

Derek S. Reveron and Jeffrey Stevenson Murer, eds
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Chapter 2
Israel-Palestine

By Stephen Van Evera

NATURE OF THE FLASHPOINTⁱ

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a boon to al-Qaeda. It feeds anti-Americanism in the Arab and Muslim worlds by causing violence between a U.S. ally, Israel, and Palestinian Arabs who are largely Muslim. Arabs and non-Arab Muslims then blame the U.S. for Israel's belligerent acts. U.S. standing among Arabs and Muslims suffers accordingly. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict also gives al-Qaeda a chance to pose in its propaganda as defender of Arabs and Muslims against a predatory Israeli/American juggernaut.

Al-Qaeda exploits the widespread anti-Americanism generated by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to win new recruits, to persuade Arab and non-Arab Muslim societies to shelter its leaders and operatives, and to dissuade these societies from cooperating with American efforts against al-Qaeda. As a result al-Qaeda is strengthened while U.S. efforts to destroy al-Qaeda are hampered. The terrorist threat to the United States is increased and hardened against American countermeasures.

Therefore the U.S. should treat the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a major menace to U.S. national security and move firmly to end it. Moreover, a strong U.S. push for peace could well succeed, as many pieces needed for a settlement are now in place. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict poses a large threat but it is also ripe for solution.

HISTORICAL CONTEXTⁱⁱ

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict stems from the effort of the Jewish people to recover their ancient homeland against the resistance of its modern Arab Palestinian inhabitants. The conflict has religious overtones, as both sides have sometimes mobilized their followers around religious themes. These religious overtones have grown louder in recent years. But at the conflict's root is a clash of secular national movements that both claim Israel/Palestine as their national

homeland. The parties fight less over religious faith than over a land that they have not been able to share.

How did the matter begin?

In ancient times the Jews were a major presence in the territory between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean sea--today's Israel/Palestine--for over 1300 years, from around 1200 B.C.E. until around 135 C.E. The Jews lived mainly in the highlands of Israel/Palestine. This is today's West Bank area and is now inhabited mainly by Palestinian Arabs. The Philistines, a non-Jewish nation, settled the coastal plains, where most Israeli Jews now live. (Thus, ironically, Israeli Jews now live mainly where the ancient Philistines lived, and the Palestinian Arabs now live mainly where the ancient Jews lived. The Jews are near their ancient homeland but not squarely on it.)

Twice the ancient Jews established independent kingdoms. The first endured for nearly 500 years, from about 1000 B.C.E. to 528 B.C.E. The second survived some 83 years, from 140 B.C.E. to 63 B.C.E., when the Roman Empire conquered and annexed it.ⁱⁱⁱ

Rome then ruled the Jews harshly. In response, the Jews launched vast but disastrous rebellions against Roman rule in 66-73 C.E. (the Great Revolt) and in 132-135 B.C.E. (the Bar Kokhba Rebellion).^{iv} When Rome smashed the Bar Kokhba revolt it slaughtered nearly half the Jewish population of the area^v and dispersed most of the rest to the four winds. To erase any trace of the Jews, Rome renamed the rebelling province after the Philistines as "*Syria Palestina*"--hence the modern name "Palestine."

Modern origins: Christian oppression of European Jewry

The dispersed Jews settled heavily in Europe but found little welcome there. Instead, Christian Europeans relentlessly oppressed their Jewish neighbors, especially in the centuries since 1000 C.E. For example, during the Crusades (1096-1291) marauding Christians massacred thousands of Jews in many parts of Europe and the Middle East. Jews then were expelled *en masse* from Britain, parts of France (four times), Spain, Portugal, and other places during 1290-1497.^{vi} Later the Jews were hunted and killed by the Spanish inquisition and were caged into ghettos throughout Europe. They were massacred again in Eastern Europe in 1648 (over 100,000 Jews were killed), were subjected to pogroms in Russia in the 19th and early 20th century, and were mass-murdered during the Russian Civil War of 1917-21 (over 100,000 Jews were killed), mostly by White Russian forces.^{vii} Oppression culminated with the Nazi German holocaust of 1941-1945 that killed 5.6 million more. The Soviet dictator Josef Stalin was planning another

great killing of Jews when he died in 1953. Jews fleeing these horrors were sometimes refused refuge by nearby states. Even after the Holocaust, Polish Christians drove thousands of Jews from Poland.^{viii}

Europe's Jews tried many stratagems to tame or appease the rage of the Christians. Some made their religious practice less visible to give less offense to Christians. Some supported greater rights for the poor on the theory that class injustice fed anti-Semitism. Some even supported Jewish assimilation into Christianity. Nothing worked. Jews made stellar contributions to European culture, science, commerce and public life, but won little gratitude from the Christians. Instead Christian abuse continued without reprieve, excepting only a brief period of Jewish emancipation in the early-mid nineteenth century.^{ix}

The Jews Seek a Haven

This relentless Christian abuse, and the despair it engendered among many Jews doubting that it could ever be subdued, finally drove Leo Pinsker, Theodore Herzl and others to launch the Zionist movement in the late nineteenth century.^x They believed that the Jews could find safety only in a secure Jewish state, and they set about to create one.

These early Zionists were secular Jews who sought to free the Jews from oppression, not to realize Jewish religious or historic claims to the land of Israel.^{xi} But they used Jewish religious and historical claims to mobilize other Jews to support Zionism. They chose the ancient Jewish home in Israel/Palestine as the site for their Jewish state mainly to allow the use of religious and historical appeals to mobilize broader Jewish support for their project.

The early Zionists foresaw that Palestinian Arabs would resist Zionism by force if they pressed ahead but they saw no other solution to their predicament and so continued forward.^{xii} To them the clash with the Arabs came not as a surprise, but rather as a tragic trial that the Zionist movement could not escape.

Jewish efforts to settle in Israel/Palestine began in 1881, at a time when only four per cent of the population of Israel/Palestine was Jewish.^{xiii} The movement floundered for two decades, but gained real momentum with the publication of Theodor Herzl's *The Jewish State* in 1896 and the 1897 Zionist congress at Basel.^{xiv} Zionism gained still more momentum in 1917 when the British government issued the Balfour Declaration, announcing that Britain would look with favor on the creation of a Jewish home in Palestine. This British endorsement proved important when Britain took control of Israel/Palestine after World War I and allowed further Jewish immigration.

The 1948 War

The Jewish community grew to 30 per cent of the population of Israel/Palestine by 1944 and 32 per cent by late 1946.^{xv} During this period the Zionist leadership decided that the time had come to reach for statehood. They launched a violent revolt against British rule, beginning in earnest in 1945.^{xvi} Pressed by this revolt Britain decided to withdraw from Israel/Palestine in 1947 and threw the problem into the lap of the new United Nations. The U.N. devised a partition plan that divided Israel/Palestine (then called Palestine) into two states and one international zone: a Jewish state on 55 per cent of the territory, an Arab state on 40 per cent, and an international zone including Jerusalem and Bethlehem on the remaining 5 per cent.^{xvii} But the partition plan of the territories were so entangled that both states lacked defensible borders, which helped prime the region for war by leaving both sides dissatisfied with their boundaries.

The Zionist leaders formally accepted the partition plan although privately they did not regard the borders presented as final – they aimed to somehow gain more territory later, in part to gain greater security, and in part to acquire more land for settlement.^{xviii} The neighboring Arab states rejected the plan because they did not accept the Jews' right to any state in Israel/Palestine. They also disputed the fairness of a partition that awarded 55 per cent of Israel/Palestine's territory to a Jewish community comprising only 32 per cent of the population.^{xix}

Fighting between Jews and Palestinians in Israel/Palestine erupted soon after the U.N. partition plan was approved on 29 November 1947 and continued through the winter and spring. When Israel declared its statehood on 15 May 1948 five nearby Arab states--Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon—joined the fight and attacked Israel. The Arab states' motives were mixed. For example, Jordan only sought to annex the Palestinian state, not to destroy Israel, while Egypt both sought to destroy Israel and to forestall Jordan's move.

Israel won a decisive military victory by early 1949 at the heavy cost of some 6,000 Jewish lives. It conquered large new territories in the war, expanding its domain from 55 per cent to 78 per cent of Israel/Palestine. It also cleansed Israel of most of its Palestinian Arab population. Some 700,000-750,000 Palestinians fled from Israel during the war while only 92,000 remained.^{xx} For decades, Israelis claimed that the Palestinians left voluntarily but it now seems the Israelis expelled most of them, often by violence or threat of violence. The former director of the Israeli Army Archives, historian Aryeh Yitzhaki, estimated that during the 1948 war Israeli forces conducted about ten large massacres of Palestinians (over 50 victims killed) and about 100 smaller massacres (one or a handful killed).^{xxi} In one massacre, at Lydda, some 250-400 Palestinians were killed and perhaps another 350 died in a later forced march.^{xxii} This violence was

small compared to the violence of other expulsions in modern times, such as those conducted by Hitler and Stalin, but it proved enough to trigger a larger exodus, which remains a sticking point on negotiations of the “right of return.” The 700,000-750,000 Palestinians refugees of 1948 plus their descendants now total about 4,000,000 people--the largest refugee population in the world. Their demand to return to Israel or to be compensated for their losses remains a major issue between Israel and the Palestinians.

Who is morally responsible for this tragedy?

Israelis and Palestinians each hold the other responsible. Yet these verdicts seem unfair, as both communities did only what most people would do if standing in their shoes. Responsibility lies instead with Western Christian societies, which for centuries treated their Jewish citizens with unprovoked cruelty. Their crimes against the Jews set the whole Mideast calamity in motion.^{xxiii} They had no shred of justification for their deeds, which they committed without reason or excuse. Accordingly they carry prime culpability. And with this culpability comes a duty to help in all possible ways to bring the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to a just and peaceful conclusion.

The Conflict Since 1948

A series of Arab-Israeli interstate wars followed in 1956, 1967, 1969-70, 1973, and 1982. A violent Palestinian uprising, or *intifada*, against Israel during 2000-2005, capped these wars. Most important was the 1967 war, which was inadvertently sparked by the reckless belligerence of Egypt's President Gamal Abdel Nasser. In that war, Israel conquered East Jerusalem and the West Bank from Jordan, the Gaza Strip from Egypt, and the Golan Heights from Syria. This gave Israel control over all of Israel/Palestine and more. It also gave Israel control over a vast and unhappy Palestinian population--a population that Israel could not assimilate or enfranchise without the state losing its Jewish character. Yet this population also could not be easily dominated.

Since 1967, all serious proposals for resolving the Israel-Palestinian conflict have been variants of a simple formula: Israel withdraws from nearly all the lands it seized in 1967 in exchange for a full and final peace that includes effective measures to ensure Israel's security. However, during 1967-1988 both sides pursued extreme aims that precluded such a settlement. Israel insisted on retaining much or all of the Palestinian territories it occupied in 1967, and it sent Jewish settlers into these territories to consolidate its control over them, while the Palestinian leadership clung to the goal of erasing Israel from the map and expelling most Jews from Israel/Palestine.

Motion toward a withdrawal-for-peace solution began in late 1988 when Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat finally recognized the state of Israel, thereby *de facto* accepting Israel's existence within its 1949 borders. This led to the Oslo peace process of 1993-2001, which saw Israel and the Palestinians negotiate a possible settlement based on a land-for-peace trade. At a climactic meeting hosted by U.S. President Bill Clinton during July and August 2000 at Camp David, Maryland, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak's government offered the Palestinians the Gaza Strip and 86-91 per cent of the West Bank (76-81 per cent up front with more to come later), a small piece of Israeli territory equivalent in size to one per cent of the West Bank, and part, but not all of Arab East Jerusalem.^{xxiv} The West Bank would be divided into two or three non-contiguous pieces. The Palestinians rejected the plan while failing to make a comprehensive counter-offer.

Both Israel and the Palestinians were more forthcoming on peace terms at a later conference in Taba, Egypt in January 2001. Before that conference, in December 2000, President Clinton proposed parameters for a peace settlement that envisioned Israeli cession of the Gaza strip, 94-96 per cent of the West Bank, and Israeli territory equivalent in size to one to three per cent of the West Bank, plus all of Arab East Jerusalem, to the Palestinians in exchange for a full and final peace.^{xxv} Both sides accepted the Clinton plan, albeit with reservations, and used its parameters as a basis for the Taba negotiations. These negotiations made progress but had not reached a settlement when Israel ended negotiations to conduct a national election, held on 7 February 2001.

During the interval between the Camp David meeting and the Taba talks, the Palestinians launched a campaign of violence and terror against Israel, starting on 29 September 2000. This Palestinian violence backfired, provoking a popular backlash among Israelis that helped hard-liner Ariel Sharon to defeat the more moderate Barak in the 7 February 2001 Israeli election. Sharon then opted not to renew negotiations on taking office as prime minister. In the U.S. the newly-inaugurated George W. Bush administration likewise chose not to push for renewing negotiations, which then ended despite Palestinian objections.

The breakdown of the Taba talks was a significant lost opportunity as the two sides were not far apart when the talks ended. Most experts believe that with more time, and without an Israeli election for prime minister, the two sides could have compromised on the remaining issues and end the conflict.^{xxvi}

After Sharon's election, the Palestinian *intifada* continued for four years until a truce was arranged in early 2005. About 1,000 Israelis and over 3,000 Palestinians died in the violence. During these years Sharon refused Palestinian pleas to renew negotiations, arguing that the Palestinians were not serious about making

peace and so were unfit negotiating partners. Instead, he pursued a policy of unilaterally withdrawing Israeli control over population centers while retaining substantial Palestinian territory. Most importantly he withdrew Israeli forces and settlers from the Gaza strip in the summer of 2005. Sharon seemed poised for further unilateral withdrawals, this time from the West Bank, when he suffered an incapacitating stroke in early January 2006.

Two upheavals in Palestinian politics also occurred during this period. Long-time Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat died in November 2004. His death brought the more moderate Abu Mazen to the fore as president of the Palestinian Authority and as leader of Fatah, historically the strongest Palestinian political party. Abu Mazen opposed violence and seemed willing to make peace with Israel on reasonable terms. On the other hand, the radical Islamist group Hamas won control of the Palestinian parliament in a surprise election victory in late January 2006. In its public statements, Hamas had always rejected a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, instead seeking Israel's destruction. Hamas also used violence, including many terrorist attacks on Israeli civilians within Israel. The rise of Abu Mazen was a step toward Palestinian moderation, while the election of Hamas was a step back toward extremism. At this writing, it is unclear how the two sides will move forward.

LINKAGES TO INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

How does al-Qaeda endure against U.S. efforts to destroy it? How does it still find recruits and support? An important reason lies in the poison spread through the Mideast region by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Opinion polls show that the conflict is highly salient in the Arab and Islamic world; these surveys also show that U.S. policy toward Israel/Palestine is deeply unpopular among Arabs and Muslims, and that the U.S. itself is also deeply unpopular in these quarters. Further, polls show that the first and second phenomena cause the third--Arabs and Muslims resent the U.S. largely because they care about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and disapprove of U.S. policies toward that conflict.

A March 2001 poll commissioned by the University of Maryland asked respondents in five Arab states--Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Lebanon--to identify the "single most important issue" for themselves, including local political and social issues. In Egypt a whopping 79 per cent named the Palestinian-Israeli conflict; 60 per cent did so in Jordan, Kuwait, the UAE and Lebanon. An additional 20 per cent in these last four countries identified the Palestinian-Israeli conflict as among their top three issues.^{xxvii} Similarly, a spring 2002 Zogby International survey of five Arab states--Egypt, the UAE, Kuwait, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia--found that about two-thirds of respondents viewed the Palestinian issue as "very important" or

"the most important" issue facing the Arab world today.^{xxviii}

These poll numbers may be somewhat inflated because some respondents may have feared declaring a prime concern about local governance – taking issue with the government can be unsafe in Egypt and elsewhere in the Arab world. Thus some whose main concern is local malgovernance perhaps stifled that thought and spoke of Israel/Palestine instead. But even discounting heavily for this possibility, these polls indicate broad and intense public concern over the Israel/Palestine question.

There are three reasons: the *intifada* that flared in the Palestinian territories after 29 September 2000, the new Arab satellite TV, including Al Jazeera, Al Arabiya and other channels, and the strength of supranational Arab and Muslim identities in the region. The *intifada* gave the conflict a dramatic and cruel face, ripe for inflaming television coverage. Satellite TV, which appeared only in the 1990s, provided a new medium for piping this cruel face into the homes of Arabs and Muslims far from Israel/Palestine. Their Arab/Muslim identities were aroused by these images, stirring anger even among non-Palestinians.

Arabs widely disapprove of the expansionist policies pursued by Israel under former Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's government (2001-2006) and fault the U.S. for giving him almost unconditional support. The spring 2002 Zogby survey found minuscule support in five Arab states for U.S. policy toward the Palestinians: only two to six per cent of respondents in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Lebanon voiced approval, and only ten per cent in the UAE. By contrast, 89 to 94 per cent of respondents in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Lebanon and 83 per cent in the UAE voiced disapproval of U.S. policy toward the Palestinians. In the world of opinion surveys such huge majorities are equivalent to unanimity. A similar picture emerged in the three non-Arab Muslim states that Zogby surveyed. Approval of U.S. policy stood at ten per cent in Pakistan, 5 per cent in Indonesia, and 3 per cent in Iran; disapproval registered at 79 per cent, 75 per cent, and 95 per cent respectively.^{xxix} This highlights that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not merely an Arab concern but also animates the wider Islamic world.

Arab/Islamic hostility toward American policy translates into enmity for the U.S. as a whole. A March 2004 Pew Research Center poll of four Muslim countries found unfavorable views of the U.S. outnumbering favorable views by 61 to 21 per cent in Pakistan, 63 per cent to 30 per cent in Turkey, 68 to 27 per cent in Morocco, and a remarkable 93 per cent to 5 per cent in Jordan.^{xxx} A Zogby International study taken three months later found even deeper hostility toward the United States in six Arab states: those with unfavorable views of the U.S. outnumbered those with favorable views by 69 per cent to 20 per cent in

Lebanon, 73 per cent to 14 per cent in the UAE, 88 per cent to 11 per cent in Morocco, 78 per cent to 15 per cent in Jordan, 94 per cent to 4 per cent in Saudi Arabia, and 98 per cent to 2 per cent in Egypt.^{xxxii} The hostility these polls reveal is especially ominous as it extends even to traditional U.S. allies like Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Pakistan.

Finally, Arabs and Muslims explain their enmity toward the United States as stemming largely from U.S. policies toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. *Pace* President Bush, they do not hate the U.S. for its freedoms, but rather for its policies. Zogby again, May 2004: 76 per cent in Jordan, 78 per cent in the UAE, 79 per cent in Lebanon, 81 per cent in Saudi Arabia, 84 per cent in Morocco, and 95 per cent in Egypt declared that American policy toward the Arab-Israeli dispute was "quite important" or "extremely important" in shaping their attitude toward the U.S.^{xxxiii} Similar majorities indicated that their views of the U.S. are shaped more by American policy than American values, by majorities ranging from 76:16 in Jordan up to 90:1 in Egypt.^{xxxiii}

Anti-Americanism in the Arab/Islamic world matters because it fosters a friendly environment where al-Qaeda can flourish, raising new recruits and money while evading the American dragnet. An Arab/Muslim public friendly to the U.S. would act as its eyes and ears, helping it glean the intelligence that is vital to successful counter-terror. But publics hostile to the U.S. sit on their hands, letting the terrorists hide in their midst while the U.S. searches blindly. Osama Bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri and other al-Qaeda leaders run free in northwest Pakistan today because the people of that region are militantly anti-America and pro-al-Qaeda. These dangerous fish could swim no more in Mao's metaphorical sea if the public willed otherwise--as it would if it viewed the U.S. with more approval.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not the sole cause of Arab/Muslim popular hostility toward the U.S. The war in Iraq and anti-American propaganda from al-Qaeda and other Islamist movements that raises other grievances against the U.S. also stoke the fire. Winding down the Iraqi occupation would help, as might stronger public diplomacy to counter al-Qaeda's propaganda. But U.S.-Mideast relations will not heal fully while irritation from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict persists. In the meantime Al-Qaeda will benefit accordingly.

Al-Qaeda's leaders will not be weaned from their campaign of terror by an Israeli-Palestinian peace settlement. Terror is their way of life, their reason for being. They cannot be conciliated; they must be destroyed. To achieve this destruction al-Qaeda's support base must be stripped away, and that can only come by engineering a large improvement in Arab/Muslim public attitudes toward the U.S. This will leave the extremists friendless and exposed, soon to

face capture or death. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict should be ended not to appease their anger but to bring their demise.

LINKAGES TO THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict fuels friction between the U.S. and other governments as well as publics. Often the U.S. needs these governments' help against al-Qaeda and other foes, and U.S. national security suffers accordingly. America's NATO allies are essential to defeating al-Qaeda, but disputes over the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have frayed U.S. relations with these allies. Disagreements stemming from Arab-Israeli strife have also disrupted important U.S.-Syrian cooperation against al-Qaeda. For a time after the 11 September 2001 attacks, Syria gave the U.S. valuable assistance against al-Qaeda, including intelligence information that helped thwart an al-Qaeda attack on the U.S. Fifth Fleet headquarters in Bahrain and an attack on an American target in Ottawa. Many American lives were perhaps saved. By 2002, Syria was also an important source of intelligence on al-Qaeda and an important ally against it.^{xxxiv} Syria's secular regime has long been targeted by Islamist radicals, including al-Qaeda, so the regime has worked to develop intelligence against these movements, often surpassing U.S. intelligence. It has hundreds of files on al-Qaeda and has penetrated al-Qaeda cells throughout the Middle East and Europe.^{xxxv} But Syrian cooperation later ended, foundering on frictions with the U.S. that stem largely from Syria's conflict with Israel, which is aggravated in turn by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

So the bad news is that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is damaging U.S. national security. The good news is that many pieces are now in place for a peace settlement. Six components in particular bear mention.

First, years of negotiation have made clear to both sides the peace terms that each can and cannot accept. If they want peace they know what its outlines must be. Long months of fumbling in the dark for a mutually acceptable formula will not be necessary. That formula is well known.

Next, most Israelis and Palestinians now agree on the same peace terms. Specifically, polls taken in December 2004 and January 2005 show that 54 per cent of Palestinians and 64 per cent of Israelis endorse the parameters for settlement proposed by President Clinton in December 2000.^{xxxvi} If the publics can agree on terms their leaders cannot do likewise.

The radical Hamas group did take control of the Palestinian parliament after winning free and fair elections in early 2006. Hamas has long opposed a compromise peace settlement with Israel. However, its opposition to

compromise puts it at odds with the pro-compromise Palestinian majority. Many of those who voted for Hamas did so only to protest corruption in the ruling Fatah party. They still dislike Hamas's rejection of peace with Israel. In the end Hamas will have to align itself with the moderate Palestinian majority on policy toward Israel or be swept from power in the next election.

Third, the Palestinian *intifada* that began in September 2000 has made major Arab states more predisposed to foster peace. They fear that passions stirred by watching the *intifada* could cause their publics to mobilize in ways that threaten their regimes. Crowds chanting "down with Israel" at noon could switch to "down with Mubarak" or "down with Abdullah" at ten minutes past. A truce dampened the *intifada* in early 2005 but if peace is not agreed the *intifada* will likely reignite, so these regimes now favor peace. Their new mood was signaled by the Abdullah peace plan, offered by the Arab League at its March 2002 summit and re-launched at its March 2005 summit, which envisions a settlement that involves acceptance by the Arabs of Israel's 1967 borders, no demand for large return of the 1948 refugees to Israel, and full integration of Israel into the larger Arab world.^{xxxvii} If the Palestinians and Israelis want to make peace they will now find many other Arabs willing to help it happen.

Fourth, Israelis are increasingly worried that Israel will lose its Jewish character unless it makes a land-for-peace trade. This worry extends even to some elements of the Israeli political right, who see the West Bank as Israeli territory but now accept that demographic realities require Israeli withdrawal.

Next, Israel no longer faces a credible threat of conventional attack from its east. Israeli hard-liners have long claimed that a land-for-peace trade was unwise because Israel needed to hold the West Bank as a buffer against possible invasion from the east by Iraq and Syria. But over the past 20 years the threat of eastern invasion has largely disappeared as the economies of Syria and Iraq have stagnated, their Soviet sponsor and arms supplier has collapsed, Israel developed its nuclear arsenal, and the United States has smashed Saddam's regime and put Iraq under occupation. The size of the eastern threat was always debatable, but Saddam's demise makes clear that it exists no more, as Syria poses no serious threat by itself. Hence Israel can now be more forthcoming about trading land for peace.

Finally, Israel now faces a dangerous new threat from al-Qaeda that gives it more interest in reaching peace with the Palestinians. Before 2001, al-Qaeda focused its violence on the U.S. while leaving Israel unmolested. But since 11 September 2001 al-Qaeda has targeted Israel as well, as dramatized by al-Qaeda's 2002 attack on Israelis at Mombassa, Kenya. Hence the Israeli-Palestinian conflict threatens Israeli security (along with U.S. security) by helping al-Qaeda to find

recruits and sanctuary, and by hampering U.S. efforts against al-Qaeda. This gives Israel a cogent new reason to seek peace with the Palestinians.

Thus if the U.S. pushes for peace, it pushes on an open door. But peace is not possible on any terms. The range acceptable to both sides is very narrow. They are basically those of the four major peace plans that have been widely discussed in recent years: the Clinton parameters of December 2000, the Abdullah Plan of March 2002, the Geneva Accord of December 2003, and the Ayalon-Nusseibeh (or "People's Voice") initiative, also of December 2003. These proposals distill to four key elements:

1. Israel would withdraw from all the territories it occupied in the 1967 war, except for minor border adjustments involving equivalent gains and losses for both sides, in exchange for a full and final peace.
2. Control of the city of Jerusalem would be shared along ethnic lines. Control of its holy places, including the Temple Mount/Noble Sanctuary area, would also be shared.
3. The West Bank and Gaza would form a Palestinian state that accepted sharp limits on its military forces in order to ensure Israel's security.
4. The Palestinians would not insist on a large return of Palestinian refugees to Israel, instead seeing their right of return recognized mainly by generous compensation to the refugees.

Neither side will accept terms outside these parameters. Israel will never agree to a large return of refugees to Israel; Palestinian insistence on a large return would torpedo peace. And the Palestinians will accept no deal that they cannot credibly claim involves full Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories. Egypt's Anwar Sadat and Jordan's King Hussein both gained full Israeli withdrawal from Egyptian and Jordanian territory in exchange for full peace in their earlier peace deals with Israel. Today's Palestinian leaders need to claim that they won the same terms to quiet their own radicals, who will otherwise accuse them of surrendering the national cause by accepting second-best treatment--"Not even what Sadat got! Not even what Hussein got!" Accordingly, Israel will torpedo peace if it offers less than full withdrawal--as it did at the failed talks at Camp David II in the summer of 2000, where it unwisely insisted on retaining nine per cent of the West Bank and parts of Palestinian East Jerusalem.^{xxxviii}

PROGRESS AND PROSPECTS

What U.S. action does peace require? The two sides cannot make peace on their

own; the U.S. must lead them to it. Specifically, Washington must frame its own final-status peace plan and use carrots and sticks to persuade both sides to agree. Enough with Oslo-style, open-ended peace plans: the two sides will move forward more willingly if they know their destination. And enough with passive mediation: strong U.S. persuasion is necessary. When either side needs incentives to move it forward, inducements--both positive and negative--should be starkly framed and firmly applied.

The U.S. final-status plan should involve a full Israeli withdrawal in exchange for full and final peace, in line with the four previous peace plans. The U.S. should use the first phase of the 2003 Quartet roadmap as its work plan to start the parties toward its final-status agreement; then it should omit the roadmap's phase two (which would create a Palestinian state with provisional borders) and move directly to the roadmap's third phase: final-status negotiations. It should closely oversee forward progress on the roadmap, framing a schedule for the fulfillment of both sides' roadmap obligations and enforcing compliance with that time line.

The Palestinian leadership needs American persuasion in three areas. First, the leadership of Hamas must be brought to declare that it accepts Israel's existence and favors a two-state solution to the conflict. Its stated aim of destroying Israel must go. Second, the whole Palestinian political elite -- of both Hamas and Fatah -- must accept the duty to disarm their own party militias and other terrorist groups that operate in the Palestinian territories, to establish firm government control of all instruments of force, and to end violence against Israel. And third, the Palestinian leadership must accept that any peace settlement will recognize the Palestinian right of return by awarding compensation for losses, not by physical return to Israel. Some Palestinians choke on the notion that Palestinians who were driven from Israel in 1948 cannot return there. Yet the necessities of peacemaking require that the Palestinians accept this. Fatah may quickly accept these positions, but Hamas will likely require greater pressure. Washington should apply whatever weight is needed.

Israel's government also needs strong American persuasion. Most Israeli leaders see the need for some further Israeli pullbacks from the Palestinian territories. But the near-total Israeli pullback that peace requires will meet fierce opposition from the Israeli settler movement and others on the Israeli far right. Without strong U.S. pressure these expansionist elements in Israel will likely persuade the Israeli government to keep enough occupied territory to preclude a peace settlement.^{xxxix}

Accordingly, the U.S. must actively press the Israeli government to offer near-total withdrawal in exchange for peace. Carrots should include the prospect of

large economic aid to cover the cost of adjusting Israeli defenses to new borders and the prospect of a full formal alliance with the United States, to even include NATO membership, if Arab-Israeli peace is achieved. As a stick the U.S. should explain that no U.S. government can remain allied to another government that pursues policies that injure U.S. national security. The U.S. should elaborate that an Israeli policy of retaining large chunks of the West Bank precludes an Israeli-Palestinian peace settlement; that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict injures U.S. national security; that any Israeli policy of expansion therefore injures U.S. national security; and that the U.S. therefore insists, as a firm condition for continuing the U.S.-Israel strategic relationship, that Israel discard any policy of expansion. Instead Israel must agree to make peace within the terms of the four peace plans mentioned above.

The U.S. should also insist that Israel take first steps toward such a peace. Most importantly, Israel must halt settlement expansion and dismantle newer settlement outposts, in line with its obligations under the 2003 Quartet roadmap. Such a U.S. policy, pursued with energy, will likely bring the Palestinians and Israelis to a settlement. The publics on both sides already favor moderate policies that align with peace, and they will not support leaders whose policies threaten rupture with the United States. Hence leaders on both sides will find themselves impelled toward peace if the U.S. forcefully applies its carrots and sticks to get them there.

Of course, the current climate in Washington precludes a policy of active U.S. pressure on both sides. Instead the Bush team now plans only coercion of Hamas plus some passive mediation unlinked to a strong U.S. policy. This will not be nearly enough to bring peace. Even the current ceasefire will likely collapse unless it is reinforced by strong U.S. pressure for peace aimed at all parties. The present Mideast calm is refreshing but without a far more forceful U.S. policy it is only the calm before another storm.

Americans who care about U.S. national security should therefore work to change the Washington climate. U.S. security requires al-Qaeda's defeat, and that demands a Palestinian-Israeli peace. The U.S. government is derelict if it does not pursue such a settlement--soon and with full force.

ENDNOTES

¹ Parts of this chapter have appeared as "Vital Interest: Winning the War on Terror Requires a Mideast Peace Settlement," *The American Conservative*, Vol. 4, No. 5 (14 March 2005): pp. 7-10; and as *Why U.S. National Security Requires Mideast Peace* (MIT Center for International Studies, Audit 05-5, May 2005. Online. Available HTTP: <web.mit.edu/cis/pdf/Audit_5_05_VanEvera.pdf>.

¹ Valuable surveys of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict include Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-2001* (NY: Vintage, 2001); Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World* (NY: W.W. Norton, 2000); Mark Tessler, *A History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994); and Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: A History with Documents*, 5th ed. (New York: St. Martin's, 2004).

¹ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, pp. 1-3.

¹ On this rebellion see Yehoshafat Harkabi, *The Bar Kokhba Syndrome: Risk and Realism in International Politics* (Chappaqua, NY: Rossel, 1983).

¹ Harkabi, *Bar Kokhba*, p. 46.

¹ Martin Gilbert, *Jewish History Atlas* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973), pp. 43-44.

¹ Gilbert, *Jewish History Atlas*, pp. 53, 82.

¹ Histories of anti-Semitism include James Carroll, *Constantine's Sword: The Church and the Jews: A History* (Houghton Mifflin, 2001); Marvin Perry and Frederick Schweitzer, *Anti-Semitism: Myth and Hate from Antiquity to the Present* (NY: Palgrave, 2002); Edward H. Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews: Twenty-Three Centuries of Antisemitism*, rev. ed. (New York: Paulist Press, 1999); and Israel Pocket Library, *Anti-Semitism* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1974).

¹ In the Arab and Muslim world Jews were also oppressed but less severely. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*: pp. 8, 10-11.

¹ A good account is Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism* (New York: Schocken, 2003), pp. 40-135.

¹ Laqueur, *History of Zionism*, pp. 40-96, *passim*; and Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, p. 34.

¹ Vladimir Jabotinsky, leader of the Revisionist Zionist movement, wrote in 1923 that "Every indigenous people will resist alien settlers as long as they see any hope of ridding themselves of the danger of foreign

settlement. This is how the Arabs will behave and will go on behaving so long as they possess a gleam of hope that they can prevent 'Palestine' from becoming the Land of Israel." Shlaim, *Iron Wall*, p. 13. Ben Gurion thought in similar terms. See *ibid.*, pp. 17-19.

¹ Specifically, the population of Israel/Palestine was then comprised of some 24,000 Jews and 565,000 Arabs, of whom about 90 per cent were Muslim, with Christians comprising most of the rest. Tessler, *A History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, pp. 43, 124.

¹ On Herzl see Laqueur, *History of Zionism*, pp. 84-135.

¹ Tessler, *History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, p. 266; and Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, p. 185.

¹ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, pp. 170-71, 180; Tessler, *A History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, p. 256.

¹ Morris, *Righteous Victims*, p. 186.

¹ Shlaim, *Iron Wall*, pp. 28-29, speaking of Ben Gurion. See also *ibid.*, p. 21, quoting Ben Gurion.

¹ Morris, *Righteous Victims*, p. 186.

¹ Shlaim, *Iron Wall*, p. 54.

¹ Guy Erlich, "Zionist Massacres in 1948: New Evidence," *Ha'ir*, May 6, 1992. Online Available HTTP: <www.deiryassin.org/op0010.html>. Yitzhaki said: "In almost every conquered [Arab] village in the War of Independence, acts were committed [by Israeli forces] which are defined as war crimes, such as indiscriminate killings, massacres and rapes." *Ibid.* Israeli military historian Uri Milstein likewise said that in the 1947-48 War "each battle ended with a massacre" and "the concept of taking prisoners was unknown" to both Israelis and Palestinians. *Ibid.*

¹ Norman G. Finkelstein, *Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict* (London: Verso, 1995), pp. 55.

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¹ Pressman, "Visions in Collision," p. 21.

¹ Pressman, "Visions in Collision," p. 22.

¹ Shibley Telhami, *The Stakes: America and the Middle East* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 2002), p. 98.

¹ John Zogby, "Why Do They Hate Us?" *The Link*, Vol. 36, No. 4 (October-November 2003), p. 3-13. Online. Available HTTP: <www.ameu.org/uploads/vol36_issue4_2003.pdf>. Specifically, respondents holding the Palestinian issue "the most" or "a very important" issue facing the Arab world were 80 per cent in Egypt, 64 per cent in Saudi Arabia, 76 per cent in Kuwait, 78 per cent in Lebanon, and 64 per cent in the UAE. *Ibid.*

¹ Zogby, "Why Do They Hate Us?" p. 8.

¹ *A Year After Iraq War: Mistrust of America in Europe Ever Higher, Muslim Anger Persists* (Pew

Research Center for the People and the Press, 16 March, 2004. Online. Available HTTP: <www.people-press.org/reports>.

¹ Zogby International, *Impressions of America 2004: How Arabs View America: How Arabs Learn About America* Zogby International. Online. Available HTTP: <www.aaiusa.org/pdf/Impressions_of_America04.pdf>, p. 3, table 1.

¹ *Arab Attitudes Towards Political and Social Issues, Foreign Policy and the Media* (Anwar Sadat Chair for Peace and Development and Zogby International, May 2004. Online. Available HTTP: <www.bsos.umd.edu/SADAT/>, pp. 8-9.

¹ *Arab Attitudes Towards Political and Social Issues*, p. 8. Respondents to the June 2004 Zogby poll likewise said that U.S. policy was important in shaping their attitude toward the United States, by important/unimportant percentage ratios of 89:7 in Morocco, 81:3 in Saudi Arabia, 71:20 in Jordan, 89:5 in Lebanon, and 72:16 in the UAE. Zogby International, *Impressions of America 2004*, p. 4, table 2b.

¹ Seymour Hersh, "The Syrian Bet," *The New Yorker*, 28 July, 2003; and William James Martin, "Clean Break with the Road Map," *Counterpunch*, 14/15 February 2004, pp. 12-14.

¹ Hersh, "Syrian Bet."

¹ *In the Post Arafat Era, Palestinians and Israelis Are More Willing to Compromise: For the First Time Majority Support for Clinton's Permanent Status Settlement Package*. Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research. Online. Available HTTP: <www.pcpsr.org/welcome.html>.; and reported in Akiva Eldar, "Poll: Majority of Palestinians Now Support Two-State Solution," *Haaretz*, 18 January 2005. Confirming a continuing trend toward moderation on peace terms among Palestinians is Khalil Shikaki, "Willing to Compromise: Palestinian Public Opinion and the Peace Process," *United States Institute of Peace Special Report* No. 158, January 2006. Online. Available HTTP: <www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr158.html>, pp. 9-11.

¹ Suleiman al-Khalidi, "Arab Leaders Relaunch Peace Offer," *Washingtonpost.com*, 23 March 2005.

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^{vi} Martin Gilbert, *Jewish History Atlas* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973), pp. 43-44.

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