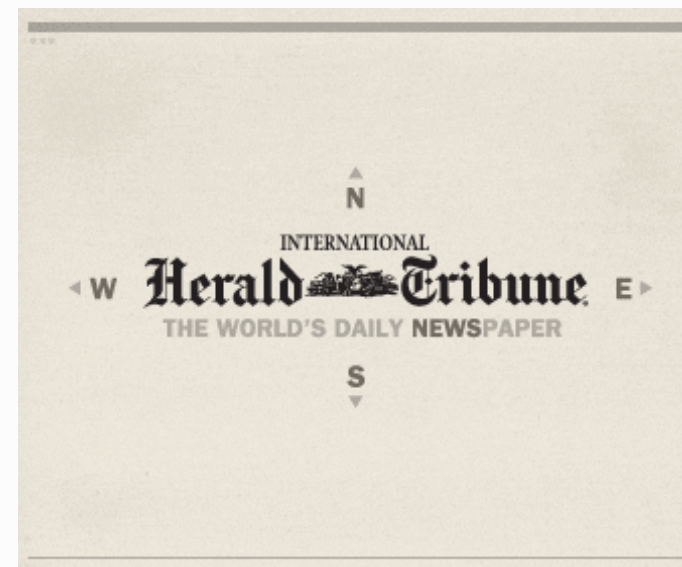
By Mikhail Gorbachev

Published: SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2000

MOSCOW: It is almost a decade since former President George Bush and I co-sponsored the first Middle East Peace Conference in Madrid in 1991. We were filled with hope then. For the first time the two sides explicitly recognized the rights of the other to exist and vowed to work together towards peace. Now it seems that both sides have forgotten this promise.

In my experience, when you take a step forward, your opponent is forced to do the same. Rather than continue with the impossible task of resolving all the issues in advance, it would be more fruitful, especially given the current situation, for the Israeli leadership to make a firm statement that they accept the right of Palestine to become a viable independent state and then to support the long-awaited declaration of this state.

The two nations of Israel and Palestine could then proceed to discuss the details of borders, and even the question of Jerusalem, on the basis of inter-state negotiations, with the help of international mediators as necessary. It should not be forgotten that once a people have their



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own state, violence becomes a threat to security rather than a tool.

Nothing less than the creation of their own state will satisfy the people of Palestine enough to put their trust back in the diplomatic process. It will then be time for the international community to seriously reassess its role in the peace process. There is currently a strong opposition on the part of Israel and the United States to what is being called Yasser Arafat's desire to "internationalize the conflict" by demanding an international investigation into the violence, and a UN protection force to shield the Palestinians. I would rather call for the internationalization of the peace process.

In the 1980s the United States attempted to solve the Middle Eastern problem unilaterally. When these attempts proved futile, George Shultz visited me in Moscow to suggest that we work together. This opened the way to the Madrid conference. Should we not draw some lessons out of these decade-old mistakes?

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The discussions in Camp David in July should have been welcomed as the first real talks on Jerusalem. Instead, the diplomatic breakdown, ensuing violence and the U.S. elections, have highlighted the fact that the three-party process is intensely vulnerable to both the pressures of domestic politics and accusations of partiality.

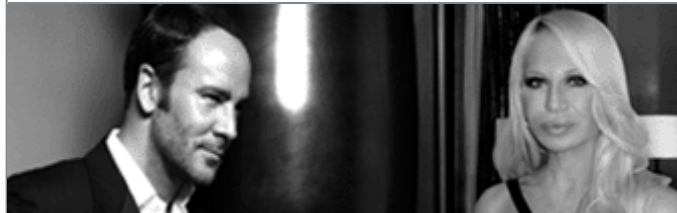
We need to involve more players, and adopt a transparent approach less likely to fall hostage to domestic politics. The recent return to arms has also made it painfully clear that peace based only on diplomatic efforts can never last long. There must also be a safety net of economic, infrastructure and other interdependencies to serve as a backbone for peace.

We need a "Marshall Plan" for the Middle East to develop the region, reduce the inequalities that are a source of so much frustration, and act as a catalyst for cooperation. This should in no way be seen as an exercise in charity, as any success in resolving the conflict in this strategically and economically vital part of the world, and building long-term international cooperation and stability, will not only remove the enormous cost of the conflict but be a wise investment in the future.

In this regard, I strongly believe that water could be a natural vehicle for peace in the Middle East. Therefore, rather than deter us, this tragic deterioration of the political process has given new resolve to the work of Green Cross International, the environmental organization of which I am president. Whatever the political climate, the people of this region need to drink water and to

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I was greatly heartened by meetings which I had with Prime Minister Ehud Barak, Mr. Arafat and King Abdullah II of Jordan earlier this year, in which all three leaders agreed that solutions to the region-wide water scarcity cannot be arrived at unilaterally. The Middle East's shared water sources could provide an avenue for mutually-beneficial cooperation in order to meet the essential water and food needs of the people. It also eliminates, or at least alleviates, one of the major security concerns in the region. And it could lead to an innovative and united international initiative to build a lasting peace in the region.

-

The writer, the last president of the former Soviet Union, contributed this comment to the International Herald Tribune.

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To Reach Middle East Peace, Leave Oslo and Return to Madrid

By Marwan Bishara Published: THURSDAY, JANUARY 18, 2001

PARIS: These days one needs reminding that the purpose behind the Middle East peace process has not been to help Ehud Barak get re-elected or earn Bill Clinton a Nobel Peace Prize. It is to stop the century-old conflict between Palestinians and Jews.

Prime Minister Barak has failed. President Clinton had more than an ample chance in the last years to put an end to occupation. His administration has sponsored seven accords that were never fully implemented, and his last ditch effort to finalize a framework agreement will fail because it has been subjugated to Israel's electoral logic.

Only a deal favorable to Israel could get Mr. Barak re-elected. In the present Israeli circumstances, an accord that fulfilled UN Resolution 242 and met minimum Palestinian requirements to end the conflict would help Mr. Barak's opponent, the infamous Ariel Sharon, to

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win.

Today the bets are on Mr. Sharon because Mr. Barak has alienated many of those who supported him in the last elections, notably the Arab minority and many in the peace camp, who together comprise almost one-third of the Israeli electorate.

Mr. Barak's mixed signals leave Israelis bewildered. One day he makes overtures to the religious parties, the next he shifts to the secular camp. He tries to negotiate a peaceful solution but aims at a unilateral physical separation.

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It is not clear whether Mr. Barak is competing against Mr. Sharon or Yasser Arafat, or whether he is the candidate capable of bringing peace or the iron man who orders inhumane closures and assassination of Palestinian leaders.

For Israel and for the sake of peace, a moderate government lead by Labor is far better than a coalition government of rightist and fundamentalist parties headed by Mr. Sharon. Unfortunately, Israelis are offered two generals and no real choice.

Perhaps, as some in the peace camp contend, the focus should be on transforming Labor into a true peace party after the elections, one that exchanges its generals for able statesmen. Sooner rather than later, Mr. Sharon will fail to bring peace or security, and Israelis would then have a real alternative.

In the meantime, Palestinians who chose not to surrender their basic historical rights will endure more hardships. But their intifada has curbed settlement activity and minimized security cooperation. The Palestinian Authority can no longer do Israel's bidding while the occupation continues.

In cases of colonialism, permanent peace comes after, not before, occupation ends and historical injustice is addressed — here, in particular, the uprooting of more than three-quarters of the Palestinian population during the 1948 war.

This does not necessarily mean that the 3.7 million registered Palestinian refugees would return to Israel once their right was recognized. But the right of return is an inalienable and must be recognized in order to facilitate the end of the conflict. Such recognition would not lead to the

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annihilation of Israel, as some claim. Rather, it would liberate Israel from its dark past and pave the way for its peaceful existence in the region.

A resolution of the Jerusalem and the refugee problems can be found in a regional context and will require international guarantees. This can be accomplished through the convening of a conference along the lines of the 1991 Madrid conference, with the participation of Europe, Russia and the United Nations in addition to the United States. This would facilitate discussion of paramount regional issues such as water, security, borders and economic cooperation.

Such a package deal could enable the Palestinians and other Arabs to take the necessary steps to normalize relations with Israel.

All of this could be helped by the fact that the foreign policy team that led the first Bush administration's initiative at Madrid, after the Gulf War, is returning to power. The peace conference was meant to show, after the liberation of Kuwait, that America was willing to work for a comprehensive settlement between Israel and its neighbors.

A decade later, and after seven years of the Oslo process, reviving the Madrid spirit is the best available option. This should be based on UN resolutions, not on the Clinton ideas, although all parties should be free to bring forward their suggestions.

If politics is the art of the possible, then intelligent politics in the Middle East should be to convince the parties that a peace is not a zero-sum game but a win-win choice.

Mr. Bishara is a researcher at l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS, Paris) and author of the forthcoming book "Israel, Palestine: What Peace?" He contributed this comment to the International Herald Tribune.

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MIDEAST TURMOIL: THE ENVOY; From Oslo Talks to Jenin: U.N. Aide Comes Under Fire

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By SERGE SCHMEMANN
Published: April 23, 2002

Since he visited the Jenin refugee camp last week and expressed his horror at what he saw, Terje Roed-Larsen, the chief United Nations representative here and the man who began the secret contacts that led to the Oslo agreements, has come under an unusually harsh personal attack by the Israeli government. He has been accused of "record-high audacity" and "anti-Semitic ideas," and officials in the prime minister's office have talked of having him expelled.

The attacks may be the most furious the 54-year-old Norwegian has faced, but they are hardly the first. As an active supporter of the land-for-peace process that he helped begin in Oslo a decade ago,



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he has been assailed by both Israeli and Arab foes of the agreements. His denunciations of suicide bombings have also prompted some accusations of bias from the Palestinians.

"I feel supremely confident because I know I did the right thing and I know I'm doing the right thing," Mr. Roed-Larsen said in a telephone interview. "Any decent human being in that place on that day, seeing corpses dug out just below the surface, smelling the stench of decay, would have been shocked and horrified. That is not an accusation. That is a reaction to human tragedy."

Today, at a news conference announcing the composition of a United Nations team to look into the events in Jenin, Secretary General Kofi Annan said he was disappointed that Mr. Roed-Larsen was being publicly attacked by Israeli officials "for just talking about what he saw."

"He never accused Israel of massacre," Mr. Annan said. "He never even used the word massacre."

The intensity of the criticism from the Israeli government has come as something of a surprise. The devastation of the refugee camp has been the focus of many news accounts, and other foreign officials who have visited the Jenin camp -- including the United States assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs, William J. Burns -- have deplored the destruction. Secretary of State Colin L. Powell had called on Israel to allow relief workers into the camp.

But it is on Mr. Roed-Larsen, whose formal title is United Nations special coordinator for the Middle East peace process, that the government of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon appears to have focused its greatest anger, especially since the decision to send a United Nations fact-finding team to Jenin.

While visiting the Jenin camp last Thursday, Mr. Roed-Larsen made various comments to reporters. He described the destruction by the Israeli Army as "morally repugnant," and said it was "shocking" that relief workers had not been allowed into the camp for 11 days. "Combating terrorism does not give a blank check to kill civilians," he said. He also infuriated the Israeli government by summoning foreign ambassadors to relate what he had found.

Defense of Mr. Roed-Larsen has come from Israeli officials he has worked with over the years. "Generally speaking he's a great friend of the state of Israel," said Danny Yatom, a former head of the Mossad intelligence agency who worked with him for many years.

Uri Savir, an Israeli negotiator who worked with Mr. Roed-Larsen on the Oslo accords, called the

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charges leveled against the United Nations envoy a "disgrace." Ron Pundak, an academic who was involved in the secret meetings in Oslo and who is now director of the Peres Center for Peace, described the attacks on Mr. Roed-Larsen as "outrageous."

"Knowing him for almost a decade, I can say he's definitely not anti-Israeli," Mr. Pundak said. "I consider him as a very, very honest broker. On every occasion, when a bomb exploded here, he was one of the first to stand up against Yasir Arafat and criticize him."

By most accounts, Mr. Sharon's antipathy for Mr. Roed-Larsen predates the current furor, and is grounded in the prime minister's abhorrence of the Oslo accords. Since his election, Mr. Sharon has refused to meet him and has resented his constant efforts to act as go-between between Mr. Arafat, the Palestinian leader, and the Israeli government.

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After Oslo

By ETHAN BRONNER
Published: May 4, 2003

SHATTERED DREAMS

The Failure of the Peace Process
in the Middle East, 1995-2002.

By Charles Enderlin.

Translated by Susan Fairfield.

Illustrated. 458 pp. New York:
Other Press. \$28.

I once asked King Hussein of Jordan whether he considered Zionism legitimate. Did he accept that there was any historical basis to the Jews' claim to a portion of Palestine as their homeland? He looked at me as if I were from Mars and ducked the question. Later he told a Jordanian colleague that only a Jew could have posed such a strange question. Perhaps by the time of his death in 1999 he had softened his view. But his reaction still exemplifies that of the vast majority of Arabs today.

Even the many who favor peace with Israel under certain conditions accept its reality but not its legitimacy. On the Israeli side there are similar denials. Ask most Israelis about Palestinian nationalism or the centrality of Jerusalem to Palestinian history and you will get a dismissive wave of

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the hand and a lecture asserting that there was no Palestinian identity until the Arabs invented it as a weapon to wield against Israel. While covering the conflict, I was struck by how fundamental a gap these perceptions represented. But when the Oslo peace framework was signed by Israeli and Palestinian negotiators in 1993, I started to reconsider. When I asked officials on both sides to reconcile their contradictory versions of history, they would do that dismissive hand wave and say the past was no longer their concern. I wanted to believe them.

Following the failure of the Camp David peace summit in 2000 and since the outbreak of the second Palestinian intifada shortly thereafter, it seemed clear that the process could never succeed without a more fundamental reassessment of competing versions of the past. Reading "Shattered Dreams," by Charles Enderlin, reaffirms that concern. Until the two sides teach their children what it means to have stood in the shoes of their adversaries -- something the Israelis began doing but stopped, and something the Palestinians have never done -- the chance of real peace remains slim.

"Shattered Dreams" is a deeply reported and scrupulous account of seven key years in the history of the conflict -- from the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in November of 1995 to the first election of Ariel Sharon a little over two years ago. Enderlin has been the Jerusalem bureau chief for one of French television's main stations for the past 13 years. He persuaded a number of officials to allow him to interview them on videotape during their negotiations on condition that he not broadcast the tapes before the end of 2001. Later, he interviewed them again, and persuaded many to share notes from secret meetings. From these he produced a documentary that was shown in numerous countries, and on PBS last summer.

This book is a written record of those interviews and notes. When it appeared last year in France, it was a best seller. Fortunately, it has now been translated into English by Susan Fairfield. Unfortunately, "Shattered Dreams" has a slightly amateurish feel. It is written entirely in the present tense, which becomes irritating. The story gushes forward with little context or analysis. But this also proves to be a kind of virtue. As Enderlin moves from event to notes to taped interview, you have the refreshing sense that you are not being spun. He is simply seeking to represent reality in its complexity -- the personalities, the accidents of fate, the sins of omission and commission. In fact, despite the book's narrative flaws, it offers the most complete and balanced picture yet of the failure of the Middle East peace process.

The accepted story in the United States is that after several years of halting negotiations, at Camp



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David the Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak offered Yasir Arafat some 90 percent of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and a reasonable deal on Jerusalem. Arafat balked, made no counteroffer and two months later gave his real response, the violent uprising, complete with suicide bombings. Enderlin's story makes clear that there is truth to this version but, by itself, it will not do. Unless you understand the way Barak ignored the Palestinians in 1999 in a failed effort to cut a deal with the Syrians first; unless you see the accelerated level of Jewish settlement building; unless you grasp the dynamic by which the Israeli right interrupted the peace process, forcing Barak to pull back, you will not have a complete picture. In this book, we learn what was offered at Camp David -- 76 percent of the West Bank -- and how it grew to 92 percent the following January before talks broke down. Errors, misjudgments, false moves and internal tensions -- Israeli, Palestinian and American -- are all part of the sad story.

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Ethan Bronner, assistant editorial page editor of The Times, was the Middle East correspondent for The Boston Globe from 1991 to 1997.

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OP-ED COLUMNIST

After Arafat, Hope

By WILLIAM SAFIRE

Published: November 10, 2004

WASHINGTON — The only lifelong terrorist to win a Nobel Peace Prize lies comatose in Paris, with his well-heeled wife - for years unwilling to share his privations in Ramallah - screaming at Palestinian leaders on Al Jazeera television that "they're trying to bury [him] alive!" More likely, they may be trying to learn in what secret accounts he buried millions of dollars.

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Israelis should remember Arafat's one "good deed": four years ago, a soon-to-be ousted Israeli prime minister and a Nobel-hungry U.S. president made the Palestinian Authority an incredibly generous and dangerous offer: dividing Jerusalem, handing over almost all of the West Bank, and even partially establishing a "right of return" for some Palestinians who fled an Arab invasion of the new Jewish state a half-century ago.

Arafat's "good deed" was to reject this sweeping offer and to launch another wave of suicidal homicide. In a macabre diplomatic sense, his refusal to take "yes" for an answer was a lucky thing for Israel's image: if those huge concessions had later been presented to Israelis in a promised referendum, Jewish voters would surely have turned down the Clinton-brokered deal. Proof of that was in the avalanche that then ousted the desperate Ehud Barak and elected the determined Ariel Sharon.

In that case, world opprobrium would have been aimed at Israelis for their concern about defensible borders rather than at Arafat for revealing his goal of driving out the Jews.

That blame did not fall on Israel. Thanks to worldwide disgust at Arafat's all-or-nothing demand and his refusal to stop the killing of innocents on school buses, Sharon was able to freeze him out of civilized diplomacy. Plain prudence required the isolation of the Palestinian dedicated to the war process until new leadership emerged to show that the Arabs were ready to create a peaceful neighboring state.

President Bush, especially after terrorism reached us on 9/11, saw the wisdom in Sharon's approach. Arafat, squelching all Palestinian leaders who wanted to disarm Hamas and other jihadists, abruptly ceased to be the most frequent foreign visitor to the White House. Bush did not object, as France and the U.N. bureaucracy did, to the security fence designed to save Israeli lives.

Sharon, with no Palestinian empowered to end the violence, then made his historic disengagement move, stunning fellow Jews who saw him as the defender of the Gaza settlers. He insisted the Palestinians take "yes" for an answer and began the painful business of withdrawal (a word he avoids).

Despite the uproar from his religious right, Sharon - with the Israeli majority and his American ally firmly behind him - faced down his Likud Party and members of his cabinet and marched implacably ahead.

Now here comes Tony Blair to Washington. In Iraq, the gutsy Brit stands shoulder to shoulder with the U.S., at

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considerable political cost at home; Bush owes him plenty. Blair needs a big favor to get the Bush-haters in Britain off his back, so welcomed Bush's re-election with "the need to revitalize the Middle East peace process is the single most pressing political challenge in our world today."

Translated into undiplomatic English, that means: Let's you, me, Vladimir Putin and Kofi Annan get together and tell Sharon to re-offer the old Barak-Clinton deal to whichever Palestinian will listen. Then the Muslim violence will stop all over the world. Step 1: appoint a big-name special envoy to deliver the ultimatum.

Just imagine: this suggests that if there had been no stiff-necked Israel, we would never have had the bombing of Pan Am 103 by Qaddafi, no massacre of 10,000 Sunnis at Hama by Hafez al-Assad, no poison-gassing of 5,000 Kurds at Halabja by Saddam, no continued unpleasantness in Chechnya, or that incident in Lower Manhattan. Just lean on Israel and we'll solve "the most pressing political challenge in the world today."

C'mon, Tony; we don't thank one big ally by selling out a smaller one. There's an honorable way.

Let Arafat pass from the scene. Let the Palestinians show they are ready to be a nation and not a bunch of warring factions. Let them register voters, including women, as the Afghans did, hold their first competitive election, and eschew violence.

Then let us invite the elected Palestinian and Israeli leaders to Camp David to work out their final settlement.

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By [DAVID BROOKS](#)

Published: November 17, 2005

The swallows fly to Capistrano; I
go to the Middle East.

Every few years I fly to Israel and
Palestine and I get out my
notebooks, and every time I go the
experience is the same. Some
world leader will have proposed a
peace plan. Some set of lines on a
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sides to the table will be in the
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Over the years, the Shultz plan begat the Oslo process, which begat the Mitchell plan, which begat the road map. Even though the names may change, the grievances are the same, the intensity is the same, and the addictive three-dimensional chess game we call the Middle East peace process is fundamentally the same.

Until this year.

I just got back from a Saban Center conference that took me once again to Jerusalem and Ramallah, and I discovered the most amazing thing: the Israelis have lost interest in the chess match. They have become desensitized to the thoughts and actions of their dysfunctional neighbors, the Palestinians, with whom they used to share such an intimate feud.

The second intifada, coming on the heels of Yasir Arafat's rejection of a deal at Camp David, cut some visceral bond that used to

join the two peoples. The Israelis are separating themselves from the Middle East emotionally and psychologically, and with a security barrier.

The dream of peace has been replaced by another dream, the dream of disengagement. Until I spoke to people here, I thought the Gaza disengagement might lead back to the peace process, but now I realize it's a replacement for that process. It's a step toward a new (and even more illusory) dream: the dream of disengaging Israel from its geographic and historical situation.

The security barrier has not only reduced suicide bombings; it has also helped change the nation's psychology. On the Israeli side of the barrier, there is increasing safety, prosperity and normalcy. Jerusalem's streets are crowded again. People no longer choose restaurants by how good their security arrangements are and no longer avoid tables by the windows.

While the barrier makes the Palestinians seem farther away, the Internet makes the rest of the

FROM SEEN CLOSER AT HAND, ISRAEL

is in the midst of a tech boom, fueled in part by the brainpower of Russian immigrants, and the nation is proud of its ties to Silicon Valley. The economy is thriving (even while income inequality soars), and Israel is developing closer bonds with China, Turkey and the world.

Over there, on the other side of the barrier, Mahmoud Abbas, a new sort of Palestinian leader, promises to impose order and defeat terror. But Israelis don't seem to feel their destiny is intertwined with his success, and they have not helped him deliver the tangible benefits he needs to have any chance of victory.

Israelis have, as I say, disengaged.

Given recent history, no one can blame Israel. The Palestinians richly deserve to be left behind. Even now they expect Israel to allow Palestinian trucks to cross its border, even though both sides know some significant portion will contain bombs designed to kill Jews.

And yet, despite it all, I wonder

What the Israelis know in their

hearts that disengagement is not a long-term option.

It's not an option because while Israelis may no longer be dependent on the Palestinians, the Palestinians remain dependent on them. Today, Gaza is spiraling into the abyss, cut off from Israeli markets and abandoned by the Arab world. When Gaza sinks, the West Bank will surely follow, and if Palestine turns into Somalia, Israel will not survive untouched. The Israeli Arabs, if no one else, will see to that.

Disengagement is not an option because America will not allow it. Americans still believe in the peace process and in democratizing the Arab world, which is the opposite of disengagement. The U.S. will always pressure Israel - as it did so forcefully this week - to re-engage with Palestine, to open up trade and movement.

Finally, unilateral disengagement is no option because the Israelis will never do it well. Driven by normal self-interest and by the bitterness of war, Israelis will grab

too much pain, and impose too much pain. A nation of philosopher-kings could impose a just unilateral solution, but no such nation exists. Unilateral action is bound to be unjust and thus unstable.

The sad fact is that no matter how long and futile the chess game sometimes appeared, someday it will have to start up once again.

Bob Herbert is on vacation.

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By Robin Wright

updated 10:03 a.m. ET, Sun., July. 16, 2006

Israel, with U.S. support, intends to resist calls for a cease-fire and continue a longer-term strategy of punishing Hezbollah, which is likely to include several weeks of precision bombing in Lebanon, according to senior Israeli and U.S. officials.

For Israel, the goal is to eliminate Hezbollah as a security threat -- or altogether, the sources said. A senior Israeli official confirmed that Hezbollah leader Hasan Nasrallah is a target, on the calculation that the Shiite movement would be far less dynamic without him.

For the United States, the broader goal is to strangle the axis of Hezbollah, Hamas, Syria and Iran, which the Bush administration believes is pooling resources to change the strategic playing field in the Middle East, U.S. officials say.

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Whatever the outrage on the Arab streets, Washington believes it has strong behind-the-scenes support among key Arab leaders also nervous about the populist militants -- with a tacit agreement that the timing is right to strike.

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"What is out there is concern among conservative Arab allies that there is a hegemonic Persian threat [running] through Damascus, through the southern suburbs of Beirut and to the Palestinians in Hamas," said a senior U.S. official who requested anonymity because of sensitive diplomacy. "Regional leaders want to find a way to navigate unease on their streets and deal with the strategic threats to take down Hezbollah and Hamas, to come out of the crisis where they are not as ascendant."

A 'unique moment'

Hezbollah's cross-border raid that captured two Israeli soldiers and killed eight others has provided a "unique moment" with a "convergence of interests" among Israel, some Arab regimes and even those in Lebanon who want to rein in the country's last private army, the senior Israeli official said, speaking on the condition of anonymity because of the ongoing conflict.

Israel and the United States would like to hold out until Hezbollah is crippled.

"It seems like we will go to the end now," said Israeli Ambassador Daniel Ayalon. "We will not go part way and be held hostage again. We'll have to go for the kill -- Hezbollah neutralization."

White House officials said Friday that Bush has called on Israel to limit civilian casualties and avoid toppling the [Lebanese government](#) but has not pressured Israel to stop its military action. "He believes that the Israelis have a right to protect themselves," spokesman Tony Snow said in St. Petersburg, where Bush is attending the Group of Eight summit. "The president is not going to make military decisions for Israel."

Specifically, officials said, Israel and the United States are looking to create conditions for achieving one remaining goal of U.N. Resolution 1559, adopted in 2004, which calls for the dismantling and disarming of Lebanon's militias and expanding the state's control over all its territory.

"We think part of the solution to this is the implementation of 1559, which would eliminate that [armed group operating outside the government] and help Lebanon extend all of its authority throughout the whole country," national security adviser Stephen J. Hadley told reporters with Bush in Russia yesterday.

The other part of the resolution calls for the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon, which was completed in April last year -- after the assassination of former Lebanese prime minister Rafiq Hariri, which was widely linked to Syria.

If Lebanon as a first step takes over Hezbollah's stockpiles, which included more than 12,000 rockets and missiles before the current strife began, then cease-fire talks could begin, the Israeli official said.

"The only way a cease-fire will even be considered is if 1559 is fully implemented," said the senior Israeli official. Lebanese troops must be deployed to take over positions in Hezbollah's southern Lebanon strongholds to ensure that there are no more cross-border raids or rocket barrages into northern Israel.

Backlash at Israel possible

There are no guarantees, however, that this strategy will work. Israeli airstrikes could backfire, experts warn.

"Hezbollah was risking alienating not only the Lebanese public at large but, incredibly, its very own Shiite constituency. But if Israel continues with its incessant targeting of exclusively civilian targets, and, as a result, life becomes increasingly difficult for the people, I would not be surprised if there is a groundswell of support for Hezbollah, exactly opposite of what Israel is trying to achieve," said Timur Goksel, an analyst and former spokesman for the U.N. force in Lebanon who lives in Beirut.

The Bush administration's position -- and diplomacy -- are the opposite of what happened during the [Clinton administration](#).

The last Hezbollah-Israel cease-fire was just before dawn on April 27, 1996, after the United States brokered a deal to end a punishing 16-day Israeli offensive designed to end Hezbollah's rocket barrages. More than 150 Lebanese, mostly civilians, were killed; more than 60 Israelis were injured. Tens of thousands on both sides of the border had fled or gone into bunkers.

Then-Secretary of State Warren Christopher shuttled for a week between Jerusalem and Damascus to mediate a written agreement, a sequel to a similar oral deal he negotiated after skirmishes in 1993.

For now, that is not a viable option to end the current conflict, U.S. officials say. With its diplomacy redefined by the war on terrorism, the Bush administration has opted for a course that plays out on the battlefield.

Pressed on whether a cease-fire was possible soon, the Israeli official said it was "way, way premature" to consider an end to hostilities. "There is no sense to have a cease-fire without a fundamental change," he said. "That change is to make sure the explosiveness of the situation cannot carry over to the future. That means neutralizing Hezbollah's capabilities."

'Space to operate'

The Bush administration is also using Resolution 1559 as a barometer, U.S. officials say, acknowledging that the Lebanese government has shown neither the ability nor the willingness to deploy its fledgling army to the southern border.

U.S. officials have cautioned Israel to use restraint, particularly on collateral damage and destruction of infrastructure, which might undermine the fragile government. There was some U.S. concern about attacks on the Beirut airport, but otherwise Washington is prepared to step aside and defer diplomacy unless there is a dramatic break, U.S. officials say.

"They do have space to operate for a period of time," the U.S. official said about Israel. "There's a natural dynamic to these things. When the military starts, it may be that it has to run its course."

Israel and the United States believe that the Israeli strikes in Gaza, following the kidnapping of an Israeli soldier, have undermined Hamas. "There is no Hamas government -- eight cabinet ministers or 30 percent of the government is in jail, another 30 percent is in hiding, and the other 30 percent is doing very little," said the senior U.S. official.

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Israel and Palestine: an invitation to negotiate

Here is my attempt to be constructive on the President Bush speech from this week - an effort to grab some kind of victory from the jaws of defeat.

It is on the [Guardian Online](#).

Can anything good possibly come out of President Bush's Middle East speech earlier this week and the flurry of diplomatic activity that will come in its wake beginning today with the Quartet meeting in Lisbon, Portugal?

First of all, let's be clear. The speech represented more of the same failed policies with even less chance of success. Anyone who thinks that the new speech was a constructive contribution should read an op-ed by Michael Oren in yesterday's Wall Street Journal that was distributed by the official White House Jewish Public Liaison, presumably signifying that Oren's interpretation has formal blessing.

Oren, of the Shalem Center, a Jerusalem-based, neocon-sympathetic creation of Benjamin Netanyahu, wrote the following: "Mr. Bush has not backtracked an inch from his revolutionary Middle East policy. Never before has any American President placed the onus of demonstrating a commitment to peace so emphatically on Palestinian shoulders...the bulk of his demands were directed at the Palestinians...Mr. Bush set unprecedented conditions for Arab participation in peace efforts."

I have detailed my own thoughts on the speech [elsewhere](#), and the search for a silver lining is not an easy one.

What I propose is a jujitsu move that leverages the expectations created by the speech toward achieving a constructive, if unlikely, outcome. To call this jujitsu move a long shot is an understatement, but it is worth a try. Here is how it could be done.

Despite White House efforts to lower expectations, Bush's speech did call for an international meeting in the fall that is being touted everywhere as a peace conference. In the speech, Bush committed Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to chairing that meeting.

Her undoubted desire to avoid a huge flop is the point of departure. The Americans will be very keen to have key regional and international players at the table in the fall, which in turn gives the Arab states and the Quartet partners an invitation to negotiate the terms of reference for the conference should they choose to use it.

This would be the moment for the Saudis, Egyptians, Jordanians and the majority of European states who are uncomfortable with current American policy to articulate and bargain over a new approach. It is even conceivable that Rice herself would welcome a strong stand on the part of her interlocutors in order to use such a negotiation to carry the president toward a more realistic policy.

The model for diplomatic efforts should be the Madrid conference of 1991. There is of course an important similarity, but an even more important and complicating difference - the president's name then and now was Bush. But Bush the father showed commitment and courage in advancing peace efforts, while Bush the son is not on board. Rice would have to cast herself in the role of James Baker, this time with the additional challenge of having to convince her boss, the president.

At the closing of that Madrid Conference, Baker said, "The United States is willing to be a catalytic force, and an energizing force, and a driving force in the negotiating process." Rice would have to adopt that mantle and be all of those things and more.

Baker shuttled for eight months around the region putting together the conference and negotiating the terms of reference for Madrid, which appeared in the letter of invitation and to which all sides agreed. He succeeded in creating a peace process that brought together Israel, the Palestinians, all the neighbouring states and an additional 10 Arab countries, none of whom had formal relations with Israel.



George H. W. Bush speaks at Tulsa. Photo by Jacob Silberg



The substance of the Madrid terms of reference contained four elements, crucial to its success.

First, the effort was comprehensive, involving not only the Palestinians and Jordanians (not yet at peace with Israel), but also the Lebanese and the Syrians. Second, the terms for engagement represented at the time a breakthrough, namely the land-for-peace formula with a comprehensive settlement to be based on UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338.

Third, the letter of invitation provided a timetable for an Israeli-Palestinian permanent status agreement. Finally, Madrid managed to bring Israel and the broader Arab world together, holding out the prospect of regional peace and acceptance that is so vital for Israelis.

Interestingly, Prince Bandar of Saudi Arabia was in attendance at Madrid. The conference set in motion five multilateral regional working groups to build confidence between Israel and the Arab world. Politicians and experts would meet to discuss the environment, economic developments, water, arms-control and regional security, and refugees in such places as Muscat, Rabat, Doha and Tunis.

A similarly ambitious approach calibrated to today's reality is what Rice should pursue. Of course it is far from clear whether she has the appetite for such a mission or whether Bush would agree. Perhaps new envoy Tony

Blair can be helpful in this regard.

Pursuing such a course would also be the implementation of the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group and fulfill their call for a regional diplomatic peace effort to restore American credibility and alliance-building capacity, and to deal a blow to Salafist radicalism.

The president's speech may inadvertently have issued an invitation to Europe and the Arab states to start negotiating a contemporary version of the Madrid letter of invitation. These might include detailed terms of reference for Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, provisions for a comprehensive, inclusive process with Syria on board, a reasonable timetable and modalities for implementing the Arab peace initiative. Forcing the frontloading of Arab deliverables outside of a broader comprehensive peace framework is likely to be a non-starter and recipe for diplomatic gridlock.

The alternative would be for this fall's meeting to resemble the January 2003 conference on Palestinian reform that was convened in London - an eminently forgettable experience.

The Madrid model offers one further clue on the way forward with regards to an even more thorny issue. At the time of Madrid, Israel and the PLO still did not recognize each other and Israel refused to talk to the PLO or to have its representatives officially in attendance. A formula was concocted whereby there would be a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation, the Palestinian members of which could be claimed by Israel to not formally represent the PLO, but who themselves insisted that they were doing everything in coordination with the exiled PLO leadership.

Hamas today is the group whose name dare not be spoken in polite company. Yet a process, today, that excludes Hamas (just like excluding the PLO then) is unlikely to deliver sustainability, legitimacy or security. A peace process cannot be built on Palestinian division, and Mahmoud Abbas and the Fatah leadership will have to be quietly and patiently climbed back down from the tree that they are so rapidly ascending.

Most of the European Union member states and the Arab states understand this. A discreet but crucial backchannel in the lead-up to any conference would have to be devoted to internal Palestinian reconciliation. This approach would ultimately have to be accepted by both the US and Israel. At least Blair, with his Northern Ireland experience, will have an informative frame of reference with regard to bringing militants into a peace process.

Like I said, it is a very long shot, but this is what I would argue that realists and genuine believers in peace should be advocating for. Today's Quartet meeting in Portugal will likely be all smiles and rhetorical platitudes, but the real work needs to begin and soon.

Posted by [Daniel Levy](#) on July 19, 2007 6:00 PM | [Permalink](#)

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seth:

mr. oren's op-ed is just the beginning of a murdoch-owned WSJ. What a sad, sad thing...

I won't disagree that the demise of the WSJ's reporting will be a sad sight if it comes to pass, but have you read the editorial page of the WSJ in past years? They're as nutty as they get. Michael Oren is positively sane and even keeled by their standards.

Posted by seth | [July 25, 2007 9:56 PM](#)

Posted on [July 25, 2007 21:56](#)

deb:

mr. oren's op-ed is just the beginning of a murdoch-owned WSJ. What a sad, sad thing...

Posted by deb | [July 20, 2007 2:48 PM](#)

Posted on [July 20, 2007 14:48](#)

Nyer:

I wish people like you understood the definition of realism. Didnt you study polisci. You are advocating a contructivist approach to the conflict. If the definition of realism is a theory "primarily motivated by the desire for military and economic power or security, rather than ideals or ethics" - than our actions and what you advocate is not a realist approach. Israel is the ideal - not an economic or security must. In fact ending Israel would be - which obvioulsy isnt an option. So stop using the term.

Posted by Nyer | [July 20, 2007 12:52 AM](#)

Posted on [July 20, 2007 00:52](#)

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About

This page contains a single entry from the blog posted on **July 19, 2007 6:00 PM**.

The previous post in this blog was [More Expert Voices on Political Islamists and the Dangers of Current Policy](#).

The next post in this blog is [Day One of the New Blair Mission](#).

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Works Cited

Completion Date: Dec.3,2007

I would like to thank Ann Evans Larimore for her continuous support during my triumphs and frustrations. I am also truly indebted to Sandy Alinghaus, who spent countless hours helping me understand the difficult concepts that were required to complete this project. She was always willing to extend to me her limitless knowledge of geography, computer programming, and web design. I have grown to love using the art of web design in visual interpretation. The skills I learned in this class are invaluable. Thanks for opening my eyes to this new discovery!

Below is a complete list of the references that were used to complete this GeoMat Study



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The Palestine National Charter

(July 17, 1968)

Stuart Hersh comments: The Fourth Palestine National Assembly, meeting in Cairo July 10-17, 1968, was charged with forming a committee to revise the 1964 Palestinian National Charter [sometimes called the [PLO Covenant](#)] in a manner that reflected a more Palestinian-oriented organization. This included revising the objective of Palestine's liberation as being the creation of a sovereign Palestinian state. Pan-Arabism, the dominant theme of the 1964 version, became subordinate to the re-emerging Palestinian nationalism.

1. This Charter shall be known as "The Palestine National Charter."

Articles of the Charter:

Article 1. Palestine, the homeland of the Palestinian Arab people, is an inseparable part of the greater Arab homeland, and the Palestinian people are a part of the Arab Nation.

Article 2. Palestine, within the frontiers that existed under the British Mandate, is an indivisible territorial unit.

Article 3. The Palestinian Arab people alone have legitimate rights to their homeland, and shall exercise the right of self-determination after the liberation of their homeland, in keeping with their wishes

and entirely of their own accord.

Article 4. The Palestinian identity is an authentic, intrinsic and indissoluble quality that is transmitted from father to son. Neither the Zionist occupation nor the dispersal of the Palestinian Arab people as a result of the afflictions they have suffered can efface this Palestinian identity.

Article 5. Palestinians are Arab citizens who were normally resident in Palestine until 1947. This includes both those who were forced to leave or who stayed in Palestine. Anyone born to a Palestinian father after that date, whether inside or outside Palestine, is a Palestinian.

Article 6. Jews who were normally resident in Palestine up to the beginning of the Zionist invasion are Palestinians.

Article 7. Palestinian identity, and material, spiritual and historical links with Palestine are immutable realities. It is a national obligation to provide every Palestinian with a revolutionary Arab upbringing, and to instill in him a profound spiritual and material familiarity with his homeland and a readiness for armed struggle and for the sacrifice of his material possessions and his life, for the recovery of his homeland. All available educational means and means of guidance must be enlisted to that end, until the liberation is achieved.

Article 8. The Palestinian people is at the stage of national struggle for the liberation of its homeland. For that reason, differences between Palestinian national forces must give way to the fundamental difference that exists between Zionism and imperialism on the one hand and the Palestinian Arab people on the other. On that basis, the Palestinian masses, both as organizations and as individuals, whether in the homeland or in such places as they now live as refugees, constitute a single national front working for the recovery and liberation of Palestine through armed struggle.

Article 9. Armed struggle is the only way of liberating Palestine, and is thus strategic, not tactical. The Palestinian Arab people hereby affirm their unwavering determination to carry on the armed struggle and to press towards popular revolution for the liberation of and return to their homeland. They also affirm their right to a

normal life in their homeland, to the exercise of their right of self-determination therein and to sovereignty over it.

Article 10. Commando action constitutes the nucleus of the Palestinian popular war of liberation. This requires that commando action must be escalated, expanded and protected and that all the resources of the Palestinian masses and all scientific potentials available to them be should be mobilized and organized to play their part in the armed Palestinian revolution. It also requires solidarity in national struggle among the different groups within the Palestinian people and between that people and the Arab masses, to ensure the continuity of the escalation and victory of the revolution.

Article 11. Palestinians shall have three slogans: national unity, national mobilization and liberation.

Article 12. The Palestinian Arab people believe in Arab unity. To fulfill their role in the achievement of that objective, they must, at the present stage in their national struggle, retain their Palestinian identity and all that it involves, work for increased awareness of it and oppose all measures liable to weaken or dissolve it.

Article 13. Arab unity and the liberation of Palestine are complementary objectives; each leads to the achievement of the other. Arab unity will lead to the liberation of Palestine and the liberation of Palestine will lead to Arab unity.. To work for one is to work for both.

Article 14. The destiny of the Arab nation, indeed the continued existence of the Arabs, depends on the fate of the Palestinian cause. This interrelationship is the point of departure of the Arab endeavor to liberate Palestine. The Palestinian people are the vanguard of the movement to achieve this sacred national objective.

Article 15. The liberation of Palestine is a national obligation for the Arabs. It is their duty to repel the Zionist and imperialist invasion of the greater Arab homeland and to liquidate the Zionist presence in Palestine. The full responsibility for this belongs to the peoples and governments of the Arab nation and to the Palestinian people first and foremost. For this reason, the task of the Arab nation is to enlist all the military, human, moral and material

resources at its command to play an effective part, along with the Palestinian people, in the liberation of Palestine. Moreover, it is the task of the Arab nation, particularly at the present stage of the Palestinian armed revolution, to offer the Palestinian people all possible aid, material and manpower support, and to place at their disposal all the means and opportunities that will enable them to continue to perform their role as the vanguard of their armed revolution until the liberation of their homeland is achieved.

Article 16. On the spiritual plane, the liberation of Palestine will establish in the Holy Land an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity in which all religious institutions will be safeguarded and freedom of worship and the right of visit guaranteed to all without discrimination or distinction of race, colour, language or creed. For this reason, the people of Palestine look to all spiritual forces in the world for support.

Article 17. On the human plane, the liberation of Palestine will restore to the Palestinians their dignity, integrity and freedom. For this reason, the Palestinian Arab people look to all those who believe in the dignity and freedom of man for support.

Article 18. On the international plane, the liberation of Palestine is a defensive measure dictated by the requirements of self-defense. This is why the Palestinian people, who seek to win the friendship of all peoples, look for the support of all freedom, justice and peace-loving countries in restoring the legitimate state of affairs in Palestine, establishing security and peace in it and enabling its people to exercise national and sovereignty and freedom.

Article 19. The Partition of Palestine, which took place in 1947, and the establishment of Israel, are fundamentally invalid, however long they last, for they contravene the will of the people of Palestine and their natural right to their homeland and contradict the principles of the United Nations Charter, foremost among which is the right of self-determination.

Article 20. The Balfour Declaration and the Mandate Instrument, and all their consequences, are hereby declared null and void. The claim of historical or spiritual links between the Jews and Palestine is neither in conformity with historical fact nor does it satisfy the requirements for statehood. Judaism is a revealed religion; it is not

a separate nationality, nor are the Jews a single people with a separate identity; they are citizens of their respective countries.

Article 21. The Palestinian Arab people, expressing themselves through the Palestinian armed revolution, reject all alternatives to the total liberation of Palestine. They also reject all proposals for the liquidation or internationalization of the Palestine problem.

Article 22. Zionism is a political movement that is organically linked with world imperialism and is opposed to all liberation movements or movements for progress in the world. The Zionist movement is essentially fanatical and racist; its objectives involve aggression, expansion and the establishment of colonial settlements, and its methods are those of the Fascists and the Nazis. Israel acts as cat's paw for the Zionist movement, a geographic and manpower base for world imperialism and a springboard for its thrust into the Arab homeland to frustrate the aspirations of the Arab nation to liberation, unity and progress. Israel is a constant threat to peace in the Middle East and the whole world. Inasmuch as the liberation of Palestine will eliminate the Zionist and imperialist presence in that country and bring peace to the Middle East, the Palestinian people look for support to all liberals and to all forces of good, peace and progress in the world, and call on them, whatever their political convictions, for all possible aid and support in their just and legitimate struggle to liberate their homeland.

Article 23. The demands of peace and security and the exigencies of right and justice require that all nations should regard Zionism as an illegal movement and outlaw it and its activities, out of consideration for the ties of friendship between peoples and for the loyalty of its citizens to their homelands.

Article 24. The Palestinian Arab people believe in Justice, freedom, sovereignty, self-determination, human dignity and the right of peoples to enjoy them.

Article 25. In pursuance of the objectives set out in this charter, the Palestine Liberation Organization shall perform its proper role in the liberation to the full.

Article 26. The Palestine Liberation Organization, as the

representative of the forces of the Palestinian revolution, is responsible for the struggle of the Palestinian Arab people to regain, liberate and return to their homeland and to exercise the right of self-determination in that homeland, in the military political and financial fields, and for all else that the Palestinian cause may demand, both at Arab and international levels.

Article 27. The Palestine Liberation Organization shall cooperate with all Arab countries, each according to its means, maintaining a neutral attitude vis-à-vis these countries in accordance with the requirements of the battle for liberation, and on the basis of that factor. The Organization shall not interfere in the internal affairs of any Arab country.

Article 28. The Palestinian Arab people hereby affirm the authenticity and independence of their national revolution and reject all forms of interference, tutelage or dependency.

Article 29. The Palestinian Arab people have the legitimate and prior right to liberate and recover their homeland, and shall define their attitude to all countries and forces in accordance with the attitude adopted by such countries and forces to the cause of the Palestinian people and with the extent of their support for that people in their revolution to achieve their objectives.

Article 30. Those who fight or bear arms in the battle of liberation form the nucleus of the popular army which will shield the achievements of the Palestinian Arab people.

Article 31. The Organization shall have a flag, an oath of allegiance and an anthem, to be decided in accordance with appropriate regulations.

Article 32. Regulations to be known as Basic Regulations for the Palestine Liberation Organization, shall be appended to this Charter. These regulations shall define the structure of the Organization, its bodies and institutions, and the powers, duties and obligations of each of them, in accordance with this Charter.

Article 33. This Charter may only be amended with a majority of two thirds of the total number of members of the National Assembly [this name was later changed to the Palestine National Council] of

the Palestine Liberation Organization at a special meeting called for that purpose.

Sources: Archives: Middle East News Service. op.cit.; Archives: Institute for Palestine Studies. The Palestine National Charter, adopted by the First Palestine National Conference, in Jerusalem in 1964, composed by the first PLO chairman Ahmed Shukeiry, was revised by the Fourth Palestine National Assembly, meeting in Cairo from 10-17 July, 1968.

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Farouk Al-Shara



Read his [speeches](#) at Madrid

"Finally, and simply, Mr. President, we have come here for peace. We shall continue to work for peace out of our faith in the peace. We declare with confidence and resolution our determination to work for just and comprehensive peace that liberates the land, and guarantees rights and security for all parties."

--Farouk Al-Shara

Farouk Al-Shara: Stepping into the Spotlight

By Tekla Szymanski

Syria's Foreign Minister Farouk al-Shara has many faces.

He once stated that the time has come to focus on the "battle of borders, not the battle for existence." He is a difficult man to analyze: Some observers see him as President Hafez al-Assad's puppet in the peace negotiations with Israel—but others suggest that, in reality, Al-Shara is pulling the strings behind the scenes.

Al-Shara, 61, rose through the ranks of the ruling Baath Party until his appointment to foreign minister in 1984. In this position, he has proved to be a tough man with whom to parry in peace talks. He has academic credentials in international law—the focus of his studies at Damascus University and at the University of London before he turned to a career in politics.

The Israeli press is eyeing al-Shara with skepticism bordering on open resentment, and many commentators have fixed upon his lack of charisma as the key to understanding the Syrian strategy. For many, he embodies "Syrian chutzpah."

His arrogant behavior is said to be testing the nerves of enthusiastic supporters of peace. Meron Benvenisti of Tel Aviv's liberal *Ha'aretz* notes his "dour expression, refusal to behave civilly and shake hands, and his avoidance of any direct public contact with the people he went to talk peace with."

Al-Shara has been compared to "a man who has forgotten his indigestion tablets," while craning his neck not to miss a word at the negotiation table. But contrary to Orli Azulay-Katz's prediction in Tel Aviv's mass-circulation *Yediot Aharonot* that Barak and Al-Shara would never take a dip in the hotel pool together or run side by side on treadmills—that is exactly what happened in January at the peace talks in Shepherdstown, West Virginia: Barak went to the hotel gym and invited Al-Shara to join him in his a workout. Surprisingly, the Syrian accepted.

Al-Shara is the most trusted aide of the ailing Assad, who is preparing his country for an imminent power shift. If Assad's son, Bashar, assumes the presidency [as he indeed did after his father's death], Al-Shara's expertise in dealing with Israel is likely to provide a vital element of continuity

Fares Boueiz



“This
Conference
held under
the title of
Peace is,
without any
doubt, of
paramount
importance
and can
become
possibly the
most

important
gathering
since the
Second
World War.
Peace is the
aspiration of
humanity,
the end
sought by
peoples the
world over,
the purpose

for which all
religions,
philosophies,
and
ideologies
strive."

-Fares Boueiz

Read his
[speeches](#) at
Madrid!

Bibliography

Fares Boueiz, former Kesrouan MP, former minister

Place and Date of Birth: Born in Beirut on January 15, 1955. Son of Nouhad Boueiz (MP, deceased) and Jacqueline Debbs.

Sect: Maronite.

Marital status: Married to Zalfa Hrawi (daughter of former president Elias Hrawi) with four children: Rhea, Nouhad, Tareq and Andrea.

Education: Bachelor of Laws (Saint Joseph University, Beirut), and a degree in French law from Jean Moulin University, Lyon, France.

Professional Career: Lawyer as of graduation in 1978. Special advisor to former president Elias Hrawi. Special envoy to France, Syria and the Vatican (1989-1990).

Political Career: Minister of Foreign Affair and Emigrants in Omar Karame government (December 24, 1990-May 10, 1992), Minister of Foreign Affair and Emigrants in Rashid Solh government (May 16, 1992-October 30, 1992), Minister of Foreign Affair and Emigrants in Rafic Hariri first government (October 31, 1992 to May 25, 1995), Minister of Foreign Affair and Emigrants in Rafic Hariri second government (May 25, 1995-November 6, 1996), and Minister of Foreign Affair and

Emigrants in Rafic Hariri third government (November 7, 1996-December 3, 1998).

Minister of Environment in Rafic Hariri's fifth government (April 17, 2003 - October 26, 2004) . **Member of Parliament:** appointed in June 7, 1991, elected in 1992, reelected in 1996 and 2000.

Current Political Status: Former Kesrouan MP.

Aspirations: Boueiz is a presidential candidate who was the fifth to announce his candidacy after MPs Nayla Moawad, Boutros Harb, Robert Ghanem and Mikahel Daher. An outlay of his ideas, program and career were covered in a recent [Interview with Daily As Safir](#).

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Background Note: Egypt



PROFILE

OFFICIAL NAME:
[Arab Republic of Egypt](#)

Geography
Area: 1,001,450 sq. km. (386,000 sq. mi.); approximately equal to Texas and New Mexico combined.
Cities: *Capital*–Cairo (pop. estimated at 16 million). *Other cities*–Alexandria (6 million), Aswan, Asyut, Port Said, Suez, Ismailia.
Terrain: Desert, except Nile valley and delta.
Climate: Dry, hot summers; moderate winters.

People
Nationality: *Noun and adjective*–Egyptian(s).
Population (July 2006 est.): 78,887,007.
Annual growth rate (2006 est.): 1.75%.
Ethnic groups: Egyptian, Bedouin Arab, Nubian.
Religions: Muslim 94%, Coptic Christian and other 6%.
Languages: Arabic (official), English, French.
Education: *Years compulsory*–ages 6-15. *Literacy*–total adult: 58%.
Health: *Infant mortality rate* (2006 est.)–31.33 deaths/1,000 live births. *Life expectancy* (2006 est.): 71 years.

Government
Type: Republic.
Independence: 1922.
Constitution: 1971.
Branches: Executive–president, prime minister, cabinet.
Legislative–People's Assembly (444 elected and 10 presidentially appointed members) and Shura (consultative) Council (176 elected members, 88 presidentially appointed). Judicial–Supreme Constitutional Court.
Administrative subdivisions: 26 governorates.
Principal political parties: National Democratic Party (ruling). Principal opposition parties–New Wafd Party, Liberal Party, National Progressive Unionist Grouping (Tagammu), and Nasserite Party.
Suffrage: Universal at 18.

Economy
GDP (2005 est.): \$303 billion.
Annual growth rate (2005 est.): 4.8%.
Per capita GDP (2005 est.): \$4,282.
Natural resources: Petroleum and natural gas, iron ore, phosphates, manganese, limestone, gypsum, talc, asbestos, lead, zinc.
Agriculture: *Products*–cotton, rice, onions, beans, citrus fruits, wheat, corn, barley, sugar.
Industry: *Types*–food processing, textiles, chemicals, petrochemicals, construction, light manufacturing, iron and steel products, aluminum, cement, military equipment.
Trade (FY 2005): Exports–\$14.3 billion: petroleum, clothing and textiles, cotton, fruits and vegetables, manufactured goods. Major markets–EU, U.S., Middle East, Japan. Imports–\$24.1 billion: machinery and transport equipment, petroleum products, livestock, food and beverages, paper and wood products, chemicals. Major suppliers–EU, U.S., Japan.

PEOPLE AND HISTORY
Egypt is the most populous country in the Arab world and the second-most populous on the African Continent. Nearly all of the country's 79 million people live in Cairo and Alexandria; elsewhere on the banks of the Nile; in the Nile delta, which fans out north of Cairo; and along the Suez Canal. These regions are among the world's most densely populated, containing an average of over 3,820 persons per square mile (1,540 per sq. km.), as compared to 181 persons per sq. mi. for the country as a whole.

Small communities spread throughout the desert regions of Egypt are clustered around oases and historic trade and transportation routes. The government has tried with mixed success to encourage migration to newly irrigated land reclaimed from the desert. However, the proportion of the population living in rural areas has continued to decrease as people move to the cities in search of employment and a higher standard of living.

The Egyptians are a fairly homogeneous people of Hamitic origin. Mediterranean and Arab influences appear in the north, and there is some mixing in the south with the Nubians of northern Sudan. Ethnic minorities include a small number of Bedouin Arab nomads in the eastern and western deserts and in the Sinai, as well as some 50,000-100,000 Nubians clustered along the Nile in Upper (southern) Egypt.

The literacy rate is about 58% of the adult population. Education is free through university and compulsory from ages six through 15. Rates for primary and secondary education have strengthened in recent years. Ninety-three percent of children enter primary school today, compared with 87% in 1994. Major universities include Cairo University (100,000 students), Alexandria University, and the 1,000-year-old Al-Azhar University, one of the world's major centers of Islamic learning.

Egypt's vast and rich literature constitutes an important cultural element in the life of the country and in the Arab world as a whole. Egyptian novelists and poets were among the first to experiment with modern styles of Arabic literature, and the forms they developed have been widely imitated. Egyptian novelist Naguib Mahfouz was the first Arab to win the Nobel prize for literature. Egyptian books and films are available throughout the Middle East.

Egypt has endured as a unified state for more than 5,000 years, and archeological evidence indicates that a developed Egyptian society has existed for much longer. Egyptians take pride in their "pharaonic heritage" and in their descent from what they consider mankind's earliest civilization. The Arabic word for Egypt is *Misr*, which originally connoted "civilization" or "metropolis."

Archeological findings show that primitive tribes lived along the Nile long before the dynastic history of the pharaohs began. By 6000 B.C., organized agriculture had appeared.

In about 3100 B.C., Egypt was united under a ruler known as Mena, or Menes, who inaugurated the 30 pharaonic dynasties into which Egypt's ancient history is divided—the Old and the Middle Kingdoms and the New Empire. The pyramids at Giza (near Cairo), which were built in the fourth dynasty, testify to the power of the pharaonic religion and state. The Great Pyramid, the tomb of Pharaoh Khufu (also known as Cheops), is the only surviving monument of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Ancient Egypt reached the peak of its power, wealth, and territorial extent in the period called the New Empire (1567-1085 B.C.).

Persian, Greek, Roman, and Arab Conquerors
In 525 B., Cambyses, the son of Cyrus the Great, led a Persian invasion force that dethroned the last pharaoh of the 26th Dynasty. The country remained a Persian province until conquered by Alexander the Great in 322 BC, ushering in Ptolemaic rule Egypt that lasted for nearly 300 years.

Following a brief Persian reconquest, Egypt was invaded and conquered by Arab forces in 642. A process of Arabization and Islamization ensued. Although a Coptic Christian minority remained—and remains today, constituting about 10% of the population—the Arab language inexorably supplanted the indigenous Coptic tongue. For the next 1,300 years, a succession of Arab, Mameluke, and Ottoman caliphs, beys, and sultans ruled the country.



The Sphinx, Giza, Egypt, May 21, 1996. [AP Images]



European influence

The Ottoman Turks controlled Egypt from 1517 until 1882, except for a brief period of French rule under Napoleon Bonaparte. In 1805, Mohammed Ali, commander of an Albanian contingent of Ottoman troops, was appointed Pasha, founding the dynasty that ruled Egypt until his great-great grandson, Farouk I, was overthrown in 1952. Mohammed Ali the Great ruled Egypt until 1848, writing the first chapter in the modern history of Egypt. The growth of modern urban Cairo began in the reign of Ismail (1863-79). Eager to Westernize the capital, he ordered the construction of a European-style city to the west of the medieval core. The Suez Canal was completed in his reign in 1869, and its completion was celebrated by many events, including the commissioning of Verdi's "Aida" for the new opera house and the building of great palaces such as the Omar Khayyam (originally constructed to entertain the French Empress Eugenie, which is now the central section of the Cairo Marriott Hotel).

In 1882, British expeditionary forces crushed a revolt against the Ottoman rulers, marking the beginning of British occupation and the virtual inclusion of Egypt within the British Empire. In deference to growing nationalism, the U. K. unilaterally declared Egyptian independence in 1922. British influence, however, continued to dominate Egypt's political life and fostered fiscal, administrative, and governmental reforms.

In the pre-1952 revolution period, three political forces competed with one another: the Wafd, a broadly based nationalist political organization strongly opposed to British influence; King Fuad, whom the British had installed during World War I, and the British themselves, who were determined to maintain control over the Canal. Other political forces emerging in this period included the communist party (1925) and the Muslim Brotherhood (1928), which eventually became a potent political and religious force.

During World War II, British troops used Egypt as a base for Allied operations throughout the region. British troops were withdrawn to the Suez Canal area in 1947, but nationalist, anti-British feelings continued to grow after the war. On July 22-23, 1952, a group of disaffected army officers (the "free officers") led by Lt. Col. Gamal Abdel Nasser overthrew King Farouk, whom the military blamed for Egypt's poor performance in the 1948 war with Israel. Following a brief experiment with civilian rule, they abrogated the 1923 constitution and declared Egypt a republic on June 19, 1953. Nasser evolved into a charismatic leader, not only of Egypt, but the Arab world, promoting and implementing "Arab socialism." He nationalized Egypt's economy.

Nasser helped establish the Non-Aligned Movement of developing countries in September 1961, and continued to be a leading force in the movement until his death in 1970. When the United States held up military sales in reaction to Egyptian neutrality vis-à-vis Moscow, Nasser concluded an arms deal with Czechoslovakia in September 1955.

When the U.S. and the World Bank withdrew their offer to help finance the Aswan High Dam in mid-1956, Nasser nationalized the privately owned Suez Canal Company. The crisis that followed, exacerbated by growing tensions with Israel over guerrilla attacks from Gaza and Israeli reprisals, resulted in the invasion of Egypt that October by France, Britain, and Israel.

Nasser's domestic policies were arbitrary and frequently oppressive, yet generally popular. All opposition was stamped out, and opponents of the regime frequently were imprisoned without trial. Nasser's foreign and military policies helped provoke the Israel that culminated in 1967 that virtually destroyed Egypt's armed forces along with those of Jordan and Syria. Israel also occupied the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and the Golan Heights. Nasser, nonetheless, was revered by the masses in Egypt and elsewhere in the Arab world until his death in 1970.

After Nasser's death, another of the original "free officers," Vice President Anwar el-Sadat, was elected President. In 1971, Sadat concluded a treaty of friendship with the Soviet Union, but a year later, ordered Soviet advisers to leave. In 1973, he launched the October war with Israel, in which Egypt's armed forces achieved initial successes but were defeated in Israeli counterattacks.

Camp David and the Peace Process

In a momentous change from the Nasser era, President Sadat shifted Egypt from a policy of confrontation with Israel to one of peaceful accommodation through negotiations. Following the Sinai Disengagement Agreements of 1974 and 1975, Sadat created a fresh opening for progress by his dramatic visit to Jerusalem in November 1977. This led to President Jimmy Carter's invitation to President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin to join him in trilateral negotiations at Camp David.

The outcome was the historic Camp David accords, signed by Egypt and Israel and witnessed by the U.S. on September 17, 1978. The accords led to the March 26, 1979, signing of the Egypt-Israel peace treaty, by which Egypt regained control of the Sinai in May 1982. Throughout this period, U.S.-Egyptian relations steadily improved, but Sadat's willingness to break ranks by making peace with Israel earned him the enmity of most other Arab states.

Domestic Change

Sadat introduced greater political freedom and a new economic policy, the most important aspect of which was the *infitah* or "open door." This relaxed government controls over the economy and encouraged private, including foreign, investment. Sadat dismantled much of the existing political machine and brought to trial a number of former government officials accused of criminal excesses during the Nasser era.

Liberalization also included the reinstitution of due process and the legal banning of torture. Sadat tried to expand participation in the political process in the mid-1970s but later abandoned this effort. In the last years of his life, Egypt was racked by violence arising from discontent with Sadat's rule and sectarian tensions, and it experienced a renewed measure of repression.

From Sadat to Mubarak

On October 6, 1981, Islamic extremists assassinated President Sadat. Hosni Mubarak, Vice President since 1975 and air force commander during the October 1973 war, was elected President later that month. He was subsequently confirmed by popular referendum for four more 6-year terms, most recently in September 2005. Mubarak has maintained Egypt's commitment to the Camp David peace process, while at the same time re-establishing Egypt's position as an Arab leader. Egypt was readmitted to the Arab League in 1989. Egypt also has played a moderating role in such international fora as the UN and the Non-Aligned Movement.

Since 1991, Mubarak has overseen a domestic economic reform program to reduce the size of the public sector and expand the role of the private sector. There has been less progress in political reform. The November 2000 People's Assembly elections saw 34 members of the opposition win seats in the 454-seat assembly, facing a clear majority of 388 ultimately affiliated with the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP). Opposition parties continue to face various difficulties in mounting credible electoral challenges to the NDP. The Muslim Brotherhood, founded in Egypt in 1928, remains an illegal organization and is not recognized as a political party (current Egyptian law prohibits the formation of political parties based on religion). Members are known publicly and openly speak their views, although they do not explicitly identify themselves as members of the organization. Members of the Brotherhood have been elected to the People's Assembly and local councils as independents, and most recently scored a major victory in 2005 parliamentary elections, winning 20% of the seats, thus forming the largest opposition group.

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS

The Egyptian Constitution provides for a strong executive. Authority is vested in an elected president who can appoint one or more vice presidents, a prime minister, and a cabinet. The president's term runs for 6 years. Egypt's legislative body, the People's Assembly, has 454 members—444 popularly elected and 10 appointed by the president. The constitution reserves 50% of the assembly seats for "workers and peasants." The assembly sits for a 5-year term but can be dissolved earlier by the President. There also is a 264-member Shura (consultative) Council, in which 88 members are appointed and 174 elected for 6-year terms. Below the national level, authority is exercised by and through governors and mayors appointed by the central government and by popularly elected local councils.

Opposition party organizations make their views public and represent their followers at various levels in the political system, but power is concentrated in the hands of the President and the National Democratic Party majority in the People's Assembly and those institutions dominate the political system. In addition to the ruling National Democratic Party, there are 18 other legally recognized parties, whereas in 2004 there were only 16 other legally recognized parties.

The November 2000 elections were generally considered to have been more transparent and better executed than past elections, because of universal judicial monitoring of polling stations. On the other hand, opposition parties continue to lodge credible complaints about electoral manipulation by the government. There are significant restrictions on the political process and freedom of expression for non-governmental organizations, including professional syndicates and organizations promoting respect for human rights.

Progress was seen in the September 2005 presidential elections when parties were allowed to field candidates against President Mubarak and his National Democratic Party. In early 2005, President Mubarak proposed amending the constitution to allow, for the first time in Egypt's history, competitive, multi-candidate elections. An amendment was drafted by parliament and approved by public referendum in late May 2005. In September 2005, President Mubarak was reelected, according to official results, with 88% of the vote. His two principal challengers, Ayman Nour and Mo'ham Gom'a, took 7% and 3% of the vote respectively.

Egypt's judicial system is based on European (primarily French) legal concepts and methods. Under the Mubarak government, the courts have demonstrated increasing independence, and the principles of due process and judicial review have gained greater respect. The legal code is derived largely from the Napoleonic Code. Marriage

and personal status (family law) are primarily based on the religious law of the individual concerned, which for most Egyptians is Islamic Law (Sharia).

Principal Government Officials

President--Mohamed Hosny Mubarak
 Prime Minister--Dr. Ahmed Nazif
 Minister of Foreign Affairs--Ahmed Aboul Gheit
 Ambassador to the United States--Ambassador Nabil Fahmy
 Permanent Representative to the United Nations--Ambassador Maged Abdel Fattah Abdelaziz

Egypt maintains an [embassy](#) in the United States at 3521 International Court N.W., Washington, D.C., 20008 (tel. 202- 895-5400). The Washington consulate has the same address (tel. 202-966-6342). The Egyptian Mission to the United Nations is located at 304 East 44th Street, New York, N.Y. (tel. 212-305-0300). Egyptian consulates general are located at: 1110 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y., 10022 (tel. 212-759-7120); 1990 Post Oak Boulevard, Suite 2180, Houston, TX, 77056 (tel. 713-961-4915); 500 N. Michigan Avenue, Suite 1900, Chicago, IL, 60611 (tel. 312-828-9162); and 3001 Pacific Avenue, San Francisco, CA, 94115 (tel. 415-346-9700).

NATIONAL SECURITY

Egypt's armed forces, among the largest in the region, include the army, air defense, air force, and navy. The armed forces inventory includes equipment from the United States, France, Italy, the United Kingdom, the former Soviet Union, and China. Equipment from the former Soviet Union is being progressively replaced by more modern American, French, and British equipment, a significant portion of which is built under license in Egypt. To bolster stability and moderation in the region, Egypt has provided military assistance and training to a number of African and Arab states. Egypt remains a strong military and strategic partner of the United States.

ECONOMY

With the installation of the 2004 Egyptian parliament, the Government of Egypt began a new reform movement, following a stalled economic reform program begun in 1991, but moribund since the mid-1990s. In the past year, the cabinet economic team has simplified and reduced tariffs and taxes, improved the transparency of the national budget, revived stalled privatizations of public enterprises and implemented economic legislation designed to foster private sector-driven economic growth and improve Egypt's competitiveness. Despite these achievements, the economy is still hampered by government intervention, substantial subsidies for food, housing, and energy, and bloated public sector payrolls. Moreover, the public sector still controls most heavy industry.

In sectoral terms, agriculture is mainly in private hands, and has been largely deregulated, with the exception of cotton and sugar production. Construction, non-financial services, and domestic marketing are also largely private. The Egyptian economy, however, relies heavily on tourism, oil and gas exports, and Suez Canal revenues, much of which is controlled by the public sector and is also vulnerable to outside factors. The tourism sector suffered tremendously following a terrorist attack in Luxor in October 1997. The tourism sector feared a repeat of the downturn in tourist numbers when terrorists attacked resorts in the Sinai Peninsula in 2004 and 2005. So far, however, the sector has not suffered as greatly as expected.

The U.S. has a large assistance program in Egypt and provides funding for a variety of programs in addition to some cash transfers. A portion of U.S. assistance to Egypt under the 2003 Iraq war supplemental appropriations was provided in the form of bond guarantees, which were contingent upon Egyptian compliance with a series of economic conditions. Egypt met the conditions and in September 2005 issued \$1.25 billion in 10-year bonds that were fully guaranteed by the United States. To support the Middle East peace process through regional economic integration, the United States permits products to be imported from Egypt without tariffs if they have been produced in Qualified Industrial Zones and 11.7% of the inputs of these products originate from Israel.

Agriculture

Approximately one-third of Egyptian labor is engaged directly in farming, and many others work in the processing or trading of agricultural products. Nearly all of Egypt's agricultural production takes place in some 2.5 million hectares (6 million acres) of fertile soil in the Nile Valley and Delta. Some desert lands are being developed for agriculture, including the ambitious Toshka project in Upper Egypt, but some other fertile lands in the Nile Valley and Delta are being lost to urbanization and erosion.

Warm weather and plentiful water permit several crops a year. Further improvement is possible, but land is worked intensively and yields are high. Cotton, rice, wheat, corn, sugarcane, sugar beets, onions, and beans are the principal crops. Increasingly, a few modern operations are producing fruits, vegetables and flowers, in addition to cotton, for export. While the desert hosts some, livestock some, large, modern farms, more common traditional farms occupy one acre each, typically in a canal-irrigated area along the banks of the Nile. Many small farmers also have cows, water buffaloes, and chicken, although larger modern farms are becoming more important.

The United States is a major supplier of wheat, corn, and soybean products to Egypt, almost all through commercial sales. Egypt is, in fact, traditionally the U.S.'s largest market for wheat sales. U.S. agricultural sales to Egypt average \$1 billion annually. U.S. food assistance programs to Egypt ended in 1992 as Egypt became more prosperous. Egypt continues to receive modest food assistance through the World Food Program and from France.

"Egypt," wrote the Greek historian Herodotus 25 centuries ago, "is the gift of the Nile." The land's seemingly inexhaustible resources of water and soil carried by this mighty river created in the Nile Valley and Delta the world's most extensive oasis. Without the Nile, Egypt would be little more than a desert wasteland.

The river carves a narrow, cultivated floodplain, never more than 20 kilometers wide, as it travels northward toward Cairo from Lake Nasser on the Sudanese border, behind the Aswan High Dam. Just north of Cairo, the Nile spreads out over what was once a broad estuary that has been filled by riverine deposits to form a fertile delta about 250 kilometers wide (150 mi.) at the seaward base and about 160 kilometers (96 mi.) from south to north.

Before the construction of dams on the Nile, particularly the Aswan High Dam (started in 1952, completed in 1970), the fertility of the Nile Valley was sustained by the water flow and the silt deposited by the annual flood. Sediment is now obstructed by the Aswan High Dam and retained in Lake Nasser. The interruption of yearly, natural fertilization and the increasing salinity of the soil has been a manageable problem resulting from the dam. The benefits remain impressive: more intensive farming on millions of acres of land made possible by improved irrigation, prevention of flood damage, and the generation of billions of low-cost kilowatt hours of electricity.

The Western Desert accounts for about two-thirds of the country's land area. For the most part, it is a massive sandy plateau marked by seven major depressions. One of these, Fayoum, was connected about 3,600 years ago to the Nile by canals. Today, it is an important irrigated agricultural area.

Natural Resources

In addition to the agricultural capacity of the Nile Valley and Delta, Egypt's natural resources include petroleum, natural gas, phosphates, and iron ore. Crude oil is found primarily in the Gulf of Suez and in the Western Desert. Natural gas is found mainly in the Nile Delta, off the Mediterranean seashore, and in the Western Desert. Oil and gas accounts for approximately 12% of GDP. Export of petroleum and related products (including bunker and aviation sales) amounted to \$2.7 billion in fiscal year 2003-04.

Crude oil production has been in decline for several years, from a high of more than 920,000 barrels per day (BPD) in 1995 to less than 662,000 BPD as of April 2006. To minimize the growing domestic demand of petroleum products, currently estimated at 25 million metric tons per year, Egypt is encouraging the production of natural gas. Over a 5-year period, production of natural gas increased by approximately 75% to reach about 3.3 billion cubic feet per day (BCFD) by the end of FY 2003/04. Currently, gas accounts for almost 50% of all hydrocarbon usage in Egypt.

Over the last 22 years, more than 230 oil and gas exploration agreements have been signed and multinational oil companies spent more than \$27 billion in exploration companions. As of September 2003, crude oil reserves were estimated at 2.8 billion barrels, and proven natural gas reserves were estimated at 62 trillion cubic feet (TCF) with probable additional reserves totaling another 40-60 TCF. Texas-based Apache Oil Company is the largest American investor in Egypt, with a total investment of more than \$2.8 billion since 1996.

Egypt's excess of natural gas will more than meet its domestic demand for many years to come. The Ministry of Petroleum has determined that expanding the Egyptian petrochemical industry and increasing exports of natural gas as its most significant strategic objectives. As of September 2005, three liquefied natural gas (LNG) trains had been in operation. The first is in Damietta on the eastern side of the Delta and started exporting in early 2005. It is headed by the Spanish electric utility, Union Fenosa. The second LNG project is located at Idku on the western side of the Delta and started exporting in 2005. The first train started in April 2005, and the second in September. British Gas (BG) Group and the Malaysian state oil company Petronas are the major investors. Another project that will utilize gas for export and domestic consumption is the Mediterranean Gas Complex in Port Said where the Italian company AGIP and BP are the main shareholders. This facility will have a total cost of about \$315 million and went on line in late 2004.

Egypt and Jordan established the Eastern Gas Company to export natural gas to Jordan, and then later to Syria and Lebanon. In summer 2003 Egypt began exporting gas to Jordan via a new pipeline from El Arish on Egypt's north Sinai coast to Tabā on the Gulf of Aqaba, and then underwater to the Jordanian city of Aqaba. Gas exports to Jordan generated gross revenues of approximately \$60 million in 2003/04 and are currently reaching \$85-100 million.

Transport and Communication

Transportation facilities in Egypt are centered in Cairo and largely follow the pattern of settlement along the Nile. The main line of the nation's 4,800-kilometer (2,800-mi.) railway network runs from Alexandria to Aswan. The well-maintained road network has expanded rapidly to over 21,000 miles, covering the Nile Valley and Delta, Mediterranean and Red Sea coasts, the Sinai, and the Western oases.

Egypt Air provides reliable domestic air service to major tourist destinations from its Cairo hub, in addition to overseas routes. The Nile River system (about 1,600 km. or 1,000 mi.) and the principal canals (1,600 km.) are important locally for transportation. The Suez Canal is a major waterway of international commerce and navigation, linking the Mediterranean and Red Seas. Major ports are Alexandria, Port Said, and Damietta on the Mediterranean, and Suez and Safra on the Red Sea.

Egypt has long been the cultural and informational center of the Arab world, and Cairo is the region's largest publishing and broadcasting center. There are eight daily newspapers with a total circulation of more than 2 million, and a number of monthly newspapers, magazines, and journals. The majority of political parties have their own newspapers, and these papers conduct a lively, often highly partisan, debate on public issues.

Egyptian ground-broadcast television (ETV) is government controlled and depends heavily on commercial revenue. ETV sells its specially produced programs and soap operas to the entire Arab world. In addition to Egyptian programming, the Middle East Broadcast Company, a Saudi television station transmitting from London (MBC), Arab Radio and Television (ART), Al-Jazeera Egipt station, and other Gulf stations as well as Western networks such as CNN and BBC, provide access to more international programs to Egyptians who own satellite receivers.

ETV has two main channels, six regional channels, and three satellite channels. Of the two main channels, Channel I uses mainly Arabic, while Channel II is dedicated to foreigners and more cultured viewers, broadcasting news in English and French as well as Arabic.

Egyptian Satellite channels broadcast to the Middle East, Europe, and the U.S. East Coast. In April 1998, Egypt launched its own satellite known as NileSat 101. Seven specialized channels cover news, culture, sports, education, entertainment, health, and drama. A second, digital satellite, NileSat 102, was launched in August 2000. Many of its channels are rented to other stations.

Three new private satellite-based TV stations were launched in November 2001, marking a great change in Egyptian government policy. Dream TV 1 and 2 produce cultural programming, broadcast contemporary video clips and films featuring Arab and international actors, as well as soap operas, another private station focuses on business and general news. Both private channels transmit on NileSat.

Radio in Egypt almost all government controlled, using 44 short-wave frequencies, 18 medium-wave stations, and four FM stations. There are seven regional radio stations covering the country. Egyptian Radio transmits 60 hours daily overseas in 33 languages and one hundred hours daily within Egypt. In 2000, Radio Cairo introduced new specialized (thematic) channels on its FM station. So far, they include news, music, and sports. Radio enjoys more freedom than TV in its news programs, talk shows and analysis.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

Geography, population, history, military strength, and diplomatic expertise give Egypt extensive political influence in the Middle East and within the Non-Aligned Movement as a whole. Cairo has been a crossroads of Arab commerce and culture for millennia, and its intellectual and Islamic institutions are at the center of the region's social and cultural development.

The Arab League headquarters is in Cairo, and the Secretary General of the League is traditionally an Egyptian. Former Egyptian Foreign Minister Amre Moussa is the present Secretary General of the Arab League. President Mubarak has often chaired the African Union (formerly the Organization of African Unity). Former Egyptian Deputy Prime Minister Boutros Boutros-Ghali served as Secretary General of the United Nations from 1991 to 1996.

Egypt is a key partner in the search for peace in the Middle East and resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Sadat's groundbreaking trip to Israel in 1977, the 1978 Camp David Accords, and the 1979 Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty represented a fundamental shift in the politics of the region—from a strategy of confrontation to one of peace as a strategic choice. Egypt was subsequently ostracized by other Arab states and ejected from the Arab League from 1979 to 1989. Egypt played an important role in the negotiations leading to the Madrid Peace Conference in 1991, which, under U.S. and Russian sponsorship, brought together all parties in the region to discuss Middle East peace. This support has continued to the present, with President Mubarak often intervening personally to promote peace negotiations. In 1996, he hosted the Sharm El-Sheikh "Summit of the Peacemakers" attended by President Clinton and other world leaders. In 2000, he hosted two summits at Sharm El-Sheikh and one at Taba in an effort to resume the Camp David negotiations suspended in July of 2000, and in June 2003, Mubarak hosted President Bush for another summit on the Middle East peace process. Throughout mid-2004, Egypt worked closely with Israel and the Palestinian Authority to facilitate stability following Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, which occurred in August and September of 2005. Prior to this Egypt and Israel reached an agreement that allowed Egypt to deploy additional forces along the Philadelphi Corridor in an attempt to control the border and prevent the smuggling of weapons.

Egypt played a key role during the 1990-91 Gulf crisis. President Mubarak helped assemble the international coalition and deployed 35,000 Egyptian troops against Iraq to liberate Kuwait. The Egyptian contingent was the third-largest in the coalition forces, after the U.S. and U.K. In the aftermath of the Gulf war, Egypt signed the Damascus declaration with Syria and the Gulf states to strengthen Gulf security. Egypt continues to contribute regularly to UN peacekeeping missions, most recently in East Timor, Sierra Leone, and Liberia. In August 2004, Egypt was actively engaged in seeking a solution to the crisis in the Darfur region of Sudan, including the dispatch of military monitors. Following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, Egypt, which has itself been the target of terrorist attacks, has been a key supporter of the U.S. war against terrorists and terrorist organizations such as Osama bin Ladin and al-Qaeda, and actively supported the Iraqi Governing Council, as well as the subsequent government of Prime Minister Alawi. In July 2005, terrorists attacked the Egyptian city of Sharm El Sheikh. In the same month, Egypt's envoy to Iraq was assassinated.

U.S.-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS

The United States and Egypt enjoy a strong and friendly relationship based on shared mutual interest in Middle East peace and stability, reviving the Egyptian economy and strengthening trade relations, and promoting regional security. Over the years, Egypt and the United States have worked together assiduously to expand Middle East peace negotiations, hosting talks, negotiations, and the Middle East and North Africa Economic (MENA) Conference. Multinational exercises, U.S. assistance to Egypt's military modernization program, and Egypt's role as a contributor to various UN peacekeeping operations continually reinforce the U.S.-Egyptian military relationship.

An important pillar of the bilateral relationship remains U.S. security and economic assistance to Egypt, which expanded significantly in the wake of the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty in 1979. U.S. military aid to Egypt totals over \$1.3 billion annually. In addition, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) provided over \$25 billion in economic and development assistance to Egypt between 1975 and 2002. A shift in assistance from infrastructure, health, food supply, and agriculture toward market-based economic development, good governance, and training programs is reflected in the motto, "From Aid to Trade." The Commodity Import Program, through which USAID provides hundreds of millions of dollars in financing to enable the Egyptian private sector to import U.S. goods, remains one of the largest and most popular USAID programs. Since 2003, U.S. assistance is also focusing more on economic reform, education, civil society, and other programs supported by the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI).

U.S. military cooperation has helped Egypt modernize its armed forces and strengthen regional security and stability. Under Foreign Military Financing (FMF) programs, the U.S. has provided F-4 jet aircraft, F-16 jet fighters, M-60A3 and M1A1 tanks, armored personnel carriers, Apache helicopters, antiaircraft missile batteries, aerial surveillance aircraft, and other equipment. The U.S. and Egypt also participate in combined military exercises, including deployments of U.S. troops to Egypt. Every other year, Egypt hosts Operation Bright Star, a multilateral military exercise with the U.S., and the largest military exercise in the region. Units of the U.S. 6th Fleet are regular visitors to Egyptian ports.

Principal U.S. Embassy Officials

Ambassador—[Francis J. Ricciardone](#)

Deputy Chief of Mission—Stuart E. Jones

Economic/Political Affairs—William R. Stewart

Consular Affairs—Richard Hermann

Management Affairs—Nick Baskey

Public Affairs—Haynes Mahoney

USAID—Ken Ellis

Defense Attaché—COL Ted Seel

Office of Military Cooperation—Maj Gen Michael Collings

Foreign Commercial Service—Amer Kayani

Foreign Agricultural Service—Peter Kurz

The [U.S. Embassy](#) is located at 8 Kamal ElDin Salah St., Garden City, Cairo, Egypt, tel: [20] [2] 797-3300, fax [20] [2] 797-3200.

TRAVEL AND BUSINESS INFORMATION

The U.S. Department of State's Consular Information Program advises Americans traveling and residing abroad through Consular Information Sheets, Public Announcements, and Travel Warnings. **Consular Information Sheets** exist for all countries and include information on entry and exit requirements, currency regulations, health conditions, safety and security, crime, political disturbances, and the addresses of the U.S. embassies and consulates abroad. **Public Announcements** are issued to disseminate information quickly about terrorist threats and other relatively short-term conditions overseas that pose significant risks to the security of American travelers. **Travel Warnings** are issued when the State Department recommends that Americans avoid travel to a certain country because the situation is dangerous or unstable.

For the latest security information, Americans living and traveling abroad should regularly monitor the Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs Internet web site at <http://www.travel.state.gov>, where the current [Worldwide Caution](#), [Public Announcements](#), and [Travel Warnings](#) can be found. [Consular Affairs Publications](#), which contain information on obtaining passports and planning a safe trip abroad, are also available at <http://www.travel.state.gov>. For additional information on international travel, see <http://www.usa.gov/Citizen/Topics/Travel/International.shtml>.

The Department of State encourages all U.S. citizens traveling or residing abroad to register via the [State Department's travel registration](#) website or at the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate abroad. Registration will make your presence and whereabouts known in case it is necessary to contact you in an emergency and will enable you to receive up-to-date information on security conditions.

Emergency information concerning Americans traveling abroad may be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll free in the U.S. and Canada or the regular toll line 1-202-501-4444 for callers outside the U.S. and Canada.

The National Passport Information Center (NPIC) is the U.S. Department of State's single, centralized public contact center for U.S. passport information. Telephone: 1-877-4USA-PPT (1-877-487-2778). Customer service representatives and operators for TDD/TTY are available Monday-Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 12:00 midnight, Eastern Time, excluding federal holidays.

Travelers can check the latest health information with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia. A hotline at 877-FYI-TRIP (877-394-8747) and a web site at <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/default.aspx> give the most recent health advisories, immunization recommendations or requirements, and advice on food and drinking water safety for regions and countries. A booklet entitled "Health Information for International Travel" (HHS publication number CDC-95-6280) is available from the U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402, tel. (202) 512-1800.

Further Electronic Information

Department of State Web Site. Available on the Internet at <http://www.state.gov>, the Department of State web site provides timely, global access to official U.S. foreign policy information, including [Background Notes](#) and [daily press briefings](#) along with the directory of [key officers](#) of Foreign Service posts and more. The Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) provides security information and regional news that impact U.S. companies working abroad through its website <http://www.osac.gov>

[Export.gov](#) provides a portal to all export-related assistance and market information offered by the federal government and provides trade leads, free export counseling, help with the export process, and more.

[STAT-USA/Internet](#), a service of the U.S. Department of Commerce, provides authoritative economic, business, and international trade information from the Federal government. The site includes current and historical trade-related releases, international market research, trade opportunities, and country analysis and provides access to the [National Trade Data Bank](#).

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Video [Profile](#) of his Legacy

Yasser Arafat

1929-2004



“The dream we entertained at the time was to establish a democratic State of Palestine in which Muslims, Christians, and Jews would live with equal

rights and
obligations
as one
unified
community,
like other
peoples in
this
contemporary
world.”

--Yasser
Arafat

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Yasser Arafat President of the Palestinian Authority

Born: 24 August, 1929, in Cairo, Egypt. Died: 11 November, 2004, in Paris, aged 75.

YASSER Arafat fought for the Palestinian cause all his life - and his indomitable style of leadership over 35 years ensured he never lost control.

Over the decades he advocated violence, peace, war and diplomacy to try to establish the state of Palestine.

As steps to a settlement with Israel were played out in the last days of his life, it seemed a cruel twist of fate that his health should fail.

Although George Bush, the United States president, refused to negotiate with Arafat, the Palestinian leader welcomed his re-election and expressed hope that he would be "more engaged" in solving the Middle East conflict.

The decline began last month when it emerged that the 75-year-old was suffering from flu and gallstones.

Speculation that he might have stomach cancer was dismissed, but after he briefly passed out at his West Bank headquarters, Israel lifted a two-year travel ban to allow Arafat to fly to a French military hospital for tests.

In his last days Arafat's grip on power appeared to be slipping. As the ailing leader lay in hospital, his subordinates assumed control of the major Palestinian organisations and some politicians predicted his domination was at an end.

Before flying to France, he had resided at his Ramallah headquarters for more than two-and-a-half years.

Israeli attacks had turned part of the compound into rubble, but Arafat stubbornly stayed on, fearing he would never be able to return if he left. It was a strange existence - and end - for a man leading one side of one of the most volatile conflicts in recent history.

Palestinians already fear infighting over who might succeed Arafat - he had unrivalled popularity and authority over the security forces.

Mohammed Abdel-Raouf Arafat As Qudwa al-Husseini was born on 24 August, 1929, in Cairo, Egypt. His father was a Palestinian textile merchant with part-Egyptian ancestry while his mother came from an old Palestinian family in Jerusalem.

At the age of five, his mother died and he was sent to live with his uncle in Jerusalem, which was then under British rule - a set-up much opposed by both Jews and Palestinians.

One of Arafat's earliest memories was of British soldiers breaking into his uncle's house after midnight, beating members of the family and smashing furniture.

Four years later he was taken back to Cairo by his father, but the two were not close. When his father

died, in 1952, he did not attend the funeral.

By 17, Arafat was smuggling arms into Palestine to fight the British and Jewish settlers, and at 19 he left his studies at King Faud University to fight in Gaza.

After the Arabs were defeated and the state of Israel was created in 1948, he returned to university in Cairo to study for a degree in engineering.

In 1958 he left Egypt for Kuwait, where he used his engineering skills, although he spent most of his time developing Fatah, the Palestinian National Liberation Movement.

Arafat and his colleagues advocated an armed struggle against Israel, and he returned to Palestine to set up Fatah on 1 January, 1965. Collective leadership was never his plan, and his contemporaries noted how he "exercised total control over the Fatah war chest, and bribed people to join him".

At the same time, the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) was being set up under the Arab League in Jordan. Arafat moved there in 1967, where two years later he was elected chairman of the executive committee of the PLO, a title he kept until his death.

The leader adopted violent means to get the world's attention, hijacking planes and carrying out terrorist acts.

In 1969, the PLO was expelled by King Hussein of Jordan, and Arafat moved to Lebanon, from where he directed attacks on northern Israeli settlements. In 1982, prompted by the murder of Shlomo Argov, the Jewish state's ambassador to London, the Israeli army swept into Lebanon forcing Arafat and the PLO to exit by sea.

From here he moved to Tunisia, and continued his struggle for independence, surviving assassination attempts, a plane crash and a serious stroke. He married Suha Tawil, a Christian Palestinian woman half his age, with whom he had a daughter Zahwa.

Many Palestinians compared him to David Ben-Gurion, Israel's founder and first leader, seeing Arafat as an Arab pioneer who struggled to lead his people back to their promised land. Many Israelis, by contrast, regarded him as an arch-terrorist, an opportunist who endorsed peace merely as a tactic to destroy Israel - "a beast on two legs", as the late Israeli leader Menachem Begin once called him.

In 1988, Arafat changed tactics and made a speech to the United Nations renouncing terrorism and supporting "peace and security" in the region.

In September 1993, Arafat and the then Israeli prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin, signed the Oslo Accord, which pledged to place the Israeli-occupied Gaza Strip, and eventually the rest of the West Bank, under Palestinian rule.

The following year, Arafat, Rabin and Shimon Peres were jointly awarded the Nobel peace prize. Rabin was assassinated by a right-wing Israeli extremist during a rally in Tel Aviv in 1995.

In 1996, Arafat was elected president of the Palestine Authority, and had secured his reputation of a more dictatorial than democratic style of rule.

When the promises of the Oslo agreement never materialised, and the violence in the area continued, his popularity waned. He was seen to have little control over the more violent elements among the extremist Arab groups. But - ever the survivor - Arafat's knack for countering repeated targeting by

the Israelis turned the Palestinians back towards him.

Arafat considered himself a leader of significant international standing and came to Britain in October 2001 to meet Tony Blair. His visit to Downing Street led to Mr Blair reportedly telling the Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon that Arafat was making a "concerted" effort to end the violence. In the previous 12 months, more than 800 people - most of them Palestinians - had been killed.

But his role on the international diplomacy circuit was cut short more than two-and-a-half years ago when he holed up in his Ramallah headquarters. But despite his exclusion, he kept a firm grip on his party and swatted challenges to his authority.

In May 2003, fellow PLO member Mahmoud Abbas was appointed prime minister of the Palestinian Authority, but Arafat's power was never seriously challenged. Abbas may have been backed by the Bush administration - which considered Arafat to be "tainted by terrorism" - but he never got Arafat's support and eventually resigned in September last year.

In recent upsurges in violence, Arafat maintained a relatively low profile. In September, he voiced support for the British hostage Ken Bigley, pledging to help in "every way possible" to secure his release. Ultimately, his efforts - if he made them - failed.

Ironically, the ultimate success story of his life came a step closer in his final weeks. Late last month, the Israeli parliament voted in favour of Sharon's plan to pull all Jewish settlers out of the occupied Gaza Strip by next September. With Arafat suffering chronic stomach pains, it was left to Palestinian Authority spokesman Nabil Abu Rudeina to welcome the news.

"We are in favour of any withdrawal from occupied land, even one centimetre," he said.

For Yasser Arafat, it was too late to see what he spent decades fighting for - at least partially - become a reality.

He is survived by his wife and daughter.

DR. HAIDER ABDOUL SHAFI
1919-2007

*"This is the moment of truth;
you must have the courage
to recognize it and the will
to implement it for our truth can
no longer be hidden away in
the dark recesses of inadvertency
or neglect. The people of
Palestine look at you with
a straightforward, direct
gaze, seeking to touch your*



- . Read a 2002 Interview with Dr. Shafi from the [Al-Ahram Weekly](#)
- . Read his obituary in the [NY Times](#)
- . **Read his obituary from**
The Economist

*heart, for you have dared to stir
up hopes that can't be
abandoned." --*

--Dr. Haider Abdoul Shafi



Icon dies undefeated

by Ramzy Baroud from the Khaleej Times Online

October 2 2007

THE recent death of Dr Haider Abdel Shafi could not have come at a worse time. Bearing in mind

In the spring of 1948, around March as he remembered it, Haidar Abdel Shafi found himself at nightfall, waiting, in a small mud hut by the side of the main road in Deir al-Balah. Around him stretched groves of olive and orange trees. Palestine, in those days, was a community of peasants and landowners; a man was judged by how many trees he had. Haidar's father had had none, preferring—as he told the astonished neighbours—to save money for schooling his six children rather than buy plantations. The lanky boy, with his dark brows, had shaken the dust from his feet and gone away to study. But he was back now, defending the land.

Beside him lay a bag of first-aid equipment. He was a doctor, trained in Beirut and Jerusalem, now based in Gaza, and one of only about a dozen practising in the whole southern sector of Palestine. With his few colleagues he had founded, in 1945, a southern branch of the Palestine Medical Society, and together they had attended the first Palestine Medical Congress. Since his student days, when he had first been inspired by Arab pan-nationalism, he had looked

the grim shortcomings within the Palestinian leadership, and the lack of any serious attempts to rectify the situation, the loss of this unique and iconic leader feels all the more acute.

Here was someone who always managed to transcend factionalism and religiosity, tribal politics and self-serving ideologies, maintaining his principles through any external difficulties. He co-founded the PLO in the 1960's and went on to start the Palestinian Crescent Society in Gaza in the 70's. The resilient man led the Palestinian delegation to Madrid peace talks in 1991, and in 1993 resigned the post after learning from his hotel radio that Yasser Arafat had reached a secret agreement in Oslo without consulting with Palestinian negotiators in Spain. Abdel Shafi told me, in the only exchange I had with him, that learning of Arafat's secret crusade from the media was a particularly embarrassing moment for him.

In the same interview in 2002, Abdel Shafi also spoke at length about the Palestinian uprising, talks with Israel, internal corruption and division, democracy and more. Then aged 83, Abdel Shafi displayed the spirit of an idealistic young fighter with unswerving vision, while also demonstrating the wisdom borne of five decades of selfless struggle and steadfastness. For him despair was really never an option. Internal unity, democracy, resistance at all fronts and dialogue on equal basis were his ultimate goals. He seemed indefatigable, but his failing health was apparent his most significant enemy, as a few years later he was diagnosed with cancer and on Sept 25, 2007 he passed away.

I wonder if the ageing warrior knew of the painful details of the Palestinian internal strife, of the shameful and mutual crackdowns on Palestinian media and freedom of expression in the West Bank and Gaza and of the division at every turn in Palestinian life. The Palestine Abdel Shafi left behind was not the Palestine that he had fought for with astonishing dedication.

In his fight, Abdel was not afraid to speak his mind and criticise what disrupted the struggle for Palestinian unity and true sovereignty. He blamed Arafat and his associates for many of the post-Oslo disasters that had befallen his people, chastising the Palestinian leadership for capitulating at Oslo, for accepting far less than what his people's rights and aspirations demanded. He refused to take part in the 'democracy' charade which instituted, among other pretences, a parliament that had no authority, neither to defy Arafat's will nor Israel's (whose oppressive occupation only intensified after the 'peace agreements' were signed).

Naturally, shortly after being voted to parliament, Abdel Shafi was the first to quit, lending his support instead to the Palestinian National Initiative which advocated for national unity, democracy and clean government. He saw clearly that while Palestinians may not be able to control Israel's actions, they were certainly capable of coordinating and correcting their own fallouts. This was really all that he asked.

In stark contrast, Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas has decided to use the Israeli colonial project to his own advantage. Unlike Abdel Shafi, who would have challenged Israeli domination with a collective Palestinian stance of complete cohesion at home and abroad, Abbas (dubbed a 'moderate' and a 'pragmatic' leader by mainstream media) opted for the deadly option; he collaborated with the enemy. As Palestinians in Gaza are murdered at will, completely besieged and denied the most basic human rights, Abbas' 'pragmatic' advisers seem to have warned him against locking horns with the US and Israel. The strategy totally overlooks the fact that defeatism has never helped an oppressed nation recover its lands, its rights and its freedom.

Unfortunately Abdel Shafi is no longer there to infuse such timely reminders. The soil of Gaza has finally claimed him the same way it claimed the bodies of many resilient Palestinian men and women, young and old. One can only hope that the spirit of Abdel Shafi is now free to wander beyond the enclosed borders, the electric fences and the blocked military zones that turned the poor strip of land into a prison, comparable in its isolation to that of Robben Island where Nelson Mandela and his comrades were held for many years.

As long as Abbas and many in his Fatah party remain busy concocting schemes to weaken their rivals in Hamas, and while both parties plot to fortify their political positions in what must be the most embarrassing media circus in Palestinian history, Israel no longer faces any serious resistance. Instead, Israeli politicians now face a different sort challenge — how to widen the gap between the divided Palestinians? The Israeli media is filled with politicians' statements to validate the notion of division as fact. According to Avi Issacharoff (writing for Haaretz), the latest question is whether releasing Fatah leader Marwan Barghouti will help unify all ranks of Fatah, thus strengthening Abbas and accelerating the break-up of Hamas.

on doctoring as a form of resistance: to illness, to poverty and, by strengthening the common people, to political troubles and oppressions. When it came to organising Palestinians, a community not easily made coherent, a network of doctors, clinics and waiting rooms might serve as well as any political party. But crouching in a hut by the main road was not his normal mode of operation.

Somewhere ahead of him were a group of *fedayeen*, Arab guerrilla fighters, who had come to attack the Jewish settlement of Kfar Darom. The settlement, one of many built on purchased land in Palestine in the years before the establishment of Israel, was well-defended, surrounded by circle after circle of barbed wire. Within the circles the ground was mined, and the whole scene was overlooked by Jewish observation towers.

The battle, though it raged all night, was a bloody defeat for the *fedayeen*: 12 killed, with Dr Abdel Shafi's first-aid bag no match for the mines and the snipers. The Zionists seemed superbly organised. Indeed, it was usually so. All through his long career, in which he was a

Unlike Abbas, the Palestinian doctor Abdel Shafi didn't fail his people, despite all of the hardships he had to endure. He did all that a single person can do on his own, and more. Shafi's funeral in Gaza reportedly united Palestinians of all factions. The man had spent much of his energy in achieving such a noble goal during his life; now at least his death has brought about a fleeting moment of unity, a reminder that such a thing is still possible.

In his speech at the peace conference in Madrid on October 31, 1991, Abdel Shafi recited a verse of Mahmoud Darwish's poetry: "My homeland is not a suitcase, and I am no traveller." At the time, my father's home in a Gaza refugee camp was crowded with neighbours who had come to listen to the televised speech and they all cried silently in response. I am sure that those of them still alive have wept again, this time at the passing of the Palestinian doctor, an icon of hope whose legacy, like his life, will always be cherished.

Ramzy Baroud, a veteran Arab American journalist, teaches mass communication at Australia Curtin University of Technology, Malaysia Campus.

Biography

Dr. Haidar Abdel Shafi (Haydar 'Abd al-Shafi): Physician; leading secular Palestinian nationalist leader in the Gaza Strip. Highly respected non-partisan figure, though with links to the Palestinian People's Party (formerly the Pal. Communist Party). Regularly commands 5-10% popular support in JMCC public opinion polls. Physician; head of the Red Crescent Society for the Gaza Strip; Commissioner-General of the Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizen's Rights. A founding member of the [Palestinian National Initiative](#), launched June 2002; also a member of the Birzeit University Board of Trustees.

Born in Gaza in 1919, just at the end of the Ottoman occupation of Palestine. One of six children of Sheikh Muheiddin Abdul Shafi, head of the Higher Islamic Council (Waqf - the authority which administered the affairs of the Muslims in Palestine) and custodian of the holy places in Gaza and (from 1925-27) Hebron.

Attended primary school in Gaza; secondary education as a boarder at the Arab College in Jerusalem, graduated 1936. Left for Beirut, to study medicine at the American University, where he joined the Arab Nationalist Movement (dedicated to Arab nationalism and the founding of a Palestinian state). Graduated 1943, went to work at the British mandate government's Municipal Hospital (Mustashfa Al-Baladiya) in Jaffa.

In 1944 joined the Jaysh al-Badiah (desert army) of the British Jordanian Army, then part of a new British Ninth Army intended to open a second front - which never materialized - in the Balkans. Spent the war instead in various locations in Palestine: Al-Azraq, Ashona, Jericho, Gaza. Resigned his commission at war's end; returned to Gaza and entered private practice. Co-founded a branch of the Palestine Medical Society (1945), and participated in the first Palestine Medical Congress in 1946.

Provided medical support to Palestinian guerillas in the clashes between Jews and Arabs following the UN partition resolution in 1947. Ran a medical clearing station in Gaza the first Arab-Israeli war (1948), when Gaza was flooded with 200,000 refugees. Worked closely with the Quakers,

founder-member of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and represented Gaza on the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), the doctor's chief lament about his own people was their disarray. They had little notion of democracy, being loyal instead to Yasser Arafat, a strongman who monopolised all decision-making and surrounded himself with thieves. And they turned out in the end to have no capacity for national unity, splintering into factions— Hamas, Fatah, Islamic Jihad and the rest—who then fought one another. The Israelis, as he often pointed out, needed only to watch the Palestinians destroy themselves, as they had watched that March night from their high, dark towers.

Requiem for the olive trees

Dr Abdel Shafi was that rarest of figures, a secular and non-sectarian Palestinian leader whose integrity and outspokenness made him a model for all the rest. He was of the left, in an old socialist way, but was never a member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine; a doctor's role, he seemed to believe, was to stay detached

who provided humanitarian relief for Gaza Palestinians until UNRWA was established in 1951. Left Gaza for the US, where he studied surgery at the Miami Valley Hospital in Dayton, Ohio. Returned to Gaza - now Egyptian-ruled - in 1954, worked as a surgeon for the Egyptians at the Tal Zahur Hospital.

Israel invaded and temporarily occupied Gaza in 1956, installing a municipal council with Abdel Shafi as one of its 10 members. Gained a reputation as troublemaker by comparing Israeli rule unfavourably to Egyptian control, and refusing to serve on council.

In 1957, married Hoda Khalidi, daughter of a prominent Jerusalem family, refugees in Alexandria since the 1948 war. Appointed by the Egyptians as head of medical services in the Gaza Strip, 1957-60; during this period, became a strong admirer and personal friend of Gamal Abdel Nasser. Returned to private practice 1960.

Served as chairman of the first Palestinian Legislative Council in Gaza (1962-4). Also a delegate to the first all-Palestinian conference (Palestinian National Congress) which convened in Jerusalem in 1964 and established the PLO (under Ahmed Shukeiry). Served as a member of the first PLO-Executive Committee (1964-5). Developed a constituency and political base through the Gaza clinic system, and by 1966 was the leading PLO figure in the Gaza Strip.

Worked as a volunteer at the Shifa hospital in Gaza during the 1967, in which Israel again occupied Gaza, this time for the long-term. Temporarily detained by Israel at war's end, suspected of support for the military activities of George Habash's PFLP, an offshoot of the Arab Nationalist Movement. (Abdel Shafi denies membership, but expresses sympathy for its goals). Upon release, he refused all co-operation with Israel's plans to tie Gaza to Israel through the development of a common infrastructure, as punishment Moshe Dayan expelled him for three months to the isolated Sinai village of Nahal in 1969. Deported again on 12 Sept 1970, this time to Lebanon for two months, along with 5 other prominent members of the Gazan leadership, in retaliation for a PFLP hijacking.

Founder and Director of Palestinian Red Crescent Society in the Gaza Strip from 1972, providing free medical care and a forum for cultural activities. Distanced himself from Egypt after the Camp David Accord of Sept 1978, which he saw as an Egyptian sell-out of the Palestinians to get back Sinai. After vocal opposition to the Accord, Israel confined him to Gaza, and threatened the Gaza Red Crescent with closure.

In May 1988, during the first intifada, he was one of three Palestinians ([Saeb Erekat](#) and Hanan Ashrawi were the others) to participate in ABC Nightline's [Town Hall meeting](#) from Jerusalem. First time that Palestinians had directly addressed an Israeli (and Western) audience. Turning point in Western perception of the PLO. Led the Palestinian element of the Pal-Jordanian delegation to the Madrid Peace Conference in 1991, and subsequently led the Palestinian negotiation team for 22 months in the Washington talks (1992-3).

Resigned from delegation in April 1993 (over settlements). Resumed position under pressure - only to urge the suspension of Palestinian participation in the talks in May 1993: *"From the beginning when we started negotiations in Washington, we insisted that Israel should stop the settlement process, because it is a contradiction with the terms of reference. When Israel refused to stop, and the American sponsor did not compel Israel to abide by the terms of reference, the negotiation process then lost its credibility."* Eventually made final break with the Palestinian negotiating team over Oslo. Abdel Shafi was one of the first to predict that the Oslo process would collapse, because it failed to tackle the issue of settlements.

Elected to the Palestinian Legislative Council in 1996 as member for Gaza, gaining highest number

from such affiliations. Far more useful was his decision to found and direct the Gaza branch of the Red Crescent, his own rallying organisation for Palestinian improvement. The Islamists attacked him, and in 1981 burned his clinic down; he noted then, stoically, that the Israelis who then ruled Gaza did not trouble to intervene.

On both the PLO and the PLC he was a gadfly, denouncing corruption and resigning with much publicity from the PLC, in 1997, because it was doing nothing to counter Israeli ambitions. The Palestinian Authority infuriated him because it would not control the *intifada* and was allowing Palestinians (though, he stressed, they had every reason to rebel) to commit random violence against Jewish civilians. He never ran for president in the 1996 elections, but might have done well if he had.

Though the Israelis twice deported him and then confined him to Gaza for his long-term refusal to co-operate, he did not oppose the existence of Israel. The Jewish presence was a reality, and the Jewish state had to be accepted. Nor did he dislike Jews: at Sabbath dusks, as a

of votes of any member. Ran for speakership of the PLC, but lost to Ahmed Qurai' (Abu Alaa) by 57-31 votes; instead took up leadership of the PLC's political committee. Walked out of April 96 Palestine National Congress meeting, arguing that Arafat should not amend PN Charter to recognize Israel until Israel gives reciprocal recognition. (Though he does support the Two-State solution: *"There is no problem of coexistence. The Jewish presence is a reality to be acknowledged"*.) Announced intention to resign from PLC in October 1997 (effective from 30 March 1998) on the grounds that it did not have any real power to change the Palestinians' situation; also called for more democracy within the PNA, and a national unity leadership.

A long-time proponent of a less PA-centric (and less Arafat-centric) Palestinian leadership. In April 1998 initiated unity talks for all factions in Gaza, to include Fatah, Hamas, the Islamic Jihad and the left-wing PFLP and DFLP. Describes the Al-Aqsa intifada as a spontaneous rejection of ten years of fruitless negotiations which Israel has used to create facts on the ground; supports the right of the Palestinians to fight, but opposes suicide bombings and is critical of the disorganized nature of the resistance. Urged the PA to organize the intifada, rather than distance itself from it, and to widen its democratic base by forming a government of [national unity](#), even if this means that PNA would be allied with groups unacceptable to Western public opinion, like HAMAS and Islamic Jihad: *"You see it is our right; it is not the business of the US nor of the European community how we manage our own affairs, to establish a national unity authority is our private concern"*.

Calls for a Pal unity govt to show the world the essentially defensive nature of Palestinian resistance by fighting only in the Occupied Territories and only against Israeli settlement activity, and its associated activities such as home demolitions and farmland expropriations: *"I think we should face the world with this position. I think that we should make this very clear to the American sponsor and to the Israelis. We should say we are not interested in killing Jews, but we will actually fight wherever Israel continues to establish settlements, or when they see it necessary to demolish a home or farm or trees, then we should fight. We must focus our fire on the illegal settlements - particularly new settlements. This is where we can stop the expansion of the Zionists, and where we are completely in our rights by international law, by the frame of reference, and supported by world public opinion"*.

Lukewarm over the Road Map, believes ending settlement activity should occupy all the energies of Pal resistance, and only thence move step by step to a two-state solution on the basis of the 1967 borders. Any negotiating activity while settlements continue to expand would be pointless and a waste of Palestinian energies.

boy, he had been in demand to light the lamps of his Jewish neighbours. But there had to be a spirit of "mutuality and reciprocity": two viable states, side by side, within the 1967 borders, and no Jewish settlers on Palestinian land. Until the settlements stopped entirely, he insisted, there was no point in any peace plan for the Middle East.

This was his message at the Madrid Conference in 1991 and at the Washington talks that followed—talks which he led and which were undermined, to his disgust, by secret accords made later at Oslo between Arafat and the Israelis. His speech at Madrid was perhaps the most eloquent the West had ever heard from a Palestinian: a plea for understanding, for sympathy and for territory. "What requiem can be sung", he asked, "for trees uprooted by army bulldozers? And...who can explain to those whose lands are confiscated and clear waters stolen, a message of peace? Remove the barbed wire. Restore the land."



Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs
September 2007

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Background Note: The Netherlands



PROFILE

OFFICIAL NAME:

[Kingdom of the Netherlands](#)

Geography

Area: 41,526 sq. km. (16,485 sq. mi.).
Cities: *Capital*--Amsterdam (pop. 744,736). *Other cities*--The Hague, seat of government (475,959); Rotterdam (583,853); Utrecht (283,893).
Terrain: Coastal lowland.
Climate: Northern maritime.

People

Population: 16.5 million.
Nationality: *Noun*--Dutchmen and Dutchwomen. *Adjective*--Dutch.
Ethnic groups: Predominantly Dutch; largest minority communities are Moroccans, Turks, Surinamese.
Religions: Roman Catholic, Protestant, Muslim, other.
Language: Dutch.
Education: *Years compulsory*--10. *Attendance*--nearly 100%. *Literacy*--99%.
Health: *Infant mortality rate*--4.88/1,000. *Life expectancy*--79.1 yrs.
Work force (2006, 7.6 million): *Commercial services*--43.8%; *non-commercial services*--30.2%; *industry*--23.9%; *agriculture*--2.1%.

Government

Type: Parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarch.
Constitution: 1814 and 1948.
Branches: *Executive*--monarch (chief of state), prime minister (head of government), cabinet. *Legislative*--bicameral parliament (First and Second Chambers). *Judicial*--Supreme Court.
Subdivisions: 12 provinces.
Political parties: Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA), Labor Party (PvdA), Socialist Party (SP), Liberal Party (VVD), other minor parties.
Suffrage: Universal at 18.

Economy

GDP (2006 est.): \$688 billion.
GDP real growth rate (2006 est.): 3.0%.
GDP per capita (2006 est.): \$42,200.
Natural resources: Natural gas, petroleum, fertile soil.
Agriculture (2.1% of GDP): *Products*--dairy, poultry, meat, flower bulbs, cut flowers, vegetables and fruits, sugar beets, potatoes, wheat, barley.
Industry (19% of GDP): *Types*--agro-industries, steel and aluminum, metal and engineering products, electric machinery and equipment, bulk chemicals, natural gas, petroleum products, transport equipment, microelectronics.
Services (79% of GDP): *Types*--trade, hotels, restaurants, transport, storage and communication, financial (banking and insurance) and business services, care and other.
Trade (2006 est.): *Exports*--\$413.8 billion (f.o.b.): mineral fuels, chemicals, machinery and transport equipment, processed food and tobacco, agricultural products. *Imports*--\$373.8 billion (f.o.b.): mineral fuels and crude petroleum, machinery, transportation equipment, consumer goods, foodstuffs. *Major trading partners in 2005 (exports/imports)*--EU (76.8%/55.0%), Germany (23.6%/19.0%), Belgium (11.9%/10.7%), China (0.9%/7.7%), U. K. (0.3%/6.3%), U.S. (4.9%/8.0%).

HISTORY

The Dutch are primarily of Germanic stock with some Gallo-Celtic mixture. Their small homeland frequently has been threatened with destruction by the North Sea and has often been invaded by the great European powers.

Julius Caesar found the region which is now the Netherlands inhabited by Germanic tribes in the first century B.C. The western portion was inhabited by the Batavians and became part of a Roman province; the eastern portion was inhabited by the Frisians. Between the fourth and eighth centuries A.D., most of both portions were conquered by the Franks. The area later passed into the hands of the House of Burgundy and the Austrian Habsburgs. Falling under harsh Spanish rule in the 16th century, the Dutch revolted in 1558 under the leadership of Willem of Orange. By virtue of the Union of Utrecht in 1579, the seven northern Dutch provinces became the Republic of the United Netherlands.

During the 17th century, considered its "golden era," the Netherlands became a great sea and colonial power. Among other achievements, this period saw the emergence of some of painting's "Old Masters," including Rembrandt and Hals, whose works--along with those of later artists such as Mondriaan and Van Gogh--are today on display in museums throughout the Netherlands and the world.

The country's importance declined, however, with the gradual loss of Dutch technological superiority and after wars with Spain, France, and England in the 17th and 18th century. The Dutch United Provinces supported the Americans in the Revolutionary War. In 1795, French troops ousted Willem V of Orange, the Stadhouder under the Dutch Republic and head of the House of Orange.

Following Napoleon's defeat in 1815, the Netherlands and Belgium became the "Kingdom of the United Netherlands" under King Willem I, son of Willem V of Orange. The Belgians withdrew from the union in 1830 to form their own kingdom. King Willem II was largely responsible for the liberalizing revision of the constitution in 1948.

The Netherlands prospered during the long reign of Willem III (1849-90). At the time of his death, his daughter Wilhelmina was 10 years old. Her mother, Queen Emma, reigned as regent until 1898, when Wilhelmina reached the age of 18 and became the monarch.

The Netherlands proclaimed neutrality at the start of both world wars. Although it escaped occupation in World War I, German troops overran the country in May 1940. Queen Wilhelmina fled to London and established a government-in-exile. During the war, the Nazis rounded up the Jewish population before deporting them to camps in the East. Over 75% of the Netherlands' 140,000 Jews died at the hands of the Nazis. Shortly after the Netherlands was liberated in May 1945, the Queen returned. Crown Princess Juliana acceded to the throne in 1948 upon her mother's abdication. In April 1980, Queen Juliana abdicated in favor of her daughter, now Queen Beatrix. Crown Prince Willem Alexander was born in 1967.

Elements of the Netherlands' once far-flung empire were granted either full independence or nearly complete autonomy after World War II. Indonesia formally gained its independence in 1949, and Suriname became independent in 1975. The five islands of the Netherlands Antilles (Curacao, Bonaire, Saba, St. Eustatius, and a part of St. Maarten) and Aruba are integral parts of the Netherlands realm but enjoy a large degree of autonomy.

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS

The present constitution--which dates from 1848 and has been amended several times, most recently in 1983--protects individual and political freedoms, including freedom of religion. Although church and state are separate, a few historical ties remain; the royal family belongs to the Dutch Reformed Church (Protestant). Freedom of speech also is protected.

Government Structure

The country's government is based on the principles of ministerial responsibility and parliamentary government. The



De Haar Castle is reflected in the moat at Haarzuilen, central Netherlands, November 7, 1998. [- AP Images]



national government comprises three main institutions: the Monarch, the Council of Ministers, and the States General. There also are local governments.

The Monarch. The monarch is the titular head of state. The Queen's function is largely ceremonial, but she does have some influence deriving from the traditional veneration of the House of Orange, from which Dutch monarchs for more than three centuries have descended. Her influence also derives from her personal qualities as Queen and her power to appoint the "formateur," who forms the Council of Ministers following elections.

The Council of Ministers plans and implements government policy. The Monarch and the Council of Ministers together are called the Crown. Most ministers also head government ministries, although ministers-without-portfolio exist. The ministers, collectively and individually, are responsible to the States General (parliament). Unlike the British system, Dutch ministers cannot simultaneously be members of parliament.

The Council of State is a constitutionally established advisory body to the government that consists of members of the royal family and Crown-appointed members generally having political, commercial, diplomatic, or military experience. The Council of State must be consulted by the cabinet on proposed legislation before a law is submitted to the parliament. The Council of State also serves as a channel of appeal for citizens against executive branch decisions.

States General (parliament). The Dutch parliament consists of two houses, the First Chamber and the Second Chamber. Historically, Dutch governments have been based on the support of a majority in both houses of parliament. The Second Chamber is by far the more important of the two houses. It alone has the right to initiate legislation and amend bills submitted by the Council of Ministers. It shares with the First Chamber the right to question ministers and state secretaries.

The Second Chamber consists of 150 members, elected directly for a 4-year term—unless the government falls prematurely—on the basis of a nationwide system of proportional representation. This system means that members represent the whole country—rather than individual districts as in the United States—and are normally elected on a party slate, not on a personal basis. There is no threshold for small-party representation. Campaigns are relatively short, lasting usually about a month, and the election budgets of each party tend to be less than \$1 million. The electoral system makes a coalition government almost inevitable. The last election of the Second Chamber was in November 2006.

The First Chamber is composed of 75 members elected for 4-year terms by the 12 provincial legislatures. It cannot initiate or amend legislation, but its approval of bills passed by the Second Chamber is required before bills become law. The First Chamber generally meets only once a week, and its members usually have other full-time jobs. The current First Chamber was elected following provincial elections in May 2007.

Courts. The judiciary comprises 62 cantonal courts, 19 district courts, five courts of appeal, and a Supreme Court that has 24 justices. All judicial appointments are made by the Crown. Judges nominally are appointed for life but actually are retired at age 70.

Local Government. The first-level administrative divisions are the 12 provinces, each governed by a locally elected provincial council and a provincial executive appointed by members of the provincial council. The province is formally headed by a queen's commissioner appointed by the Crown.

Current Government. General elections were held in November 2006. On February 22, 2007, a new center-left coalition government was sworn in, composed of the center-right Christian Democrats (CDA), Social Democrats (PvdA), and left-of-center orthodox Protestant Christian Union (CU) under CDA Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende. Given the consensus-based nature of Dutch politics, a change of government does not usually result in any drastic change in foreign or domestic policy. Descriptions of the four main parties follow.

The Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA) was formed from the merger of the Catholic People's Party and two Protestant parties, the Anti-Revolutionary Party and the Christian-Historical Union. The merger process, begun in the early 1970s to try to stem the tide of losses suffered by religiously based parties, was completed in 1980. The CDA supports free enterprise and holds to the principle that government activity should supplement but not supplant communal action by citizens. On the political spectrum, the CDA sees its philosophy as standing between the "individualism" of the Liberals and the "statism" of the Labor Party. CDA has 41 seats in the current Second Chamber, more than any other party.

The Labor Party (PvdA), a classic European Social Democratic party, is left of center. It currently has 33 seats in the Second Chamber. Labor's program is based on greater social, political, and economic equality for all citizens, although in recent years the party has begun to debate the role of central government in that process. Although called the Labor Party, it has no formal links to the trade unions.

The Liberal (VVD) Party is "liberal" in the European, rather than American, sense of the word. It thus attaches great importance to private enterprise and the freedom of the individual in political, social, and economic affairs. The VVD is generally seen as the most conservative of the major parties. It currently has 22 seats in the Second Chamber.

The Socialist Party (SP) was founded as a grass root Marxist-Leninist movement in 1972. From the start Jan Majnissen has been the driving force behind the party. Started at the local level, Majnissen transformed the party into a working-class leftist alternative to the Labor Party and succeeded at being elected to parliament in 1994. At every subsequent election the party grew, and in November 2006 it obtained 25 seats, which made it the third largest party. The party is fundamentally nationalistic and opposes globalization, the European Union and Dutch participation in international peacekeeping. It also favors cutting defense spending by 40%.

Domestic Drug Policy
Despite intensified efforts by the Dutch Government to combat production of and trafficking in narcotic drugs, the Netherlands continues to be a significant transit point for drugs entering Europe (especially cocaine), an important producer and exporter of synthetic drugs, notably MDMA (Ecstasy), although MDMA production seems to be declining substantially. According to the National Police, three large seizures caused the number of ecstasy tablets seized in the U.S. that could be linked to the Netherlands to rise to 0.85 million in 2005 from 0.2 million in 2004. MDMA seizures are still down from the 1.1 million tablets seized in 2003 and 2.5 million in 2002. The successful five-year strategy (2002-2006) against production, trade, and consumption of synthetic drugs was reviewed at the end of 2006, and a new long-term plan was published in May 2007.

The Dutch Opium Act punishes possession, commercial distribution, production, import, and export of all illicit drugs. Drug use, however, is not an offense. The act distinguishes between "hard" drugs that have "unacceptable" risks (e. g., heroin, cocaine, ecstasy) and "soft" drugs (cannabis products). One of the main aims of this policy is to separate the markets for soft and hard drugs so that soft drug users are less likely to come into contact with hard drugs. The sale of a small quantity (under five grams) of soft drugs in "coffeeshops" is tolerated, albeit under strict conditions and controls. The United States continues to disagree with this aspect of Dutch drug policy. Overall, the Health Ministry coordinates drug policy, while the Ministry of Justice is responsible for law enforcement. Matters relating to local government and the police are the responsibility of the Ministry of Interior. At the municipal level, policy is coordinated in tripartite consultations among the mayor, the chief public prosecutor, and the police.

The Netherlands has a wide variety of demand-reduction and "harm"-reduction programs reaching about 80% of the country's 26,000-30,000 opiate addicts. The number of opiate addicts has stabilized over the past few years, with the average age rising to 40, and the number of overdose deaths related to opiates stabilizing at between 30 and 50 per year.

Counterterrorism/Homeland Security

The Netherlands supports the global coalition against terrorism with leadership, personnel and material, including the deployment of troops to Iraq and Afghanistan. The Prime Minister stated the U.S. and his country stand "shoulder to shoulder" in the struggle for global security. The Netherlands is a party to all 12 UN counterterrorism conventions.

In August 2004, the Act on Terrorist Crimes, implementing the 2002 European Union (EU) framework decision on combating terrorism, became effective. The Act makes recruitment for the Jihad and conspiracy with the aim of committing a serious terrorist crime separate criminal offenses. In 2006, three packages of counterterrorism legislation were adopted by Parliament, namely a bill to permit the use of intelligence information in criminal proceedings, a bill to expand the use of special investigative methods, such as phone taps, surveillance and infiltration, in investigations and prosecutions of terrorist crimes, and a bill to ban organizations on the UN or EU terror lists. In 2006, there were successful trials against two terror groups leading to major convictions. In 2004, the government created a National Counterterrorism Coordinator's Office to streamline and enhance Dutch counterterrorism efforts. The Dutch have taken a leading role, particularly in the European Union, to establish financial protocols to combat terrorism. They have also donated to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to provide assistance to countries that lack the wherewithal to implement some of these measures immediately. They have taken steps to freeze the assets of individuals and groups included on the UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1267 Sanctions Committee's consolidated list. In March 2006, the Dutch hosted a major international terrorist financing conference.

The Netherlands is an active participant in the Container Security Initiative at Rotterdam, one of Europe's busiest ports. The Dutch have also installed radiological portal monitors at Rotterdam, in partnership with the Department of Energy's Megaport/Second Line of Defense Initiative. The government also permitted U.S. CBP Immigration Liaison Officers to return to Schiphol Airport to assist with U.S.-bound passenger screening (the program is now known as the Immigration Assistance Program). In January 2005, the U.S. and Netherlands agreed to develop an International Registered Travelers program to facilitate travel between Schiphol Airport and JFK.

Principal Government Officials

Head of State--Queen Beatrix
Prime Minister--Jan Peter Balkenende
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance--Wouter Bos
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Youth and Family Affairs--Andr   Rouvoet
Foreign Minister--Maxime Verhagen
Defense Minister--Eimert van Middelkoop
Ambassador to the United States--Christiaan Kr  mer
Ambassador to the United Nations--Frank Major

The Netherlands' [embassy](#) in the U.S. is at 4200 Linnean Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20008; tel: 202-244-5300; fax: 202-362-3430.

ECONOMY

After a strong performance in the 1990s, which brought unemployment to below 3%, the Dutch economy struggled through 2002 and 2003, plagued by relatively high costs and weak domestic demand. Real GDP growth recovered to 2.0% in 2004, but fell back slightly in 2005 to 1.5% largely due to lagging corporate investment and decreased government consumption. The economy is expected to grow by 3.0% in both 2006 and 2007. Export growth slowed to an estimated 6.8% in 2005, after a 2004 rebound of 9.8%, and is expected to stay strong through 2006 and 2007.

Private consumption decreased by 1.2% in 2006, primarily due to reforms in the health care system which shifted health care spending from private to public consumption. Employment gains brought unemployment down to 5.5%, leading to projections of a 2.3% increase in private consumption for 2007. After a drop in the early 2000s, investment staged a recovery in 2005. This upward trend in investment continued into 2006 with an estimated increase of 3%. A further increase of up to 9% is projected for 2007.

In recent years, many firms in the Netherlands cited a loss of competitiveness as a major impediment to growth as unit labor costs outpaced those of their major competitors, including within the euro area. Low wage rises in 2004 and 2005 enabled firms to regain some lost ground. With many collective wage agreements signed when strong growth was not yet apparent, the 2006 growth level has not yet put upward pressure on overall wages, but wages are expected to go up in 2007 as the collective agreements come up for renegotiation. Inflation dropped to 1.2% in 2004, but increased to 1.7% in 2005. For 2006, it is again expected to drop to 1%, with projections suggesting it will return to 1.25% in 2007.

The Netherlands was one of the first EU member states to qualify for the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). Its fiscal policy has sought to strike a balance between further reductions in public spending and lower taxes and social security contributions. After an unexpected sharp economic downturn in 2003 caused the nominal deficit to breach the 3% GDP limit set by the EMU's Growth and Stability Pact, the center-right coalition government agreed to a package of spending cuts, which helped to lower the budget deficit to 1.9% of GDP in 2004 and further to 0.3% in 2005. The government achieved a 0.6% budget surplus in 2006 and a 0.2% surplus is expected for 2007.

Government Role

Although the private sector is the cornerstone of the economy, the Netherlands has an important and vibrant public sector. The government plays a significant role through permit requirements and regulations pertaining to almost every aspect of economic activity. The government combines a rigorous and stable microeconomic policy with wide-ranging structural and regulatory reforms. The government has gradually reduced its role in the economy since the 1980s, and privatization and deregulation continue unabated.

Trade and Investment

The Netherlands, which derives more than two-thirds of GDP from merchandise and services trade, continued to have a strongly positive balance of goods and services trade for 2005 of \$42.2 billion--close to 7.7% of GDP, the main contributor to a current account surplus of close to 8.8% of GDP. Since there are no significant trade or investment barriers, the Netherlands remains a receptive market for U.S. exports and an important investment partner. The Netherlands is the eighth-largest U.S. export market, as well as the fourth-largest direct investor in the United States. Dutch accumulated direct investment in the United States in 2005 was \$17.1 billion. The United States is the largest investor in the Netherlands with direct investment of \$3.83 billion. There are more than 1,600 U.S. companies with subsidiaries or offices in the Netherlands. The Dutch are strong proponents of free trade and the staunchest allies of the U.S. in international fora such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Sectors of the Economy

Services account for almost three quarters of the national income and are primarily in transportation, distribution, logistics, and financial areas, such as banking and insurance. Industrial activity generates about a fourth of the national product and is dominated by the metalworking, oil refining, chemical, and food processing industries. The agriculture and fisheries sector and traditional Dutch activities account for some 2% of GDP.

Although Dutch crude oil production is small, the Netherlands is a relatively large producer and distributor of natural gas. The Slochteren gas fields in Groningen Province in the north are among the world's larger producing natural gas fields. Total proven reserves of natural gas situated on the mainland currently amount to about 2 trillion cubic meters. Roughly 80% is accounted for by reserves on the mainland, the remaining 20% accounted for by relatively small deposits on the North Sea continental shelf. Current gas production is running at an annual average of around 75 billion cubic meters, roughly half of which is exported to EU member countries.

Environmental Policy

The Netherlands is a small and densely populated country. Its economy depends on industry, particularly chemicals and metal processing, intensive agriculture and horticulture, and on its infrastructure, which takes advantage of the country's geographical position at the heart of Europe's transportation network. These factors have led to major pressure on the environment.

The National Environmental Policy Plan (NMP) sets out Dutch environmental policy. Under NMP-4, published in 2001, the government seeks to cut back on all forms of pollution by 80%-90% within one generation, meaning that by 2010, the present generation should be able to pass on a clean environment to the next one.

Although the environmental quality in the Netherlands has improved significantly, some important targets, particularly with respect to nitrogen oxide and ammonia emissions, climate change, and noise reduction, will be difficult to reach.

The Dutch Government works closely with industry and nongovernmental organizations to reach environmental targets. In order to meet the Kyoto target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 6% in the 2008-2012 period from 1990 levels, the government reached an agreement with industry and the energy sector on emission rights trading. In May 2006, the government told parliament it had sufficient confidence the Kyoto targets would be reached provided planned additional measures are implemented.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Netherlands abandoned a long-standing policy of neutrality after World War II. The Dutch are engaged participants in international affairs. Dutch foreign policy is geared to promoting a wide variety of goals: the rule of law, human rights, and democracy. Priority is given to enhancing European integration, ensuring European security and stability (mainly through the mechanism of NATO and by emphasizing the important role the United States plays in the security of Europe), and participating in conflict management and peacekeeping missions.

The Netherlands generally pursues its foreign policy interests within the framework of multilateral organizations. The Netherlands is an active and responsible participant in the United Nations as well as other multilateral organizations such as NATO, the EU, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Council of Europe (CoE), the OECD, the WTO, and the International Monetary Fund. A centuries-old tradition of legal scholarship has made the Netherlands the host of the International Court of Justice, the Yugoslavia and Rwanda War Crimes Tribunals; the European judicial and police organizations Eurojust and Europol; the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons; and International Criminal Court. Dutch security policy is based primarily on membership in NATO, which the Netherlands joined as a charter member in 1949.

The Dutch have traditionally been strong advocates of European integration, and most aspects of their foreign, economic, and trade policies are coordinated through the European Union. However, Dutch voters rejected the EU constitutional treaty in June 2005. Along with other EU members, the Netherlands is debating the future role of the EU.

The Netherlands' post-war Customs Union with Belgium and Luxembourg (the Benelux group) paved the way for the formation of the European Community (precursor to the EU). Likewise, the Benelux abolition of internal border controls was a model for the wider Schengen accord, which today has 15 European signatories, including the Netherlands, pledged to common visa policies and free movement of people and goods across common borders.

The Dutch were key proponents of the 1992 Maastricht Treaty and were the architects of the 1998 Treaty of Amsterdam. They have embraced the introduction of new member states and the common currency (euro). In recent years, however, the Dutch have become increasingly skeptical of the way the EU is run and of any further enlargements.

Foreign Aid

The Netherlands is among the world's leading aid donors, giving about 0.8% of its gross national product (about \$5.6 billion in 2005) annually in development assistance, a ratio maintained as a firm policy target. The Dutch thus rank as the

sixth largest donor nation in dollar terms and the fifth most generous relative to GNP. The country consistently contributes large amounts of aid through multilateral channels, especially the UN Development Program, the international financial institutions, and EU programs. A portion of Dutch aid funds also are channeled through private ("cofinancing") organizations that have almost total autonomy in choice of projects. Minister for Development Cooperation Agnes van Ardenne oversees the aid portfolio.

Dutch development strategy is anchored in the Millennium Development Goals and as such focuses on poverty reduction. The priority programmatic areas for Dutch assistance are education, the environment and water, AIDS, and reproductive health care.

In 2004, the Netherlands introduced a new, more focused development aid strategy, under which a number of smaller aid programs in wealthier developing countries were phased out. The number of countries in which the Dutch operate bilateral assistance programs was thus cut from 49 to 36, and the number of sectors in which the Dutch will be active in each country was limited to two to three. Roughly half of Dutch aid is earmarked for Africa. In addition, the Dutch introduced a new policy instrument, the Stability Fund, which pushes the bounds of traditional development assistance by funding programs and activities, such as police training, that aim to create a security environment in which development can proceed. The Stability Fund, managed jointly by the Minister for Development Cooperation and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, spent \$109 million in 2005.

The Dutch are the top donor of unearmarked assistance to UN humanitarian programs. For Afghanistan, the Netherlands spent \$66 million on reconstruction in 2005, of which \$33 million went to the Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF), \$10 million was spent on the elections, almost \$7 million on the fight against drugs, and an additional \$8 million on humanitarian relief. The Dutch contribution to the ARTF alone totaled \$50.8 million in 2006. For 2007-2009, the Dutch have pledged \$132 million. For Iraq, the Dutch have pledged \$36 million in humanitarian and reconstruction assistance since March of 2003. In January 2006, the Netherlands signed a bilateral agreement with the Government of Iraq, canceling an amount of over \$300 million in Iraqi debt, as part of an effort by the Paris Club to provide debt relief to Iraq.

In response to the Asian tsunami, the Dutch contributed \$53 million in humanitarian relief and have promised \$264 million over the next five years for reconstruction efforts in Indonesia and Sri Lanka. In 2006, they pledged an additional \$86 million for the reconstruction of Aceh and Nias, of which \$77 million to the Multi Donor Fund (MDF). The Netherlands has traditionally been a strong supporter of programs to help Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. The Balkans are another major recipient of Dutch assistance. The Dutch fund programs in Bosnia and Macedonia in the areas of education, good governance, and economic reform.

Despite their commitment to ODA, the Dutch also champion the role of trade and private enterprise for their contributions to development. In recent years, the government has devised new programs to support private sector development in developing countries.

In August 2006, the Center for Global Development, in conjunction with *Foreign Policy* magazine and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, ranked the Netherlands number two in the world for its government's policies in support of development.

International Drug-Trafficking Control

The Dutch work closely with the United States and other countries on international programs against drug trafficking and organized crime. In July 2005, the two nations signed an agreement to expand information sharing and cooperative research. There is close Dutch-U.S. cooperation on joint counter-narcotics operations in the Caribbean. The Netherlands actively participates in the Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC). The 10-year Forward Operation Locations agreement between the U.S. and the Kingdom for the establishment of forward operating locations on Aruba and Curacao became effective in October 2001. The Netherlands is a signatory to international counterterrorism agreements, a member of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the 1990 Strasbourg Convention on Money Laundering and Confiscation, and is a major contributor to international counter-narcotics projects.

U.S. RELATIONS

The U.S. partnership with the Netherlands is one of its oldest continuous relationships and dates back to the American Revolution. The excellent bilateral relations are based on close historical and cultural ties as well as a common dedication to individual freedom and human rights. The Netherlands shares with the United States a liberal economic outlook and is firmly committed to free trade. The United States attaches great value to its strong economic and commercial ties with the Dutch. The Netherlands is the third-largest direct foreign investor in the United States, and the United States is the third-largest direct foreign investor in the Netherlands.

The United States and the Netherlands often have similar positions on issues and work together both bilaterally and multilaterally in such institutions as the United Nations and NATO. The Dutch have worked with the United States at the WTO, in the OECD, as well as within the EU to advance the shared U.S. goal of a more open, honest, and market-led global economy. The Dutch, like the United States, supported the accession of 10 new members to the EU in 2004, and accession negotiations for Turkey in 2005.

The United States and the Netherlands joined NATO as charter members in 1949. The Dutch fought alongside the United States in the Korean War and the first Gulf War and have been active in global peacekeeping efforts in the former Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Iraq. The Netherlands played a leading role in the 1999 Kosovo air campaign. They currently are contributing to EU peacekeeping forces in Bosnia. In the initial phase of the recent Iraq conflict, the Dutch deployed Patriot missiles to protect NATO ally Turkey, and sent a battalion of troops to Iraq to participate in stabilization operations. The Dutch also support and participate in NATO and EU training efforts in Iraq. They are active participants in the International Security Assistance Force and Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

Principal U.S. Embassy Officials

Ambassador--[Gisela F. Appel](#)
Deputy Chief of Mission--Michael Gallagher
Political Counselor--Andrew J. Schofer
Economic and Integration Counselor--Karen Enstrom
Global Affairs Officer--Susan P. Garro
Legal Counselor--Heather Schildge
Public Affairs Counselor--Gary P. Keith
Management Counselor--Sarah A. Solberg
Regional Security Officer--Roberto C. Bernardo
Defense Attache--Devon G. Goldsmith
Office of Defense Cooperation--Col. David Kelly
Commercial Officer--Sheryl A. Maas
Agriculture Counselor--Roger A. Wentzel
Consul General, Amsterdam--Marjorie A. Ames

The [U.S. Embassy](#) is located at Lange Voorhout 102, 2514 EJ The Hague; tel: 31-70-310-2209; fax: 31-70-361-4688. The Consulate General is at Museumplein 19, 1071 DJ Amsterdam; tel: 31-20-575-5309; fax: 31-20-575-5310.

TRAVEL AND BUSINESS INFORMATION

The U.S. Department of State's Consular Information Program advises Americans traveling and residing abroad through Consular Information Sheets, Public Announcements, and Travel Warnings. **Consular Information Sheets** exist for all countries and include information on entry and exit requirements, currency regulations, health conditions, safety and security, crime, political disturbances, and the addresses of the U.S. embassies and consulates abroad. **Public Announcements** are issued to disseminate information quickly about terrorist threats and other relatively short-term conditions overseas that pose significant risks to the security of American travelers. **Travel Warnings** are issued when the State Department recommends that Americans avoid travel to a certain country because the situation is dangerous or unstable.

For the latest security information, Americans living and traveling abroad should regularly monitor the Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs Internet web site at <http://www.travel.state.gov>, where the current **Worldwide Caution: Public Announcements**, and **Travel Warnings** can be found. **Consular Affairs Publications**, which contain information on obtaining passports and planning a safe trip abroad, are also available at <http://www.travel.state.gov>. For additional information on international travel, see <http://www.usa.gov/Citizen/Topics/Travel/International.shtml>.

The Department of State encourages all U.S. citizens traveling or residing abroad to register via the [State Department's travel registration](#) website or at the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate abroad. Registration will make your presence and whereabouts known in case it is necessary to contact you in an emergency and will enable you to receive up-to-date information on security conditions.

Emergency information concerning Americans traveling abroad may be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll free in the U.S. and Canada or the regular toll line 1-202-501-4444 for callers outside the U.S. and Canada.

The National Passport Information Center (NPIC) is the U.S. Department of State's single, centralized public contact center for U.S. passport information. Telephone: 1-877-4USA-PPT (1-877-487-2778). Customer service representatives and operators for TDD/TTY are available Monday-Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 12:00 midnight, Eastern Time, excluding federal holidays.

Travelers can check the latest health information with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia. A hotline at 877-FYI-TRIP (877-394-8747) and a web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/default.aspx> give the most recent health advisories, immunization recommendations or requirements, and advice on food and drinking water safety for regions and countries. A booklet entitled "Health Information for International Travel" (HHS publication number CDC-95-6290) is available from the U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402, tel. (202) 512-1800.

Further Electronic Information

Department of State Web Site. Available on the Internet at <http://www.state.gov>, the Department of State web site provides timely, global access to official U.S. foreign policy information, including [Background Notes](#) and [daily press briefings](#) along with the directory of [key officers](#) of Foreign Service posts and more. The Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) provides security information and regional news that impact U.S. companies working abroad through its website <http://www.osac.gov>

[Export.gov](#) provides a portal to all export-related assistance and market information offered by the federal government and provides trade leads, free export counseling, help with the export process, and more.

[STAT-USA/TradeNet](#), a service of the U.S. Department of Commerce, provides authoritative economic, business, and international trade information from the Federal government. The site includes current and historical trade-related releases, international market research, trade opportunities, and country analysis and provides access to the [National Trade Data Bank](#).



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Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs
July 2007

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Background Note: Spain



PROFILE

OFFICIAL NAME:

[Kingdom of Spain](#)

Geography

Area: 504,750 sq. km. (194,884 sq. mi.), including the Balearic and Canary Islands; about the size of Arizona and Utah combined.
Cities: *Capital*--Madrid (5.5 million). *Other cities*--Barcelona (4.9 million), Bilbao (353,950), Malaga (1.3 million), Seville (1.8 million), Valencia (2.3 million), Zaragoza (871,000).
Terrain: High plateaus, lowland areas such as narrow coastal plains, and mountainous regions.
Climate: Temperate. Summers are hot in the interior and more moderate and cloudy along the coast; winters are cold in interior and partly cloudy and cool along the coast.
Time zone: Spanish mainland and Balearic Isles--local time is 1 hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) in winter and 2 hours ahead in summer. Canary Islands are on GMT.

People

Nationality: *Noun*--Spaniard(s). *Adjective*--Spanish.
Population (2007 est.): 45,116,894.
Annual growth rate (2007 est.): 0.116%.
Ethnic groups: Distinct ethnic groups within Spain include the Basques, Catalans, and Galicians.
Religion: Predominantly Roman Catholic; Protestant and Islamic faiths also have a significant presence.
Languages: Spanish (official) 74%, Catalan-Valenciana 17%, Galician 7%, Basque 2%.
Education: Years compulsory--to age 16. *Literacy* (2003 est.)--98%.
Work force (19.2 million): *Services*--65.1%; *agriculture*--5.2%; *construction*--12.5%; *industry*--17.2% (2005 est.).

Government

Type: Constitutional monarchy (Juan Carlos I proclaimed King November 22, 1975).
Constitution: 1978.
Branches: *Executive*--president of government nominated by monarch, subject to approval by democratically elected Congress of Deputies. *Legislative*--bicameral Cortes: a 350-seat Congress of Deputies (elected by the d'Hondt system of proportional representation) and a Senate. Four senators are elected in each of 47 peninsular provinces, 16 are elected from the three island provinces, and Ceuta and Melilla elect two each; this accounts for 208 senators. The parliaments of the 17 autonomous regions also elect one senator as well as one additional senator for every 1 million inhabitants (about 20 senators). Judicial--Constitutional Tribunal has jurisdiction over constitutional issues. Supreme Tribunal heads system comprising territorial, provincial, regional, and municipal courts. Subdivisions: 47 peninsular and three island provinces; two enclaves on the Mediterranean coast of Morocco (Ceuta and Melilla) and three island groups along that coast--Alhucemas, Penon de Velez de la Gomera, and the Chafarinas Islands. Political parties: Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE), Popular Party (PP), and the United Left (IU) coalition. Key regional parties are the Convergence and Union (CiU) in Catalonia and the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) in the Basque country.

Economy

GDP (2006): \$1,225 trillion (seventh-largest Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development--OECD--economy).
Annual growth rate (2006 est.): 3.9%.
Per capita GDP (2006 est.): \$27,422.
Natural resources: Coal, lignite, iron ore, uranium, mercury, pyrites, fluorspar, gypsum, zinc, lead, tungsten, copper, kaolin, hydroelectric power.
Agriculture and fisheries (2.8% of GDP, 2006 est.): *Products*--grains, vegetables, citrus and deciduous fruits, wine, olives and olive oil, sunflowers, livestock.
Industry (15.54% of GDP, 2006 est.): *Types*--processed foods, textiles, footwear, petrochemicals, steel, automobiles, consumer goods, electronics.
Trade (2006): *Exports*--\$211.4 billion: automobiles, fruits, minerals, metals, clothing, footwear, textiles. *Major markets*--EU 70.35%, U.S. 4.41%; *Imports*--\$289.8 billion: petroleum, oilseeds, aircraft, grains, chemicals, machinery, transportation equipment, fish, consumer goods. *Major sources*--EU 58.44%, U.S. 3.27%.
Average exchange rate (2006): 0.797 euros=U.S.\$1.

PEOPLE

Spain's population density, lower than that of most European countries, is roughly equivalent to New England's. In recent years, following a longstanding pattern in the rest of Europe, rural populations are moving to cities. Urban areas are also experiencing a significant increase in immigrant populations, chiefly from North Africa, South America, and Eastern Europe.

Spain has no official religion. The constitution of 1978 disestablished the Roman Catholic Church as the official state religion, while recognizing the role it plays in Spanish society. More than 90% of the population is at least nominally Catholic. Among the remaining population, there are about 1.2 million evangelical Christians and other Protestants (2006 est.), 1 million Muslims (2006 est.) and 48,000 Jews (2006 est.).

Educational System

About 70% of Spain's student population attends public schools or universities. The remainder attend private schools or universities, the great majority of which are operated by the Catholic Church. Compulsory education begins with primary school or general basic education for ages 6-14. It is free in public schools and in many private schools, most of which receive government subsidies. Following graduation, students attend either a secondary school offering a general high school diploma or a school of professional education (corresponding to grades 9-12 in the United States) offering a vocational program. The Spanish university system offers degree and post-graduate programs in all fields--law, sciences, humanities, and medicine--and the superior technical schools offer programs in engineering and architecture.

HISTORY

The Iberian Peninsula has been settled for millennia. In fact, some of Europe's most impressive Paleolithic cultural sites are located in Spain, including the famous caves at Altamira that contain spectacular paintings dating from about 15,000 to 25,000 years ago. The Basques, Europe's oldest surviving group, are also the first identifiable people of the peninsula.

Beginning in the ninth century BC, Phoenicians, Greeks, Carthaginians, and Celts entered the Iberian Peninsula. The Romans followed in the second century BC and laid the groundwork for Spain's present language, religion, and laws. Although the Visigoths arrived in the fifth century AD, the last Roman strongholds along the southern coast did not fall until the seventh century AD. In 711, North African Moors sailed across the straits, swept into Andalusia, and within a few years, pushed the Visigoths up the peninsula to the Cantabrian Mountains. The Reconquest--efforts to drive out the Moors--lasted until 1492. By 1512, the unification of present-day Spain was complete.

During the 16th century, Spain became the most powerful nation in Europe, due to the immense wealth derived from its presence in the Americas. But a series of long, costly wars and revolts, capped by the defeat by the English of the "Invincible Armada" in 1588, began a steady decline of Spanish power in Europe. Controversy over succession to the throne consumed the country during the 18th century, leading to an occupation by France during the Napoleonic era in the early 1800s and a series of armed conflicts throughout much of the 19th century.



Women wearing traditional Sevillana dresses attend the May fair in Cordoba, Spain, May 19, 2007. [- AP Images]



The 19th century saw the revolt and independence of most of Spain's colonies in the Western Hemisphere; three wars over the succession issue; the brief ousting of the monarchy and establishment of the First Republic (1873-74); and, finally, the Spanish-American War (1898), in which Spain lost Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines to the United States. A period of dictatorial rule (1923-31) ended with the establishment of the Second Republic. It was dominated by increasing political polarization, culminating in the leftist Popular Front electoral victory in 1936. Pressures from all sides, coupled with growing and unchecked violence, led to the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in July 1936.

Following the victory of his nationalist forces in 1939, General Francisco Franco ruled a nation exhausted politically and economically. Spain was officially neutral during World War II but followed a pro-Axis policy. Therefore, the victorious Allies isolated Spain at the beginning of the postwar period, and the country did not join the United Nations until 1955. In 1959, under an International Monetary Fund stabilization plan, the country began liberalizing trade and capital flows, particularly foreign direct investment.

Despite the success of economic liberalization, Spain remained the most closed economy in Western Europe—judged by the small measure of foreign trade to economic activity—and the pace of reform slackened during the 1960s as the state remained committed to “guiding” the economy. Nevertheless, in the 1960s and 1970s, Spain was transformed into a modern industrial economy with a thriving tourism sector. Its economic expansion led to improved income distribution and helped develop a large middle class. Social changes brought about by economic prosperity and the inflow of new ideas helped set the stage for Spain's transition to democracy during the latter half of the 1970s.

Upon the death of General Franco in November 1975, Franco's personally designated heir Prince Juan Carlos de Borbón y Borbón assumed the titles of king and chief of state. Dissatisfied with the slow pace of post-Franco liberalization, he replaced Franco's last Prime Minister with Adolfo Suárez in July 1976. Suárez entered office promising that elections would be held within one year, and his government moved to enact a series of laws to liberalize the new regime. Spain's first elections since 1936 to the Cortes (Parliament) were held on June 15, 1977. Prime Minister Suárez's Union of the Democratic Center (UCD), a moderate center-right coalition, won 34% of the vote and the largest bloc of seats in the Cortes.

Under Suárez, the new Cortes set about drafting a democratic constitution that was overwhelmingly approved by voters in a national referendum in December 1978.

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS

Parliamentary democracy was restored following the death of General Franco in 1975, who had ruled since the end of the civil war in 1939. The 1978 constitution established Spain as a parliamentary monarchy, with the prime minister responsible to the bicameral Cortes (Congress of Deputies and Senate) elected every 4 years. On February 23, 1981, rebel elements among the security forces seized the Cortes and tried to impose a military-backed government. However, the great majority of the military forces remained loyal to King Juan Carlos, who used his personal authority to put down the bloodless coup attempt.

In October 1982, the Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE), led by Felipe Gonzalez, swept both the Congress of Deputies and Senate, winning an absolute majority. Gonzalez and the PSOE ruled for the next 13 years. During that period, Spain joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Community.

In March 1996, Jose Maria Aznar's Popular Party (PP) won a plurality of votes. Aznar moved to decentralize powers to the regions and liberalize the economy, with a program of privatization, labor market reform, and measures designed to increase competition in selected markets. During Aznar's first term, Spain fully integrated into European institutions, qualifying for the European Monetary Union. During this period, Spain participated, along with the United States and other NATO allies, in military operations in the former Yugoslavia. President Aznar and the PP won reelection in March 2000, obtaining absolute majorities in both houses of parliament.

After the terrorist attacks on the U.S. on September 11, 2001, President Aznar became a key ally in the fight against terrorism. Spain backed the military action against the Taliban in Afghanistan and took a leadership role within the European Union (EU) in pushing for increased international cooperation on terrorism. The Aznar government, with a rotating seat on the UN Security Council, supported the intervention in Iraq.

Spanish parliamentary elections on March 14, 2004 came only three days after a devastating terrorist attack on Madrid commuter rail lines that killed 191 and wounded over 1,400. With large voter turnout, PSOE won the election and its leader, Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, took office on April 17, 2004. Carrying out campaign promises, the Zapatero government immediately withdrew Spanish forces from Iraq but has continued to support Iraq reconstruction efforts. The Zapatero government has supported coalition efforts in Afghanistan, including maintaining troop support for 2004 and 2005 elections, supported reconstruction efforts in Haiti, sent troops to UNIFIL in Lebanon, and cooperated on counterterrorism issues and many other issues of importance to the U.S.

Local Government

The 1978 constitution authorized the creation of regional autonomous governments. By 1985, 17 regions covering all of peninsular Spain, the Canaries, and the Balearic Islands had negotiated autonomy statutes with the central government. In 1979, the first autonomous elections were held in the Basque and Catalan regions, which have the strongest regional traditions by virtue of their history and separate languages. Since then, autonomous governments have been created in the remainder of the 17 regions. The central government continues to devolve powers to the regional governments, which will eventually have full responsibility for health care and education, as well as other social programs.

Terrorism

The Government of Spain is involved in a long-running campaign against Basque Fatherland and Liberty (ETA), a terrorist organization founded in 1959 and dedicated to promoting Basque independence. ETA targets Spanish security forces, military personnel, Spanish Government officials, and politicians of the Popular Party and the Socialist Party (PSOE.) The group has carried out numerous bombings against Spanish Government facilities and economic targets, including a car bomb assassination attempt on then-opposition leader Aznar in 1995, in which his armored car was destroyed but he was Govant. The Spanish Government attributes over 800 deaths to ETA terrorism since its campaign of violence began. In recent years, the government has had more success in controlling ETA, due in part to increased security cooperation with French authorities.

In November 1999, ETA ended a cease-fire it declared in September 1998. Following the end of that ceasefire, ETA conducted a campaign of violence and has been blamed for the deaths of some 46 Spanish citizens and officials. Each attack has been followed by massive anti-ETA demonstrations around the country, clearly demonstrating that the majority of Spaniards, including the majority of Spain's Basque populace, have no tolerance for continued ETA violence. In March 2006, ETA declared another ceasefire, which it ended in June 2007. The government continues to pursue vigorous counterterrorist policy and has worked closely with its international allies to foil several suspected ETA attacks.

Spain also contends with a resistance group, commonly known as GRAPO. GRAPO is an urban left-wing terrorist group that seeks to overthrow the Spanish Government and establish a Marxist state. It opposes Spanish participation in NATO and U.S. military presence in Spain and has a long history of assassinations, bombings, and kidnappings mostly against Spanish interests during the 1970s and 1980s.

In a June 2000 communiqué following the explosions of two small devices in Barcelona, GRAPO claimed responsibility for several terrorist attacks throughout Spain during the past year. These attacks included two failed armored car robberies, one in which two security officers died, and four bombings of political party offices during the 1999/2000 election campaign. In 2002 and 2003, Spanish and French authorities were successful in hampering the organization's activities through sweeping arrests, including some of the group's leadership.

Al Qaeda is known to operate cells in Spain. On March 11, 2004, only three days before national elections, 10 bombs were detonated on crowded commuter trains during rush hour. Three were deactivated by security forces and one was found unexploded. Evidence quickly surfaced that jihadist terrorists with possible ties to the al Qaeda network were responsible for the attack that killed 191 people. Spanish investigative services and the judicial system have aggressively sought to arrest and prosecute suspected al Qaeda members and actively cooperate with foreign governments to diminish the transnational terrorist threat. A Spanish court convicted 18 individuals in September 2005 for their role in supporting al Qaeda, and Spanish police disrupted numerous Islamist extremist cells operating in the country. The trial against 29 people for their alleged participation in the Madrid March 11, 2004 terrorist attack started in February 2007, and was declared ready for judgment at the end of June. One of the 29 was absolved during the trial. The prosecutor asked for sentences as high as 30,000 years of jail for some of them. The court is expected to issue the sentence sometime in October 2007.

Principal Government Officials

Chief of State, Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces—King Juan Carlos I
President of the Government (Prime Minister)—Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero
Minister of Foreign Affairs—Miguel Angel Moratinos
Ambassador to the United States—Carlos Westendorp y Cabeza

Spain maintains an [embassy](#) in the United States at 2375 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20037 (tel. 202-452-0100) and consulates in many larger U.S. cities.

ECONOMY

Spain's accession to the European Community--now European Union (EU)--in January 1986 required the country to open its economy to trade and investment, modernize its industrial base, improve infrastructure, and revise economic legislation to conform to EU guidelines. In doing so, Spain increased gross domestic product (GDP) growth, reduced the public debt to GDP ratio, reduced unemployment from 22% in 1986 to 23% in 1986 to 8.47% in first quarter 2007, and reduced inflation to under 3%. The fundamental challenges remaining for Spain include decreasing unemployment further, reforming labor laws lowering inflation, and raising per capita GDP.

Following peak growth years in the late 1980s, the Spanish economy entered into recession in mid-1992. The economy recovered during the first Aznar administration (1996-2000), driven by a return of consumer confidence and increased private consumption, although growth has slowed in recent years. Unemployment remains a problem at 8.47% (2007, first quarter), but this still represents a significant improvement from previous levels. Devaluations of the peseta during the 1990s made Spanish exports more competitive, but the strength of the euro since its adoption has raised recent concerns that Spanish exports are being priced out of the range of foreign buyers.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

After the return of democracy following the death of General Franco in 1975, Spain's foreign policy priorities were to break out of the diplomatic isolation of the Franco years and expand diplomatic relations, enter the European Community, and define security relations with the West.

As a member of NATO since 1982, Spain has established itself as a major participant in multilateral international security activities. Spain's EU membership represents an important part of its foreign policy. Even on many international issues beyond Western Europe, Spain prefers to coordinate its efforts with its EU partners through the European political cooperation mechanism.

With the normalization of diplomatic relations with Israel and Albania in 1986, Spain virtually completed the process of universalizing its diplomatic relations. The only country with which it now does not have diplomatic relations is North Korea.

Spain has maintained its special identification with Latin America. Its policy emphasizes the concept of Hispanidad, a mixture of linguistic, religious, ethnic, cultural, and historical ties binding Spanish-speaking America to Spain. Spain has been an effective example of transition from authoritarianism to democracy, as shown in the many trips that Spain's King and Prime Ministers have made to the region. Spain maintains economic and technical cooperation programs and cultural exchanges with Latin America, both bilaterally and within the EU.

Spain also continues to focus attention on North Africa, especially on Morocco. This concern is dictated by geographic proximity and long historical contacts, as well as by the two Spanish enclave cities of Ceuta and Melilla on the northern coast of Africa. While Spain's departure from its former colony of Western Sahara ended direct Spanish participation in Morocco, it maintains an interest in the peaceful resolution of the conflict brought about there by decolonization. These issues were highlighted by a crisis in 2002, when Spanish forces evicted a small contingent of Moroccans from a tiny islet off Morocco's coast following that nation's attempt to assert sovereignty over the island.

Meanwhile, Spain has gradually begun to broaden its contacts with Sub-Saharan Africa. It has a particular interest in its former colony of Equatorial Guinea, where it maintains a large aid program.

In relations with the Arab world, Spain has sought to promote European-Mediterranean dialogue. Spain strongly supports the EU's "Barcelona Process" which seeks to expand dialogue and trade between Europe and the nations of North Africa and the Middle East, including Israel. It is seen by some as too greatly favoring the European Union. Other proposals are on the table, including one put forward by French President Nicolas Sarkozy in 2007. The latest meeting on the Barcelona initiative was held on November 29, 2005.

Spain has been successful in managing its relations with its two European neighbors, France and Portugal. The accession of Spain and Portugal to the EU has helped ease some of their periodic trade frictions by putting these into an EU context. Franco-Spanish bilateral cooperation is enhanced by joint action against Basque ETA terrorism. Ties with the United Kingdom are generally good, although the question of Gibraltar remains a sensitive issue.

U.S.-SPANISH RELATIONS

Spain and the United States have a long history of official relations and are closely associated in many fields. In addition to U.S. and Spanish cooperation in NATO, defense and security relations between the two countries are regulated by a 1989 Agreement on Defense Cooperation, revised in 2003. Under this agreement, Spain authorized the United States to use certain facilities at Spanish military installations.

The two countries also cooperate in several other important areas. Under a 1964 agreement (currently being renegotiated), the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the Spanish National Institute of Aerospace Technology (INTA) jointly operate the Madrid Deep Space Communications Complex in support of Earth orbital and solar system exploration systems. The Madrid Complex is one of the three-largest tracking and data acquisition complexes comprising NASA's Deep Space Network.

An agreement on cultural and educational cooperation was signed on June 7, 1989. A new element, supported by both the public and private sectors, gives a different dimension to the programs carried out by the joint committee for cultural and educational cooperation. These joint committee activities complement the binational Fulbright program for graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, and visiting professors, which became the largest in the world in 1989. Besides assisting in these exchange endeavors, the U.S. Embassy also conducts a program of official visits between Spain and the United States.

Spain and the U.S. are strong allies in the fight against terrorism.

Principal U.S. Embassy Officials

Ambassador--[Eduardo Aguero Jr.](#)
Deputy Chief of Mission--Hugo Llorens
Counselor for Management Affairs--Michael S. Hoza
Counselor for Agricultural Affairs--Stephen Hammond
Counselor for Commercial Affairs--Jim Wilson
Counselor for Consular Affairs--Daniel Keller
Counselor for Economic Affairs--James Dudley
Counselor for Political Affairs--Kathleen M. Fitzpatrick
Counselor for Public Affairs--Josie S. Shumake
Chief, Office of Defense Cooperation--Col. Ulysses S. Rhodes, USAF
Defense Attach--Capt. Kevin Little, USN
Drug Enforcement Administration Attach--Joseph Bond
NASA Representative--vacant
Regional Security Officer--John Young
Consul General Barcelona--Todd Robinson
Customs and Border Protection--vacant
Transportation Security Agency--Luz Ponce
Defense Communication Support Group (DCSG)--vacant

The [U.S. Embassy](#) is located at Serrano, 75, 28006 Madrid (tel. 34-91-587-2200; fax 34-91-587-2303). [Consulate General, Barcelona](#), Paseo Reina Elisenda 23, Barcelona 08034 (tel. 34-93-280-2227; fax 34-93-205-5206).

TRAVEL AND BUSINESS INFORMATION

The U.S. Department of State's Consular Information Program advises Americans traveling and residing abroad through Consular Information Sheets, Public Announcements, and Travel Warnings. [Consular Information Sheets](#) exist for all countries and include information on entry and exit requirements, currency regulations, health conditions, safety and security, crime, political disturbances, and the addresses of the U.S. embassies and consulates abroad. [Public Announcements](#) are issued to disseminate information quickly about terrorist threats and other relatively short-term conditions overseas that pose significant risks to the security of American travelers. [Travel Warnings](#) are issued when the State Department recommends that Americans avoid travel to a certain country because the situation is dangerous or unstable.

For the latest security information, Americans living and traveling abroad should regularly monitor the Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs Internet web site at <http://www.travel.state.gov>, where the current [Worldwide Caution](#), [Public Announcements](#), and [Travel Warnings](#) can be found. [Consular Affairs Publications](#), which contain information on obtaining passports and planning a safe trip abroad, are also available at <http://www.travel.state.gov>. For additional information on international travel, see

<http://www.usa.gov/Citizen/Topics/Travel/International.shtml>.

The Department of State encourages all U.S. citizens traveling or residing abroad to register via the [State Department's travel registration](#) website or at the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate abroad. Registration will make your presence and whereabouts known in case it is necessary to contact you in an emergency and will enable you to receive up-to-date information on security conditions.

Emergency information concerning Americans traveling abroad may be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll free in the U.S. and Canada or the regular toll line 1-202-501-4444 for callers outside the U.S. and Canada.

The National Passport Information Center (NPIC) is the U.S. Department of State's single, centralized public contact center for U.S. passport information. Telephone: 1-877-4USA-PPT (1-877-487-2778). Customer service representatives and operators for TDD/TTY are available Monday-Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 12:00 midnight, Eastern Time, excluding federal holidays.

Travelers can check the latest health information with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia. A hotline at 877-FYI-TRIP (877-394-8747) and a web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/default.aspx> give the most recent health advisories, immunization recommendations or requirements, and advice on food and drinking water safety for regions and countries. A booklet entitled "Health Information for International Travel" (HHS publication number CDC-95-8280) is available from the U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402, tel. (202) 512-1800.

Further Electronic Information
Department of State Web Site. Available on the Internet at <http://www.state.gov>, the Department of State web site provides timely, global access to official U.S. foreign policy information, including [Background Notes](#) and [daily press briefings](#) along with the directory of [key officers](#) of Foreign Service posts and more. The Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) provides security information and regional news that impact U.S. companies working abroad through its website <http://www.osac.gov>

[Export.gov](#) provides a portal to all export-related assistance and market information offered by the federal government and provides trade leads, free export counseling, help with the export process, and more.

[STAT-USA/Internet](#), a service of the U.S. Department of Commerce, provides authoritative economic, business, and international trade information from the Federal government. The site includes current and historical trade-related releases, international market research, trade opportunities, and country analysis and provides access to the [National Trade Data Bank](#).

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Felipe Gonzalez Marquez



"There is a hope which must not be dashed to the ground. We are aware of the complexity of the process, but we Spaniards know how cooperation among cultures and the union of collective efforts can generate peaceful coexistence. Peace is the necessary condition."

-- Felipe Gonzalez Marquez

Felipe Gonzalez Marquez is one of Europe's most accomplished political figures of the 20th century. Behind his astute leadership skills and political acumen, Gonzalez was elected to an unprecedented four consecutive terms as Prime Minister of Spain. During his tenure in office, he pushed the nation into an era of economic growth it had not seen for over half a century, culminating in a successful integration into the European Union.

Felipe Gonzalez was born in Seville, Spain in 1942. While enrolled at the University of Seville in 1962, where he would eventually earn a degree in law, he joined the Spanish Socialists' Party (PSOE), which had been an illegal organization since the Spanish Civil War had returned power to the Traditionalist Conservatives in 1939. Soon after his graduation, Gonzalez found success teaching law in Seville while also representing workers in litigation cases.

With the death of General Francisco Franco in 1975, the PSOE's legality was restored and, behind the leadership of Felipe Gonzalez, assumed 118 (of 303) seats in Parliament and 29.2% of the vote in Spain's first post-Franco general election. Once reinstated into the National government, Gonzalez pushed rid the PSOE of their Marxist doctrines to appeal to all classes. He succeeded in 1979, and was named the party's Secretary General.

In the 1982 general election, the PSOE gained 48.3% of the vote and Felipe Gonzalez was named Prime Minister of Spain at the age of 40, making him Europe's youngest Head of Government. He went on to hold the office through four more elections until the Popular Party commanded control in the 1996 general election. During this 16-year span, Gonzalez pushed for liberal reforms and a restructuring of the economy, which had been long stagnant under the guidance of the old regime. The economic conditions of Spain saw vast improvements under the guidance of Gonzalez, including a landmark inclusion within the European Economic Community, the predecessor of the European Union, in 1986.

Felipe Gonzalez was awarded the Charlemagne Prize for distinguished service on behalf of European Unification in 1993 and in 1997, and was honored with the Great Golden Cross for Merit by the Republic of Austria.

Gonzalez resigned as the leader of the PSOE in 1997, though he still remains involved in its processes. He currently heads the Madrid based Global Progress Foundation (FPG), and enjoys tending to bonsai trees, many of which he has donated to the Royal Botanic Gardens of Madrid.

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HISTORY

Monday, April 20, 1998 Published at 14:13 GMT 15:13 UK

Israel and the PLO



The former BBC Middle East correspondent, Tim Llewellyn, looks back at the history of Israel.

In the face of Israel's domination of the region after 1967 - the war and occupation of the West Bank pushed nearly 400,000 more Palestinians into Jordan - many Palestinians lost faith in the machinations of Arab regimes and began to build their own nationalist and resistance movement.

By the middle of the 1960s, organised Palestinian groups under the umbrella of Yasser Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) were carrying out border raids into Israel from Jordan and Syria, and after 1967 these intensified.

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Yasser Arafat

They were able to exploit a low-level war of attrition between Israel and Egypt and, until 1970, enjoyed the tacit support of the Jordanian and Syrian governments.

Entanglement in Lebanon

Israel retaliated against the guerrillas, striking at them in Jordan at first, then more decisively and extensively into Lebanon, where the Palestinian organisations fled after King Hussein of Jordan crushed and expelled them in 1970.

Israel had the better of the military exchanges, and in 1978 invaded Southern Lebanon, occupying an area across the Israeli border. It created and ran there a mainly Christian Lebanese militia led by a rebel Lebanese Army major.

But the PLO and its Lebanese allies continued to raid and shell northern Israel. The PLO also gained more and more international recognition, in the Arab world and beyond, even in the West, as the official representative of the Palestinian people.

Much to Israel's distress, the Palestinian movement was being seen worldwide as a legitimate nationalist resistance movement with a high political profile - rather than the bloodied terrorists of traditional Israeli propaganda.

The Palestinians in the occupied territories were also becoming increasingly active. There were riots and violence that Palestinian activists inside and outside the region were able to exploit at Israel's expense.



The international community continued to blame Israel's continued occupation of Arab lands and its settlements policy for these upheavals.

In June 1982, with a view to putting an end to the PLO as a force to be reckoned with, and quashing its support in the West Bank

and Gaza, the Israel Defence Force acted. Israeli aircraft and troops began a supposedly retaliatory move into Lebanon (although the border was in fact quiet at the time).

This quickly became a full-scale invasion lasting more than two months and eventually rolling into the Lebanese capital Beirut itself. Tens of thousands of civilians, Lebanese and Palestinians, were killed and injured.



Sabra-Shatila - after the massacre

World and much of Israeli opinion was appalled. The outrage reached epic proportions when in September 1982, fighters of a Christian militia allied to Israel carried out a massacre of several hundred Palestinian civilians in a Beirut camp, Sabra-Shatila, that the Israeli Army was supposed to be controlling and guarding.

Again, many Arab and independent observers held Israel responsible for the massacre, or at least accused it of almost wilful criminal negligence in not controlling its Christian allies. And there were other, darker conspiracy theories.

An Israeli judicial commission found that the Israeli Army had failed in its duties and was indirectly responsible for

the massacre. Even wider worries were voiced in Israel itself as to whether during the invasion the government of Prime Minister Begin had ever really had control of events or the army itself.



Itzhak Shamir

Begin resigned, reduced and wearied by events, to be replaced by Itzhak Shamir, yet another former leader of an extremist underground organisation, the Stern Group, or Lehi, in the 1940s.

In May 1983, Israel signed a defence agreement with Lebanon, which was soon abrogated under Syrian pressure. By 1985 Israeli forces, harassed by Lebanese guerrillas, had pulled back from much of Lebanon. But they widened their "security zone" in South Lebanon.

New enemies



Defeated, but fighting on

The PLO, it was true, was no longer a military force in Lebanon - the Syrians finished off what pockets the Israelis had not reached. But new and more lethal enemies took up arms against Israel and its allies, the South Lebanon Army led by yet another rebel Lebanese officer. These guerrillas were mainly Lebanese Shi'ites of South Lebanon, particularly the

Iranian-backed Hizbollah, or Party of God.

During the next 13 years, the so-called "security zone" in South Lebanon became more and more problematic for

Israel. By 1998, the Israelis were trying to find an acceptable way out of the Lebanese thicket.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian problem continued to grow.

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Monday, April 20, 1998 Published at 14:27 GMT 15:27 UK

The road to Oslo



Yitzhak Rabin: "There is a time for war, and there is a time for peace"

The former BBC Middle East correspondent, Tim Llewellyn, looks back at the history of Israel.

After the Gulf war, the United States tried to reshape Middle Eastern politics. With great effort the American government organised the first-ever effective Israel-Arab-Palestinian dialogue. The negotiations, based on the concept of "land for peace", were launched at Madrid in October 1991, and involved Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinians.

Within two years the initiative foundered. But behind the scenes negotiations continued, with face-to-face talks in Norway between the PLO and the Israeli government. This

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Yitzhak Rabin signing the Oslo Treaty at the White House

resulted in the Oslo Accords of September 1993, approved by Israel's then prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin, PLO chairman Yasser Arafat, and endorsed by US President Bill Clinton.

Concentrating on the Israeli-Palestinian dispute, Israel at last recognised the PLO and gradually allowed the organisation's members and leadership to return to - some of - the occupied territories.

The agreements envisaged an interim period of Israeli withdrawals and redeployments from and in the territories and limited autonomy for the Palestinians, in return for peace and an end to Palestinian claims on Israel proper.

Open questions

However, the decisive questions of the status of Jerusalem and its Arab population, the settlements, the refugees and Israel's borders were put off until the interim period was over, towards the end of the decade.



Since then, the accords have foundered though have not yet been abandoned. Israel continued to expand its settlements mightily during the 1990s, both during and after - and in spite of - the Madrid peace conference and the Oslo accords. The Judaisation of Arab East Jerusalem proceeds apace.

Israel's negotiations with the

Jewish settlements continue being built, here at Har Homa in East Jerusalem

Syrians and Lebanese collapsed nearly two years ago. Only Jordan and Israel

have made peace, albeit, like the Israeli treaty with Egypt, most of the Arab population is cool towards the treaty.

The future of Israel

Israel is an advanced, prosperous, industrialised Western-style implant in the Middle East, decades ahead of its neighbours in technological and military prowess.

It has its own military-industrial complex, has highly developed computer, construction and textile industries, and is the world's second-largest exporter of cut and polished diamonds.



American Jews fundraising for Israel

American irritation with its current leadership is unlikely to turn into significant withdrawal of military, financial, political or moral support. The Jewish lobby in the United States is as forceful as ever in seeing Israel's interests pursued without serious hindrance in the corridors of American power, especially Congress.

Israel's biggest dangers are internal. There is growing Palestinian resentment and frustration inside Israel and the occupied territories, which could soon lead to unprecedented bloodshed.

There are the tensions between Israelis themselves, between fractious and extremist



Modern Israel: ultra-orthodox and secular Jews have to learn to co-exist

religious groups and the secular majority, who see the nature of their pragmatic Zionist ideals being compromised by overly powerful and coddled religious fanatics; between right and left, that is anti- and pro-compromise with the Arabs; and between European and Oriental Jews - a clash of class status and ethnic origins.

For Israelis, May 15, 1998, is not a straightforward 'Happy 50th Birthday'.

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Israel and Palestine: an invitation to negotiate

Here is my attempt to be constructive on the President Bush speech from this week - an effort to grab some kind of victory from the jaws of defeat.

It is on the [Guardian Online](#).

Can anything good possibly come out of President Bush's Middle East speech earlier this week and the flurry of diplomatic activity that will come in its wake beginning today with the Quartet meeting in Lisbon, Portugal?

First of all, let's be clear. The speech represented more of the same failed policies with even less chance of success. Anyone who thinks that the new speech was a constructive contribution should read an op-ed by Michael Oren in yesterday's Wall Street Journal that was distributed by the official White House Jewish Public Liaison, presumably signifying that Oren's interpretation has formal blessing.

Oren, of the Shalem Center, a Jerusalem-based, neocon-sympathetic creation of Benjamin Netanyahu, wrote the following: "Mr. Bush has not backtracked an inch from his revolutionary Middle East policy. Never before has any American President placed the onus of demonstrating a commitment to peace so emphatically on Palestinian shoulders...the bulk of his demands were directed at the Palestinians...Mr. Bush set unprecedented conditions for Arab participation in peace efforts."

I have detailed my own thoughts on the speech [elsewhere](#), and the search for a silver lining is not an easy one. What I propose is a jujitsu move that leverages the expectations created by the speech toward achieving a constructive, if unlikely, outcome. To call this jujitsu move a long shot is an understatement, but it is worth a try. Here is how it could be done.

Despite White House efforts to lower expectations, Bush's speech did call for an international meeting in the fall that is being touted everywhere as a peace conference. In the speech, Bush committed Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to chairing that meeting.

Her undoubted desire to avoid a huge flop is the point of departure. The Americans will be very keen to have key regional and international players at the table in the fall, which in turn gives the Arab states and the Quartet partners an invitation to negotiate the terms of reference for the conference should they choose to use it.

This would be the moment for the Saudis, Egyptians, Jordanians and the majority of European states who are uncomfortable with current American policy to articulate and bargain over a new approach. It is even conceivable that Rice herself would welcome a strong stand on the part of her interlocutors in order to use such a negotiation to carry the president toward a more realistic policy.

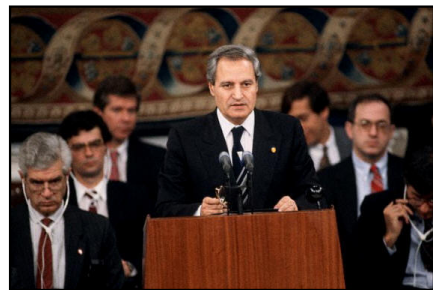
The model for diplomatic efforts should be the Madrid conference of 1991. There is of course an important similarity, but an even more important and complicating difference - the president's name then and now was Bush. But Bush the father showed commitment and courage in advancing peace efforts, while Bush the son is not on board. Rice would have to cast herself in the role of James Baker, this time with the additional challenge of having to convince her boss, the president.



George H. W. Bush speaks at Tufts.
Photo by David Silverberg

At the closing of that Madrid Conference, Baker said, "The United States is willing to be a catalytic force, and an energizing force, and a driving force in the negotiating process." Rice would have to adopt that mantle and be all of those things and more.

Baker shuttled for eight months around the region putting together the conference and negotiating the terms of reference for Madrid, which appeared in the letter of invitation and to which all sides agreed. He succeeded in creating a peace process that brought together Israel, the Palestinians, all the neighbouring states and an additional 10 Arab countries, none of whom had formal relations with Israel.



The substance of the Madrid terms of reference contained four elements, crucial to its success.

First, the effort was comprehensive, involving not only the Palestinians and Jordanians (not yet at peace with Israel), but also the Lebanese and the Syrians. Second, the terms for engagement represented at the time a breakthrough, namely the land-for-peace formula with a comprehensive settlement to be based on UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338.

Third, the letter of invitation provided a timetable for an Israeli-Palestinian permanent status agreement. Finally, Madrid managed to bring Israel and the broader Arab world together, holding out the prospect of regional peace and acceptance that is so vital for Israelis.

Interestingly, Prince Bandar of Saudi Arabia was in attendance at Madrid. The conference set in motion five multilateral regional working groups to build confidence between Israel and the Arab world. Politicians and experts would meet to discuss the environment, economic developments, water, arms-control and regional security, and refugees in such places as Muscat, Rabat, Doha and Tunis.

A similarly ambitious approach calibrated to today's reality is what Rice should pursue. Of course it is far from clear whether she has the appetite for such a mission or whether Bush would agree. Perhaps new envoy Tony Blair can be helpful in this regard.

Pursuing such a course would also be the implementation of the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group and fulfill their call for a regional diplomatic peace effort to restore American credibility and alliance-building capacity, and to deal a blow to Salafist radicalism.

The president's speech may inadvertently have issued an invitation to Europe and the Arab states to start negotiating a contemporary version of the Madrid letter of invitation. These might include detailed terms of reference for Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, provisions for a comprehensive, inclusive process with Syria on board, a reasonable timetable and modalities for implementing the Arab peace initiative. Forcing the frontloading of Arab deliverables outside of a broader comprehensive peace framework is likely to be a non-starter and recipe for diplomatic gridlock.

The alternative would be for this fall's meeting to resemble the January 2003 conference on Palestinian reform that was convened in London - an eminently forgettable experience.

The Madrid model offers one further clue on the way forward with regards to an even more thorny issue. At the time of Madrid, Israel and the PLO still did not recognize each other and Israel refused to talk to the PLO or to have its representatives officially in attendance. A formula was concocted whereby there would be a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation, the Palestinian members of which could be claimed by Israel to not formally represent the PLO, but who themselves insisted that they were doing everything in coordination with the exiled PLO leadership.

Hamas today is the group whose name dare not be spoken in polite company. Yet a process, today, that excludes Hamas (just like excluding the PLO then) is unlikely to deliver sustainability, legitimacy or security. A peace process cannot be built on Palestinian division, and Mahmoud Abbas and the Fatah leadership will have to be quietly and patiently climbed back down from the tree that they are so rapidly ascending.

Most of the European Union member states and the Arab states understand this. A discreet but crucial backchannel in the lead-up to any conference would have to be devoted to internal Palestinian reconciliation. This approach would ultimately have to be accepted by both the US and Israel. At least Blair, with his Northern Ireland experience, will have an informative frame of reference with regard to bringing militants into a peace process.

Like I said, it is a very long shot, but this is what I would argue that realists and genuine believers in peace should be advocating for. Today's Quartet meeting in Portugal will likely be all smiles and rhetorical platitudes, but the real work needs to begin and soon.

Posted by [Daniel Levy](#) on July 19, 2007 6:00 PM | [Permalink](#)

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seth:

mr. oren's op-ed is just the beginning of a murdoch-owned WSJ. What a sad, sad thing...

I won't disagree that the demise of the WSJ's reporting will be a sad sight if it comes to pass, but have you read the editorial page of the WSJ in past years? They're as nutty as they get. Michael Oren is positively sane and even keeled by their standards.

Posted by seth | [July 25, 2007 9:56 PM](#)

Posted on [July 25, 2007 21:56](#)

deb:

mr. oren's op-ed is just the beginning of a murdoch-owned WSJ. What a sad, sad thing...

Posted by deb | [July 20, 2007 2:48 PM](#)

Posted on [July 20, 2007 14:48](#)

Nyer:

I wish people like you understood the definition of realism. Didnt you study polisci. You are advocating a contructivist approach to the conflict. If the definition of realism is a theory "primarily motivated by the desire for military and economic power or security, rather than ideals or ethics" - than our actions and what you advocate is not a realist approach. Israel is the ideal - not an economic or security must. In fact ending Israel would be - which obvioulsy isnt an option. So stop using the term.

Posted by Nyer | [July 20, 2007 12:52 AM](#)

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Beyond negotiations

Long-time activist Haidar Abdel-Shafi was at the negotiating table in the Spanish capital in 1991 when Yasser Arafat was conducting secret talks that ultimately lead to the Oslo deal of 1993. Abdel-Shafi was one of the first to predict that the Oslo process would collapse.

When elections for the first Palestinian parliament were held in 1996, Abdel-Shafi easily won a seat, reflecting his popularity in Gaza, where he lives. Less than two years later, he resigned from parliament, saying that he did not feel it had any real power. He now heads the Red Crescent Society for Gaza Strip and is the commissioner-general of the Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizen's Rights.



It's been two years since the Al-Aqsa Intifada began. How would you evaluate the uprising?

The Intifada is a genuine reaction of the people regarding what has been going on, and the negotiation process in particular. We know that Israel has been exploiting the negotiation process to expand its physical presence in the occupied territories -- that is, it has continued to establish more settlements under the cover of negotiations.

Does this mean that the achievements that came after Oslo have been erased?

Oslo did not really achieve anything. The agreement has been exploited to the benefit of Israeli aggression. The Intifada condemns this negotiating process and Oslo. It affirms the right of the Palestinians to fight in defence of their legitimate rights.



Israel claims that Palestinian Authority (PA) President Yasser Arafat orchestrated the Intifada. The

PA says the uprising was the natural result of Ariel Sharon's visit to Al-Aqsa mosque. Some analysts say that because the older generation that surrounded Arafat failed to achieve independence and good governance, Fatah's younger generation has taken up violence with the aim of forcing Israel to withdraw from Palestinian land as well as to weaken the older generation. What do you think?

Israel exploited the Oslo peace agreement to justify further aggression. The people see this, and of course, in the face of aggression, Palestinians will fight.

Owing to the Intifada, Palestinians are losing out when it comes to education, economic development, social problems and other areas. What do you think?

The Intifada is a spontaneous emotional reaction to the violations that are taking place on the ground under the cover of the negotiating process. This is obvious and reasonable, but the Intifada is, as I said, a spontaneous and unorganised action and, in this sense, it can make unnecessary mistakes. The leadership has a duty to organise the Intifada.

The leadership's failure to uphold this responsibility left the Intifada to proceed in a disorderly manner that played into Israel's hands. It provided a pretext for the brutality of the Israeli reaction against the Intifada. The parties that are making efforts in the context of the Intifada are various political organisations with distinct outlooks about how the Intifada should proceed. For this reason it is vital that all political forces come together to decide, in a democratic manner, on a unified position regarding the activities of the Intifada.

Unity has been repeatedly called for under the title of "The Necessity of National Unity Leadership". Such leadership would be responsible for decision-making with respect to the Intifada.

Because the PA did not take up this call, the Palestinians remain in evident disorder.

So, you blame Arafat's PA?

The PA is to blame for not realising the unity needed to organise the Intifada and for failing to attend to the needs of the people.

The latest polls show that more than two thirds of Palestinians continue to believe that armed confrontations have helped achieve Palestinian national rights in ways that negotiations could not. What do you think?

It's not possible to speak of any real achievements so far, and as I have said, the unorganised fighting in the context of the Intifada has been serving Israeli objectives.

I admit that in the effort to regain our rights, we need to fight; but I emphasise, again, the necessity of organising as a principle in whatever we do, whether peacefully or militarily.

What do you think of the attacks that target Israeli civilians?

I'm against these military attacks. First, they kill innocent people, and I claim that there are innocent people in Israel. More than that, though, there are Israelis who support our rights. Second, such actions deprive us the sympathy and support of the outside world. Third, such attacks provide the Israelis with reasons to unleash their military might against us in a very brutal and unrestricted manner.

Would you refer to these attacks as terrorist attacks?

I disagree with defining these acts as terrorist acts. In my opinion, the young person who commits these acts in which he sacrifices his or her life can't be condemned as a terrorist. A terrorist is someone who destroys the lives of others without exposing her- or himself to the possibility of death.

If there is any kind of Palestinian terrorism, then it was certainly preceded by Jewish terrorism that started in Palestine in the mid-1930s, with Jewish terrorists planting time-bombs in the markets of Jaffa, Haifa and other Palestinian cities.

Recent polls suggest that while support for political reform remains very high, it is less than it was last May, when support for such changes was 91 per cent. How would you explain the drop in the support for reform?

It's a bad sign, because I believe the need for reform is still there. Reform is imperative, and if there is less support for it now, I could only suggest that this means that people are becoming desperate about the possibility of achieving any reform.

When talking to people on the street, they stress one point: the American administration and the Israeli government are the ones pushing for reform for their own purposes. Palestinians feel they have been marginalised and doubt that such reform will lead to democracy.

Israeli and American talk about reform is immaterial. What the Palestinians need is strictly a Palestinian issue, and we can't tolerate any interference in this -- American, Israeli, or otherwise.

What do you think of the Palestinian Legislative Council's (PLC) open challenge to Arafat by forcing him to accept the resignation of his cabinet and to schedule presidential and parliamentary elections for January?

I consider it to be a good sign, and I hope it is an indication that the PLC has finally decided to attend to the responsibilities that it has neglected so far.



Abdel-Shafi

Why now, and not earlier? People are asking that question.

You ask them. There's no need to speculate why now; it's enough to express our satisfaction with this change.

You were the first and the only one to resign.

That was October 1997, because the council neglected and violated its responsibility as a legislating body and indirectly conceded that responsibility to Arafat.

Do you blame the PLC for not standing with you at that time?

I blame them for not standing earlier, too.

Hamas is gaining support. Ask university or high school students who they support, and they say "we support Hamas".

I don't want to comment on who is gaining or losing support. A unified Palestinian position remains the main requirement for the Palestinian cause. We should condemn this talk of factional strife, and we should put more emphasis on the necessity of unity.

Do you think that a civil war could break out here?

I hope not -- it would be a disaster. All responsible Palestinians must take every effort against internal civil strife.

Do you think a Palestinian state will be established?

If we organise better and are able to utilise our potential, we will certainly be on the road to achieving our national objective.

What roles do you think the American administration and the Arabs should play?

I'm against any American interference. We welcome all Arab support on the basis of consultation with the Palestinian leadership.

Israeli Defence Force Chief of Staff Moshe Ya'alon has said that he views the Palestinians as an invisible threat, like cancer. He said, "Some will say it's necessary to amputate organs but, at the moment, I'm applying chemotherapy." Do you think Israel will take even more stringent measures than it is currently pursuing?

What more can they do beyond the terrible brutality they are inflicting on the Palestinian people?

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Haidar Abdel Shafi, Who Led P.L.O. and Red Crescent, Dies at 88

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By ISABEL KERSHNER
Published: September 26, 2007

JERUSALEM, Sept. 25 — Haidar Abdel Shafi, a [Palestinian](#) leader, physician and founder of the Palestine Red Crescent Society in Gaza, died at his home in Gaza City early Tuesday. He was 88.

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The cause was colon cancer, his daughter Hind said.

Dr. Abdel Shafi, who studied medicine in Beirut and in the United States, founded the Gaza branch of the Palestine Red Crescent Society in 1972 and was its first director. The group was established to provide free medical care in Gaza. A Socialist long identified with the Palestinian secular left, he also helped establish the [Palestine Liberation Organization](#) in the 1960s.

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Ruth Fremson/The New York Times, 2002

Dr. Haidar Abdel Shafi.

Dr. Abdel Shafi was a soft-spoken, gentlemanly figure but also a fiercely independent politician who often went against the Palestinian mainstream. He was among the first of his people to call for the acceptance of Israel alongside a Palestinian state.

“In 1948, I was among the people who advocated the acceptance of the partition,” he said in an interview decades later, referring to the [United Nations](#) partition plan for Palestine, which the Arab world rejected.

“In the 1960s, I wrote that it was time for the Arabs and Palestinians to call for the implementation of the partition and seek a peaceful resolution to the conflict,” he said. “I was attacked

then in the Arab press.”

In 1991, he led the Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to the Madrid peace conference, which brought Israel together with its Arab neighbors. He later became the chief Palestinian negotiator in talks with Israel in Washington until 1993. Those talks ended after the disclosure of secret negotiations between the Palestinians and Israelis, which led to the Oslo peace accords.

Dr. Abdel Shafi had already become frustrated with the peace process by then. In particular, he protested Israel’s continued construction of settlements in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, which he saw as a contradiction of the spirit of the process.

In 1996 he was elected to the Palestinian Legislative Council, the [Palestinian Authority](#)’s Parliament, but he quit two years later, saying it was ineffective.

Dr. Abdel Shafi became a sharp critic of the centralization of power in the Palestinian territories under the rule of [Yasir Arafat](#). In 2002 he helped found the Palestinian National Initiative, a civic organization advocating national unity, democracy and clean government.

Dr. Abdel Shafi had expressed his distress at the rising violence and chaos in his native Gaza in recent years. On his death, rival Palestinian factions, in a rare coalescence, issued statements of tribute. The secular [Fatah](#) Party hailed him as a “great national struggler.” The Islamic movement [Hamas](#), which seized control of Gaza in June, praised him as “one of the most important Palestinian figures in

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Palestinian history.”

Dr. Abdel Shafi is survived by his wife, four children and eight grandchildren.

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