

**The American Jewish Committee
Student Resource Guide
to Israel and the Middle East**

The Voices of Reason

Not Hate

Will Facilitate Peace



The American Jewish Committee

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Dear Student:

There are few places more exciting than a college campus. Your years in college are a time to gain exposure to new perspectives, debate important issues, and develop your own views and ideas. One of the most widely discussed topics on campuses today is the Middle East, specifically the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Talking about Israel and the Middle East is not easy. The sources of today's conflicts are complex, and many people feel that they do not have the background or the facts to successfully present their views. In addition, a troubling trend has developed on college campuses around the country—many pro-Israel students have reported feeling intimidated by hate speech, social and academic pressure, and sometimes blatant anti-Semitism.

While it might not always be easy to support Israel on campus, the more you learn about it, the stronger the case for Israel becomes. This Student Resource Guide, which was compiled by college students working with the American Jewish Committee over the summer, is designed to help you learn about the issues central to understanding Israel's past and the choices it faces today, to teach you the advocacy skills you need to more clearly and effectively express your point of view, and to show you where to find more information.

The American Jewish Committee also encourages you to discover and use your local resources. College Hillels and other Jewish campus organizations are good places to find allies as well as more information. And check out the American Jewish Committee website, www.ajc.org, for timely publications, an entire "student" section, and information about the AJC chapter near you.

Being on the side of Israel is being on the side of peace. There is no country in the world that has taken such risks for peace and, despite constant rejections and setbacks, continues to do so today. Israel needs more voices of reason and advocates for a secure peace, especially on college campuses. Your voice can make a real difference.

David A. Harris
Executive Director

The American Jewish Committee

Advancing democracy, pluralism and mutual understanding

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* Find additional flyers by going to the American Jewish Committee web site, www.ajc.org, and clicking on "posters" under the Students section or by going to www.takeACTIONnow.org. We encourage you to share these flyers with others and to use them to spark informal discussions.

Background and Historical Context

Map of Israel



Source: <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/is.html>

Note: The broken line between the white and gray areas is the Green Line, the armistice line after Israel's War of Independence. It was Israel's border with Jordan and Egypt, respectively, until came into this land while acting in defense during the 1967 Six-Day War.

Israel and its Neighbors



Source: www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org

Relative Size of

ISRAEL and...



Source: www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org

Timeline of Israeli-Arab Relations

| | |
|-------|--|
| 1947 | UN approves partition plan. The United Nations Partition Plan proposed two separate states in the former British Mandate of Palestine—one Jewish and one Arab. The Jewish population accepted the plan; the Arab population, intent on preventing any Jewish entity in Palestine, did not. |
| 1948 | <p>Israel declares and defends its independence. Immediately after its establishment, Israel was forced to fight a war for its independence. The Arab world rejected the UN partition plan and seven Arab countries attacked Israel with the intent to “push all of the Jews into the sea.” Against all odds, Israel won the war.</p> <p>Between 1948 and 1967, the West Bank and Gaza Strip were controlled by Jordan and Egypt respectively. During their 19-year rule, neither country ever made any attempt to establish a Palestinian state there.</p> |
| 1964 | The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was founded —three years <i>before</i> Israel gained control of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in the Six-Day War—with the mission to destroy Israel, claiming that all of Israel is “occupied territory.” |
| 1967 | <p>Just prior to the Six-Day War (June '67), when Israel was surrounded by 465,000 Egyptian, Syrian, Iraqi, and Lebanese troops, 2,800 tanks and 800 aircrafts, Egyptian President Gamal Nasser declared, “Our basic objective will be the destruction of Israel.”</p> <p>Immediately after winning the Six-Day War, Israel offered to return most of the land captured during the war in exchange for peace and normal relations, but the offer was rejected in the Khartoum Declaration issued by eight Arab states.</p> |
| 1973 | Yom Kippur War. On Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the Jewish year, Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack against Israel. At least nine Arab states actively aided the Egyptian-Syrian war effort. Israel was severely outnumbered and suffered tremendous losses during the first two days of the war. Israel managed to mobilize reserve troops and eventually repelled the Arab armies. |
| 1978 | Peace with Egypt. In 1978, Anwar Sadat, president of Egypt, signed the Camp David Accords. Under this agreement, Israel returned the Sinai desert, which Israel captured while defending itself in the 1967 war, in exchange for Egypt’s recognition of Israel’s right to exist. All but two Arab countries severed diplomatic ties with Egypt and, in 1981, Sadat was assassinated by Islamic Jihad. Despite this, relations between Israel and Egypt—although often strained—remain peaceful to this day. |
| 1993 | Oslo Accords. In 1993, representatives of the Israeli government met secretly with members of the PLO in an attempt to arrive at an understanding. In the Oslo Declaration of Principles, both sides agreed to recognize the other’s right to exist as a people within the borders of Palestine/Israel and committed themselves to negotiating a permanent settlement and improving relations. Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat received the Nobel Peace Prize for this achievement. |
| 1994 | Peace with Jordan. In October 1994, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin signed a peace treaty with the prime minister of Jordan, Abdul-Salam Majali. Privately, the relationship between Israel and Jordan had long been a cooperative one, based on mutual interests. Once it appeared that Israel was on its way to an agreement with the Palestinians, Jordan was in a position to officially establish peaceful ties with Israel. |
| 2000 | Camp David II. In 2000, in an attempt to bring the Oslo process to fruition, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak made the most generous offer in the history of Arab-Israeli peace efforts for the creation of a Palestinian state. Yasser Arafat rebuffed the offer and failed to propose a counteroffer, instead launching the current wave of Palestinian violence. |
| Today | Even today, Arab-language broadcasts and print media commonly state that Israel has no right to exist and that suicide bombing and terrorism are virtuous. Palestinian leaders have thus far done little to stop this incitement, and instead have often fed it. |

What Is ...? Understanding Key Terms

What is United Nations Security Council Resolution 242?

UN Security Council Resolution 242 was adopted in November 1967, following the Six-Day War. (Defending itself in this war, Israel took control of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, the Sinai Peninsula, and the Golan Heights.) This resolution is one of the most commonly referenced UN resolutions in Middle Eastern politics and is the origin of the “land for peace” principle upon which many subsequent agreements and peace talks were based (e.g., the 1979 Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty, in which Israel withdrew from the Sinai Peninsula; the Oslo Accords, in which some of the disputed territories were to become a Palestinian state).

The resolution calls for a cessation of all states of war in the area, assures the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all Middle Eastern nations, and calls for a “just settlement” of the refugee issue. It calls for the “withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict” in exchange for an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The semantics of Resolution 242 have been hotly debated. Most Arab states contend that the resolution requires Israel to retreat from all territories it captured. However, Israel and its allies maintain that the deliberate omission of the word *the* in front of “territories” in the phrase, “withdrawal from territories occupied in the recent conflict,” implies that Israel could comply by retreating, in the context of a larger peace treaty, from only some of the territories. Because of the indeterminate nature of final boundaries, and because Israel took control of the territories from Jordan and Egypt, whose rights to the areas were never recognized, Israel calls the territories “disputed” rather than “occupied.” Israel also argues that the resolution justifies a continued Israeli presence in all of the disputed territories until Israel is recognized by each of its Arab neighbors and can “live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force.”

What is Camp David II?

Camp David II is the name given to the failed negotiations in July 2000 between Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat, facilitated by President Bill Clinton at the presidential retreat, Camp David. During the two weeks of negotiations, Barak made more concessions to the Palestinians than any Israeli prime minister before him. Barak’s offer* included:

- Israeli redeployment from 95% of the West Bank and 100% of the Gaza Strip
- The creation of a Palestinian state in that area
- The removal of isolated settlements that would be transferred to Palestinian control

* There is no one official account of these negotiations. Most maps that depict Barak’s offer at Camp David represent the Palestinian account; however, the Palestinian version differs dramatically from what Israel and President Clinton claim was offered. For what Israel claims to have offered, see Yaacov Lozowick’s *Right to Exist: A Moral Defense of Israel’s Wars*. (New York, Doubleday: 2003).

- Slices of Israeli land to be ceded to the Palestinian state to compensate for the percentage of the West Bank to remain under Israeli sovereignty
- Palestinian control over parts of Jerusalem including most of the Old City
- "Religious sovereignty" (international control) over the Temple Mount (rather than Israeli sovereignty, which had been in effect since 1967)

Despite these concessions, there were still a number of unresolved issues, including the final status of Jerusalem and of Palestinian refugees (though a program of family reunification for some and compensation for the rest was being worked out). Some junior Palestinian negotiators presented alternate plans for discussion, but Arafat refused to consider them. Instead of offering a counterproposal, he walked away from the negotiations and chose to incite the current wave of violence.

What is the "Right of Return"?

One of the most contentious issues in negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians has been that of Palestinian refugees. Around 700,000 (some claim up to one million) Palestinian Arabs left their homes during Israel's War of Independence. It is still debated how many Arabs left because they were asked or threatened by other Arab leaders, how many fled because of the crossfire, and how many were forced to leave by the Israeli military. The refugees fled to Egyptian-controlled Gaza, Jordanian-controlled West Bank (Judea and Samaria), Jordan, Syria and other Arab countries.

Jordan is the only one of the Arab countries to have given the refugees citizenship. Other Arab countries have conveniently used the unresolved status of the Palestinian refugees to deflect onto Israel the anger of their people about the lack of democracy and development in their own countries.

Now, generations later, Arab descendents of the refugees number over four million. The United Nations created a special agency, the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), to look after the Palestinian refugees as well as their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. There has been no refugee population that has been treated by the international community in this way. All other refugee populations fall under the jurisdiction of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. In addition, in other situations, only the original generation, and not their descendants, is given the official status of refugees.

Some Palestinian leaders and supporters demand a Palestinian "right of return" to places where their grandparents and great-grandparents had lived within Israel. There are two main reasons that Israel cannot comply with this request:

1. One million Arabs already live within Israel; an additional four million Arab immigrants means that the numbers of Jews and Arabs would be equal. Jews would soon become a minority, and instead of Israel being a Jewish state, it would become a majority Arab state.
2. The Palestinian population is extremely hostile to Israeli civilians and Israeli society, as evidenced by the brutal suicide attacks, anti-Semitism and hatred that emanates from Palestinian Authority-controlled areas and from the entire Arab world. Israel cannot be required to accept a very large population violently hostile to its very existence.

It is clear that there is no way for Israel to invite the Palestinian population to return to Israel; it would be suicide for Israel as a Jewish state. If Palestinian leaders were truly concerned with the well-being of their constituents, they would not let this issue stalemate the peace process and would instead work to resolve this issue, either by

getting other Arab states (who share common language, culture and religion with the Palestinians) to accept the descendants of the refugees, or by working to create a Palestinian state alongside Israel. In general, it is recognized that within the framework of a final Israeli-Palestinian settlement, Palestinian refugees will receive compensation.

What are the settlements?

“Settlements” are Jewish communities in the West Bank (Judea and Samaria) and Gaza Strip that have developed since 1967. Israel gained control over these territories during the defensive Six-Day war of 1967.

Some Jews claim a religious-historical right to live in these areas. With the exception of the twenty years of Jordanian rule when Jews were forced to leave, there had been Jews in Judea and Samaria at various points throughout history, beginning in ancient times. Some Jews who choose to live in the West Bank seek continuity, since the land is historically connected to the Torah and the birth of Judaism. Other Jews are attracted to the area because of its beauty and affordable housing.

The settlements are often cited as one of the main obstacles to peace. However, the Arab-Israeli conflict existed long before the settlements, and the PLO was founded three years before Israel was in control of these territories.

In total, approximately a quarter of a million Jews live in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

What is the “Road Map to Peace”?

The Road Map is a peace proposal that lays out the steps for Israelis and Palestinians to create a Palestinian state that will live in peace with Israel within three years. The plan is endorsed by representatives of the “Quartet”—the United States, the United Nations, the European Union, and Russia—and was presented in April 2003 to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas. The Road Map is divided into three stages:

1st Phase: An end to Palestinian violence; Political reform within the Palestinian Authority, including Palestinian elections; withdrawal of Israeli forces and a freeze on the expansion of settlements.

2nd Phase: The creation of an independent Palestinian state; the organization of an international conference and international monitoring of compliance to the Road Map’s stipulations.

3rd Phase: Organization of a second international conference; permanent status agreement, including an agreement on the final borders; a resolution of difficult issues including the final status of Jerusalem and the fate of refugees and settlements; Arab states to agree to peace deals with Israel.

The plan suggests a three-year timetable, but it is “performance-based”; it will only move forward if Israelis and Palestinians are deemed to have met the given criteria.

Questions left open include: Who will judge Israelis’ and Palestinians’ performance? And what exactly qualifies as acceptable performance, since the Road Map is open to interpretation? Technically, the Quartet will decide. The United States, however, has been the most involved in the peace process and may find it difficult to come to an agreement with other Quartet members, given the recent political climate and the plan’s vague stipulations.

One perceived weakness of the plan is that it leaves unresolved the most contentious issues, particularly those of the Palestinian refugees and the "right of return" they claim. The issue is deferred to negotiations planned for the end of Phase II, though it proved the greatest stumbling block at Camp David II.

Finally, how can the Quartet implement its ideas on the ground? Palestinian terrorism has yet to end, leaving the process hanging at the very beginning. At this time, many consider the Road Map already outdated, because it has not achieved any significant progress toward peace or a Palestinian state. Nevertheless, it remains a reference point for the international community.

What is the security fence?

The security fence is a temporary defensive measure, designed to prevent terrorists from entering Israel and killing innocent people. Before the construction of this fence, terrorists could easily attack Israeli cities, many within walking distance of the Palestinian Authority-controlled areas, resulting in numerous and often large-scale attacks. The fence has been effective in decreasing the number of terrorist attacks and preventing confrontations between armed Palestinians and Israeli Defense Forces, resulting in fewer Palestinian deaths. The security fence is neither a final border nor a political statement; rather, its path is based solely on topography and security needs. Only five of the 480 miles of the barrier are actually a concrete wall—the rest is a simple fence with cameras and fine sand to detect movement.

Israel recognizes the difficulties the fence may create for some Palestinians, and is constantly working to alleviate them by creating civilian passageways through the security barrier, changing the course of the fence, or providing compensation for any land used to build the fence. Despite efforts to accommodate Palestinian concerns, the fence does make life more difficult for a small number of Palestinians who live adjacent to the fence. However, Israel's responsibility to protect its citizens is its first priority, and the fence has been extremely effective in doing this. When the terrorist attacks stop, there will be no need for the fence, and real political negotiations can begin between Israeli and Palestinian leaders about establishing secure borders and a Palestinian state.

For more information on the security fence, including details about the International Court of Justice ruling and the Israeli Supreme Court ruling on the fence, see the Israel Ministry Foreign Affairs web site at www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/ and click on the Anti-Terrorist Fence link in the lower left-hand corner.

Israel and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: A Brief Guide for the Perplexed

By David A. Harris
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This article provides both historical information and talking points on the Israeli-Arab conflict. It is not an exhaustive examination of the subject.

The case for Israel is as strong today as ever.

When presented with the facts, sensible people should understand:

- (a) Israel's fifty-six-year-long quest for peace and security;
- (b) the real dangers faced by Israel, a tiny country no larger than New Jersey, in a tumultuous, heavily armed neighborhood;
- (c) Israel's unshakeable commitment to democracy and democratic values;
- (d) the common extremist and fanatical enemies faced by Israel and the United States; and
- (e) Israel's impressive contributions to world civilization in such fields as science, medicine, technology, agriculture, and culture—contributions that are even more remarkable given the country's relative youth and its heavy defense burden.

No country's historical record is perfect. Israel, like other democratic nations, has made its share of mistakes; however, acknowledging fallibility is a national strength, not a weakness. And I'll gladly match Israel's record against that of any other country in the region, indeed well beyond the region, when it comes to the values the West holds dear.

Israel has a proud record and the country's friends shouldn't hesitate to shout it from the rooftops. That record actually begins long before the establishment of the modern state in 1948.

The Jewish people's link to the land of Israel is incontrovertible and unbroken.

It spans nearly four thousand years. Exhibit A is the Hebrew Bible. The Book of Genesis, the first of the five books of the Bible, recounts the story of Abraham, the covenantal relationship with the one God, and the move from Ur (in present-day Iraq) to Canaan, the region corresponding roughly to Israel. Exhibit B is any Jewish prayer book in use anywhere in the world. The references in the liturgy to Zion, the land of Israel, are endless.

The same is true of the connection between the Jewish people and Jerusalem.

It dates back to the period of King David, who lived approximately three thousand years ago, and who established Jerusalem as Israel's capital. Ever since, Jerusalem has represented not only the geographical center of the Jewish people, but also the spiritual and metaphysical heart of our faith and identity. Indeed, the relationship between Jerusalem and the Jewish people is unique in the annals of history.

Jerusalem was the site of the two Temples—the first built by King Solomon during the tenth century B.C.E. and destroyed in 586 B.C.E. during the Babylonian conquest, and the second built less than a century later, refurbished by King Herod, and destroyed in 70 C.E. by Roman forces.

Though in forced dispersion for nearly nineteen hundred years, Jews never stopped yearning for Zion and Jerusalem.

In addition to expressing this through prayer, there were always Jews who lived in the land of Israel, especially in Jerusalem. Indeed, since the nineteenth century, Jews have constituted a majority of the city's population.

For example, according to the *Political Dictionary of the State of Israel*, Jews were 61.9 percent of Jerusalem's population in 1892.

The historical and religious link to Jerusalem is especially important because some Arabs seek to rewrite history and assert that Jews are "foreign occupiers" or "colonialists" with no actual tie to the land. Such attempts to deny Israel's legitimacy are demonstrably false and need to be exposed for the lies they are. They also entirely ignore the "inconvenient" fact that when Jerusalem was under Muslim (i.e., Ottoman and, later, Jordanian) rule, it was always a backwater.

Zionism is the quest for national self-determination of the Jewish people.

Although the yearning for a Jewish homeland dates back thousands of years and is given expression in classic Jewish texts, it also stems from a more contemporary reality.

Theodor Herzl, considered the father of modern Zionism, was a secular Jew and Viennese journalist who became appalled at the blatant anti-Semitism fueling the infamous Dreyfus case in France, the first European country to extend full rights to the Jews. He came to the conclusion that Jews could never enjoy full equality as a minority in European societies, since the sad legacy of centuries of anti-Semitism was too deeply embedded. Therefore, he called for the establishment of a Jewish state, which he set out to describe in his landmark book *Altneuland* ("Old-New Land"), published in 1902.

Herzl's vision was endorsed by the British foreign secretary, Lord Balfour, who issued a statement on November 2, 1917, saying in part:

His Majesty's Government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.

In 1922, the League of Nations, entrusting Britain with a mandate for Palestine, recognized "the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine."

The rise of Hitler and the Nazi "Final Solution," spearheaded by Germany and its allies—and facilitated by widespread complicity in as well as indifference to the fate of the Jews—revealed in tragic dimensions the desperate need for a Jewish state. (Apropos, Haj Amin el-Husseini, the mufti of Jerusalem, was among the enthusiastic supporters of the Nazi genocide of the Jewish people.)

Only in such a state, the Zionist movement believed, would Jews not have to rely on the "goodwill" of others to determine their destiny. All Jews would be welcome to settle in the Jewish state as a refuge from persecution or as a fulfillment of a "yearning for Zion." Indeed, this latter point fired the imagination of many Jews who settled in what was then a generally desolate Palestine, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, out of idealistic convictions, and who laid the foundation for the modern State of Israel.

Israel's adversaries to this day twist the meaning of Zionism and try to present it as a demonic force. Their goal is to undermine Israel's *raison d'être* and to isolate the state from the community of nations.

The Arab-Israeli conflict was avoidable.

Shortly after its founding in 1945, the United Nations took an interest in the future of mandatory Palestine, then under British rule. A UN commission (UNSCOP, or the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine) recommended to the General Assembly a partition of the land between the Jews and the Arabs. Neither side would get all it sought, but a division would recognize that there were two populations in the land—one Jewish, the other Arab—each meriting a state.

On November 29, 1947, the UN General Assembly, by a vote of 33 in favor, 13 opposed, and 10 abstaining, adopted Resolution 181, known as the Partition Plan.

Acceptance of the Partition Plan would have meant the establishment of two states, but the Arab states and the local Arab population vehemently rejected the proposal. They refused to recognize a Jewish claim to any part of the land and chose war to fulfill their objectives.

On May 14, 1948, the Jews of Palestine founded the State of Israel. Winston Churchill said at the time:

The coming into being of a Jewish state ... is an event in world history to be viewed in the perspective not of a generation or a century, but in the perspective of a thousand, two thousand or even three thousand years.

Years later, President John F. Kennedy offered his perspective on the meaning of Israel:

Israel was not created in order to disappear—Israel will endure and flourish. It is the child of hope and home of the brave. It can neither be broken by adversity nor demoralized by success. It carries the shield of democracy and it honors the sword of freedom.

Israel's Declaration of the Establishment of the State included these words:

We extend our hand to all neighboring states and their peoples in an offer of peace and good neighborliness, and appeal to them to establish bonds of cooperation and mutual help with the sovereign Jewish people settled in its own land.

Tragically, that offer was ignored.

On May 15, 1948, the armies of Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria attacked the fledgling Jewish state, seeking its destruction.

In the course of this war, launched by the Arabs, civilian populations were affected, just as in all wars. Controversies continue to this day about how many local Arabs fled Israel because Arab leaders called on them to do so or threatened them if they did not, how many left out of fear of the fighting, and how many were compelled to leave by Israeli forces. Importantly, hundreds of thousands of Arabs ended up staying in Israel and became citizens of the state.

The central point must not be overlooked—Arab countries began this war aiming to wipe out the 650,000 Jews in the new State of Israel, and in doing so, the Arabs defied the UN plan for the creation of both Arab and Jewish states.

There have been two refugee populations created by the Arab-Israeli conflict, not one.

While world attention has been focused on the Palestinian refugees, the plight of Jews from Arab countries, hundreds of thousands of whom became refugees as well, has been largely ignored. Indeed, many experts believe that the size of the two groups was roughly comparable. But there was one profound difference—Israel immediately absorbed the Jewish refugees, while the Palestinian refugees were placed in camps and deliberately kept there as a matter of calculated Arab policy and with the complicity of the UN.

There is no comparable situation in the world today where a refugee population has been so cynically exploited.

Until now, only one Arab country—Jordan—has offered citizenship to the Palestinian refugees.

The other twenty-one Arab countries, with their vast territory and common language, religion, and ethnic roots with the Palestinians, have refused to do so. Why? Sadly, they appear to have little interest in alleviating the plight of refugees living in often squalid camps for two and three generations. Rather, they want to breed hatred of Israel and thus use the refugees as a key weapon in the ongoing struggle against Israel.

Parenthetically—just to give a sense how Palestinians are treated in the Arab world—Kuwait summarily expelled over 300,000 Palestinians working in the country (but never given Kuwaiti passports) when Yasser Arafat voiced support for Iraq in the Gulf War and the Palestinians were seen as a potential fifth column. There was hardly a peep of protest from other Arab countries about what amounted to the expulsion of an entire Palestinian community.

Unfortunately, the story of the Jewish refugees from Arab countries is not often told.

When the issue of Jewish refugees from Arab countries is raised, Arab spokesmen often feign ignorance or strenuously assert that Jews lived well under Muslim rule (unlike Jews in Christian Europe). Sometimes they disingenuously argue that Arabs, by definition, cannot be anti-Semitic because, like Jews, they are Semites.

It is certainly true that nothing like the Holocaust happened to Jews in Muslim lands, and that there were periods of cooperation and harmony, but the story does not end there. Jews never enjoyed full and equal rights with Muslims in Islamic countries; there were clearly delineated rules of behavior for Jews as second-class citizens. Violence against Jews was also not unknown in the Muslim world.

The vast majority of Libya's 40,000 Jews left between 1948 and 1951, following pogroms in 1945 and 1948. In 1951, Libya became independent. Despite constitutional guarantees, the Jews who remained in the country were denied the right to vote, hold public office, obtain Libyan passports, supervise their own communal affairs, or purchase new property. After a third pogrom in 1967, Libya's remaining 4,000 Jews lived uninterrupted in Libya since the time of the Phoenicians, that is, many centuries before the Arabs arrived from the Arabian Peninsula, bringing Islam to North Africa and settling—occupying?—lands already inhabited by Berbers, among others.

Jews fled, permitted to leave with only one suitcase and the equivalent of \$50. In 1970, the Libyan government announced a series of laws to confiscate the assets of Libya's exiled Jews and issued bonds providing for fair compensation payable within fifteen years. But 1985 came and went, with no compensation paid.

At the same time, the government destroyed Jewish cemeteries, using the headstones to pave new roads, as part of a calculated effort to erase any vestige of the Jewish historical presence in the country.

There were an estimated 754,000 Jews in Arab countries in 1948, the year of Israel's establishment; today, there are fewer than 8,000, the bulk of them in Morocco and Tunisia.

Where was the Arab sympathy for the Palestinian population from 1948 to 1967?

The armistice agreements ending Israel's War of Independence left the Gaza Strip in the hands of Egypt. Rather than consider sovereignty for the local Arab population and the Palestinian refugees who settled there, Egyptian authorities imposed military rule. Meanwhile, the West Bank and the eastern half of Jerusalem were ruled by Jordan. Again, there was no move to create an independent Palestinian state; to the contrary, Jordan annexed the territory, a step recognized by only two countries in the world, Britain and Pakistan.

It was during this period, 1964 to be precise, that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was founded. Its aim was not the creation of a state in the lands under Egyptian and Jordanian rule, but rather the elimination of Israel and the founding of an Arab Palestinian state in the whole of Palestine.

Article 15 of the PLO Charter clearly revealed this goal:

The liberation of Palestine, from an Arab viewpoint, is a national duty to repulse the Zionist, imperialist invasion from the great Arab homeland and to purge the Zionist presence from Palestine.

In the ensuing years, PLO-sponsored terrorism took its deadly toll, focusing on Israeli, American, European, and Jewish targets.

How did Israel come into possession of the West Bank, Golan Heights, Gaza Strip, the Sinai Peninsula, and the eastern half of Jerusalem, including the Old City?

These days, some people reflexively refer to the "occupied territories" without ever asking the question of how they fell into Israel's hands in 1967. Once again, there are those in the Arab world who seek to rewrite history and impute expansionist motives to Israel, but the facts are clear.

On June 5, 1967, Israel, surrounded by Arab forces likely to attack at any moment, launched a preemptive strike. Within Six-Days, Israel had defeated its adversaries and, in the process, captured land on the Egyptian, Jordanian, and Syrian fronts.

Israel had made strenuous efforts, via UN channels, to persuade King Hussein to stay out of the war. Unlike Egypt and Syria, whose hostility toward Israel was unrelenting, Jordan had quietly cooperated with Israel and shared concerns about the Palestinians' aggressive designs. Years later, King Hussein publicly acknowledged that his decision to enter the 1967 war, in which he lost control of the West Bank and eastern Jerusalem, was one of the biggest mistakes he ever made.

Another lost peace opportunity

Shortly after the Six-Day War, Israel indicated its desire to negotiate peace with its Arab neighbors. While Israel was unprepared to relinquish the eastern half of Jerusalem—which contained Judaism's holiest sites and which, despite the terms of the Israeli-Jordanian armistice agreement, had been entirely off limits to Israel for nearly nineteen years (while Jordan desecrated dozens of synagogues in the Old City)—it was willing to exchange the other seized territories for a comprehensive

settlement. But Israel's overtures were rebuffed. An unmistakable response came from Khartoum, Sudan's capital, where Arab leaders issued a resolution on September 1 of that year announcing three no's: "no peace, no recognition, and no negotiation."

In November 1967, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 242.

This resolution, often cited in discussions about the Arab-Israeli conflict as the basis for resolving it, is not always quoted with precision. The resolution stresses "the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war and the need to work for a just and lasting peace in which *every* [emphasis added] State in the area can live in security."

Further, it calls for "withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict," but deliberately omitted use of the word "the" before the word "territories." The U.S. ambassador to the UN at the time, Arthur Goldberg, noted that this was intentional, so that any final settlement could allow for unspecified border adjustments that would take into account Israel's security needs.

The resolution also includes a call for "termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgment of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and *their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force* [emphasis added]."

And, not least, it "affirms further the necessity (a) For guaranteeing freedom of navigation through international waterways in the area; (b) For achieving a just settlement of the refugee problem [Author's comment: Note the absence of reference to which refugee problem, allowing for more than one interpretation of the refugee populations covered.]; and (c) For guaranteeing the territorial inviolability and political independence of every State in the area, through measures including the establishment of demilitarized zones."

On October 22, 1973, during the Yom Kippur War, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 338, which called for a cease-fire, implementation of Resolution 242 in its entirety, and the onset of talks between the parties concerned. Resolutions 242 and 338 are normally cited together in connection with any Arab-Israeli peace talks.

The settlements have been a contentious issue.

No question, but, like just about everything else associated with the Arab-Israeli conflict, there's more here than meets the eye.

After Israel's victory in the 1967 war, and once it became clear that the Arabs were not interested in negotiating peace, Israel, under a Labor-led coalition, began encouraging the construction of settlements, or new communities, in the captured lands. This practice was accelerated under Likud-led governments after 1977.

Whatever one's perspective on the settlements, it's important to understand Israel's motives in moving ahead on this front: (a) Israel contended that the land was disputed—both Arabs and Jews laid claim to it—and since there was no sovereign authority, Israel had as much right to settle there as the Palestinians; (b) there had been Jewish communities in the West Bank long before 1948, for example, in Hebron and Gush Etzion, both sites of massacres by Arabs in which large numbers of Jews were killed; (c) the West Bank, according to the Bible, represents the cradle of Jewish civilization, and some Jews, driven by faith and history, wanted to reassert that link; (d) the Israeli government believed that certain settlements could serve a useful security purpose; and (e) some Israeli officials felt that building settlements, and thus creating facts on the ground, might hasten the day when the Palestinians, presumably realizing that time was not on their side, would talk peace.

Today, most Israelis agree that any peace agreement with the Palestinians will necessarily entail dismantling many, though not all, of the settlements. Polls repeatedly show that a majority of Israelis accept this prospect, but only in the context of a real peace process.

The possibilities of peace

In 1977, Menachem Begin, Israel's first Likud prime minister, took office. That did not stop Egypt's President Anwar Sadat from making his historic trip to Israel the same year and addressing the Knesset, Israel's parliament. An extraordinary peace process ensued, with all the ups and downs that came with a difficult set of negotiations. In September 1978, the Camp David Accords were adopted, containing a framework for comprehensive peace, including a proposal for limited self-government for the Palestinians. (The proposal was rejected by the Palestinians.) Six months later, a peace accord was signed and the thirty-one-year state of war between Israel and Egypt came to an end.

It was a remarkable moment in history. Sadat, virulently anti-Israel and anti-Semitic for much of his life, and the mastermind of Egypt's surprise attack (together with Syria) on Israel that ignited the 1973 Yom Kippur War, teamed up with Begin, the head of Israel's leading right-wing party, to open a new chapter in Arab-Israel relations. It proved that with will, courage, and vision, anything was possible.

But every Arab country except Sudan and Oman severed diplomatic ties with Cairo. And in 1981 the Egyptian leader was assassinated by members of Egyptian Islamic Jihad, who would later become brothers-in-arms of Osama bin Laden and his Al Qaeda network.

For its part, Israel yielded the vast expanse of the Sinai (approximately 23,000 square miles), which had provided a critical strategic buffer zone between itself and Egypt. It also gave up valuable oil fields it had discovered in the Sinai, a big sacrifice for a country with no natural resources to speak of. It closed important air bases it had constructed. And, despite Begin's staunch commitment to settlements, it dismantled these enclaves in Sinai.

In doing so, Israel demonstrated very clearly its desire for peace, its willingness to take substantial risks and to make sacrifices, and its scrupulous commitment to fulfilling the terms of its agreements.

Israel and Jordan reached an historic peace agreement in 1994.

This was a much easier negotiation than with Egypt, since Israel and Jordan already enjoyed good, if quiet, ties based on overlapping national interests vis-à-vis the Palestinians. Israel once again demonstrated its deep yearning for peace and readiness to take the steps necessary to achieve it, including border adjustments and water-sharing arrangements called for by Amman.

Another opportunity for peace was spurned by the Palestinians in 2000-2001.

When Ehud Barak took office as prime minister in 1999, he announced an ambitious agenda. The Israeli leader said he would attempt to reach an historic end to the conflict with the Palestinians within thirteen months, picking up where his predecessors had left off, and building on the momentum of the 1991 Madrid Conference and accelerated by the 1993 Oslo Accords. As it turned out, his willingness to compromise went beyond what anyone in Israel might have expected.

With the active support of the Clinton administration, Barak pushed the process as far and as fast as he could, and, in doing so, he broke new ground on such infinitely

sensitive issues as Jerusalem in order to reach an agreement. But alas, he and Clinton failed.

Arafat was not ready to engage the process and make it work.

Rather than press ahead with the talks, which would have led to the establishment of the first-ever Palestinian state, with its capital in eastern Jerusalem, he walked away, after preposterously trying to persuade President Clinton that there was no historical Jewish link to Jerusalem and dropping the bombshell demand of a so-called "right of return" for Palestinian refugees and their generations of descendants. Arafat surely knew that this was an instant deal-breaker, since no Israeli government could ever conceivably allow millions of Palestinians to settle in Israel and thus destroy Israel as a Jewish state.

Tragically, Arafat revealed himself incapable or unwilling, or both, of pursuing peace at the negotiating table. Instead, he returned to a more familiar pattern—on occasion talking peace, while consistently encouraging violence.

He knew that the media images of heavily armed Israeli troops facing Palestinians in the streets, including children cynically sent to the front lines, would work to his advantage. Israel would be cast in the role of aggressor and oppressor, the Palestinians as downtrodden victims.

It wouldn't be long, he calculated, before the Arab world would angrily denounce Israel, the nonaligned countries would dutifully follow suit, the Europeans would urge still more concessions from Israel to placate the Palestinians, international human rights groups would accuse Israel of excessive force, and the world, plagued by a short memory, would forget that the Palestinian leader had just spurned an unprecedented chance to strike a peace deal.

What exactly is Israel expected to do to ensure the safety of its citizens? What would other states do in a similar situation?

When the United States and its allies respond to Osama bin Laden, Al Qaeda, the Taliban, and terrorists around the world, "restraint," "dialogue," "compromise," and "understanding" were not part of Washington's vocabulary vis-à-vis those who attack us, nor should they be. Similarly, Israel cannot be expected to negotiate and compromise with those Palestinians who are planning and supporting terrorist attacks against Israeli citizens.

At the end of the day, Israel tragically finds it has no credible negotiating partner. Instead, its citizens have been targeted for murder by suicide bombers who are brainwashed to believe they are destined for martyrdom and sexual ecstasy in paradise.

Despite repeated requests, the Palestinian Authority has proved unwilling to arrest and imprison those responsible for murdering Israelis.

The limits on the size and arms of the Palestinian police force, agreed to in the Oslo Accords, have long since been exceeded, and well-armed and aggressive militia forces are emerging to do battle with Israel. Several of these groups, including the Tanzim and Force 17, are under the direct control of Arafat.

Hamas and Islamic Jihad, two radical groups on the American list of terrorist organizations that are believed to have links with bin Laden's Al Qaeda, operate with relative impunity in the Palestinian-controlled areas.

Cease-fires negotiated with Israel are regularly broken by the Palestinians. Ze'ev Schiff, the highly respected defense correspondent for *Ha'aretz*, noted (October 20, 2000) that Arafat agreed to twenty-two cease-fires with Jordan's King Hussein until

he was banished from the country thirty years ago, and to more than seventy cease-fires during the Lebanese civil war.

The education for peace that is so necessary to laying the groundwork for a new era in the region is absent in the Palestinian Authority. Schools, the media, and the mosques preach hatred of Jews, vilification of Judaism, Holocaust denial, demonization of Israel, and violence.

Perhaps the tragic results of the terrorism inflicted on the United States and on many other countries will help the world grasp the kind of threat that Israel has been facing and the rationale for Israel's unflinching response.

Unflinching, yes, but also measured. The truth is that Israel could deliver a much more devastating blow to the Palestinians but has chosen not to for a host of diplomatic, political, strategic, and humanitarian reasons.

In the final analysis, even though Israel enjoys military superiority, Jerusalem understands that this is not a conflict that can be won exclusively on the battlefield. Simply put, neither side is going to disappear. This conflict can be resolved only at the peace table, if and when the Palestinians finally realize they have squandered more than fifty years and numerous chances to build a state—alongside Israel, not in its place. Alternatively, Israel today—despairing of having a partner for peace in the Palestinian leadership—is contemplating taking unilateral steps.

Israel lives in a particularly rough neighborhood. To survive, it has had to be courageous both on the battlefield and at the peace table, passing both tests with flying colors. As Israel faces the unresolved challenges in its region, it deserves both understanding and support.

Evaluating Israel's Options

By Eran Lerman
Director of the Israel/Middle East Office
The American Jewish Committee

Early in 2004, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon surprised friend and foe alike by announcing a unilateral disengagement from the Gaza Strip and Northern Samaria (in the West Bank). The proposed disengagement entails withdrawal of Israeli military and civilian presence from these parts of the territories. This plan is, essentially, a separation from the Palestinians as a first step toward a two-state solution, but *not* on Yasser Arafat's terms.

To understand where this position comes from, it is important to understand the other options that Israel has. There are six potential scenarios for Israel's future status:

1. Create a bi-national state

Israel could cease to be a democratic Jewish (Zionist) state and become a bi-national state. Palestinians present this option as creating a "secular democratic" state; however, this is simply an elegant way of saying a state with an Arab/Muslim majority. A few radical Jewish left-wingers in Israel, many Israeli Arabs and others in the Arab world, as well as a good number of intellectuals in the West seem to support this "option." This would result in the Jews being a minority population, subject to the will of the Arab majority. The great majority of Israelis see this as practically suicidal and morally unjust because it effectively denies the Jewish people the right to a homeland.

2. Deny Palestinians statehood in Israeli territories

Some Israelis believe that there should never be a Palestinian state between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean. They adhere to various hard-line positions (for example, granting Palestinians small cantons of land, transferring them out of Israel, or giving them Jordanian citizenship). They desire the destruction of the Palestinian Authority and harsh measures to prevent any future partition of the country; anything less would be seen as bowing to American pressures or, worse, as surrendering to Arab demands and terror. Advocates of this position fail to explain how Israel could continue to be an ethical state while denying all rights to Palestinians or how Israel could survive condemned completely by world opinion.

3. Maintain the status quo

Another view assumes that Israel can persist in its present condition, in effect leaving a large Palestinian population without political rights well into an indefinite future. Over the horizon, this would lead—sooner or later—to the same rough choices: transfer of Palestinians, an unequal state, or the loss of Israel's Jewish identity.

The three other options assume a partition:

4. Make concessions to the current Palestinian leadership

The Zionist left seeks a solution acceptable to the present Palestinian leadership. It believes that Ehud Barak should have made more concessions to Yasser Arafat during the Camp David II negotiations of 2000 in order to achieve a partition based on bilateral agreements. It fears that unilateral action might ruin what is left of the peace process. However, the mainstream of the Israeli public does not feel comfortable with the radical concessions that would be demanded of Israel.

5. Compromise with willing leaders

The vast majority of Israelis have come to see a Palestinian state as inevitable, but do not believe that Israel should withdraw to the 1949 armistice line for security and other reasons. Theoretically, the creation of a Palestinian state can be achieved, either directly or through the stages of the "Road Map" plan, if and only if there are Palestinian leaders willing to sign on to a practical compromise—on 90 percent and not 100 percent of their demands. A good number of concerned people on the Palestinian side have been ready—and continue to tell us that they are still willing—to sign on to something like the Clinton proposals at Camp David II. Arafat is not.

6. Disengage unilaterally

Because there seems to be little hope for a viable compromise as long as Arafat holds real power, the preference of the Israeli majority for a separation is increasingly likely to be translated into growing support for unilateral disengagement. This is the plan that Ariel Sharon is now supporting. In its present form, the disengagement plan commits the government to dismantle, in four stages, all the settlements in the Gaza Strip and four small settlements in Northern Samaria (in the West Bank). Egyptian, Jordanian and international help—in some coordination with the Palestinians—is envisaged in the post-withdrawal Gaza Strip; and thus, it is not entirely accurate to speak of a "unilateral" disengagement. The appropriate term should be "partition without an overall agreement." Because Israel finds itself with no negotiating partner, disengagement is the only way that Israel can move forward and achieve security.

None of these options is ideal—each involves incredible risks and concessions from various segments of Israeli society. Nevertheless, most Israelis accept a two-state solution and are willing to take the risks and make the concessions necessary to progress towards an independent Palestinian state alongside a secure Israel.

Land for Peace: Revisiting the Leap of Disengagement

By Rebecca Neuwirth
 Director of Special Projects
 The American Jewish Committee

No country in the world has ever repeatedly offered territory in exchange for the promise of peace—none except Israel. It is a perilous gamble in a region still overwhelmingly hostile to the very existence of the Jewish state, especially given the last four years of Palestinian terrorism and violence.

It is instructive to put Israel's struggle into a larger context. Germany lost two world wars in the last century. Part of the price it paid was giving up land—major swaths to Poland and key territories to France. After World War I, Austria lost influence throughout areas of its former empire and gave up South Tyrol and the port of Trieste to Italy. In other wars throughout history, Denmark lost land to Sweden, Bolivia lost its only access to water to Chile, Finland lost territory to Russia. The list goes on. None of these territories were regained and, indeed, none of them are even disputed today. Losing land has been the accepted price of defeat, especially for the aggressor. This is the way of history.

The recent proposal of the Israeli government to prepare for full withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and partial withdrawal from the West Bank, land which it gained from Egypt and Jordan in a defensive war, is a radical departure from historical experience.

At this moment in time—when the future of the conflict and hopes for peace hang in the balance—there are several risks and opportunities that must be recognized and addressed.

Foremost among the risks that Israel faces is that disengagement may spur more terrorism.

Many believe that Arab residents of the Gaza Strip will read a withdrawal of Israeli forces and the dismantling of settlements as a victory for terrorism. A similar interpretation of Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon was widely seen as having inspired the new wave of Palestinian violence in 2000. Such a reaction in the Gaza Strip would not only create a heightened threat to Israel, especially for residents of nearby areas, but would likely spread, inspiring greater violence in the West Bank and beyond. It could also endanger the chances of any responsible, fledgling government emerging in Gaza.

Without troops in the Gaza Strip, Israel's options will be much more limited—either ignoring violence aimed against it or retaliating with much larger, destructive force from outside—potentially enflaming the situation anew in the area and creating an even more volatile situation in the Arab world generally.

Israel cannot afford to stand by while violence escalates. Its recent incursions into Rafah and its targeted assassinations of known terrorist leaders were motivated by a need to cut off terrorism at its source—its leadership and its infrastructure—while the chance to do so in a targeted manner still exists. Israel must exercise the greatest caution in dealing with civilians in the Gaza Strip, but its fundamental aim of making the area safe for real Palestinian development and for Israelis living in areas near Gaza should be given the greatest international understanding and support. After all, security is not only in the interest of Israelis and Palestinians, but also of Egypt, which has been cooperating closely with Israel and will likely play a vital role in ensuring stability in the Gaza Strip, and of the entire world.

Second, there are the potential benefits of the recent Israeli decision for both Israelis and Palestinians, which should be recognized and capitalized upon. Israeli disengagement from the Gaza Strip, if managed correctly, holds the promise of real autonomy for Palestinians and a chance for badly needed economic development. For Israelis, while disengagement will first entail the painful process of relocating Jewish communities, it also promises to relieve many

Israeli soldiers of the difficult and sometimes dangerous duty of patrolling the area. Indeed, soldiers have been a ready target for Palestinian provocations, which have escalated at times to real violence.

It is important to remember that disengagement from Gaza Strip is not isolated from Israeli actions in the West Bank. Israel plans to dismantle some settlements in Northern Samaria and to build a security barrier between areas where Palestinians and Israelis live as an extended part of this initiative. For Israelis, the fence is seen as a guard against terrorist attacks, making hostile penetration from Palestinian areas more difficult. Measured by lives saved, the fence has already proven its effectiveness over the past months.

For Palestinians, the fence promises tangible benefits as well, a fact many have startlingly failed to recognize. Most notably, when it is completed, Israel may well be able to decrease its military presence in Palestinian areas. Frequent contact between Palestinian civilians and Israeli soldiers has increased Palestinian embitterment; the opposite trend will be a relief for many Palestinians, increasing their sense of freedom and motivating them to press for development in their communities.

The Israeli Supreme Court has involved itself in determining the final lines of the fence to ensure that the barrier created will disturb the lives of inhabitants as little as possible while still fulfilling its security purpose.

Finally, in order for disengagement and the fence to lead to a better life for Palestinians and Israelis alike, efforts must be focused right now on encouraging and supporting new, responsible Palestinian leadership.

This situation is most dire in the Gaza Strip, where Israeli disengagement will lead to a power vacuum. No doubt, Hamas control is the worst possible option—for both Palestinians eager to finally begin normal lives and for Israelis, intent on saving theirs. A reconfigured Fatah would be a better option. Yasser Arafat, who has proven unwilling and unable to stop terrorism, has less power over Fatah in the Gaza Strip than in the West Bank. This circumstance may provide an opportunity for new leadership in Fatah or outside of that structure. Egypt has already made moves to help, but more must be done to find moderate Palestinian leaders and to give them support.

The international community has an interest in helping Israel and the Palestinians reduce the risks posed by disengagement and maximize the possible gains presented by this move and by the building of a fence in the West Bank. The enormity of such an undertaking on Israel's part—and the importance of controlling the process—must not be underestimated.

Israel defied history once before, giving the Sinai Peninsula—an enormous block of territory that included settlements, bases, and natural gas resource—back to Egypt. That trade was the origin of the concept “land for peace.”

The international community took both sides of the equation seriously at that time. Land was a concrete good, and Israel returned every inch that it had promised—but on the other side, peace too was seen not just as a word. The international community understood the need for reciprocity and applied pressure and support for peace. Israel's risk at that time was unprecedented—and it paid off. With proper recognition of the momentousness of Israel's steps today, and with an appropriate, international push for the conditions of peace on the other end, an end to terrorism and a new leadership in Palestinian areas—this new risk could pay off as well.

The UN and Israel

By Hillel C. Neuer
Executive Director, United Nations Watch
An Institute of the American Jewish Committee

The United Nations was founded in 1945 on a beautiful dream: world peace. In the decades that followed, however, the organization has too often foundered on the rocks of reality—the reality that many of its member states are governed by repressive regimes that deny, and work to defeat, the very human rights principles guaranteed by the UN Charter.

Let's face it: the UN is the sum of its parts and many parts of our world are rotten. In April 2004, for example, when the UN Commission on Human Rights considered a resolution that would speak out for victims of China's state repression of religious and political freedoms, member states such as Bahrain, Congo, Cuba, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia all voted against. The resolution was defeated, the victims forgotten. Similarly, a resolution to speak out for victims of the Zimbabwe regime's politically motivated violence, including killings, torture, sexual and other forms of violence against women, suffered the same fate. The resolution was defeated, the victims forgotten. The list goes on.

Yet no injustice in the UN has been more brazen, pervasive or enduring than the injustice of inequality that is practiced against Israel by UN agencies the world over. The demonization of Israel is led by Arab and Muslim states, and abetted by many others, particularly from the Third World. Israel alone is singled out year after year for differential, discriminatory, and disproportionate treatment:

- The Commission on Human Rights in Geneva annually condemns democratic Israel in five special resolutions; the General Assembly in New York does so in some twenty resolutions. Meanwhile, despotic regimes—e.g., Saudi Arabia, which tramples on the rights of women, or Syria, which hosts no fewer than ten terror groups in Damascus—are routinely ignored. *That's discrimination.*
- Israel is the only state in the UN that continues to be denied full membership in any of the five regional groupings. Because these groupings dominate UN procedures, this segregation of Israel means that when critical issues are being decided, Israel is literally left outside in the corridors. *That's discrimination.*
- The UN spends millions of dollars and dedicates a sixteen-person staff to support its "Division for Palestinian Rights," a unit lodged within the UN secretariat that spreads anti-Israel propaganda within the UN and around the world, in publications and international conferences held across the globe. In the spring of 2004 alone, major pro-Palestinian conferences that vilify Israel and justify terrorism were held in Geneva, Beijing, and Cape Town. *That's discrimination.*

By systematically singling out Israel for unfair treatment, the UN violates the equality guarantee of its own Charter, as provided under the Preamble, and under Articles 1 and 2.

Let's take another look at just one UN body, the Commission on Human Rights. In March 2004, the Commission on Human Rights convened an emergency "Special Sitting" to condemn Israel for killing Ahmed Yassin, the senior leader of Hamas. The UN resolution against Israel failed to mention the critical fact that Yassin led an organization expressly dedicated to the destruction of a UN member state, Israel; that Yassin's organization perpetrated countless suicide bombings and other violent attacks against innocent civilians to implement their genocidal objective; and that Hamas is legally certified as a terrorist group by the United States, Canada, and the European Union.

By contrast, the Commission on Human Rights never called an emergency session to stop Sudan from its ethnic cleansing of one million black Africans in the country's Darfur region. Government-backed Arab militias have forced hundreds of thousands from their homes, burned fields, poisoned wells, and raped women. Not only did the UN fail to call an urgent session on Sudan, it could not even pass a resolution to condemn the atrocities.

Israel, however, the only democracy in the Middle East, was singled out by the commission for five condemnatory resolutions. Think about it: only five other countries in the entire world were singled out for condemnation, none of which received more than one resolution. But Israel? Five resolutions against Israel alone. *That's discrimination.*

The discrimination against Israel is an *institutionalized* discrimination; it's built-in. That's because the very *agenda* of the Commission on Human Rights singles out Israel for unequal and unfair treatment. There is one agenda item (No. 9) dedicated to human rights violations "in any part of the world," and then another *entirely separate* agenda item (No. 8) that has been dedicated to attacking alleged violations by Israel. One item to discuss 191 states, one item to discuss Israel. *That's discrimination.*

At UN Watch, as hard as it is, we have not given up on the original dream of the United Nations. To set things right, though, we must call injustice by its name, and educate our respective communities about what needs to change. Your campus is a good place to start.

Advocacy and the Debate on Campus

Interview with a Student Activist: Stephanie Schwartz, Chair of 2003 "Israel Inspires" at Rutgers University

Stephanie Schwartz, a recent graduate of Rutgers University, helped her Jewish community turn a difficult situation into a golden opportunity. The Jewish students at Rutgers were put in a challenging position when they learned in 2003 that an anti-Israel group planned to hold a conference on their campus in the fall. Instead of protesting the conference, the Jewish community used it as an opportunity to present a positive vision of Israel through a program called "Israel Inspires." Below is an interview with Stephanie Schwartz, the student chair of this program.

What was your involvement in the Jewish community?

I was a very active student at Rutgers, in the Jewish community and in other communities as well. The Rutgers Jewish community is very big and very diverse. I served on the Hillel board for three years, and my senior year I was the Hillel president. Separate from my involvement in Hillel, I was also the chair of "Israel Inspires," a year-long series of pro-Israel activities designed to create a pro-Israel renaissance on campus. I was actually never a really big Israel person until I got involved in "Israel Inspires."

What was the general sentiment toward Israel on the Rutgers campus?

We definitely have a very active pro-Israel community, but there is also a lot of anti-Israel activity, all of which comes from a group called NJ Solidarity, a coalition of anti-Israel students and community members. Actually, it's pretty much dominated by non-students. There have been a number of disturbing anti-Israel episodes. For example, there was a banner put up in our Student Center, "From the River to the Sea, Palestine Will Be Free," basically denying Israel's right to exist, and our Hillel has been vandalized numerous times with anti-Israel slogans. We also experience a lot of typical anti-Israel things like biased newspaper articles. The difference between anti-Israel activity at Rutgers and many other campuses is the intensity and frequency of the anti-Israel activities—at Rutgers, the anti-Israel presence was there all the time.

When the community first heard about the Palestine Solidarity Conference, a large-scale anti-Israel conference that draws students and activists from around the country, the Jewish community was really upset. People sort of saw it as the last straw—all these anti-Israel things had happened this year, and now this even bigger event was planned for the fall.

How did the community respond?

The community was in a big uproar about the conference. A lot of people were writing letters to the editor of the newspaper and speaking badly about Rutgers, which brought negative attention to the school and made it look like the Jewish community and Hillel weren't doing anything constructive. One of the purposes of our "Israel Inspires" campaign was to channel the community's energy into something positive instead of focusing on negatives. We wanted to do something really big and really positive that would get a lot of attention to overshadow the anti-Israel initiative.

What was “Israel Inspires”?

“Israel Inspires” was a year-long, positive, pro-Israel initiative designed to take the Rutgers campus by storm with pro-Israel activism. The highlight of the year was the “Israel Inspires” weekend. There were three parts to it. It was planned for the weekend of the anti-Israel conference, because we wanted to take away attention from it.

On Thursday we had a huge community-wide rally with 7,000 people from around the state. We had both senators from New Jersey, the governor, several members of Congress, and I was the student speaker. It was the biggest pro-Israel gathering in the history of the state; it was so exciting. The rally was the way we really involved the community, and it was also the aspect of the weekend that got the most media attention. Friday afternoon we had a huge Israel block party. It was a really big, fun event and a lot of people came.

Over the rest of the weekend we had a student conference in a hotel. It was just a celebration of all things Israel: cultural, social, political. We had a variety of speakers, workshops and presentations.

“Israel Inspires” got so many people involved in the planning and in the actual events. It brought students together from all sides of the political and religious spectrum; it was great. We designed the campaign to be positive; we spoke very little about the Arab-Israeli conflict and encouraged people to look beyond the news as well. We focused on culture, politics (drawing the connection between American and Israeli democracy), as well as women’s rights and other important issues.

How was this initiative organized?

It was a gigantic event in every sense, and every detail had to be taken care of. There were all kinds of committees: the executive committee, general student committee, parent committees.... Basically, the Hillel staff and I were in charge of all the student committees. We met in the summer for hours every day. We actually had to hire another staff member at Rutgers Hillel just to work on “Israel Inspires!” It was a full-time job.

We got a lot of support from the Jewish community, especially AJC. It took us a while to get some of the other organizations involved but, once they saw that other people were getting involved, basically everyone came on board. We had some difficulty with the university—not because it was a pro-Israel event, but because of the magnitude of it; they weren’t sure that they could accommodate us. We learned that the way to get the support of an institution like a university is to sell the idea of why your event is important and why it’s beneficial to them. We told them that all the major news networks would cover our event and they realized that it was in their interest to support us, even though it was difficult for them.

Do you have any advice for other students?

Each campus is different, so no one thing works for every campus. I think that the most important thing is to assess your campus’s needs and then focus on doing what has to be done.

Interviewed by Cara Suvall, a student at the University of Pennsylvania, interning with the American Jewish Committee.

Anti-Israel Allegations: Legal and Political Responses to Accusations

Background

Israel is a democratic country, a steadfast ally of the United States and other democratic nations around the world. It is currently confronting a ferocious, ongoing wave of terrorist attacks that target civilians throughout the State of Israel.

Israel has not brought this terror campaign upon itself. Rather, Israel's prime minister in 2000, Ehud Barak, made an historic offer to the Palestinian Authority of land and statehood in exchange for peace at Camp David II. The terror campaign was the Palestinian response to Barak's offer, driven by extremist groups aided and abetted by the Palestinian Authority itself.

Although its population suffers from these terrorist attacks, Israel continues to uphold fundamental principles of human rights. Furthermore, polls repeatedly show that Israelis remain prepared to support painful concessions leading to the creation of a viable and peaceful Palestinian state beside it. But Israel cannot make peace with itself. It needs a partner that will condemn terrorism clearly, and take credible action to back up its words.

Below are some false allegations against Israel, along with the legal and political facts you need to answer them.

Allegation 1: Israel is an apartheid state.

Reality: Calling Israel an apartheid state is a lie. Furthermore, it is offensive to those who truly suffered from apartheid in South Africa.

Facts: Apartheid is a system designed to exclude a majority of the population from any form of power. Nothing about that definition applies in any way to the State of Israel, a country in which all citizens—Jewish, Muslim and Christian—enjoy the same fundamental civil and political rights.

A full sixth of the total population of Israel—one million people—are Arabs. As such, they, and all other citizens of Israel, enjoy democratic rights and the protection of the rule of law. Israel has six official religions, and is the home of the Baha'i Church, which has been persecuted in Muslim countries throughout the Middle East. While there are issues of contention between the majority and minority communities in Israel and cases of discrimination, as there are, regrettably, in every other democratic nation, this is light years away from a system of apartheid.

The Palestinian residents of the West Bank and Gaza Strip are not citizens of Israel, and therefore the difference between their rights and those enjoyed by Israelis cannot, by definition, be considered a situation of apartheid. Indeed, it would be absurd to suggest that Israel should grant the same rights and privileges to a demonstrably hostile neighboring people as it does to its own people.

In addition, any comparison between Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and blacks in South African Bantustans (tribal homelands) fails to recognize another fundamental distinction: that the final status of the territories has been acknowledged inter-nationally, including by Israel, as a matter for negotiations. As part of the Oslo Process, the Palestinians gained autonomy in most of the territories and, at the time of Camp David II in July 2000, approximately 95 percent of Palestinians were living under Palestinian Authority jurisdiction. But rather than embracing negotiations and statehood, the Palestinian leadership turned toward terror—losing an historic opportunity. In spite of this, the current status of the territories is temporary and the

long-term goal—as President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Ariel Sharon have reiterated—is to achieve the creation of a peaceful Palestinian state through negotiations.

Ironically, Israel is the only country that has ever made an effort to create a Palestinian state—in 1947, when the Jews agreed to the UN Partition Plan, which would have given Palestinians a state alongside a newly formed Israel; and in 2000 at Camp David II and Taba. What did Jordan do for the Palestinians living in the West Bank when it had control of that territory between 1948 and 1967? It did not use the opportunity to create a Palestinian state and instead attempted to illegally annex the territory. The same is true of Egypt when it controlled the Gaza Strip during those same years. It imposed military rule on Palestinians living under its jurisdiction.

Similarly, for over 50 years Lebanon and Syria have refused to give citizenship to Palestinians currently residing within their territories. One could rightly state that Palestinians are living under apartheid systems there. Indeed, only Jordan among the 22 Arab states has offered citizenship and a new start to Palestinians. Further, after Palestinians sided with Saddam Hussein during the 1991 Gulf War, Kuwait expelled practically overnight 300,000 Palestinians living within its borders. Many critics of Israel willfully ignore such examples of egregious treatment of Palestinians, not to mention the treatment of hundreds of thousands of Jews from Arab countries forced to leave their ancestral homes by intolerant regimes.

Israel is a vibrant democracy, all of whose diverse citizens enjoy fundamental rights. Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip do not live in their own state today because the Palestinian leadership is not committed to peace, not because they are subjugated by Israel. When a Palestinian leadership seriously commits to the pursuit of peace, negotiations will resume toward the express goal of establishing an independent Palestinian state. Comparing this situation to apartheid in South Africa insults the millions who suffered for decades under that institutionalized system of discrimination.

Allegation 2: Israel is violating UN Resolution 242 and must withdraw immediately from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in order to comply with international law.

Reality: Compelling Israel to withdraw from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip without a legitimate Palestinian commitment to peace would violate the principles of UN Resolution 242.

Facts: To set the historic record straight, Israel did not seek to conquer territory in 1967. Rather, a war for survival was forced upon Israel by Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Iraq through an immense buildup of troops on Israel's borders, an illegal blockade of the Strait of Tiran, and a matching rhetoric of war. At the end of the 1967 defensive war, Israel gained land, including the Sinai, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and the Golan Heights, which it was eager to exchange for peace. Instead of engaging in negotiations, however, the Arab states gathered in Sudan and issued the famous Khartoum Declaration, stating that they would accept "no peace, no recognition, and no negotiation" with Israel.

UN Resolution 242 does not require Israel to withdraw from these territories in a vacuum. The drafters of the resolution understood that Israel could not be expected to withdraw unilaterally and without a significant commitment to peace by surrounding Arab states. Resolution 242 also does not specify that Israel should withdraw to exact pre-1967 borders, but rather that Israel should ultimately withdraw to "secure and recognized borders," without specifying what those final borders should be.

In order to meet the standards of UN Resolution 242, Israel requires partners for

peace. When Egypt's President Anwar Sadat proved to be a willing partner, Israel yielded the entire Sinai to Egypt in 1979—representing 91 percent of the territories it had captured in the 1967 war, including oil fields developed by Israel. Likewise, when Jordan's King Hussein expressed willingness to make peace, he and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin negotiated an agreement establishing peace between their countries and collaboratively resolving tough issues, including borders and water rights.

Israel hoped that the Palestinians would be equally viable partners for peace, and consequently engaged in the Oslo process. Tragically, when that process reached its defining moment and Prime Minister Ehud Barak presented Yasir Arafat with a detailed landmark peace plan, strongly supported by President Clinton, Arafat rejected it, offered no counter proposal, walked away from the negotiating table, and launched the current round of violence against Israel to deflect attention from his refusal and to try to regain world sympathy. Thus, the current Palestinian leadership has not met the standards of UN Resolution 242 in helping to assure secure and recognized borders for Israel; instead, it has supported terrorism over peace. International law does not require Israel to concede territory in such circumstances.

Israel never sought to occupy the West Bank and the Gaza Strip; it captured them in a defensive war. And Israel is willing to give up territory in return for a firm and credible commitment to peace by the other side.

Allegation 3: Israel violates human rights by practicing of torture.

Reality: Israel has outlawed the use of torture in spite of its daily war against terrorists who operate on its territory.

Facts: Israel faces a predicament because of the real threat of terrorism that it faces daily. True to its democratic principles, the Israeli Supreme Court has outlawed the practice of torture, even in "ticking bomb" cases, i.e., in cases in which a terrorist organizer knows about a bomb that is about to go off and kill civilians, and information extracted from him could save lives.

The use of physical pressure against criminals and terrorists is, unfortunately, practiced around the world, and the UN Convention Against Torture has reprimanded scores of countries in the Americas, Europe, and Asia for such violations. Israel is one of only a few countries that has confronted this issue publicly and moved, through democratic procedures, to outlaw torture and investigate violations when they occur. Why, when the practice of torture is much more horrifying in many other countries, especially in the Arab world, do anti-Israel critics target only Israel?

Those who care about preventing torture would do well to condemn a host of Arab countries for their practices, rather than singling out Israel, which has attempted to adhere to strict international standards in its treatment of terrorists and potential terrorists.

Allegation 4: Israel is in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention through its policy of maintaining settlements in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Reality: Israel is not violating the Fourth Geneva Convention by any fair measure of its legal and moral intent. Settlements will be addressed in the context of broader negotiations on Israeli-Palestinian peace, but not before the cessation of Palestinian Authority-sponsored terrorism against Israel.

Facts: Israel has undertaken to comply with the humanitarian provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention regarding the territories. But there is no humanitarian provision that denies Jews the right to live in the West Bank and Gaza—just as one million Arabs live within Israel proper. Indeed, many Jews lived in these areas for centuries before 1948. The conflating of settlements with “forced transfer of populations,” as referred to in the Fourth Geneva Convention, is incorrect: Jews in the territories have moved there voluntarily. Further, settlements do not endanger the Palestinians as a people, which was the original concern of the Fourth Geneva Convention, written in light of Hitler’s attempts to expand greater Germany and subjugate surrounding peoples.

Since Palestinian terrorists deliberately use populated areas of the West Bank and Gaza as staging grounds to indoctrinate, train, and arm suicide bombers, and to smuggle weapons from Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq, civilian populations sometimes suffer under restrictions designed to stop terrorism. On November 1, 2002, the respected Human Rights Watch organization issued a report strongly condemning Palestinian suicide bombers and the organizations that stand behind them for crimes against humanity.

(Note: In 1999 and 2001, the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention met, for the first time in history, to condemn Israel for supposed violations. The reconvening was successfully pushed by the Arab League for political, not humanitarian, reasons. The United States and Australia boycotted the meeting, and other countries intent on justice, proportionality, and the separation of humanitarian law from politics, worked together to minimize the impact of these meetings. Far greater human tragedies, including killings in Sudan, the genocide in Rwanda, ethnic cleansing attempts in former Yugoslavia, and the Biafra War in Nigeria, were never found to violate the Geneva Conventions. It is morally reprehensible to politicize human rights in this way.)

Palestinians, not Israelis, have egregiously violated humanitarian law by deliberately directing acts of terrorism at civilians and by hiding terrorists behind Palestinian civilians, including children, using them as human shields. These are the violations that desperately need to be addressed.

Allegation 5: International law mandates that Israel must allow the immediate return of Palestinian refugees, including to areas within Israel’s pre-1967 borders.

Reality: UN Resolutions 194 and 242 speak about resolving the problem of refugees in general. A settlement to the refugee problem would be part of a final peace agreement with the Palestinians, and would include Arab recognition of Israel’s right to exist in agreed-upon borders.

Facts: The problem of Palestinian refugees and Jewish refugees from Arab lands must be solved through negotiations between the Palestinian leadership and Israel. Such negotiations must take into account that if Israel were to accept all of the people who consider themselves Palestinian refugees today, it would not remain a Jewish

state. (Note: Approximately 700,000 Palestinians were deemed to be refugees after the 1948 war. The number now exceeds four million and includes descendants several generations removed from the actual refugees. This definition of refugees to include all descendants is highly usual. Negotiations should also consider the fate of the Jewish refugees from Arab lands [approximately 700,000], who were driven out of their ancestral homes, leaving behind everything they had without compensation or apology. This issue has never been addressed.)

Most agree that the best solution to the refugee problem, spelled out at Camp David II, would be to create two states for two peoples, to compensate the refugee populations, and to give all Palestinian refugees the right to a home in the new state.

The issue of refugees must be solved in the context of the creation of a Palestinian state, under the accepted principle of two states for two peoples. Those who care about the status of refugees should work to stop Palestinian terrorism so as to allow negotiations to restart, and they should concurrently work to improve the lives of the many Palestinian refugees now living in deplorable conditions under Arab control—whether in territories administered by the Palestinian Authority, or in Lebanon or Syria.

Allegation 6: Israel must allow international peacekeepers to immediately put an end to the violence, something Israel's policies have failed to do.

Reality: Peacekeeping forces are effective in situations where an armistice is already in place and outside forces are required, literally, to keep the peace. To call for peacekeeping forces between Israelis and Palestinians now, however, would be to invite disaster.

Facts: Peacekeepers have often been helpful in sustaining situations of fragile peace. Unfortunately, this is far from the case in Israel today. Israel is in a state of low-level warfare with Palestinian terrorists, who work and hide in the midst of civilian areas, and are aided and abetted by the Palestinian government itself. Separating the parties, which peacekeeping forces might be able to do, is far from sufficient to guarantee peace.

Instead, aggressive measures are necessary to halt terrorist capabilities. International peacekeeping forces would not be willing or able to carry out this type of military mission. Their presence would likely produce a false sense of calm, allowing terrorists to reorganize, rearm, and increase their attacks, or else peacekeeping troops could get caught in crossfires and further complicate the situation. Ample precedent exists for both outcomes in the history of peacekeeping forces deployed to areas that are still in conflict.

Peacekeepers are good at keeping peace, but not at stopping ongoing terrorist attacks. There may be a role for peacekeepers in the future, but there is none now.

Allegation 7: Israel's human rights record has been singled out for criticism by the moral authority on the issue—the UN Commission on Human Rights—and should be the international community's primary concern today.

Reality: Singling out Israel as a violator of human rights is disingenuous and makes international humanitarian law subservient to a political agenda that does not serve the aim of peace.

Facts: While Israel is not immune from committing human rights violations—violations occur in every democratic country, and Israel is faced with an extraordinary situation of daily terrorism directed at it from within its own borders—there is no need to involve outside mechanisms to enforce these rights within Israel. Israel sympathizes with the plight of innocent Palestinian civilians who are used as shields by terrorists or who get caught in the crossfire between Israel and terrorists. But Israel's court system, free press, and human rights organizations provide a sufficient corrective.

Unfortunately, in recent years the UN Commission on Human Rights has fallen prey to a dimly political agenda, much to the disservice of those who need its protection around the world. The fact that in 2002 the United States was voted off the Commission and that its chairman in the 2003 session was Libya, which itself has a human rights record among the most egregious in the entire world, underlines the Commission's lack of credibility.

Israel has a serious human rights system in place to monitor violations. For example, its Supreme Court recently required the rerouting of the security barrier to minimize its negative impact on the lives of Palestinians.

Allegation 8: Israel violates international norms by engaging in targeted killings, which have also resulted in civilian deaths.

Reality: Israel's targeted killing of Palestinian combatants does not violate the laws of war, and may be the best response to terrorism under the circumstances. Terrorist attacks against civilians, on the other hand, are clear violations of international law; the organized implementation of suicide bombings has been labeled a war crime by Human Rights Watch.

Facts: A government's primary responsibility is to keep its citizens safe. Terrorists roam freely in Palestinian areas of the West Bank and Gaza. Palestinian Authority security forces have made no serious efforts to stop their murderous work and, in many cases, have contributed to it. It has been proven that Yasser Arafat funneled money to terrorists and was complicit in the import of illegal, heavy weapons from Iran. In addition, he has been a driving inspiration for terrorism, using Palestinian Authority mechanisms to glorify and incite violence against Israel and Jews.

Given the lack of credible Palestinian leadership committed to fighting terrorism, Israel has concluded that its best response, when its intelligence is aware of planned terrorism, is to target the individuals masterminding attacks, the facilities, and the supplies that are to be used. This strategy has proven effective, at least in the short-term, in dramatically slowing down the rate of attacks. The United States has also targeted terrorists in this way in its fight against terror.

Targeted killing does not violate international law and is not the same as assassinations. In the current state of low-level warfare between Israel and the Palestinians, armed Palestinian militants must be considered combatants, not civilians. As such, they are military targets. Similarly, buildings and houses used for

military purposes become legitimate targets of attack.

Israel adheres to the legal principles of distinction, by targeting only combatants and not civilians, and proportionality, by trying to limit the damage it inflicts when acting in defense of its citizens. Tragically, many Palestinian terrorists deliberately and cynically work in civilian areas, endangering the lives of uninvolved Palestinians on purpose and seeking to garner sympathy from the outside world.

Israel has investigated instances in which allegedly unarmed Palestinians have been fired upon by individual soldiers. Such cases are rare but not unknown in the highly charged atmosphere of a conflict situation. They are tragic and deeply regrettable, but difficult to avoid entirely in light of Palestinian methods.

The Israeli army takes care, risking its own soldiers' lives, to avoid civilian casualties in its military missions, yet mistakes happen. Civilian deaths that occur as a result of targeted killing of terrorists are extremely regrettable, but the responsibility lies with the terrorists who use civilians as human shields, not with the Israeli army.

Conclusion

Israel alone in the Middle East stands for the values that we hold dear: free and fair elections with the participation of all citizens, regardless of religion and ethnicity; an open and inquisitive press; a representative political system (including Arab members of the Israeli parliament); an independent judiciary; and a rich and varied cultural life that celebrates the diversity of the country. Israel has taken great care to ensure those rights, including developing a sophisticated system to monitor human rights violations. No other country in the Middle East comes anywhere close to Israel on any of these measures.

From its rebirth in 1948 until today, Israel has not seen a day of peace. Until it signed a peace agreement with Egypt in 1979 and with Jordan in 1994, it was subjected to constant attacks, large and small, from virtually all the countries surrounding it. Today, Lebanon serves as a base for ongoing attacks against Israeli civilians in the north—with Syria and Iran providing significant military support. In addition, Iraq under Saddam Hussein proudly supported Palestinian terrorist attacks on Israeli civilians that emanated from the West Bank and Gaza.

Furthermore, Israel faces a barrage of virulent and hateful propaganda from the entire Arab world. This inflammatory rhetoric includes books by the defense minister of Syria repeating the age-old anti-Semitic blood libel, a television series on a major Egyptian network based on the infamous "Protocols of the Elders of Zion," music videos that glorify suicide bombers on Palestinian Authority-run television, and textbooks used throughout much of the Arab world today that contain maps denying Israel's existence and content vilifying Jews and Israel. Such propaganda is intended to incite violence. And it does.

It is this violence and hatred that should outrage the international community. Indeed, it is the single greatest barrier to peace in the region. Today, when the existence of the state is severely endangered, Israel needs our support.

Prepared by Rebecca Neuwirth, The American Jewish Committee, with assistance from Benjamin Fishman. Thanks also to Martin Bresler, Debra Feuer, Sarah Hiller, Sybil Kessler, Elana Roffman, and Kenneth Stern.

Tips for Effective Advocacy*

By David A. Harris
Executive Director
The American Jewish Committee

Anyone who speaks out in support of Israel today in a public setting, particularly on an American college campus, is likely to encounter opposing voices, some reasoned, others shrill. The following “tips” from someone who has debated about the Middle East in numerous diplomatic, political, media, and academic settings may be of help.

Be prepared. It sounds painfully obvious, but too few of us take this point seriously enough.

Talking about Israel these days requires a reasonably firm command of the subject, including, of course, basic history. Moreover, we must anticipate and respond to a torrent of arguments, some outrageous beyond belief, from the other side. Those arguments allege that Israel is guilty of “occupation,” “apartheid,” “human rights abuses,” “war crimes,” “racism,” “genocide,” “colonization,” “economic strangulation,” “humiliation,” or “military excesses.”

There are persuasive replies to each of these assertions, but they need to be thought through in advance with the help of available publications such as *Myths and Facts*, and talking points from the Israeli government Web site (www.mfa.gov.il), the American Jewish Committee (www.ajc.org), and other informed parties.

Know your adversaries. Where are they coming from and what motivates them? Do they support Israel’s right to exist as a Jewish state, whatever the final borders, or do they in fact reject the basic tenet of Zionism, the national liberation movement of the Jewish people? Are they anti-American, anti-Western, anti-capitalist, and anti-globalization, and accordingly see Israel as nothing more than an extension of these values?

When they speak of the “end of occupation,” do they mean the end of Israel’s (unsought) occupation of the territories acquired in the 1967 Six-Day War for Israel’s survival, or do they instead refer to the end of Israel’s “occupation” of all lands since 1948, meaning the end of the State of Israel? When they speak of “Free Palestine,” do they mean an independent Palestinian state living side by side in peace with the State of Israel, or do they seek the “freeing” of all of British Mandatory Palestine as it was constituted in 1948, and therefore the end of Israel?

If they reject Israel’s right to exist as a Jewish state, why? There are 191 members of the UN. Do the critics challenge any other country’s right to exist, or only Israel’s? If the latter, then don’t hesitate to label this what it is—anti-Semitism. There is no other way to describe an attitude that uniquely denies to the Jewish people the right of self-determination that all other peoples seek.

Don’t attempt to build your case on Israel’s infallibility. Israel is not a perfect society, but then again, no society is. One does not have to defend each and every Israeli action from 1948 to the present to stand on Israel’s side. Israel is capable of making mistakes, just like any other democratic society (not to mention nondemocratic societies), but those mistakes do not undermine the basic case for Israel. In fact, Israel’s case is so overwhelmingly powerful that acknowledging an Israeli error is not a weakness, but a strength.

Be compassionate. If innocent Palestinians are mistakenly killed or wounded by the Israeli military in its anti-terror operations, express regret. Make clear that in any conflict situation—and this conflict was triggered by the Palestinian decision to reject the Camp David II peace proposal of 2000 and turn to violence instead—tragic accidents occur despite the considerable efforts of Israel, in this case, to minimize them. But avoiding such incidents can be especially difficult when an adversary cynically uses schools, hospitals, churches, and even children as shields to protect gunmen.

* Adapted from a speech to Hillel’s 2002 Charles Schusterman International Student Leaders Assembly, Honesdale Pennsylvania August 21 2002

Be on the side of peace. Stress again and again that no nation on earth seeks peace more than Israel. Not only is peace at the center of the Jewish religious and ethical tradition, but it is the overriding goal for a nation that, 57 years after its establishment, has yet to know a single day of true peace. Emphasize that when Israel had a credible partner, e.g., Jordan and Egypt, peace became possible. The Clinton-Barak peace proposal offered the Palestinians a contiguous state with a capital in East Jerusalem. Rather than engage this tantalizing proposal, however, the Palestinians said no—not for the first time—and turned to terror to achieve their political aims. Without doubt, when a trustworthy Palestinian partner finally emerges, peace on this front will also become possible.

Be on the side of democracy. Hammer away at the fact that Israel is a democracy, the only one in the region. There are a million Arab citizens of Israel, and they enjoy the right to vote. The Israeli parliament currently has a number of members from the Israeli Arab community, and has for many years.

Democracy means free and fair elections, smooth transfers of power, and an independent judiciary. Where else in the region is there a remotely comparable society? And if there were more democracies, there would be less conflict and more conflict resolution. When was the last time in history that one democracy attacked another? Look at the example of Western Europe. Plagued by wars for centuries, Western Europe today is a region of peace, stability, and prosperity. Why? First and foremost because the nations all embrace democracy and have realized the benefits of cooperation rather than conflict. The Arab world could learn a thing or two from the European example.

Go on the offensive. Take on human rights issues in the Middle East that have been largely—and inexplicably—ignored. Why shouldn't there be a movement to promote women's rights in the region, or gay rights, or labor rights, or press freedom in the Arab world? Why should there be total silence about Syria's ongoing occupation of Lebanon and refusal to recognize the country as anything other than part of "Greater Syria?"

Emphasize the fact that there appears to be an obsessive, relentless preoccupation with Israel and Israel alone. The glib response is often that "we expect more from Israel." This comment completely ignores the fact that Israel is not operating in a vacuum, but rather in a conflict situation against adversaries with no scruples—witness the widespread use of suicide bombers against innocent civilians.

Why should we be put on the defensive, as if Israel were the be-all and end-all of discussion about the Middle East?

Fight the liberal-conservative divide. Many today see support for Israel as an essentially conservative position, while liberals may reflexively support, even romanticize, the "underdog" Palestinians, totally ignoring the inconvenient fact that the Palestinian leadership has rejected peace offers that could have led to a two-state solution and a new start for the Palestinian people.

Point out that Israel is the only country in the region where liberal values are not just preached but practiced. Where else do political parties from across the spectrum, human rights organizations, women's groups, labor unions, gay groups, the press, the judiciary, and students have as much freedom to organize, express themselves, and act without interference? Where else in the region are basic human rights protections, which Americans often take for granted, in place? Where else would protest and dissent be permitted as it is in Israel?

Be passionate, not angry. Easily said, I know, but at times hard to practice. All of us have lost our temper at one time or another, but it's precisely at such moments that we risk losing the argument.

Remember the goal. The aim in any debate is not to persuade your adversary. That's usually a waste of time. Rather, it's to convince those who may be listening to you and are open to

new ideas and cogent arguments. It is essential to try to understand who else is in the room and what approaches and themes are most likely to resonate with them.

Don't win the battle but lose the war. In a debate on the Middle East, it's important not to get sucked into arguments over every single issue, but rather to control the message by sticking, when and where possible, to the larger questions.

These include Israel's demonstrated quest for peace and willingness to take enormous and concrete risks in its pursuit; the objective dangers to Israel of a neighborhood laden with arms and bereft of fellow democracies; the difficulty of trying to defend a nation against terrorism and suicide bombings that have touched every corner of the country (what would any other country do under similar circumstances to defend its citizens?); the Palestinian refusal to come forward, whether as far back as 1947 or as recently as 2000, in a spirit of cooperation and compromise, in the search for peace; and the impossibility of achieving peace with a Palestinian leader who may sometimes parrot the language of peace—in English, if not in Arabic—but who actively encourages terrorism, harbors terrorists, and thus betrays the interests of those Palestinians who seek a genuine accommodation with Israel.

Be confident, but never overconfident. You have the best weapon—the facts. Even so, each debate may take a slightly different turn; therefore, always be on your toes. Stay acutely sensitive to the dynamics of the discussion, the setting, and the audience, and adjust your approach accordingly.

Don't feel alone. There are countless Web sites, organizations, and publications available to offer advice and information. See pages 43-46 for a list of helpful books and web sites.

Communicating with America: Key Words, Themes, and Language*

The Ten Commandments of Effective Communication

- 1) **Above all, draw direct parallels between Israel and America.** From history, to culture, to values, the closer you define the similarities between Israel and America, the more likely you are to win the support of those who are neutral. The American-Israeli parallel should be part of every American interview starting with the response to the very first question. Conclude with: *"And what would America do under similar circumstances?"*
- 2) **The language of Israel is the language of America: "democracy," "freedom," "security," and "truth."** These four words are at the core of the American political, economic, social, and cultural system. They should be repeated as often as possible because they will resonate with virtually every American.
- 3) **Explain why a threat to Israel is a threat to America.** The reason why Americans are paying attention to the Middle East is not because of the rising level of violence or a personal concern for Israelis or Palestinians. The reason why Americans are paying attention is a fear that somehow the U.S. will get dragged into the conflict and AMERICAN lives will be lost and gas prices will rise higher. Therefore, you need to explain why a threat to Israel's security is a threat to America's security and economy.
- 4) **Promote Anwar Sadat and King Hussein BEFORE you delegitimize Arafat.** Nobody likes Arafat in America, but Israelis are undermining their own message and strategy every time they state assertively and categorically that Arafat is not legitimate. You need to SHOW it, not say it. A better answer is to compare Arafat with Anwar Sadat, an American icon, as well as King Hussein. *"Sadat ... King Hussein ... People of courage in the Arab world that have stood up to terrorists, told their people to put down their guns, and made peace with Israel." But Yasser Arafat?*
- 5) **Oslo matters a lot.** Oslo was a treaty, not a technicality, and Americans believe that signing your name to a treaty, accord or agreement denotes a total commitment to whatever is written in the document. Emphasize Arafat's signature. Emphasize what he agreed to do. Then demonstrate exactly how he failed and the consequences of that failure. *"The same man who signed the Oslo Accord is the same man who signed the checks that paid the terrorists. That man is Yasser Arafat. And when he signed those checks, he signed away his credibility, his integrity, and his honor."*
- 6) **The American people differentiate between Arafat and the Palestinian people. So should you.** There is an immediate and clear distinction between the empathy people feel for the Palestinians and the scorn they direct at Arafat. If it looks like you are attacking the Palestinian people as well as Arafat, your message will be ignored—or even backfire. Right now, Americans sympathize with the plight of the Palestinians, and that sympathy will increase if you fail to differentiate.

* Excerpted from the Luntz Research Companies' Communication Manual.

- 7) **Never forget 9/11. It has been forever implanted into the minds and psyches of the American people.** Here's where you make the direct contrast between Israelis and Palestinians. On that fateful day, Israelis shed tears of pain for the Americans who were killed. But on that day, the Palestinians danced in the streets in celebration. Conclude with: "Yes, there is a difference between the two peoples." One caveat—do not compare the situation in Israel to America on 9/11. Americans see the situation differently, and comparing the two undermines your credibility.
- 8) **Explain your principles.** Both Arab and Israeli spokespeople go right into an attack against the other, and virtually no one on either side explains the principles behind their actions. Americans respond much better to facts, actions, and results when they know why—not just how. And use rhetorical questions. "Can there be true peace without security?" "Who can Americans really trust as their faithful ally?"
- 9) **The nation that is perceived as being most for peace will win this debate.** It didn't matter how it was said or who said it. Every time someone made pleas for peace, the reaction was positive. If you were to do a media contest analysis, you'd find that the Palestinian spokespeople are using the peace word much more than the Israelis—and it is working. If you want to regain the public relations advantage, peace should be at the core of whatever message you wish to convey.
- 10) **You can't please everyone.** Some people cannot be moved to support Israel no matter what words, themes, or language you use. Your goal is to inform and empower your supporters and educate the neutrals. Leave the hostiles alone.

Writing to Elected Officials

Aside from being an advocate for Israel on your campus, you can also help Israel's cause by writing letters to elected officials. Keep in mind, you should not only write to them to express your dissatisfaction with their position, but to convey your appreciation as well.

President of the United States

The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500
Phone: 202-456-1414
Fax: 202-456-2883
president@whitehouse.gov

Vice President

Office of the Vice President
Old Executive Building
Washington, D.C. 20501
Phone: 202-456-2326
Fax: 202-456-7044
vice.president@whitehouse.gov

Secretary of State

Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520
Phone: 202-647-5291
Fax: 202-736-4461
secretary@state.gov

Secretary of Defense

The Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301
Phone: 703-695-5261
www.defenselink.mil/faq/comment.html

United States Ambassador to the United Nations

799 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017
Phone: 212-415-4050
Fax: 212-415-4443
www.un.org

Senators: Go to www.senate.gov and find the senator you wish to contact

Members of Congress: Go to www.house.gov and find the representative you wish to contact.

The American Jewish Committee Legislative Action Center provides access information to the executive and legislative branches. Go to www.ajc.org and click on "Support Israel." The Jewish Community Relations Council has a list of New York Senators and Congressmen with addresses and phone numbers at www.jcrcny.org.

Web Sites and Books

Useful Web Sites

Israel Advocacy:

American Jewish Committee (AJC)

www.ajc.org

AJC's website has a wide variety of resources. Specifically, see the "students" section as well as the publication "Why Campus Anti-Israel Activity Flunks Bigotry 101" within that section to learn about how to spot anti-Semitism under the guise of anti-Israel sentiment.

American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC)

www.aipac.org

AIPAC is the only registered lobby that works with Congress and the administration to strengthen the U.S.-Israel relationship.

Caravan for Democracy

www.CaravanforDemocracy.org

This web site offers lots of news on Israel advocacy around the country and provides some great resources that are especially geared to college students.

Israel Info Center

www.IsraelInfoCenter.com

This is an excellent site that has links to dozens of other online Israel advocacy sites.

Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs

www.mfa.gov.il

Includes current information about Israeli foreign policy, policy statements, governmental communiqués, status of negotiations, matters relating to the Israeli government, law, culture, religion and economy. Contains many useful documents relating to Israel's history.

Stand With Us

www.standwithuscampus.com

Stand With Us advocates for Israel and democracy by presenting well-sourced facts, activist materials, and a general system of communication for the pro-Israel college community.

TakeACTIONnow

www.takeACTIONnow.org

AJC has developed a user-driven, highly interactive web site geared to facilitating discussion and a sharing of ideas on issues surrounding Israel on campus and beyond.

Israel on Campus:

Campus Watch

www.campus-watch.org

Campus Watch is a project of the Middle East Forum that monitors and critiques Middle Eastern studies in North America, with an aim to improving them. The project mainly addresses five problems: analytical failures, the mixing of politics with scholarship, intolerance of alternative views, apologetics, and the abuse of power over students.

Hillel

www.hillel.org

The largest Jewish campus organization in the world, Hillel embraces all streams of Judaism. Click on the "Israel" tab for pro-Israel updates and tools.

Israel on Campus Coalition

www.israeloncampuscoalition.org

The Israel on Campus Coalition is a partnership of the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation and Hillel in cooperation with a network of national organizations committed to promoting Israel education and advocacy on campus. Subscribe to the ICC's Israel Campus Beat.

The World Union of Jewish Students

www.wujs.org

The World Union of Jewish Students web site has helpful materials for Israel advocacy, including a comprehensive *hasbara* handbook for promoting Israel on campus.

Middle East Encyclopedia:

Jewish Virtual Library

www.us-israel.org/index.html

An excellent reference site for Jewish and Israeli history, including the online version of *Myths and Facts*, the rich question-and-answer guide to controversies surrounding the Arab-Israeli conflict. Look up *Israel on One Foot* – also in book version – another excellent student resource.

News Sources:

Current Events

www.cnn.com www.nytimes.com www.washingtonpost.com

Use the Internet to keep informed about what's going on in Israel and around the world. You can also read editorials and opinion pieces to find out about different points of view on current events.

Israeli News Sources

www.haaretzdaily.com www.jpost.com www.israelnationalnews.com

Instead of getting all your news from American sources, try reading what Israeli journalists are writing too. Here are links to the web sites of two popular Israel daily newspapers and an all-Israel news web site.

Monitoring

www.camera.org www.honestreporting.com www.imra.org.il

These web sites are devoted to objectivity in Mideast reporting and can help you learn to recognize bias in your own campus's media. Camera.org is especially useful for its special student page and newsletter.

Middle East Media Review and Analysis:

Access Middle East

www.accessmiddleeast.org

Access Middle East offers clear, well-documented analyses of critical issues, links to and summaries of articles from more than 400 sources, including newspapers and think tanks, as well as a search engine that accesses the libraries of 50 prestigious related institutions.

Israel 21c

www.israel21c.org

This site brings you “the good news” from Israel—as opposed to the “only bad news is good news” approach of mainstream media. It wishes to inform Americans about 21st century Israel, its people, its institutions and its contributions to global society beyond the conflict.

The Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI)

www.memri.org

MEMRI bridges the language gap which exists between the West and the Middle East by providing timely translations of Arabic, Farsi, and Hebrew media, as well as original analyses of political, ideological, intellectual, social, cultural, and religious trends in the Middle East.

Book List**The Middle East Conflict, Introductions:**

Cohn-Sherbok, Dan, and Dawoud S. el-Alami. *The Palestine-Israeli Conflict: A Beginner's Guide*. Great Britain, Oneworld; distributed by National Book Network, 2001.

An Israeli rabbi and a Palestinian wrestle together with the issues at the heart of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. They offer a new, personal perspective on over 50 years of conflict and what went wrong.

Herzog, Chaim. *The Arab-Israeli Wars. War and Peace in the Middle East from the War of Independence through Lebanon*. New York, Vintage Books, 1984.

Israel's former president presents the military details and lessons of Israel's fight for survival.

Lewis, Bernard. *The Middle East: A Brief History*. New York, Scribner, 1995. A very readable historical survey by a highly esteemed Princeton professor.

Morris, Benny. *Righteous Victims. A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-1999*. New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1999.

Very detailed overview by one of Israel's leading “new historians” who tries to unmask what he sees as Israeli founding myths. Very controversial—read the criticism along with the book.

Israel Advocacy:

Bard, Mitchell G. *Myths and Facts. A Guide to the Arab-Israeli Conflict*. Chevy Chase, American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, 2002.

Invaluable and almost classic guide to popular myths that are used to accuse Israel of historical and political injustices, and how to counter them. Includes more than twenty maps.

Dershowitz, Alan. *The Case for Israel*. Hoboken, N.J., Wiley, 2003.

Divided into 32 chapters headed by questions that reflect views typical of Israel's critics. This top legal scholar from Harvard University defends Israel against a variety of accusations.

Lozowick, Yaacov. *Right to Exist. A Moral Defense of Israel's Wars*. New York, Doubleday, 2003.

Examines Israel's conflicts, starting with the War of Independence and ending with the so-called Al Aqsa Intifada. Defends Israel's positions morally and politically; includes a fascinating analysis of the causes for European criticism of Israel.

Troy, Gil. *Why I Am a Zionist*. Hewlett, N.Y., Gefen Books, 2002.

A crash course in Jewish nationalism and identity, topics include the Arab-Israel conflict, terrorism, multiculturalism, and the quandary of North American modern Zionism.

Israeli History:

Begin, Menachem. *The Revolt; Story of the Irgun*. New York, H. Schuman, 1951.

This personal report by Israel's former prime minister offers a subjective close-up of the Jewish underground's struggle for Israeli independence.

Gilbert, Martin. *Israel: A History*. New York, William Morrow, 1998.

Highly detailed account of Israel's first 50 years. Rich source of quotes and anecdotes.

Hertzberg, Arthur. *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader*. Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday, 1959.

Places the Zionist movement in its historical and philosophical perspective, presenting the thoughts and writings of Zionism's most important ideologists.

Oren, Michael B. *Six-Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East*.

New York, Oxford University Press, 2002.

Very detailed account of a key war and how it transformed the Middle East.

Sachar, Howard. *A History of Israel: From the Rise of Zionism to Our Time*. Second ed., rev. and updated. New York, Knopf, 1996.

Analyzes the Jewish movement to statehood and Israel's history in encyclopedic broadness.

Life in Israel:

Chafets, Ze'ev. *Heroes and Hustlers, Hard Hats and Holy Men. Inside the New Israel*. New York, William Morrow and Company, 1986.

Personal report on "ordinary Israelis"—beyond the daily headlines.

Rosenthal, Donna. *The Israelis. Ordinary People in an Extraordinary Land*. New York, Free Press, 2003.

Very up-to-date portrait of Israeli society; presents the country the way its own people see it. Entertaining and informative.

Jewish History:

Bayme, Steven. *Understanding Jewish History: Texts and Commentaries*. Hoboken, N.J., KTAV Publishing House, in association with The American Jewish Committee, New York, 1997.

An historical primer on the breadth and diversity of the Jewish experience, containing both primary sources and analysis.

Johnson, Paul. *A History of the Jews*. New York, Harper & Row, 1987.

Covering 4,000 years of Jewish history, this classic text portrays the impact of Jewish thought on the world and offers detailed insight into events and individuals shaping history.

Proof that Israel wants peace ...

- 1948** Israel accepts the UN's plan for a Jewish state and an Arab state.
Arab states reject the plan and attack Israel.
- 1967** Immediately after fighting the Six-Day War, a struggle for its survival, Israel offers to exchange land obtained for peace.
8 Arab states issue the Khartoum Resolutions: "no peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel, no negotiations with it."
- 1979** Israel gives the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt after the two countries sign a peace treaty.
- 1993** Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin signs a peace treaty with Yasser Arafat at Oslo.
Arafat, a self-professed longtime Palestinian terrorist, supported Saddam Hussein when he sent Scud missiles into Israel during the Gulf War.
- 2000** At Camp David, Israel offers to create a Palestinian state on 96% of the disputed territories.
Arafat rejects the plan. The second *intifada* is launched and a wave of terror begins.
- 2004** After four years of terror targeted at Israeli civilians, the vast majority of Israelis still favor the creation of a Palestinian state alongside a secure Israel.

Israel, a partner in peace



Egyptian President Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Begin sign a historic peace accord, 1979. President Carter looks on.

Why we stand behind Israel...

Diversity. People of all backgrounds, including women, gays, and dozens of ethnic communities are actively involved in Israeli society.

A free press. There are over a dozen major newspapers in Israel, both in Hebrew and Arabic, and a lively journalistic debate.

Freedom of worship. Jews, Christians, Muslims, and a myriad of other religions call Israel 'home.' Holy sites are open to members of different faiths who seek to worship in peace.

Democracy. Israel's government runs on a system of checks and balances, with an independent judicial branch and a parliament that includes parties that span the political spectrum and the ethnic-religious divide.

Israel, a home for all voices

Martin Luther King, Jr. stood behind Israel ...

WHY?

He understood that Israel has the right to exist within secure borders. Shortly after the 1967 Six-Day War, Dr. King said these words:

I see Israel, and never mind saying it, as one of the great outposts of democracy in the world, and a marvelous example of what can be done, how desert land can be transformed into an oasis of brotherhood and democracy.

Peace for Israel means security and that security must be a reality.

March 25, 1968, the 68th annual
convention of the Rabbinical Assembly



Civil Rights March on Washington, D.C.

Israel, a home for all voices



What do they teach in school?

An Israeli lesson...

"We extend our hand in peace...to all the neighboring states."

a selection from Israel's Declaration of Independence in *Windows*, a fourth grade textbook, p. 9.

A Palestinian lesson...

"Beware of the Jews, for they are treacherous and disloyal."

a selection from the Palestinian Authority's Islamic Education for Ninth Grade #589, p. 79.

Israel wants peace, not war. According to The Center for Monitoring the Impact of Peace: "All [Israeli textbooks] express a yearning for peace and for an end to war."

We hope dearly that all children in the Middle East will be taught tolerance instead of hate, and can work towards a new solution based on a fundamental respect for life.



Israel, a partner in peace

Does this sound like a two-state solution to you?

“Israel will exist ... until Islam will obliterate it.”

Introduction, Charter of Hamas



Unless terrorists stop destroying the hope for peace, there will be no hope for creating a Palestinian state.

No excuse for terrorism

Why is Israel Building a Security Fence



**If there were NO TERROR,
there would be NO FENCE**

Since 2000, more than 900 Israelis have been murdered in suicide bombings; 715 were civilians on buses and in cafes, pizzerias and nursery schools.

Terrorist groups like Hamas, Al-Aksa Martyrs Brigade and Islamic Jihad openly call for the destruction of Israel, and the Palestinian Authority has given tacit approval for their actions. They glorify martyrdom and make heroes out of suicide bombers.

Israel has the right to defend itself.

The fence works. Suicide bombings have decreased significantly since construction began.

Lives are being saved.

NO TERROR, NO FENCE



STUDENTS FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST



www.takeACTIONnow.org