

# Israel vs. Hamas

Terror & counterterror orgs are deeply embedded in the century-long struggle between Israelis and Palestinians for control over territory. Understanding the evolution of terror is inseparable from that history.

Zionist movement in 19<sup>th</sup> c. sought a Jewish homeland in Land of Israel. By start of WWI in 1914: 88,000 Jews and 590,000 Arabs lived in the region.

The British held Mandate of Palestine, but bowing to Arab resistance, they restricted Jewish immigration. By 1947: 630,000 Jews and 1,310,000 Arabs.



Sporadic violence erupted on both sides, for example:

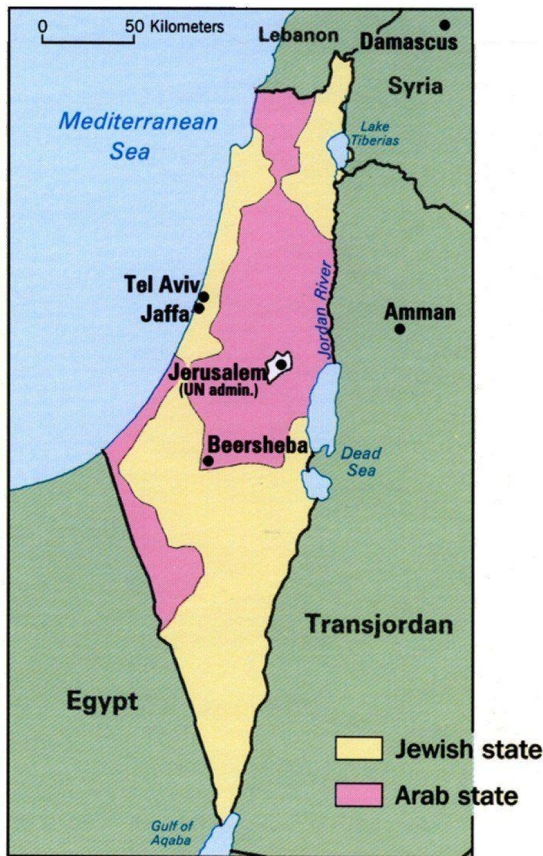
- ✓ Palestinian riots over abuses of holy places and massacres of Jewish communities (1921, 1929)
- ✓ Arab Revolt (1936-39): general strike, attacks on British & Jews; Jewish terrorists attacked Arabs
- ✓ In 1946, *Irgun Tsvai Leumi* (National Military Org) blew up British headquarters in the King David Hotel

UN Partition Plan (1947) divided area west of Jordan into Jewish and Arab states, split Jerusalem. Arabs rejected Plan & five nations attacked Israel.

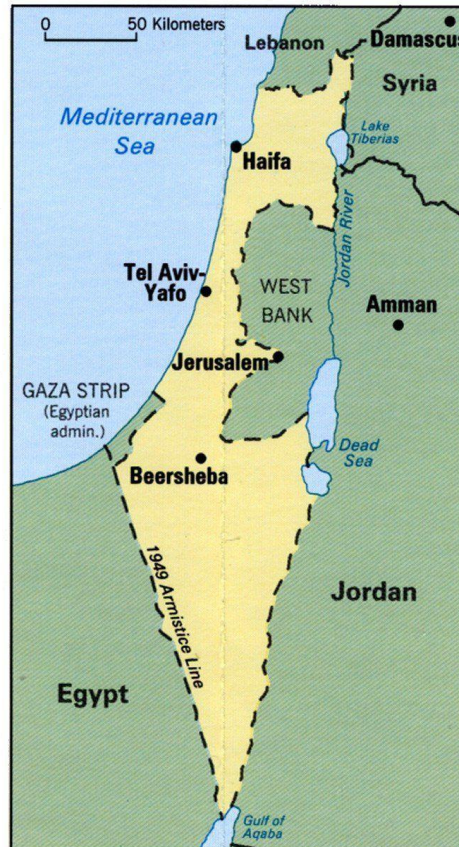
# Changing Borders

During the first war 700,00 Palestinians fled Israel. After the 1967 Six-Day War, many fell under Israeli military occupation, which became a continuing focus of terrorism intended to destroy the Israeli state & replace it with a Palestine state.

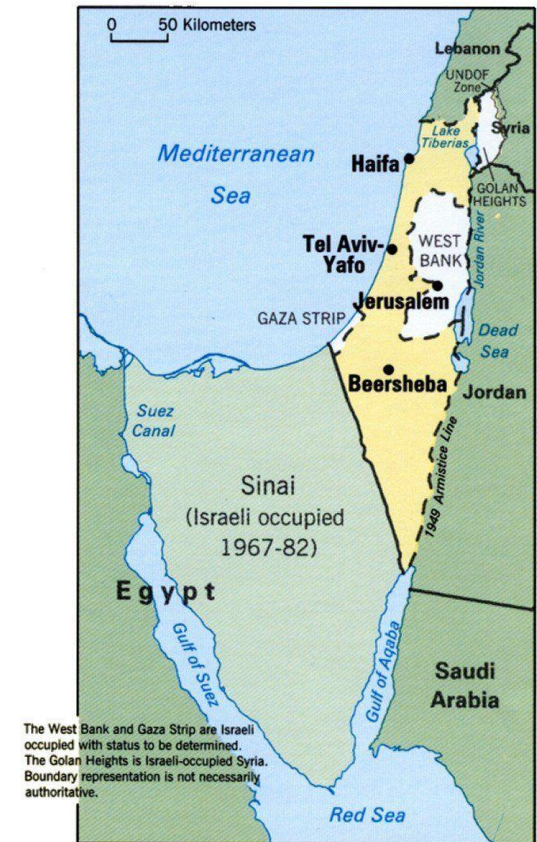
UN's 1947 Palestine Partition Plan



After the 1949 War



After the Six-Day War 1967



# PLO & Islamic Jihad

The **Palestine Liberation Organization**, a secular-nationalist coalition, used terror against Israel & Lebanon (1964-93). It signed 1993 Oslo Accords, recognizing Israel's existence & seeking a two-state solution.

Of PLO's 10 members are Fatah & PFLP are largest; neither is Islamist.



PLO isn't on U.S. State Dept FTO list, but **Islamic Jihad** is listed. Its goals are the destruction of Israel & creation of Islamic state in Palestine Mandate.

Islamic Jihad's Al-Quds brigade carried out many suicide bombings in First and Al-Aqsa **Intifadas** (1987-93 & 2000 - )

Islamic Jihad was founded in 1970s as a branch of Egypt's Islamic Jihad (now led by Al-Qaida's Ayman al-Zawahiri). It opposes many Arab states as corrupt, pro-Western, insufficiently Islamic and reputedly receives funds from Iran & Hezbollah.

Much smaller than Hamas, Islamic Jihad's strongholds are in such West Bank cities as Jenin and Hebron.



# Hamas' Rise to Power

Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, a schoolteacher, started the **Islamic Center** in 1978 as a Muslim Brotherhood charity to run Gaza clinics & welfare services. Ironically, Israel initially supported his Center “to undermine the secular nationalists and ... mount a challenge to the PLO.”



1987: Yassin found **Hamas** (حماس = Islamic Resistance Movement) in response to the First *Intifada*. Hamas criticizes the PLO's secularism, recognition of Israel, and its acceptance of the two-state solution.

1988: **Hamas Charter** calls for an armed *jihād* to obliterate Israel & create an Islamic state in Palestine. Hamas' refusal to renounce its charter is an obstacle to peace negotiations.

**Watch “Hamas Behind the Mask” about its origins and operations in Gaza.**

Hamas' military wing was responsible for the majority of killings of Israeli soldiers and civilians: rocket and mortar attacks, suicide bombings from 1993-2005. Hamas also attacked rival Palestinian movements in West Bank and Gaza, as well as in Egypt. Iran is a major funder of Hamas.

# Israel's Counterterror Strategies

Israel's counterterror strategies evolved to meet innovative forms of terrorism by the PLO, Islamic Jihad, Hamas, and other organizations.



Israeli counterterror strategies include:

- ❑ Gather intelligence, e.g., from Palestinian informants, electronic surveillance
- ❑ Prevent suicide bombers from infiltrating, using check-points and physical barriers (see map last slide)
- ❑ Swift rescue, retaliation by elite commandos
- ❑ Collective punishment: curfews, demolitions, mass detentions, economic blockades
- ❑ Targeted assassination of leaders

**Israel retaliated for the 1972 Munich Olympic massacre. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Intifada*, Israeli Defense Forces killed Hamas co-founders Sheik Yassin & Abdul Rantissi (2004).**

Both collective punishment & targeted assassination are controversial policies, often condemned by other nations as illegal and immoral.

# Selective Killing of Leaders

Gal Luft acclaimed the success of Israel's "extrajudicial punishment" policy.

**Targeted assassination** – killing of leaders to prevent, deter, and incapacitate their terrorist organizations' actions

What is the legality, morality, and effectiveness of Israel's policy?

Students form two sets of small groups & debate the opposing sides:

## PRO:

- ✓ All nations at war have right to self-defense, including killing of enemy soldiers & their leaders
- ✓ Terrorists are *de facto* military forces, thus are subject to the rules of war
- ✓ Due process of criminal cases cannot be applied to terrorists
- ✓ Violence is reduced, uncounted lives are saved when terrorist org leaders are taken out

## CON:

- ✓ A violation of international law & widely condemned in world public opinion (U.S. forbids it)
- ✓ Terrorists should be criminally prosecuted, not extra-judicially
- ✓ Ratchets up a vicious cycle of revenge killings & mass murder
- ✓ No evidence that it decreases suicide-bomb attack rates
- ✓ Our own leaders would be put at risk of counter-assassination

# **Strategic Change: Lessons from Hamas**

Hillel Frisch asked why terrorist organizations (PKK, Hezbollah, Al-Qaida) change strategies from fighting external enemies to battling internal enemies?

**Cost-benefit proposition:** If a government blocks both violent and nonviolent methods, a challenger switches efforts to achieving hegemony (dominance) within the rebel camp. Can be costly to the challenger movement as a whole.



**Al-Aqsa Intifada suicide bombing campaign initially had a very costly impact on Israel. But, Israel eventually learned how to stop bombers from entering and missiles proved ineffective.**

**2005: Hamas turned to elections against Fatah and Palestinian Authority (PA), winning control of Legislative Council in 2006.**

**2007: Hamas security forces in Gaza drove Pres. Mahmoud Abbas's PA into West Bank; two *de facto* governments today**

Why does Frisch call Hamas' triumph in Gaza a "suboptimal outcome for Palestinians?"

Is Israel in a stronger or weaker position to negotiate a two-state solution with Abbas alone? To escalate its military strikes against Hamas in Gaza?

What can President Obama do, if anything, to promote peace in the Palestine-Israel conflict?



# Up Against the Wall

The West Bank barrier, now over 60% completed, runs partly along the 1949 Armistice's "Green Line."

Israel says the wall improves security by blocking suicide bombers; 90% drop since wall went in 2003.

Palestinians charge that it illegally restricts travel & work. By annexing West Bank territory, it imperils the outcome of a two-state negotiation.



## ISRAEL'S WALL AND SETTLEMENTS (COLONIES) FEBRUARY 2007

