

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF THE SIGNIFICANT EVENTS IN THE NATION OF ISRAEL

The area was first named Palestine by the 1st century Romans, who, trying to erase any Jewish connection to the land, called it Syria Palaestina, a name derived from the Philistines (Israel's ancient enemies). Palestine was never a nation, a language, a separate race.

For 400 years, the Ottoman Turks ruled northern Africa, of which Palestine was part.

1890 Herzl/Zionist Movement

Zionism: A movement to unite the Jewish people of the Diaspora (exile) and settle them in Palestine. Arose in late 19th century, culminated in 1948 with establishment of the state of Israel.

Theodore Herzl, a Hungarian born Jewish journalist, convened the first World Zionist Congress, 1897, in Basel, Switzerland.

He predicted the State of Israel would be a reality in 50 years. (He was right.)

At the congress, established the World Zionist Organization (WZO) and authorized it to establish branches in every country with a substantial Jewish population.

In 1881, pogroms in Russia caused large numbers of Jews to emigrate to the West, primarily the U.S. A smaller number went to Palestine, then under Turkish rule.

Baron Edmond de Rothschild, a French Jewish philanthropist, financially supported those who emigrated to Palestine.

Many did not persevere and this early Jewish immigration was insignificant.

Kibbutzim: Agricultural co-ops, which began as social experiments (Socialist Zionists), provided the political, cultural, and military backbone of the *Yishuv* (the Jewish community in Palestine) before the state of Israel was established and for many years afterward.

Prior to the outbreak of World War I, the British proposed support for national independence in the Arab-speaking world, in return for their rebellion against the Turks.

During this time, secret talks took place between England and France, establishing post-war borders for the Middle East. (Most Arab states owe their borders to that agreement.)

Balfour Declaration

The British had gained control of Palestine during World War I from the Turks who had dominated the region.

British statesman, Arthur James Balfour, Prime Minister from 1902-1905, issued the Balfour Declaration of 1917, which pledged British support for a Jewish national home in Palestine.

Dr. Chaim Weitzmann was an ardent Zionist. As a scientist, he invented TNT. He gave extraordinary help to the British in World War I. In gratitude, the British Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary signed the Balfour Declaration in 1917 which declared the goal of establishing a national homeland for the Jewish people in Palestine. The U.S. and other western nations approved. Initially, Arab leaders endorsed the Balfour plan, hoping that Britain would grant Arab independence and control over vast parts of the former Ottoman Empire.

As Jewish immigration continued and more land was sold by absentee Arab landowners to the Jews (for exorbitant prices), Arab unrest broke out into riots. The lack of Arab independence only fueled Arab leaders.

1922-1948 British Mandate

World War I ended and in the 1920 Peace Talks, Palestine was put under British authority.

In 1922, the new League of Nations approved the British mandate of Palestine and Jews began to immigrate in large numbers, despite Arab opposition.

As violence and Arab unrest increased, Britain, hoping to placate the Arabs, gave 77% of the proposed Jewish homeland (the area east of the Jordan River) to the Arabs and created a new Arab land called Transjordan (modern day Jordan). (see Figure 2)

After the establishment of Transjordan, the British allowed Arabs to settle anywhere in Palestine, but Jewish people were no longer allowed to settle east of the Jordan River.

Jewish people were allowed to settle in the mountains of Israel (the West Bank), until Jordan captured the area in 1948. Transjordan then became Jordan.

Today, the territory once known as Palestine is two nations: Jordan (an Arab Palestinian state) and Israel (the Jewish state).

During the years of British mandate, the *Yishuv* grew from 50,000 to 600,000 people. Most were refugees from Nazi persecution in Europe.

1935 New Zionist party

Zeev Vladimir Jabotinsky seceded from the Zionist movement and formed the New Zionist party.

He advocated a Jewish state on both sides of the Jordan River.

Devoted himself to arranging for mass evacuation of European Jews to Palestine, which was largely unsuccessful.

1936-1939 Arab rebellion/riots

Full scale riots and rebellion from Arabs of Palestine erupted as coexistence with Jews became more difficult.

Zionist movement adopted various approaches including the foundation of a joint Arab-Jewish state.

David Ben-Gurion, future Israeli prime minister, however, argued that accommodation with the Arabs could only come from a position of Jewish strength, after the *Yishuv* had become the majority.

1939 British White Paper

As the need increased for Britain to guard her oil interests in the Middle East, Arab influence also increased. The area continued to be a hotbed of volatile unrest.

Putting pressure on the oil-dependent British resulted in the British government changing its Palestine policy in an effort to appease the Arab world, reversing the Balfour plan.

The MacDonald White Paper of May 1939 terminated Britain's commitment to Zionism.

Provisions of the paper: 1) the establishment of a bi-national Palestinian state within 10 years, 2) restriction of Jewish land purchases, 3) guaranteed continuation of the Arab majority by a clause that provided for the immigration of 75,000 Jews during the following 5 years, but thereafter, entry would depend on Arab consent.

The Jews felt betrayed and the Anglo-Zionist alliance was broken.

Violent protest erupted among the *Yishuv*.

The Arabs also rejected the plan, demanding the immediate creation of an Arab Palestine, prohibition of further immigration, and a review of the status of all Jewish immigrants since 1918.

1938-1944 Holocaust

The systematic murder of 6 million European Jews by the Nazis.

It convinced Western Jews of the need for a Jewish state.

1944: National Military Organization, a Zionist guerrilla force led by future Israeli Prime Minister Menachim Begin, began an armed revolt against British rule in Palestine.

1948 UN Declaration, War of Independence

Herzl's prophetic declaration of exactly 50 years before becomes a reality when on May 14, 1948, Palestine becomes the new independent state of Israel.

1,878 years after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, Isaiah's prophecy is fulfilled (Isaiah 14:1-3)

1st Prime Minister: David Ben-Gurion

He insists that Zionist leaders who remain in Diaspora have no say in Israel's policy decisions, and now that the Jewish state exists, the sole purpose of Zionism is personal *aliya* (settling in Israel).

Opposing viewpoints argued that Zionism must also nurture and preserve Jewish life in Diaspora; warned against creating a schism between Israel and Diaspora Jewry.

Jews resided in significant numbers west of the Jordan River until the War of Independence when they were driven from the mountains by the Jordanian army.

1956 Sinai War

From 1949 to 1956 the armed truce between Israel and the Arabs, enforced in part by the UN forces, was punctuated by raids and reprisals.

Among the world powers, the United States, Great Britain, and France sided with Israel, while the Soviet Union supported Arab demands.

Tensions mounted during 1956 as Israel became convinced that the Arabs were preparing for war.

The nationalization of the Suez Canal by Egypt's Gamal Abdal Nasser in July, 1956, resulted in the further alienation of Great Britain and France, which made new agreements with Israel.

On Oct. 29, 1956, Israeli forces, directed by Moshe Dayan, launched a combined air and ground assault into Egypt's Sinai Peninsula.

Early Israeli successes were reinforced by an Anglo-French invasion along the canal.

Although the action against Egypt was severely condemned by the nations of the world, the cease-fire of Nov. 6, which was promoted by the United Nations with U.S. and Soviet support, came only after Israel had captured several key objectives, including the Gaza strip and Sharm el Sheikh, which commanded the approaches to the Gulf of Aqaba.

Israel withdrew from these positions in 1957, turning them over to the UN emergency force after access to the Gulf of Aqaba, without which Israel was cut off from the Indian Ocean, had been guaranteed.

1967 Six Day War

After a period of relative calm, border incidents between Israel and Syria, Egypt, and Jordan increased during the early 1960s, with Palestinian guerrilla groups actively supported by Syria.

In May, 1967, President Nasser, his prestige much eroded through his inaction in the face of Israeli raids, requested the withdrawal of UN forces from Egyptian territory, mobilized units in the Sinai, and closed the Gulf of Aqaba to Israel.

Israel (which had no UN forces stationed on its territory) responded by mobilizing.

The escalation of threats and provocations continued until June 5, 1967, when Israel launched a massive air assault that crippled Arab air capability.

With air superiority protecting its ground forces, Israel controlled the Sinai peninsula within three days and then concentrated on the Jordanian frontier, capturing Jerusalem's Old City (subsequently annexed), and on the Syrian border, gaining the strategic Golan Heights.

The war, which ended on June 10, is known as the Six-Day War.

The Suez Canal was closed by the war, and Israel declared that it would not give up Jerusalem and that it would hold the other captured territories until significant progress had been made in Arab-Israeli relations.

The end of active, conventional fighting was followed by frequent artillery duels along the frontiers and by clashes between Israelis and Palestinian guerrillas.

1973 Yom Kippur War

During 1973 the Arab states, believing that their complaints against Israel were going unheeded (despite the mounting use by the Arabs of threats to cut off oil supplies in an attempt to soften the pro-Israel stance of the United States), quietly prepared for war, led by Egypt's President Anwar Sadat.

On Oct. 6, 1973, the Jewish holy day Yom Kippur, a two-pronged assault on Israel was launched. Egyptian forces struck eastward across the Suez Canal and pushed the Israelis back, while the Syrians advanced from the north.

Iraqi forces joined the war and, in addition, Syria received some support from Jordan, Libya, and the smaller Arab states.

The attacks caught Israel off guard, and it was several days before the country was fully mobilized; Israel then forced the Syrians and Egyptians back and, in the last hours of the war, established a salient on the west bank of the Suez Canal, but these advances were achieved at a high cost in soldiers and equipment.

Through U.S. and Soviet diplomatic pressures and the efforts of the United Nations, a tenuous cease-fire was implemented by Oct. 25.

Israel and Egypt signed a cease-fire agreement in November, but Israeli-Syrian fighting continued until a cease-fire was negotiated in 1974.

Largely as a result of the diplomatic efforts of U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, Israel withdrew back across the Suez Canal and several miles inland from the east bank behind an UN-supervised cease-fire zone. On the Syrian front too, Israeli territorial gains made in the war were given up.

After the war Egyptian and Syrian diplomatic relations with the United States, broken since the 1967 war, were resumed, and clearance of the Suez Canal began.

The 1973-74 War brought about a major shift of power in the Middle East and ultimately led to the signing of the Camp David Accords.

1979 Camp David Accords

In 1978, Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Egyptian President Anwar al-Sadat signed the Camp David accords; a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel was signed (1979) in Washington, D.C., and Israel withdrew from the Sinai by 1982.

Little progress was made, however, with respect to the Gaza Strip and West Bank, and in 1981 Israel annexed the Golan Heights (captured from Syria in 1967).

1982-1985 Lebanon Operation

In 1978 Palestinian guerrillas, from their base in Lebanon, launched an air raid on Israel; in retaliation, Israel sent troops into S Lebanon to occupy a strip 4-6 i (6-10 km) deep and thus protect Israel's border.

Eventually a UN peace-keeping force was set up there, but occasional fighting continued.

In 1982 Israel launched a massive attack to destroy all military bases of the Palestine Liberation Organization in S Lebanon and, after a 10-week siege of the Muslim sector of West Beirut, a PLO stronghold, forced the Palestinians to accept a U.S-sponsored plan whereby the PLO guerrillas would evacuate Beirut and go to several Arab countries that had agreed to accept them.

Israel withdrew from Lebanon in 1985 but continues to maintain a 6-12 mile (10-20 km) security zone just north of the border.

1985-2001

Menachin Begin retired in 1983 and was succeeded by Yitzhak Shamir.

Indecisive elections in 1984 and 1988 resulted in an awkward coalition government, led by Labor party leader Shimon Peres (1984-86) and Shamir (1986-90).

In June 1990, after the coalition collapsed, Shamir formed a right-wing government. In the late 1980s and early 1990s there were increasingly violent clashes between Palestinians and Israeli troops in the occupied territories.

Soviet Jews began emigrating to Israel in large numbers in 1990, strapping Israel's resources, and Iraq launched missiles at Israel during the Persian Gulf War.

Israel began peace talks with Syrians, Jordanians, and the Palestinians in 1991.

In 1992 the Labor party and its allies won the largest bloc of seats in parliament, and Yitzhak Rabin became Prime Minister.

In 1993 Israel signed an accord with the PLO that led to Palestinian self-rule in the Gaza Strip and Jericho in mid-1994.

A 1995 accord called for the expansion of self-rule to all Arab cities and villages in the West Bank by 1996.

A peace treaty with Jordan was signed in 1994.

Rabin was assassinated by a right-wing Jewish extremist in 1995; Peres succeeded him as Prime Minister.

Internal terrorist attacks by Muslim extremists in 1996 and 1997 postponed the peace process and, in elections held in 1996, Peres narrowly lost as Prime Minister to the Likud candidate, Benjamin Netanyahu.

Under an accord signed in 1998, Israel agreed to withdraw from additional West Bank territory, while the Palestinian Authority pledged to take stronger measures to fight terrorism.

In the May 1999 elections, Labor (renamed the One Israel party) returned to power under Ehud Barak, a former army chief of staff, who formed a coalition government.

In September, Barak and Yasir Arafat, the Palestinian leader, signed an agreement to finalize their borders and to determine the status of Jerusalem within a year.

By March 2000, Israel completed handing over additional West Bank territory; in May it withdrew from S Lebanon.

July, 2000 Camp David Peace talks: Further peace talks deadlocked in July, after an unprecedented and over-generous offer by Israel which included handing over 97% of the occupied territory (the West Bank) and dividing Jerusalem.

September, 2000: Second Intifada begun by Palestinians, resulting in ongoing terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians, with military response by Israelis against terrorist targets following Ariel Sharon's visit to the Haram esh-Sherif (the Temple Mount to Jews) in Jerusalem.

In February, 2001 Sharon defeated Barak as the Prime Minister; Sharon formed a broad national unity government.

2003-2006

June, 2003: "Road Map to Peace" – meeting between President George Bush, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, and Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas failed to bring peace. Violence continues. Road Map fails to reach its destination.

July/August, 2006: War between Israel and Hezbollah in southern Lebanon.