

GREAT DECISIONS

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Glossary: Israel and the U.S.

1948 Arab-Israeli War: War that broke out when five Arab nations invaded territory in the former Palestinian mandate immediately following the announcement of the independence of the state of Israel on May 14, 1948. In the concluding armistice, Israel gained some territory belonging to the Palestinian Arabs.

1967 Arab-Israeli War: Also known as the Six Day War or the June War. In response to sabotage acts by Palestinian guerilla organizations, Israel launched a land offensive which within six days decisively defeated Egyptian, Jordanian and Syrian forces. Israel was able to take control of the Gaza Strip, Sinai Peninsula, the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights.

1973 Arab-Israeli War: Also known as the Yom Kippur War. War that began when Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack in Israeli occupied territories on Yom Kippur. Despite early success, the two Arab states were eventually repelled by Israel.

Al-Aqsa Intifada: Also known as the Second Intifada. Second Palestinian uprising against the Israeli occupation between September 2000 and February 2005. Approximately 3,000 Palestinians and 1,000 Israelis are estimated to have died in the violence.

Al-Nakba: (Arabic: “catastrophe”). Refers the mass exodus and displacement of over 700,000 Palestinians that occurred before, after and during the 1948 war between Israel and Palestine.

Annapolis Conference: Middle East peace conference held in 2007 in Annapolis, MD. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Israel Prime Minister Ehud Olmert agreed to launch bilateral negotiations to conclude a peace treaty that would affirm both an Israeli state and a Palestinian state.

Balfour Declaration: Letter sent on Nov. 2, 1917 from UK’s foreign secretary Arthur James Balfour to Baron Rothschild, a leader of the British Jewish Community. Later published by the press. The Declaration read: “His Majesty’s Government view with favour 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.”

Camp David Accords: Agreements between Israel and Egypt signed by Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat and brokered by U.S. President Jimmy Carter at Camp David in 1978. The agreements laid out a framework for establishing autonomous self-governing authority in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and also paved the way for the subsequent Israeli-Egyptian Peace Treaty.

David Ben-Gurion: First Prime Minister of Israel, he served from 1948 and 1954 and from 1955 to 1963, and is widely hailed as the Israel’s founding father. He also served as Israel’s first Minister of Defense and led the country through the 1948 and 1956 wars.

Fatah: The Palestinian Liberation Party (Reverse mnemonic for *ḥarakat al-tahrīr al-waṭanī al-filasṭīnī*, meaning the “Palestinian National Liberation Movement.”). Founded in 1959 and initially headed and by Yasser Arafat, Fatah had its own democratic institutions like the Fatah Congress with over 1,200 members. Fatah is the largest party in the Palestine Liberation Organization. Fatah’s current president is Mahmoud Abbas.

First Intifada: (*intifada*: “shaking off”). First Palestinian uprising against the Israeli occupation. The intifada began in December 1987 after a series of escalating actions and deaths of both Palestinians and Israelis, culminating in an Israeli Army truck crashing into a car and killing four Palestinians. The violence claimed approximately 160 Israeli and over 2,000 Palestinian lives. The conclusion of the first intifada is generally dated to the Madrid Conference in 1991, although it is sometimes dated to the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993.

Gaza Strip: Self-governing entity on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea that borders Egypt and Israel. Between 1948 and 1967, it was under the control of Egypt. In 1967, it was captured by Israel in Six Day War. After the 1993 Oslo Accords, civil control was ceded to the Palestinian Authority, and in 2005 Israel withdrew altogether. Since 2007, Hamas has controlled the strip and has formed an alternative government separate from the State of Palestine.

Golan Heights: A rocky region in southwestern Syria that was seized by Israel in the 1967 Six-Day War. The region is strategically

important both as a buffer zone with excellent vantage points and as a key source of water for an arid region.

Hamas: Islamic Resistance Movement (Arabic: *Harakat al-Muqawamah al-Islamiyyah*). Palestinian Sunni Islamist organization. Originally founded as an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood, the group is also famous for its paramilitary arm, the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, which conducted many anti-Israeli attacks. Hamas rejects all agreements between the PLO and Israel and has engaged in conflict with Fatah. It has governed the Gaza Strip since 2007, when it won parliamentary elections. It has been designated a terrorist organization by the United States.

Madrid Conference: 1991 conference co-sponsored by the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. in Spain to attempt to start a peace process between Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and the Palestinians. Although little concrete progress was made, the conference laid the symbolic foundations that enabled further progress.

Operation Defensive Shield: Large-scale military operation conducted by the Israel Defense Forces in 2002, during the Second Intifada. Israeli forces made incursions into six of the largest cities in the West Bank as part of the campaign to stop the increasing deaths from terrorist attacks.

Oslo Accords: 1993 agreement signed in the presence of PLO chairman Yasser Arafat, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and U.S. President Bill Clinton. After secret negotiations in Oslo, the two leaders agreed to the creation of a Palestinian interim self-government, the Palestinian National Authority and the withdrawal of the Israel Defense Forces from parts of the Gaza Strip and West Bank.

Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO): (Arabic: *Munazzamat al-Tahrir al-Filastiniyyah*). The PLO was created in 1964 with the goal of creating an independence State of Palestine. Until the Madrid Conference in 1993, the PLO was categorized by the United States as a terrorist organization.

Palestinian National Authority (PA): Interim self-government body established after the 1993 Oslo Accords to govern the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The PA is Fatah controlled and has virtually no control over the Gaza Strip, due to its conflict with Hamas.

Peel Commission (1936-37): A British Royal Commission of Inquiry that set out to propose changes to the British Mandate for Palestine. The commission was established at a time of increased violence in the region, and sought solutions to curbing the instability. It recommended dissolving the Palestine Mandate, and earmarking less than 20% of the country for Jewish and 70–75% for Arab rule.

Roadmap for Peace: A plan to resolve the Palestinian conflict, originally outlined by U.S. President George W. Bush in 2002 and subsequently supported by the U.S., the EU, Russia, and the UN. The plan calls for an independent Palestinian state. It stalled early on and was ultimately never implemented.

Sabra and Shatila Massacre: Slaughter of at least 800 civilians, mostly Palestinians and some Lebanese, by the Lebanese Christian militia group, the Phalange. The massacre took place during the

Israeli invasion of Lebanon during the First Lebanon War. Although no Israelis were directly responsible for the massacre, the Israeli Kahan Commission concluded that Israel was indirectly responsible for not taking necessary precautions to prevent bloodshed. The commission further found Defense Minister Ariel Sharon to bear personal responsibility in this matter.

Second Lebanon War: Conflict between Israeli and Hezbollah forces in Lebanon that lasted between July and August of 2006. The war was instigated by Hezbollah guerrillas conducting cross border raids and concluded with a UN-brokered ceasefire. Hezbollah was believed to have received unprecedented Iranian military support throughout this time.

Suez Crisis (1956): Also known as the Sinai War. After Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser decided to nationalize the Suez Canal Company, a British-French enterprise, Israel, France and Britain attacked Egypt. Pressure from the U.S., the U.S.S.R. and the UN ultimately forced the nations to withdraw and the United Nations Emergency Force to police the Egyptian-Israeli border.

The Reagan Plan: The Reagan administration's diplomatic initiative to repair Israeli-Palestinian relations that called for an Arab recognition of the state of Israel, but ruled out Israeli sovereignty of the West Bank and Gaza, as well as an independent Palestinian state. Due to disturbing developments in Lebanon, the Reagan Plan was not pursued.

United Nations Relief Work Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA): Relief and human development agency intended to support Arabs who left Israel during the 1948 war. It provides education, health care, social services and emergency aid to five million Palestinian refugees and their descendants.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 338: Resolution adopted on October 22, 1973 calling for a ceasefire in the Yom Kippur War.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 242: Resolution adopted on November 22, 1967 after the Six-Day War. The resolution emphasizes, "the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war," which has been interpreted, not without controversy, to mean that Israel should withdraw from its conquered territories.

West Bank: Territory surrounded by the state of Israel on the west and bordered by Jordan on the east. Since 1993, the Palestinian Authority has controlled parts of the West Bank, but a large part of the territory remains under Israeli control.