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A Regional Perspective on the Arab-Israel Conflict

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this article is to provide a realistic framework for understanding the reality of the Middle East and, in particular, the Arab-Israel conflict. No attempt is made to suggest solutions. Rather, the goal is to present an accurate picture of the true nature of the conflict and the politics and passions of the region. The author has found that the vast majority of people outside the Middle East who concern themselves with the region – media persons who report, pundits who comment, politicians and statesmen who initiate actions – are abysmally ignorant of the true character of the stage upon which the drama is being played.

It must be understood that the so-called Palestinian issue is not the root cause of the Arab-Israel conflict and Middle East violence.

To understand the real nature of the conflict, it is not necessary to reach back into the minute details of history. There is enough information available in broad outline to paint an accurate picture of the Middle East today.

Since the seventh century and the establishment of Islam, long before the creation of the State of Israel, the Middle East has been the scene of inter-Arab and inter-Moslem conflicts. In particular, since the beginning of the 19th century and the active entry of the European powers onto the Middle East stage, the endemic violence has taken on new and international dimensions.

No realistic proposal for resolution of the Arab-Israel conflict or for creating a more democratic and peaceful Middle East can ignore the manner in which the present situation came about. Today's harsh reality can only be understood against the background of more than a millennium of history, and 200 years of political and military interference by the European powers and, more recently, the United States.

Only when certain basic facts are clearly understood can practical solutions be proposed. The exposition is not exhaustive; it does not completely describe the phenomena discussed. The purpose is to present 13 basic facts as briefly and broadly as possible to provide background. A limited number of sources are quoted to provide a basis for the reader to delve further while, at the same time, not converting this article into a purely academic dissertation.

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A Regional Perspective on the Arab-Israel Conflict

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Introduction

The purpose of this article is to provide a realistic framework for understanding the Arab-Israel conflict. No attempt will be made to suggest solutions. Rather, the goal is to present an accurate picture of the character of the conflict and the realities of the politics and passions of the region. The author has found that the vast majority of people outside the Middle East who concern themselves with the region – media persons who report, pundits who comment, politicians and statesmen who initiate actions – are abysmally ignorant of the character of the stage upon which the drama is being played.

It must be understood at the outset that the so-called Palestinian issue is not the root cause of the Arab-Israel conflict and Middle East violence.

To understand the real nature of the conflict, it is not necessary to reach back into the minute details of history as was so ably done by Professor Bernard Lewis in his comprehensive and layman-oriented volume, *The Middle East*.¹ There is enough information available in broad outline to paint an accurate picture of the Middle East today.

Since the seventh century and the establishment of Islam, long before the creation of the State of Israel, the Middle East has been the scene of inter-Arab and inter-Muslim conflicts. Just to cite a few, *Sunni* vs. *Shi`a*, religious vs. secular, rich vs. poor, Iraq vs. Iran, Saudi Arabia (with Egyptian support) vs. Yemen, Syria vs. Iraq, Iraq vs. Kuwait; and internal strife and revolutions in Iran, Iraq, Egypt, and Jordan, among others. In particular, since the beginning of the 19th century and the active entry of the European powers onto the Middle East stage, the endemic violence has taken on new and international dimensions.

No realistic proposal for resolution of the Arab-Israel conflict can ignore the manner in which the encounter came about. The harsh reality of the Middle East today must be seen against the background of more than a millennium of history, and 200 years of political and military interference by the European powers and, more recently, the United States.

It is necessary to take note of some basic facts and realities. Only when all these are clearly understood can practical and workable solutions be proposed. The following sections are not exhaustive; they do not completely describe the phenomena discussed. The purpose is to present 13 basic facts as briefly and broadly as possible to provide background. I have quoted a limited number of sources in order to provide a basis for the reader to delve further while, at the same time, not converting this article into an academic dissertation.

Fact No. 1: The War Between Islam and Other Civilizations

In 1993, Samuel P. Huntington introduced the concept of the “The Clash of Civilizations”.² His hypothesis is that world politics is entering a new phase and the fundamental source of conflict in the world will be neither primarily ideological nor primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. With the end of the Cold War, international politics moved out of its Western phase, and its centerpiece becomes the interaction between the West and non-Western civilizations and among non-Western civilizations. In the politics of civilizations, the peoples and governments of non-Western civilizations no longer remain the objects of history as targets of Western colonialism but join the West as movers and shakers of history.

Although there are differences between the United States and Europe, they are close enough to each other in character as compared with other civilizations that, for the purposes of his thesis, Huntington lumps them

together as the “West”; the West being essentially a Judeo-Christian civilization. Huntington’s broad definition of the West will be used in this essay.

Huntington defines the nature of civilizations in terms of cultural identity; that is, common objective elements, such as language, history, religion, customs, institutions, and by the subjective self-identification of people.

Differences among civilizations are not only real; they are basic. And the most important difference is religion. These differences are the product of centuries and they are more fundamental and lasting than differences among political philosophies and political regimes. In much of the world, religion has moved in to fill the gap caused by the weakening of the nation-state as a source of identity. The revival of religion provides the basis of identity and commitment that transcends national boundaries and unites civilizations. The West, which is now at the peak of its power, confronts non-Western civilizations that increasingly have the desire, the will, and the resources to shape the world in non-Western ways.

Huntington defines seven or eight major civilizations; these include Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American and possibly African. He hypothesizes that there is already evidence that future conflicts will occur along the cultural fault lines separating civilizations. Among the many examples he cites are the turbulent Balkans where the fault line runs between Christianity (Protestant and Roman Catholic) to the north and west, and Orthodox Christianity and Muslim to the south and east.

Without going into the precise details of the Huntington thesis, there are several very important aspects of his theory that are immediately pertinent to the problems addressed by this paper.

First, the perception of the civilizational conflict is different between the West and the others. Western concepts differ fundamentally from those prevalent in other civilizations. Western ideas of individualism, liberalism, constitutionalism, human rights, equality, liberty, the rule of law, democracy, free markets, the separation of church and state, have little support in other civilizations. The attempts by the West to propagate these ideas have produced a reaction against “human rights imperialism”. Most important, the very notion that there could be a “universal civilization” is a Western idea that is in direct opposition to the particularism of other societies. The United States and other Western powers have attempted to induce other peoples to adopt Western ideas concerning democracy and human rights. Modern democratic government originated in the West and when it has developed to any extent in non-Western societies it has usually been the product of Western colonialism and imposition. It is not endemic to non-Western societies. Unfortunately the West does not see it this way. To put it simply, the West, particularly the United States, does not realize that “the Middle East is not the Middle West.”

Second, the most violent conflict between civilizations is taking place along the crescent shaped Islamic bloc of nations from the bulge of Africa to Central Asia. Violence occurs between Muslims on one hand, and Orthodox Serbs in the Balkans, Jews in Israel, Hindus in India, Buddhists in Burma and Catholics in the Philippines. Islam, in the words of Huntington, has bloody borders.

Conflict along the fault line between Western and Islamic civilizations has been going on for 1,300 years. Beginning with the Arab surge west and north in the eighth century, through the Crusader attempt to bring Christianity to the Holy Land, the Ottoman Turk expansion from the 14th through the 17th century, the ascent of the Western powers in the 19th and early 20th centuries, the retreat of the West after World War II, and the rise of Arab nationalism followed by Islamic fundamentalism. One of the bizarre results of the heavy dependence of the West on Arab oil during the 20th century was the opportunity for the oil rich Muslim countries to become money-rich and, when they wished to, weapons-rich. According to Huntington, the centuries-old military interaction between the West and Islam is unlikely to decline and it could become more virulent (this was written in 1993!). On both sides, the interaction between Islam and the West is seen as a clash of civilizations. “The West’s next confrontation,” according to M.J. Akbar, an Indian Muslim author, “is definitely going to come from the Muslim world. It is in the sweep of the Islamic nations from the Maghreb to Pakistan that the struggle for a new world order will begin.”

According to Bernard Lewis,

We are facing a mood and a movement far transcending the level of issues and policies and the governments that pursue them. This is no less than a clash of civilizations – the perhaps irrational but surely historic reaction of an ancient rival against our Judeo-Christian heritage, our secular present, and the worldwide expansion of both.³

Although historically the clash of civilizations has taken place along the civilizational fault lines, the advent of modern technology has changed the picture irreversibly. The most violent, sobering, traumatic and not to be ignored Islamic attack upon the United States and what it represents did not occur in some far-off island or continent. It took place in the heart of New York, Washington and Pennsylvania on September 11, 2001. The audaciousness and character of that attack means that the West is in a struggle for its very existence.

The conflict between Islam and the West is further complicated by the fact that there has been a huge influx of Muslim immigrants to the West since World War II, especially to Europe but also significantly to the United States. In France and Germany, immigrant and locally born Muslims are a non-negligible percentage of the voting population. In France, for example, there are an estimated six million Muslims, which is a large voting bloc (more than 10 times the number of Jews). In the United States, because of the character of the election system (the electoral college), there are a growing number of states wherein the politicians must cater to the wishes of the Muslim electorate. This has profound effect upon foreign policy of the Western nations particularly since it is the rare politician who will make the morally proper decision when confronted with the choice between pandering to the source of his votes and promoting the long-range national interest. Politicians have trouble seeing beyond the next public opinion poll, and cannot see anything at all beyond the next election.

The large Muslim population in the Western democracies represents another threat, that of the existence of a dangerous fifth column – citizens and residents who actively identify with ideologies and actively support factions that are in direct conflict with the interests of the countries in which they live.

Another phenomenon which should be noted is that the civilizational conflict between the West and Islam has a dual character. The terrorist attacks are based, or claim to be based, upon religious motivation.⁴ On the other hand, the Islamic countries whose missiles are within range of a number of European capitals, define themselves as secular – Syria, Libya, Egypt and, until recently, Iraq. Iran is also seen as moving away from its religious base to a more secular one. In some countries, such as Egypt, the secular and religious conflict is an internal one.

It should be noted that there are other theories that differ somewhat in degree or modify the thesis of Huntington. These include such theoreticians as Barry Buzan, Daniel Pipes, Martin Kramer, Peter Rodman and others. Suffice it to say that a decade has passed since Huntington's theory was first proposed, and the accumulated data indicates that he was quite correct. We are witness to what Charles Krauthammer called "a global *intifada*".⁵ And Krauthammer's remarks were made one and a half years before the Twin Towers fell victim to Islam's attack upon the West.

Fact No. 2: Islamic Terror

The civilizational confrontation between Islam and the other civilizations, particularly the West which it perceives as most threatening to itself, is exacerbated by a deadly dimension – Islamic terror.

Islamic terror, a historical phenomenon, took on an additional, threatening aspect in the last decade of the 20th century – institutionalization. Although *al-Qa`idah*, the Islamic terrorist organization, was founded in 1988 by bin Laden, the establishment in 1998 of the Worldwide Islamic Front for Holy War against the Jews and the Crusaders meant that terrorism had become a problem that recognizes neither borders nor limits of any kind. It appeals to the world's Muslims to kill Americans and their allies everywhere, as a personal duty, and to liberate the *al-Aqsa* Mosque in Jerusalem.

Dr. David Bukay writes that “the combination of Arab radicals and fundamentalist Islam constitutes the greatest threat to the existence of modern society.”⁶ France’s leading intellectual, Bernard-Henri Levy, who visited Pakistan to research a book on slain Wall Street reporter, Daniel Pearl, returned stunned by the depth and ferocity of radical Islam. He reported to *Le Figaro*, “Radical Islam is as much to be feared as the Communist and fascist totalitarianisms of yesterday.”

It is, to a great extent, more dangerous than Communism and Fascism which rose and which were defeated during the 20th century because it is found in many states throughout the world and has a population of more than one billion Muslims who are widely distributed geographically. Significantly, it is found in large numbers in modern, industrialized countries. It is more threatening, in combination with states having extremist regimes, and has both the means and powerful motives for purchasing and obtaining weapons of all kinds, conventional and otherwise; its ideology is uncompromisingly murderous and nihilistic. Although serious students of the phenomenon, such as Daniel Pipes, have noted that the fundamentalists are only a minority in Islamic society, the unfortunate fact is that unless the moderate majority asserts itself, this hyperactive minority will set the tone. There are signs that this is already happening. There were less than 20 terrorists involved in the multiple attacks upon the United States in September 2001, supported by a logistic and intelligence network of perhaps thousands, and funded by wealthy Arab regimes, particularly Saudi Arabia.

The fundamentalists believe that many Arab regimes maintain their stability and power due to the presence of Western imperialism and its generous assistance. Thus, the fundamentalists have two goals. First, to undermine the foundations of these regimes through terrorist actions against the West in order to drive the West off Islamic soil and to replace the present regimes. The corollary of this method is a war of attrition to wear down the desire of the West to rule and expand; second, to bring about the collapse of the West and to take its place.

This is not the place for a detailed discussion of the roots, causes, growth and danger of Islamic terrorism. Suffice it to say that, as of 9/11, it is a reality that can no longer be avoided or covered up. It is not at all clear how much the Western world, and perhaps the moderate Islamic world, understands the threat and the directions that it may take.

Fact No. 3: The Arab World Does Not Accept the Legitimacy of a Sovereign Jewish State

In the foreseeable future, the Arab world will not accept the legitimacy of a sovereign Jewish state and will do everything in its power to destroy Israel. This is an unpleasant fact but one which must be faced if Israel is not to continue to repeat the blunders, wishful thinking and blindness to reality that brought about the disastrous Oslo process.

In order to appreciate why this is true, it is necessary to understand the nature of the Arab-Jewish conflict. I choose the definition “Arab-Jewish” and not “Israeli-Arab” because the conflict is not confined to the existence of the State of Israel but it reaches deeper into the Muslim, particularly Arab, perception of the Jewish people. The Arabs are opposed to the existence of the State of Israel because it is perceived as an outpost of the West and, worse, as the sovereign entity of the Jewish people. The Jews are considered by the Arabs to be a protected people – *dhimmi* – that are not a nation and that have no sovereign rights, particularly the right to rule over Muslims.

In order to clarify the real nature of what is commonly called the Arab-Israel problem, it is necessary to place it in the proper historic and geopolitical perspective.

Nagib Azoury, a Christian Arab nationalist, wrote in his book, *The Awakening of the Arab Nation* (1905):

Two important phenomena of the same nature but nevertheless opposed which have not yet attracted attention manifest themselves at this time in Asiatic Turkey. They are the awakening of the Arab nation and the latent

efforts of the Jews to reconstitute the ancient monarchy of Israel on a very large scale. These two movements are destined to fight each other until one prevails over the other. Upon the final outcome of that battle between these two peoples representing opposing principles, the fate of the entire world depends.

In 1994, two leading spokesmen for the Muslim position made typical statements indicating that absolutely nothing has changed since Azoury's prescient remarks almost a century ago. Ibrahim Ghawshal, head of Hamas in Jordan said: "We think that the conflict between Arabs and Jews, between Muslims and Jews, is a cultural conflict that will continue to rage throughout all time."

Sayyid Muhammed Husayn Fadlallah, spiritual head of *Hizbullah* in Lebanon noted that:

...the struggle against the Jews in which Muslims are engaged is a continuation of the old struggle of the Muslims against the Jews' conspiracy against Islam. Israel is not merely a group that established a state at the expense of a people. It is a group which wants to establish Jewish culture at the expense of Arab culture.

At the 12th Palestinian National Council which convened in Cairo in June 1974, it was decided that the Palestine Liberation Organization was ready to accept any territory that would be liberated and would set up a national authority on it (Article 2), and would continue the struggle for completing the liberation of all Palestinian territory (Article 8). In the concluding announcement of the 13th PNC it was stated that:

the strategic goal of the PLO is liberation of Palestine from the racist-Zionist occupation, in order for it to be the homeland of the Palestinian people, in which the Palestinian democratic state will be established, in which the inhabitants who cast aside the racist-Zionist identity will live without discrimination of color or race.

Professor Edward Sa'id, one of the most well-known, articulate and dishonest spokesmen for the terrorist cause said,

There is no symmetry in the conflict. One side is guilty and one side is a victim. The victim's war must be fought to total victory, and it is legitimate. Israel is an occupying power over the whole territory of Palestine. The territories [of Judea, Samaria and Gaza] by themselves have no relevance for the Palestinian cause. Israel will always be guilty if it does not give up its Zionist state and identity.

In a blurb describing his new book (released in September, 2003), Professor Alan Dershowitz wrote:

In the conclusion to the book I argue that it is impossible to understand the conflict in the Middle East without accepting the reality that from the very beginning the strategy of the Arab leadership has been to eliminate the existence of any Jewish state, and indeed any substantial Jewish population, in what is now Israel.

Even Professor Edward Sa'id, the Palestinians' most prominent academic champion, has acknowledged that "the whole of Palestinian nationalism was based on driving all Israelis [by which he means Jews] out." This is a simple fact not subject to reasonable dispute. The evidence from the mouths and pens of Arab and Palestinian leaders is overwhelming. Various tactics have been employed toward this end, including the mendacious rewriting of the history of the immigration of Jewish refugees into Palestine, as well as the demographic history of the Arabs of Palestine. Other tactics have included the targeting of vulnerable Jewish civilians beginning in the 1920s, the Palestinian support for Hitler and Nazi genocide in the 1930s and 1940s, and the violent opposition to the two-state solution proposed by the Peel Commission in 1937, then by the United Nations in 1948. Yet another tactic was creating, then deliberately exacerbating and exploiting, the refugee crisis.

For some, the very idea of Palestinian statehood alongside a Jewish state has itself been a tactic – a first step – toward the elimination of Israel. Between 1880 and 1967, virtually no Arab or Palestinian spokesperson called for a Palestinian state. Instead they wanted the area that the Romans had designated as Palestine to be merged into Syria or Jordan. As Auni Bey Abdul-Hati, a prominent Palestinian leader told the Peel Commission in 1937, "There is no such country... Palestine is a term the Zionists invented. Our country was for centuries part of Syria." Accordingly, the Palestinians rejected the independent homeland proposed by the Peel Commission because it would also have entailed a tiny Jewish homeland alongside it. The goal has always remained the same: eliminating the Jewish state and transferring most of the Jews out of the area.

The realistic Jewish response to the Arab attitude was expressed pithily by Arthur Ruppin, a Zionist leader, in 1936:

The Arabs do not agree to our venture. If we want to continue our work in *Eretz* Israel against their desires, there is no alternative but that lives will be lost. It is our destiny to be in a continual state of warfare with the Arabs. This situation may well be undesirable but such is the reality.

Recently, Israeli Arab MK Mohammed Barakei declared that Israel can never be accepted as a “Jewish” state, while MK Azmi Bishara demanded: “Does the Arab world have to join the Zionist movement and recognize [Israel] as the Jewish state? Who ever heard of such a thing?”

Further evidence is provided by the Pew Global Attitudes Project, whose findings were that 80% of Palestinians, as well as large majorities in a number of other Arab countries polled (ranging from 65% in Lebanon to 90% in Morocco), agree with the statement: “The rights and needs of the Palestinian people cannot be taken care of as long as the State of Israel exists.”

In other words, far from assuming that a resolution of the conflict involves a Palestinian state alongside a Jewish one, the vast majority of the Arab world believes that the only real solution is for Israel to cease to exist.

Moreover, when the Pew researchers asked which global leader people most trusted to “do the right thing” in world affairs, the Palestinians’ top choice was Osama bin Laden, with 71% of the vote. In Jordan and Morocco, bin Laden came in second, with approval ratings of 55% and 49%, respectively. In other words, most Palestinians and many Arabs consider mass murder *à la* September 11 “the right thing” to do to achieve their goals, a view that would seem to preclude peaceful coexistence with a state whose very existence they deem incompatible with Palestinian needs.

Without Arab recognition of Israel’s right to exist as a Jewish state, any “peace process” is obviously doomed to failure.

Thus, Arab hostility to Israel is not based upon any action or inaction on the part of the Jewish state. It is fundamental to the Arab/Muslim belief and self-image. As such, it does not lend itself to the types of conflict resolution that are so favored by the Western world.

This is extremely difficult for the Western secular and rationalist world to accept since it finds it almost impossible to posit spiritual passions as independent primary forces in history. Yet they can be, and in the Middle East, unfortunately, they actually are.

The two so-called peace treaties made between Arab nations (Egypt and Jordan) and Israel were not peace agreements in the true sense of the word. They have neither brought peace between these nations, nor normalized relations at any level, nor curtailed the anti-Israel and anti-Semitic activities that are sanctioned by those governments. Both Egypt and Jordan entered these agreements as strategic steps in gaining American support. Hussein of Jordan and Sadat of Egypt wisely perceived that the road to Washington (and America’s money and arms) led through Jerusalem.

Further, after the disastrous Oslo Agreement resulted in handing parts of Israel to the PLO, the Arabs began an intensive and so far successful effort to destroy all historical evidence of Jewish presence in the Holy Land. This has included systematic destruction of irreplaceable archeological relics in such areas of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem that are irrefutable proof of Jewish life and sovereignty as far back as 3,000 years ago. The Arabs deny the very legitimacy of the Jews as a historical people in the Holy Land.

The Arab attitude concerning the Jews and Israel has been consistently reinforced by the educational systems, the mosques, and the media in the Arab countries and in the area controlled by the PLO. Today, Egypt is the Arabic source of virulent anti-Semitic propaganda comparable only to that produced in Nazi Germany including such discredited lies as *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* which also was produced as a television series. This brainwashing against the Jews, Judaism and the Jewish state has been a staple of Arab

education, preaching, and propaganda since, at least, the creation of Israel and, to a certain degree, even before Jewish sovereignty was established. Fifteen-year-old male and female suicide/homicide bombers don't grow on arid soil. One of the worst aspects of the Oslo Agreement is that it entrusted the education of a generation of Palestinians to Arafat, thereby ensuring that the Palestinian people would be far less prepared for reconciliation than it was before the process began. Young Palestinians in the Oslo era were educated to see Israel as illegitimate, Jews as demonic, and genocidal terrorism as a choice career option. To call that "incitement" is to understate the crime.

Just recently, Arafat told a group of visiting Palestinian youth on "Children's Day" that martyrdom was their highest national and religious calling. Only in Palestine does the nation's leader celebrate Children's Day by telling children to kill themselves.

One of the most meaningful gauges of the integrity of any peace process and its likelihood of success is the degree to which the parties educate toward peace. It is by this yardstick that the Palestinian Authority's education apparatus, formal and informal, has been such a dismal disappointment.

Instead of seizing the opportunity to educate future generations to live with Israel in peace, the PA has done everything in its power to fill young minds with hatred.

The truth about the PA schoolbooks is that they contain anti-Semitic content, delegitimize Israel's existence, and incite to hatred and violence. For example, the new sixth-grade *Reading the Qur'an* openly presents anti-Semitic messages as children read about Allah's warning to the Jews that because of their evil, Allah will kill them: "...Oh you who are Jews...long for death if you are truthful...for the death from which you flee, that will surely overtake you..."

In other sections they learn of Jews being expelled from their homes by Allah, and in another Jews are said to be like donkeys: "Those [Jews] who were charged with the Torah, but did not observe it, are like a donkey carrying books..." This religious-based anti-Semitism is particularly dangerous because children are taught that hating Jews is God's will. Islam also contains positive attitudes toward Jews yet PA educators chose to incorporate only hateful teachings.

The new PA schoolbooks compare Israel to colonial Britain: "Colonialism: Palestine faced the British occupation after the First World War in 1917, and the Israeli occupation in 1948." Moreover, the book refers to Israel exclusively as Palestine. For example: "Among the famous rocks of southern Palestine are the rocks of Beersheba and the Negev," and "Palestine's Water Sources, ...The most important is the Sea of Galilee."

But the Negev, Beersheba and the Sea of Galilee are in Israel and do not border the disputed territories of Judea and Samaria. So why are PA children taught these areas are Palestine?

Educating against Israel's existence is further cemented through tens of maps in the schoolbooks in which Palestine encompass all of Israel. Israel does not exist on any map, within any borders at all.

Another new book teaches what must be done for "occupied Palestine" and the "stolen homeland":

Islam encourages this [love of homeland] and established the defense of it as an obligatory commandment for every Muslim if even a centimeter of his land is stolen. I, a Palestinian Muslim, love my country, Palestine...

The complete and total message Palestinian children are taught is that Jews, according to Allah, are like donkeys; Israel is a colonial occupier that stole their land; the cities, lakes and deserts of Israel are occupied Palestine; and that the children have an obligation to liberate it if even a "centimeter is stolen".

All the books cited above were written during the most optimistic periods of the peace process, before the violence began in September 2000. They are not a reflection of the war, but they were a contributing factor to it. By dismissing the criticism and retaining this hateful material the PA is planting the seeds of the next war in their young people. And the defenders of this PA hate-education including some Israelis are nurturing those seeds of war.

Four generations of Arabs, especially Palestinian Arabs, have been consistently brainwashed to believe the worst canards against Jews, and indoctrinated with hate. This is not the kind of thing that can be eliminated by signatures on a piece of paper. It will take generations. Even if there were a complete turnabout today in the Arab attitude toward Israel and Jews, the Arabs will not be ready for peace with Israel in the foreseeable future.

Fact No. 4: The Borders in the Middle East Including the Kingdom of Jordan are Artificial

The concepts of citizenship and nationality are not perceived in the Middle East as they are in the Middle West. Indeed, to a large degree these concepts are unknown. This is based on the history, mentality, religion, and social structure of the area – ethnic and religious groups, tribes and clans, in contrast to citizens. And the entire picture is complicated by the fact that the nations and international borders in the Arabic speaking Middle East are nothing more than lines drawn in the sand to satisfy the contradicting imperialistic goals of the nations that defeated the Turkish Empire in World War I.

Indeed, the nation/states in the Middle East are a crazy quilt created by the Allies, particularly Great Britain and France, who were victorious over the Ottoman Empire in World War I. There is nothing natural about the borders of Syria, Palestine, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the Arab Emirates since they represent the results of power plays and squabbling among the victors who divided up the spoils. Iraq, for example, is a colonial creation built upon ancient Mesopotamia and composed of *Sunni*, *Shi'ia*, Kurds, and Turkmen held together until recently by an iron hand of the central government in Baghdad.

The pivotal year in which the fate of the Middle East for the rest of the 20th century was established was 1922.⁷ The Ottoman Sultan was deposed and the Turkish National State (confined to the Turkish-speaking portion of the dissolved empire) came into being. The rest of the former Ottoman domains in the Middle East were partitioned between Britain and France by such documents as France's League of Nations Mandate to rule Syria and Lebanon; Britain's League of Nations Mandate to rule Palestine including Transjordan, and the treaty with Iraq which Britain intended to serve as affirmation of a Mandate to rule that newly created country in what had been Mesopotamia. Arabia was to remain independent under British-influenced monarchs.

Britain, France, and to a lesser extent Russia, established states, appointed persons to govern them, and drew frontiers between them.

Just to provide a taste of the artificiality of the borders in the Middle East, consider the following two (of many) piquant historical facts:

- (1) When the borders between modern Iraq and modern Saudi Arabia were drawn by British diplomats, what began as a straight-as-an-arrow line ended with a bump that is still known as Churchill's Bump. That Bump created Kuwait. In fact, Winston Churchill personally created not just Iraq, Kuwait, and their mutual border, but he was also responsible for many of the current geopolitical land divisions within the Middle East. William Manchester, in his 1983 biography of Winston Churchill, reported on the British politician's diplomatic mission to the Middle East in 1921. On March 12 of that year, the Cairo conference opened, and "Winston's real purpose in Cairo was...the choosing of two kings, protégés of the British to rule over Iraq and Transjordan." At the conference, where "of the 38 participants, 36 were British," Lawrence (of Arabia) suggested that "Faisal be crowned head of Iraq... His motion, with Churchill's approval, carried without dissent." But the *Emir* Faisal had a brother, the *Emir* Abdullah, and as Manchester relates, "Churchill announced his intention to appoint Abdullah in Palestine, and in later years he would say: 'The Emir Abdullah is in Transjordan, where I put him one Sunday afternoon in Jerusalem.'"
- (2) At the end of 1922, in a meeting at a port called 'Uqair, Sir Percy Cox imposed upon Ibn Saud an agreement defining the Saudi kingdoms' frontiers with Iraq and Kuwait.

Thus, the European powers, in addition to slicing up the former Ottoman Empire, also wanted to ensure that the governments of these puppet nations be compliant to their needs and wishes. This required that the appropriate persons be the leaders of these new nations.

It is impossible, in a short article, to describe all the Byzantine dealings, intrigue, scheming, double-crossing, double-dealing and general bad faith that characterized the relationships among the leaders of the Arabic-speaking people, and the European powers during World War I, and at the peace conferences that took place in the period immediately after the war ended. However, a brief outline of the facts pertaining to Iraq, Jordan and Palestine is necessary for purposes of this article, particularly the history and fate of the *Hashemite* clan in Iraq and Jordan.

The Hejaz is the western section of the Arabian Peninsula bordering the Red Sea; it contains the two Muslim holy cities, Mecca and Medina. At the beginning of the 20th century, the area was ruled on behalf of the Ottoman Sultan by Hussein Ibn Ali who was known as the Sheriff of Mecca. Hussein, like Mohammed himself, was a member of the House of Hashem and referred to himself as a "*Hashemite*". Two of Hussein's sons, Faisal and Abdullah were active politically and were deputies in the Ottoman Parliament. T.E. Lawrence, a British officer, convinced the British High Command that Arab irregulars could assist British forces in the Palestine and Syria campaigns which Allenby, the head of the Allied forces in the Middle East, was planning to launch in the autumn of 1917. Faisal was deputized as a British general under Allenby's command and was transported by sea from the British-held coast of Arabia to Aqaba with a small band of Bedouins. Faisal's army, at its height, consisted of about 1,000 Bedouins supplemented by about 2,500 Ottoman ex-prisoners of war. When the invasion of Palestine took place along the Mediterranean coast, Faisal's forces harassed the Turks on the British right flank on the east bank of the Jordan River. Their effectiveness is still debated since much of their exploits were the product of Lawrence's vivid imagination and self-aggrandizement. (He became famous as Lawrence of Arabia.) Colonel Richard Meinertzhagen, the head of Allenby's intelligence wrote that "it is safe to say that Lawrence's Desert Campaign had not the slightest effect on the main theater west of the Jordan."

Be that as it may, on the morning of October 1, an Australian cavalry brigade achieved Allenby's goal – it entered Damascus. By clever public relations, it was declared that Damascus had been liberated by Faisal's forces. This was part of a British plan to install Faisal as King of Syria, essentially a British puppet. Faisal, who was indeed proclaimed King of Syria by a Syrian National Congress in Damascus in March 1920, was ejected by the French in July of the same year. At the Cairo Conference of 1921, the British set the parameters for Iraqi political life that were to continue until the 1958 revolution. They chose Faisal as Iraq's first king. To confirm Faisal as Iraq's first monarch, a one-question plebiscite was carefully arranged that had a return of 96% in his favor. The British saw in Faisal a leader who possessed sufficient nationalist and Islamic credentials to have broad appeal, but who also was vulnerable enough to remain dependent on their support. He never achieved legitimacy and died while undergoing medical treatment in Switzerland and was succeeded by his 21 year-old son, Ghazi. Iraq then experienced a series of military coups, revolutions and political assassinations. In April 1939, Ghazi was killed in an automobile accident and was succeeded by his infant son, Faisal II. Ghazi's first cousin, *Emir Abd al Ilah*, was made regent. The government in Baghdad was pro-Nazi and anti-British during World War II and the British invaded in 1941 and reimposed the monarchy. From then on, the monarchy was completely divorced from the powerful nationalist trend and was viewed as an anachronism that lacked popular legitimacy. The country experienced continuous unrest until the *Hashemite* monarchy was overthrown on July 14, 1958, in a coup in which a new republic was proclaimed and King Faisal II was executed, as were many others in the royal family. Thus, the *Hashemite* regime in Iraq, an artificial creation of British imperial ambitions, came to a bloody end.

The other *Hashemite* monarchy, the second creation of Great Britain and the successor to Hussein's other son Abdullah, rules today in Jordan. This came about through Britain's attempt to resolve its growing problems in the Middle East.

At the time of the Cairo Conference, having opted for a *Hashemite* solution for Iraq, Churchill decided to do the same for Transjordan which was in disorder and the British did not have enough troops to control it. Faisal's brother Abdullah, accompanied by 30 officers and 300 Bedouin had arrived in the Transjordan city of Amman. For the good of Great Britain and to establish order, Churchill decided to offer Abdullah authority in that region. Abdullah agreed to govern Transjordan for six months with the advice of a British chief political officer and with a British financial subsidy but without British troops. After a few months as governor of Transjordan, Abdullah began to change his mind about leaving. The British Colonial Office's temporary and merely administrative set of arrangements for Transjordan in time hardened into an enduring political reality. Abdullah, with his foreign retinue of British advisors and Bedouin troops, settled into Amman. Abdullah was assassinated by a Palestinian Arab in Jerusalem in 1951 and his son Talil assumed the throne. However, Talil was mentally unstable and he abdicated less than a year later in favor of his eldest son Hussein, the heir apparent.

The plan that Palestine, which stretched from the Mediterranean Sea to the Iraqi border, be partitioned between Arabs and Jews, as envisioned by the Balfour Doctrine and the League of Nations Mandate, ran up against the problem that 75% of the country had already been given to an Arab dynasty, the *Hashemites*, which was not Palestinian. The newly created artificial province of Transjordan, later to become the independent state of Jordan then the Kingdom of Jordan, gradually drifted into existence as an entity separate from the rest of Palestine; indeed, today it is almost totally forgotten that Jordan was ever part of Palestine.

Fact No. 5: Saudi Arabia – A Special Case

To understand much of the world's problems today, particularly in the Middle East, it is necessary to have some knowledge of the history and character of Saudi Arabia.

At the end of World War I, Arabia was divided between two rival leaders, Hussein in the west (the *Hejaz*) and Ibn Saud in the center and east, who were fighting one another. Ibn Saud was the hereditary champion of the teachings of Mohammed ibn Abdul Wahhab, an 18th century religious leader whose alliance with the House of Saud in 1745 had been strengthened by frequent intermarriage between the two families. The *Wahhabis* (also known as *Hanbalis*) are severely puritanical while the *Hashemites* were orthodox *Sunni* Muslims; thus, the two leaders were both doctrinal and political enemies. At the end of 1912, a movement of religious revival began that strengthened Ibn Saud and he gathered a large powerful army with the intent to take over all of Arabia. In a key battle in 1919, the *Hejazi* forces led by Hussein's son Abdullah were completely routed and by 1924, Ibn Saud had completed the conquest of Arabia and driven Hussein into exile.

The fact that Arabia had been taken over by a clan of Muslim fanatics would not have made much impact on the world except for one item – oil. The fact that Saudi Arabia is the home of vast oil reserves has, for strategic and commercial reasons, enabled one of the most repressive and reactionary police states in the world to be immune from criticism. Kenneth Adelman, a former Reagan arms controller, on a televised interview on C-Span, said Saudi Arabia is “a terribly barbaric society at the bottom of the human-rights list, worst of the worst, along with North Korea”.

Further, since World War I, Ibn Saud and his descendants have depended on foreign troops – the Christians of Britain, France and the United States – to remain in power. From 1946 to 1962 the US maintained an airbase in Saudi Arabia, and before that the British assisted the Saudis against both the Ottomans and the *Hashemites*. When the Saudis needed to clear the Grand Mosque in Mecca of protestors in 1979, they employed French paratroops to kill Muslims within the walls of the mosque. Although Saudi Arabia is a major client of the American arms industry, American troops were sent to protect this medieval autocracy as recently as during the first Gulf War in 1991.⁸

The *Wahhabi* sect of Islam preaches violence not only against Christians, Jews, Hindus and others, but also against non-*Wahhabi* Muslims. The official theological organs of the state, exclusively held by clerics from the *Wahhabi* school of Islam, publicly castigate *Shi`ites* as non-Muslims; courts, controlled by the *Wahhabi* clerics do not admit testimony by *Shi`ites*; marriages between *Wahhabi Sunnis* and *Shi`ites* have been banned.

Wahhabism has been spreading since the early 1970s, when the Saudi government began using booming oil revenues to build mosques and finance Islamic charities from Morocco to Malaysia. Saudi-built mosques usually came with *Wahhabi* clerics who preach their puritanical message. *Wahhabi* ideology has inspired many radical Islamic movements, including Afghanistan's *Taliban* and Osama bin Laden's *al-Qa`idah* network. In its most extreme form, *Wahhabi* doctrine supports permanent *jihad* to spread its interpretation of the faith. Some *Wahhabis* have a tendency to label all Western influences as "infidel", a term that invokes the use of holy war.

Details on the involvement of the government of Saudi Arabia in world terrorism, including the 9/11 attack on the United States, can be found in a recent study by Dore Gold.⁹ Fifteen of the 19 9/11 terrorists were from Saudi Arabia. In Saudi Arabia, the *al-Qa`idah* terrorist network enjoys vast resources in the ranks of the clerical hierarchy and the state. Anti-western sermons in government mosques, disseminated in the media and on the Internet are continuous and intensive. The Saudis built and continue to support mosques, schools, student associations, and other religious institutions that preach the *Wahhabi* brand of Islam in Europe and the United States and throughout the Muslim world. Some highlights of the Saudi involvement in terror that were listed in an article in *The Wall Street Journal* by Stephen Schwartz include: Princess Haifa, wife of the Saudi Ambassador to the United States and Prince Bandar ibn Sultan, who donated funds that just happened to wind up in the hands of two of the September 11 suicide pilots. Among clerical hatemongers, Ayed Al-Qarni, an adviser to Prince Abdel Aziz ibn Fahd, the youngest son of King Fahd, stands out. Al-Qarni wrote a poem, repeatedly broadcast on Saudi media during the Iraqi intervention, in which he declared, "Slaughter the enemy infidels..." This lyric was supplemented by an interview in *The Future of Islam* – a monthly issued by the World Assembly of Muslim Youth – for April 2003. Therein, al-Qarni proudly affirmed that he prays daily for America's destruction... During the Iraq war, preacher Naser al-Omar called for suicide attacks on the coalition. Interviewed by a Saudi-backed TV station operating from Dubai, he said, "We should hope for more terror bombings to kill more of the enemies of God – Jews and Christians." A pro-Saddam Hussein *fatwa* signed by him and other clerics was distributed in Saudi government offices.

The above is just a sampling of the teaching and preaching that is supported by the Saudi government around the world. Their message is clear, in all languages, but primarily in Arabic. Their English pronouncements are more muted, taking Western sensibilities into account. But the messages in Arabic in the media, the mosques and the *madrassas* (religious schools) now spread across the Islamic world from West Africa to Indonesia and in Europe and the United States where millions of Arab children study Islam, is virulently anti-Western.

Vast wealth from oil income has enabled this benighted monarchy to fund terrorism on an international scale. In essence, oil has been the tool that enables Saudi *Wahhabi* fanaticism to acquire petrodollars to use in activities aimed at undermining, attacking and ultimately subjugating the West. At the same time, the Saudi regime is undergoing a deep social crisis and movements of protest have been diverted by the ultra-*Wahhabi* faction of the royal family toward support of bin Laden and his terrorists. In essence, supporting international terror is a form of protection paid by the royal family to prevent the terror being turned against itself. It's as simple as that.

A disturbing aspect of the Saudi tie-in to terrorism is the attitude of the Bush Administration. In July 2003, *Newsweek* magazine published an article that exposed an apparent Bush administration cover-up of suspected Saudi governmental collusion with the 9/11 terrorists. Omar al-Bayoumi, a suspected Saudi agent, met with two of the hijackers in the year 2000, right after he left the Saudi Consulate in Los Angeles. He

paid their apartment rent for two months and is suspected of having arranged for them to receive Social Security cards and flight training in Florida. The administration is currently insisting that 29 pages of Congress' 900-page report on intelligence failures that preceded the 9/11 attacks be expunged. These 29 pages deal with Saudi involvement in the attacks. Secretary of State Powell is one of the administration officials most associated with the Bush administration's policy of backing the Saudi government. The backing continues unabated in spite of the fact that Saudi citizens have provided *al-Qa'idah* with the bulk of its funding and soldiers.

Frank J. Gaffney, Jr., president of the Center for Security Policy, wrote:

...the West's enemies – notably an array of Saudi princes, charities, businessmen and front organizations – have been spending some US\$70 billion to recruit, train and arm adherents around the world in the name of the central idea being wielded against us [the US] namely “*jihad*” or holy war.¹⁰

Gaffney quotes an article in the *US News and World Report* by David Kaplan entitled, “The Saudi Connection: How Billions in Oil Money Spawned a Global Terror Network”. According to Kaplan,

US officials now say that key [Saudi government and affiliated] charities became the pipelines of cash that helped transform ragtag bands of insurgents and *jihadists* into a sophisticated, interlocking movement with global ambitions. Many of those spreading the *Wahhabist* doctrine abroad, it turned out, were among the most radical believers in holy war, and they poured vast sums into the emerging *al-Qa'idah* network.

The Saudi funding program is the largest worldwide propaganda campaign ever mounted – dwarfing the Soviet's propaganda efforts at the height of the Cold War.

Kaplan cites the Saudi weekly, *Ain al-Yaqeen* as saying the funds produced “some 1,500 mosques, 210 Islamic centers, 202 colleges, and nearly 2,000 schools in non-Islamic countries”.

Gaffney notes,

Unfortunately, many of these Saudi-bankrolled institutions are in the United States. The Saudi Kingdom's investments have produced the base for radical, intolerant and violent Muslims – known as Islamists – to mount a Fifth Column threat from within the United States.

If all of the above is not sufficient to provide an understanding of the threat posed by Saudi Arabia to world peace, consider what appeared in an article in the online *Wall Street Journal* (January 2, 2004), by Gopalaswami Parthasarathy a visiting professor at the Centre for Policy Research in New Delhi, and former Indian ambassador to Pakistan concerning Pakistan's nuclear program. He wrote that former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto stated that his aim as Prime Minister of Pakistan had been “to put the ‘Islamic Civilization’ at par with the ‘Christian, Jewish and Hindu Civilizations’, by giving the Islamic world a ‘full nuclear capability’.” In a meeting of top scientists and advisers that he had convened on Jan. 20, 1972, just after assuming office, Bhutto made it clear that he was determined to achieve nuclear capability, not merely to neutralize India's inherent conventional superiority, but also to make his country a leader of the Islamic world.

But how was a cash-strapped Pakistan to get the financial resources to achieve these objectives? Bhutto's press adviser, Khalid Hasan, has since revealed how Bhutto sought and obtained financial assistance from Saudi Arabia and the mercurial Libyan leader Mu' ammar Gadhafi to fulfill his ambitions... While Iran and Libya have agreed to comprehensive IAEA inspections of their nuclear facilities under international pressure, there has been little or no attention paid to the nexus between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia on nuclear issues. Apart from the revelations of Khalid Hassan about Saudi funding of the Pakistan nuclear program, Mohammed al Khilawi, the senior Saudi diplomat who defected to the US in 1994, has also given details about how Riyadh bankrolled Pakistan and then Iraq to obtain nuclear weapons capabilities.

More recently, eyebrows were raised when the Saudi Defense Minister, Prince Sultan was provided unprecedented access to Pakistan's nuclear enrichment facilities in Kahuta in March 1999. During this visit, he invited Dr. A.Q. Khan, the “Father of the Islamic Bomb”, to visit Saudi Arabia. While Saudi Arabia

actively uses “charities” to promote *Wahhabi* extremism across the world, Pakistan has been the recipient of huge direct economic assistance from the desert kingdom. The Saudis have bailed out Islamabad over the past decade by supplying Pakistan with an estimated \$1.2 billion of oil products annually, virtually free of cost. Just after the visit of Dr. Khan to Saudi Arabia in November 1999, a Saudi nuclear expert, Dr. Al Arfaj, stated at a seminar that “Saudi Arabia must make plans aimed at making a quick response to face the possibilities of nuclear warfare agents being used against the Saudi population, cities or armed forces.” After the departure of American forces from its soil, how does Saudi Arabia propose to deal with such nuclear contingencies? The 2,700-kilometer range CSS-2 missiles that Saudi Arabia obtained from China in 1987 are useless if fitted only with conventional warheads. One cannot, therefore, avoid the inference that like the Pakistan-North Korean nukes for missiles deal, there is an “oil for nukes” deal between the Saudis and Pakistanis.

Washington’s response to these developments has been strange. When Mr. Al Khilawi made his revelations about Saudi nuclear ambitions in 1994, a senior official in the Clinton White House remarked: “Can you imagine what would happen if we discovered Saudi had a bomb? We would have to do something and nobody wants that. Best not to ask tough questions in the first place.”

Fact No. 6: The Virtual Security Fence

Recently, the construction of a security fence separating “little Israel” from the areas presently not under Israeli sovereignty (Judea, Samaria and Gaza) has become quite controversial, including attempts to bring the subject before an international tribunal in The Hague. The media and a significant number of politicians claim that such a fence will not be a border but instead will separate Israel from the Palestinian Arabs and significantly reduce the instances of terror. The Israeli government has already invested millions of dollars in the first stages of construction.

This is a dangerous illusion intended to provide the population with a feeling of security. The only justification for such a wall would be basing Israel’s security policy upon some kind of New Age therapy to make the public think that it is being protected against terrorism. The security fence solution to Israel’s problems with the hostile Palestinian Arabs is a perfect example of H.L. Mencken’s pithy remark, “There is always an easy solution to every human problem – neat, plausible, and wrong.”

The following paragraphs describe what is entailed in the simple term “security fence”.¹¹ I have elaborated on this topic because, in contrast with the other basic facts, it is of very recent origin and is not yet a stable part of the Middle East reality. It is in a state of change. There is no plethora of references that can be consulted as in the case of the other basic facts mentioned herein. The only serious analysis to date was accomplished by Moshe Leshem in April 2003, and it now appears that his pessimistic estimates of the cost and utility of the fence were conservative – the reality is worse than he estimated.

There is presently no agreement as to the length of fence required to provide security for the optimal number of persons. Estimates range from 320 to more than 700 kilometers. The following analysis is conservatively based on a length of 320 kilometers.

The basic cost of the fence (not including sophisticated and necessary supplementary items such as radars, TV cameras, infrared, UV and other sensors) would be approximately one million shekels per kilometer. Maintenance of the fence, including personnel and equipment, is estimated to be one billion shekels per year.

The fence itself is not sufficient to provide the proposed protection against terrorism. It will require sensing devices and warning systems, mined areas, patrol roads, and lookout towers. In the areas close to Jewish population centers, concrete walls will be required to prevent shooting by weapons of flat trajectories (rifles, machine guns, antitank missiles).¹² There will be no protection against high trajectory weaponry (mortars and rockets).¹³ Camps will have to be set up along the fence to provide lodging for manpower (soldiers, technicians) and storage of equipment required to maintain the fence and for daily military operations such

as patrolling, manning lookout towers, etc. Logistics and administrative personnel will be required to supply food, fuel, ammunition, health and sanitary services.

The fence will extend through the areas of three military command zones – north, central and southern. In order to ensure efficiency and unified control, the IDF will have to set up another military command – the security fence command – which will command and control all the activities and personnel associated with the fence. These include the IDF, Border Patrol, police and other security agencies as well as the ancillary civilian services.

The more sophisticated the fence is made, the higher the probability that terrorists will turn their attention to the Jewish communities outside the fence and will also attempt to overcome the difficulties presented by the fence by high trajectory weaponry. This means that the IDF will have to increase its presence outside the fence to prevent such activities. This will result in additional investment of funds and manpower. Colonel (ret.) Moshe Leshem estimates that a large part of the standing army and the reserves will be required just for the activities associated solely with the fence. The ongoing cost of the fence will be astronomical.

In addition to cost in manpower and financial resources, there are other, more subtle but very real, aspects that have not been considered by proponents of the fence – the rules of operation and their implications. For example, what will be the open-fire orders that ensure preventing terrorists from crossing the fence but not result in killing innocent Arabs trying to sneak into Israel to search for employment? Will the government information systems know how to deal with and explain photographs of innocent people riddled with bullets because they tried to sneak across the fence. And if the orders require the defense forces to wait until they are sure that those who cross the fence are not terrorists, what will be the cost in Israeli lives because of those critical moments of hesitation when the response should be trained and almost automatic?¹⁴

Further, the Jewish communities outside the fence will, for all practical purposes, be in “enemy territory”. Roads will be unsafe and the communities will require reinforced defenses. Just going to work, school, and shopping and returning safely will become a semi-military operation requiring moving in convoys, often with military support. At present, most communities have a security arrangement that includes a voluntary rapid response team to handle emergencies until the IDF arrives. These will have to be increased and better equipped. The burden on the regular army and reserves, together with those required by the fence and normal operational and training needs of the army will turn Israel into a virtual Sparta.

Bitter experience has shown that the real and psychological burdens imposed by the security fence will embolden the radical left organizations in Israel, supported by the European Union and other anti-Israel and anti-Semitic sources, to pressure and frighten the government into taking impulsive steps (such as hastily retreating from Lebanon with the consequence that the northern border is under continuous threat from *Hizbullah*), and lobby and demonstrate for abandonment of the communities outside the fence and transfer of Jews from their homes.

It is also of interest to take note of another, perhaps curious, result of analysis of the security fence concept. Analysts from the Rand Corporation were asked to rate the top ten under-attended international problems in the world today. Topping the list was Israel’s security fence, which, according to the Rand experts

will profoundly change the geographical and political landscape of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The wall could also deepen Palestinian rage and enmity, of course, prompting escalated mortar and ground-to-ground missile attacks against targets inside Israel. The wall could also prompt further attacks on Israelis overseas, like the suicide bombing last November of a Mombasa hotel filled with Israeli tourists and the accompanying attempt to shoot down an Israeli chartered plane.¹⁵

Thus, the Rand Corporation think-tank analysts are predicting that the fence itself will provoke more attacks. I put this on the record here for completeness although I am not sure that it makes sense; in a worst-case scenario it must be assumed that it is conceivable. That the experts believe the security wall would intensify

Arab desire and motivation to destroy Israel and kill Jews beyond the present level impresses me as an indication of the expert's ignorance of the Middle East and the Arab attitude toward Jews.

In addition to all of the above, the proposed security fence will retain close to a million increasingly hostile Arabs within Israel together with their radical leadership who, although Israeli citizens, identify actively or passively with the enemies of the Jewish state.

Thus, the security fence – now being hastily built by the government – could be one of the most potentially destructive enterprises undertaken by the state. The collapse of the much vaunted and expensive Bar Lev Line at the Suez Canal in the first hours of the Yom Kippur War is the perfect example of the substitution of wishful thinking and public relations for long term strategic planning.

Fact No. 7: The False Conflict

The Jewish-Arab conflict is perceived by the international community (not including the anti-Semites who need no particular excuse for their anti-Israel position) as “a conflict of two people over one land” that can be resolved by the creation of a Palestinian state. According to this view, since Jews and Arabs both lay claim to the same territory of Israel-Palestine, some division of the territory between will bring about a peaceful resolution. Unfortunately, the Arab war against Israel is no more a territorial conflict than was *al-Qa'idah's* strike against America.

The British government that was granted a mandate from the League of Nations to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine, was the first to delude itself into thinking that there was a territorial conflict between the Arabs and Jews. The British government misjudged not merely the depth but also the nature of Arab opposition.¹⁶ In the aftermath of World War I, the Middle East was partitioned according to the wishes of the victorious allies (primarily France and Great Britain). Churchill, the Colonial Secretary, and his colleagues, who were responsible for the Mandate and for British policy in the Middle East, treated the land issue as if it were valid rather than the fraud that it was. The Arab opposition to Jewish settlement had nothing to do with land; indeed, the Palestinian Arab leadership was deeply implicated in land sales that they publicly denounced. At least a quarter of the elected leadership of the Arab Palestinian community sold land to Jewish settlers between 1920 and 1928. In the early 1920s the Arabs offered so much land to Jews that the only limiting factor on purchases was money; the Jewish settlers did not have enough money to buy all the land that the Arabs offered to them. In truth, the Arab opposition to Jewish settlement was rooted in emotion, xenophobia, and particularly religion

There was violent and bloody Arab opposition to Jewish settlement throughout the period of the Mandate (1921-1948) before Israel was established (1948) and before Judea, Samaria and Gaza fell under Israeli jurisdiction (1967). In 1947 when Jewish leaders accepted and Arab rulers rejected the UN partition plan of Palestine, the Arab-Israeli conflict bore no likeness whatsoever to more conventional territorial struggles. Arab rulers defy the UN charter by denying the legitimacy of a member state. Arab countries refuse to acknowledge the existence of a single Jewish land. Arab rulers did not object to Israel because it rendered the Palestinians homeless. Rather, they ensured that the Palestinians should remain homeless so that they could organize their politics around opposition to Israel.

At any point since the creation of Israel, the Arab governments, that were primarily responsible for the creation of Palestinian Arab refugees, could have helped the Palestinian Arabs settle down to a decent life. They could have created the infrastructure of an autonomous Palestine state in Judea and Samaria, which were controlled by Jordan, and the Gaza territory that Egypt controlled until 1967, or encouraged the resettlement of Palestinians in Jordan, which constitutes the lion's share of the original mandate of Palestine. Rather than fund the Palestine Liberation Organization to foment terror against Israel, they could have endowed Palestinian schools of architecture, engineering, medicine and law. What Israel did for its refugees from Arab lands, Arabs could have done much more sumptuously for the Palestinians displaced by the same

conflict. Instead, Arab rulers cultivated generations of refugees in order to justify their ongoing campaign against Israel.

Ruth Wisse noted that the anti-Israel posturing of the Arab nations has served an additional political purpose. The autocrats who govern Arab societies have used the “Zionist entity” to deflect attention from the worst aspects of their rule. The unwanted presence of the Jews became the rallying point for internal dissatisfaction with the mounting problems of Arab regimes. The drumbeat against Israel invited the world to debate the iniquities of the Jews rather than question the legitimacy of the attacks against them. Without question, Arab rulers successfully deflected attention from their offenses by their decades of war and propaganda against Israel. Even the liberal Western media that might have been expected to support a besieged fellow democracy have long since focused on alleged Israeli abuses instead of on the abuses of their Arab accusers.¹⁷

Dividing the Holy Land into two states, Israel and Palestine, would be the perfect solution to a territorial problem. Unfortunately, the Arab opposition to Israel has no relation to territory. It has to do with the existence of Jewish sovereignty, something that the Arabs cannot accept under any circumstances.

Fact No. 8: Legitimacy of Jewish Settlement

Two items that have become part of the conventional wisdom are that Jewish settlement in the heart of the Holy Land is illegal and that the Jews are occupiers in Palestinian Arab Land. The purveyors of these items have followed the advice of Joseph Goebbels, Hitler’s Minister of Propaganda, who developed the concept that if a lie is big enough and repeated often enough, it will be accepted as true.

The real facts and their implications can be deduced from the terms of the British Mandate for Palestine which was granted by the League of Nations in 1922, and an analysis by Professor Eugene V. Rostow.

The purpose of the Mandate was to secure the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine, “it being clearly understood that nothing should be done which might prejudice the civil or religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.”¹⁸ The omission of the word “political” from the list of the rights of the non-Jewish communities in Palestine to be protected during the period of creating the Jewish National Home was not accidental. The Palestine Mandate was intended to fulfill a policy of self-determination for the Jewish people, while the Arabs of the Ottoman Empire were given many states for development of self-rule.

Under the Palestine Mandate, “the Jewish people” have the right to make “close settlements” in those areas – a right later protected by Article 80 of the United Nations Charter, which provides that until trusteeship agreements are concluded for certain territories, nothing in the Charter shall be construed “to alter in any manner whatsoever the rights of any states or any peoples or the terms of international instruments to which members may be parties”.¹⁹

The Palestine Mandate provided that, if circumstances made it necessary, the Mandatory Power could “postpone” or “withhold” the Jewish right of settlement in what is now the *Hashemite* Kingdom of Jordan – that is, the part of Mandatory Palestine east of the Jordan River. This was done in 1922; the Mandate authorized no other interference with the Jewish right of settlement. In short, the entire area of Palestine west of the Jordan River was reserved by the Mandate for Jewish settlement. While the Mandate ceased to be applicable in Israel and Jordan when these two countries were formed and recognized, the areas of Judea, Samaria, Gaza and East Jerusalem have not been generally recognized as parts of either country, and therefore remain subject to the Mandate, notwithstanding the passage of time. Great Britain gave up its trusteeship voluntarily in 1948. In 1947, the United Nations General Assembly had recommended that the Security Council terminate the British administration of the Mandate and implement a plan for partition for Palestine west of the Jordan River. The Security Council never acted on that recommendation because the first Arab war broke out against Israel and the Security Council concentrated on ending the war.

What the Arab argument boils down to is the proposition that a claim to self-determination is universal and transcendent; whenever a group of people makes that claim with respect to any parcel of territory, they must immediately be granted sovereignty. The UN Charter makes no such assertion, nor does customary international law. The claims of, for example, the Basques of Spain, Kurds of Iraq, and French of Canada are not recognized. And the Jewish right of settlement has not been abrogated.

One could draw further conclusions that experts in international law could quarrel about. For example, it can be argued that the State of Israel is not a “Jewish National Home”. Rather, it is a secular, bi-national state, which prides itself upon being a pluralistic society, the goal of which is the preservation of its democratic regime.²⁰ All communities in Israel have equal political rights in contra-distinction to the goals of the Mandate. Further, since Judea, Samaria and Gaza are unresolved Mandatory territory, Israel does not have the right to determine who is to gain sovereignty in that area and, conversely, any group which claims to represent that entity known as the Jewish people has the right to claim sovereignty. And Article 80 of the UN Charter would prevent Israel from interfering with Jewish settlement in those areas. Under the Mandate, which is still in effect in these areas, it would not merely be legitimate for a Jewish National Home to be established therein, it is “mandated” that such a home be established therein.

Fact No. 9: Semantic Infiltration, the Refugee Problem, and Palestinian Identity

Senator Patrick Moynihan defined the term “semantic infiltration”. Semantic infiltration is the repetitive use of specific words to establish mind-sets. In the case of the Arab-Israel conflict there are several primary terms, one of which is “refugees” to refer only to the approximately 450,000 Arabs who left willingly or were forced out of the territory that became Israel in 1948-49. Some were encouraged by Arab leadership to leave temporarily to make way for the invading armies of the Arab states; others fled in fear; still others were forced to leave under the kinds of conditions that happen in war. This definition of “refugees” ignores the 800,000 Jews who left Arab countries voluntarily or under coercion at the same time and were resettled in Israel. What happened, in fact, was a population exchange in which one side welcomed its brothers and integrated them into the new state. The other party chose to keep its brethren in abominable conditions for two generations in order to use them as a political tool against Israel. They were quite successful with this ploy. Of the millions of refugees that have appeared on the international scene since the end of World War II, the Arabs of the former British Mandate are the longest festering sore on the conscience of the world – and their suffering has been cynically extended by Arab leadership. The perpetuation of the Arab refugee problem by the Arab states has the same central purpose as its creation: to bring about the destruction of the State of Israel.

To provide perspective, consider: since the Second World War, there have been more than 40 million refugees in the world. The vast majority was either driven physically from their homes or fled under the immediate threat of physical danger or political oppression. Immediately after the war, some 12 million Germans were driven into Germany from Poland, Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union, Hungary, and Romania. They left all their property behind. This was done with the approval of the powers participating in the Potsdam Conference – the Soviet Union, Great Britain and the United States. In 1947, India was partitioned and 14 million people became refugees within a few months. Also in 1947, Finland was compelled to give up almost one-eighth of her territory and at the same time receive nearly half a million Finnish refugees expelled by the Soviet Union. In 1950, Bulgaria expelled 150,000 Turks with whom they had fought a war two generations earlier.

Tens of millions of refugees were absorbed by their own people, speaking the same language, with basically similar cultural backgrounds. Some were absorbed by foreign countries which owed them nothing except common humanity. A minority – rather more than a million – was settled in a variety of countries through the efforts of the International Refugee Organization.

The Arab nations, with their vast territories and resources, could have readily absorbed the approximately 450,000 Arabs who left Israeli territory in Palestine. In fact, the vast majority of the original refugees were absorbed. The oil-rich state of Kuwait initially took in large numbers of Palestinian Arabs but 40 years later expelled them when they sided with Iraq in the war in 1991. Some 400,000 Arabs left Judea and Samaria (which were controlled by Jordan from 1948 to 1967) voluntarily, primarily to the Persian Gulf states, without aid, to better themselves. However, the remainder of the original refugees were kept in camps supervised by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). The original number of refugees was distorted by the fact that the United Nations had defined an Arab refugee as any person who had been in Palestine for *only two years* before 1948. In other parts of the world, the more or less universally used description of eligibility to be considered a refugee included those people forced to leave a “permanent” or “habitual” home.²¹ The number of Arab refugees further ballooned by births, failure to report deaths and the addition of non-refugees who came to benefit from the handouts, food, medical supplies, and shelter. These camps, in Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, and the Gaza area, became, under UN supervision, fertile grounds for educating generations in hate of Israel, and breeding grounds for terrorism – paid for and sponsored by the United Nations.

And most egregiously, the refugee camps were the incubator in which the child known as the “Palestinian People” was nourished and developed. Had there been a Palestinian Arab nation or people it would have been mentioned in the treaties, news reports and other documentation concerning Palestine and the Middle East. However, major instruments such as the Balfour Declaration, the League of Nations Mandate for Palestine, the United Nations resolutions concerning Palestine and others, are completely devoid of this term.

In truth, for hundreds of years, the population of Palestine was a mixed group that came from many sources. The full details of the population history can be found in *From Time Immemorial* by Joan Peters (particularly Chapter 6). Peters shows that the concept of an Arab-Palestinian people is a myth and that, contrary to conventional wisdom, Jews did not displace Arabs here – but rather the opposite. The book states (p. 168-9):

The peoples who roamed the country in the 19th century were not... indigenous to the land. They did not stay on the land. Of the sparse population who were later counted as “original” settled “Arabs” in the 19th century when the arriving Jewish immigrants united with the native Palestinian Jewish population, many were in fact imported Muslim peoples from Turkey and other lands. [They were brought by] the Turks, in many cases, to protect against the wandering Bedouin tribes...

Kurds, Turcomans, Na'im, and other colonists arrived in Palestine around the same time as the Jewish immigration wave began. 18,000 “tents” of Tartars, the “armies of Turks and Kurds”, whole villages settled in the 19th century of Bosnians and Moors and “Circassians” and “Algerians” and Egyptians, etc. – all were continually brought in to people the land called Palestine.

The concept of a Palestinian peoplehood is an invention of the Arab world to match the Jewish history by inventing an identity for the Palestinian Arabs that would counter Zionism. Thus has been largely accomplished the cynical rewriting of history, which in turn can only result in a perversion of justice.²²

A few additional observations by experts and observers on the topic of the population of Palestine and the existence of a Palestinian nation include the following:

From the end of the Jewish state in antiquity to the beginning of British rule, the area now designated by the name Palestine was not a country and had no frontiers, only administrative boundaries.²³

There is no such thing as Palestine in history, absolutely not.²⁴

It is common knowledge that Palestine is nothing but southern Syria.²⁵

An unbiased observer should ask the following questions:

- If there was a Palestine state through most of recorded history, then when was it founded and by whom?
- What were its borders?

- What was its capital?
- What were its major cities?
- What constituted the basis of its economy?
- What was its form of government?
- Can you name at least one Palestinian leader before Arafat?
- Was a sovereign Palestine ever recognized by a country whose existence, at that time or now, leaves no room for interpretation?
- What was the language of the country of Palestine?
- What was the prevalent religion of the country of Palestine?
- What was the name of its currency?
- Choose any date in history and tell us what was the approximate exchange rate of the Palestinian monetary unit against the US dollar, German mark, British pound, Japanese yen, or Chinese yuan on that date.
- And, finally, since there is no such country today, what caused its demise, and when did it occur?

And here is the least sarcastic question of all: If the people mistakenly known as “Palestinians” are anything but generic Arabs collected from all over – or thrown out of – the Arab world, if they really have a genuine ethnic identity that gives them right for self-determination, why did they never try to become independent until Arabs suffered their devastating defeat in the Six Day War?

Despite the above, it has to be admitted that the hoax of Palestinian peoplehood has become a reality. The world has accepted the existence of a Palestinian people for a variety of reasons, including but more serious than semantic infiltration, which are beyond the scope of this article.²⁶ And the indoctrination of the Arabs in the refugee camps and in the rest of the Arab world has resulted in their internalization of this self-identity.

Thus, for all practical purposes, there is today a Palestinian people. The primary characteristic and goal of this newly established identity is the destruction of the Jewish state, an objective defined by the Charter of the Palestine Liberation Organization, conceived in 1964, updated in 1967 and presently in effect.

And this newly born Palestinian people has a congenital problem that reinforces its primary goal: it came into being as a loser. And in the Arab world, where honor is a prime factor in determining behavior, the Palestinian people cannot come to terms with its loss other than by erasing it through defeat and destruction of the enemy – Israel – that caused its failure. This need to restore honor is reinforced and symbolized annually on May 15 by *Naqba Day*, the commemoration of the “tragedy” of the creation of Israel. From the perspective of the Palestinians, there can be no peace until this tragedy is compensated for.

And who were the other refugees created by the Arab-Israel conflict – refugees that no one speaks of?

Of more than 850,000 Jews in Arab lands before the establishment of Israel in 1948, it is presently estimated that there are fewer than 20,000. Most of the Arab states have been rendered virtually free of Jews – what Hitler called *Judenrein*. In Saudi Arabia, Jews are not only prohibited from living (as in Jordan) but they are also banned from entering. In Iraq in 1948, as in Germany in the 1930s, Jews, whose roots in that region go back more than 1,500 years before Islam, were ousted from government service and deprived of licenses as doctors. The universities were cleansed of Jewish students, severe restrictions were imposed on Jewish merchants and banks and Zionism was made a crime punishable by hanging. In March 1950, the government enabled Jews to leave provided they renounced Iraqi citizenship. Emigrants were allowed to take only a small amount of cash; their property which was left behind, was legally confiscated by the government in 1951. (Interestingly, now that the United States has occupied Iraq, there may be a possibility for those who left Iraq virtually penniless to recover some of their losses.) The situation was quite similar in Egypt,

including indiscriminate street arrests, imprisonment and a general reign of terror. Arbitrary confiscation of property was legalized and emigration was encouraged.

Thus, in varying degrees of harshness, some 850,000 Jews were arbitrarily driven or forced out from the Arab countries – Iraq, Egypt, Syria, Algeria, Morocco and Yemen. Their number is about double that of the Arabs who left their homes in Palestine in 1948. Some 700,000 were brought to Israel and absorbed into the country. Almost all came with nothing. Their property, which certainly far exceeded the abandoned property of Arabs in Israel, simply enriched the states which had driven them out.

Neill Lochery, director of the Centre for Israeli Studies, Hebrew and Jewish Studies at University College, London wrote, “The Israeli government has taken the first steps toward making a compensation claim against Iraq for the 123,000 Iraqi Jews who were expelled from that country following the creation of Israel in 1948.”²⁷

This, however, is just the tip of the iceberg, as between 1948 and 1960 some half a million Jews were forced to leave Arab and North African countries to come to Israel. Today the legal questions that surround these Jewish refugees have become central to the success of the road map and the wider Middle East negotiations... the Jewish refugees are often referred to as “the forgotten refugees”.

Collectively they are known as the Orientals – or by their Hebrew name, *Mizrahim*. Their arrival placed a massive strain on an Israel that was already experiencing severe economic difficulties, with many of the Orientals being initially housed in tents and transit camps away from established population centers. Soon many of these camps assumed the permanence of small or medium-sized towns known as development towns (some 33 were established between 1948-1957, mainly in the Galilee and Negev). The rest of the immigrants were absorbed into around 300 agricultural communities established between 1948-1954.

Israel’s reaction to the Orientals, while by no means perfect – there was initial widespread discrimination against this group from established Israelis – compared favorably with the reaction of Arab governments toward the Palestinians who sought refuge in their countries. Here the central aim of Arab regimes has been to stop the transit camps in which the Palestinians arrived from taking on the appearance of permanent towns. In this respect, most of the camps were not allowed to develop the infrastructure needed for even the most basic comforts such as sewage systems and secure housing.

Arab leaders argued that any sign of permanence would diminish the Palestinians’ claim to the “right of return” – to their original homes in Israel. Privately, the same leaders confessed, and still do today, that any attempt to formally incorporate the 1948 refugees into Arab states would lead to political and social instability.

For the past 50-plus years the Palestinians have been living in disgraceful conditions as the result of the Arab leadership’s use of them as political pawns with the aim of securing international sympathy for the Palestinian cause and condemnation of Israel, which – in their eyes – caused the tragedy...[the Jews] were expelled by order from Arab lands. The rationale that Arab leaders used for the effective expulsion: The Jews were removed in retaliation for the Palestinian exodus from Israel. Recent research on the plight of Iraqi Jews has revealed this to be rubbish. Even prior to the Palestinians exodus, plans were being shaped to remove the Jews. The current Arab leadership is, unsurprisingly, extremely sensitive about these charges. One of the shrewdest politicians in the Arab world today, Farouk Shara, the Syrian Foreign Minister, addressed this charge directly at the United Nations in 1991, stating that Jews living in Muslim lands had never experienced any discrimination.

What the current Arab leadership fears is documents coming to light in liberated Iraq that will provide enough hard evidence for Israeli and American lawyers to build a compelling case for compensation for the Jewish refugees. Sadly, it’s highly probable that other Arab regimes are busy shredding all remaining evidence of wrongdoing.

Unlike their Palestinian counterparts, the Jewish refugees do not seek the right of return to their country of origin. After much initial hardship, the Oriental Jews have come to play a full and exciting role in making Israel the great melting pot it is today.

What the Jewish refugees desire is recognition of their plight from the world – and compensation for what they were forced to give up such as homes and businesses.

As for the Palestinians, they should start proceedings against the Arab states that have hosted their refugees in appalling conditions for the past 55 years.

To sum up: if there is a refugee problem in the Middle East, it is not one-sided. Twice as many Jews were driven from Arab lands than left what is now Israel. The difference is that the Jews took in their brethren while the Arabs kept their kinsmen in deplorable conditions for four generations for political reasons – to use against the Jewish state. As King Hussein of Jordan said in 1960, “Since 1948, Arab leaders have approached the Palestinian problem in an irresponsible manner... They have used the Palestinian people for selfish political purposes. This is ridiculous and, I could say, even criminal.”

Fact No. 10: The Demographic Problem West of the Jordan River

There is a very serious demographic problem that threatens the very existence of the State of Israel. The gap between the growth rates of the Arab and Jewish communities is increasing to the detriment of the Jews. Since, at the moment, there are no longer large Jewish populations in the Diaspora that are potential sources of immigration, the gap in growth between Jews and Arabs will continue to increase and the Jews will eventually lose their majority status. The reservoirs of large Jewish populations are the United States, several South American countries, the English-speaking countries and France. For the foreseeable future there will be no large-scale immigration from these countries. And the solution to the demographic problem cannot be found in the limited area between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River.

The natural increase of the Arab population within the State of Israel is approximately twice that of the Jewish population.²⁸ Since 1948, the Arab population has increased eight-fold and so has the Jewish population. But the numbers are deceiving. Of the approximately six million Jews in Israel today, three million are immigrants or offspring of immigrants. The 650 thousand Jews of Israel in 1948 have increased only 3.5 times compared to the Arabs of 1948 who have increased, as noted, eight-fold.

Today, 1.2 million Arabs live in Israel, 20% of the population. Approximately half of them are below the voting age of 18. In the present school year, 30% of the students who began first grade are Arabs. When they finish their education in 2015, one third of the new voters will be Arabs. In that year, more than 40% of Israelis below voting age will be Arabs. This trend will continue. Additionally, if one includes the Arab populations of Judea, Samaria and Gaza, the Arabs will be the majority west of the Jordan River in 2010 – that is, seven years from now.

Further, the Arabs in Judea and Samaria have five children per family compared to four children per family among Israeli Arabs. Jewish families have 2.13 children; this is mostly because of the religious sector (“*charedim*” and religious Zionists). In Gaza, according to the statistics of the United Nations and the World Bank, the average family has seven children and this population doubles itself every 15-17 years. This means that if today there are 1.5 million Arabs in Gaza, there will be three million in 2017, and more than four million in 2025. This is a ticking bomb. And this bomb will not necessarily explode in a war – even natural calamities like an outbreak of disease or hunger will cause an explosion. And what will Israel do then – will the IDF fire on those Arabs trying to enter Israel to escape these natural calamities? Certainly not. Perhaps the Egyptians will, as they did in Rafiah (in the Gaza region), when the Strip was divided between Israel and Egypt and Arabs rioted when they found themselves separated from their families. But that is not the way Jews react. And the Arabs of Gaza know this. They know that Egypt used poison gas against fellow Arabs in Yemen in the 1960s and Iraqis used the same methods against the Kurds (fellow Muslims). In addition, the

Israeli Office of Statistics reports that the Bedouins in Israel's Negev double their population every 12 years and are rapidly exploiting the remaining available land.

Israel missed opportunities to begin to resolve the demographic problem when it signed the only two peace agreements that it has with its Arab neighbors – Egypt and Jordan. For example, Egypt has an area of approximately one million square kilometers, 46 times larger than Palestine west of the Jordan River and 220 times larger than the area of Judea and Samaria. Most of Egypt is uninhabited and the overwhelming bulk of its population, 70 million people, lives along the Nile River. The Sinai is practically empty. Northern Sinai is fertile and contains a large amount of water resources particularly in the area of El Arish, which borders the Gaza region. When Israel signed a peace agreement with Egypt, it missed an opportunity to solve the Gaza population problem by not insisting that the Arabs of Gaza – brothers to the Egyptians in language, religion and culture – be resettled in Northern Sinai. The other major land reserves bordering on Israel are in Jordan. Here again, Israel signed a peace agreement without negotiating conditions that would have initiated a solution to the very serious problem that it is facing.

To sum up: without the neighboring Arab nations contributing land resources to resolve the Arab population growth west of the Jordan River, the future of Israel as the Jewish state is in doubt. Two opportunities to introduce the concept of a regional solution were missed by Israeli shortsightedness. But only a regional solution will solve this problem to the benefit of the both Arabs and Jews, eliminate at least one of the major causes of turmoil in the Middle East, and assist the West in resolving its conflict with Muslim civilization.

Fact No. 11: The Middle East Arms Race

There are those who believe that if there were a worldwide ban on arms sales to the Middle East, there would be no more radical Arab dictators with modern arms. If the foreigners stopped selling advanced weaponry to nations of the Middle East, the conflict would end.

As no Arab country has a military industry, all weapons in the region are imported or crude copies of arms developed elsewhere. If the Western nations were truly interested in bringing peace to the Middle East, they would have placed a moratorium on sales of arms and weapons technology to the region decades ago. Instead, they sell tens of billions worth of military hardware every year to the unstable regimes of the region. So the entities that are sending special envoys to “help the two sides make peace” are at the same time the main providers of weapons to the region. Somehow, this contradiction is never exposed.

Further, although modern conventional arms are purchased from foreign suppliers, the relatively simple weaponry that is readily produced in the Middle East can have strategic use and implications. A simple missile, rudimentary on modern standards, armed with a chemical or biological warhead (that can be produced at negligible cost), fired from a Middle Eastern country into a European city, can change the course of history. It is estimated that there may be hundreds of such missiles deployed or readily deployed in the Middle East.

In 2002, Arab governments in the Middle East spent \$52 billion on their military forces, of which \$18 billion was for purchases from foreign countries. In realistic numbers, Arab countries devote 30% of their national incomes to defense (23% of all government expenditures).²⁹ In the past decade, Saudi Arabia alone has spent over \$100 billion on weapons. According to the Federation of American Scientists, in the decade after the Gulf War (1991-2001) the US sold more than \$43 billion worth of weapons, equipment and military construction projects to Saudi Arabia, and \$16 billion more to Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates. Saudi Arabia alone imports about \$15 billion worth of weapons each year. Instead of using this wealth for building an economic infrastructure throughout the region, it is wasted on arms. The rest of the oil revenues (after basic government expenditures are met) are deposited in Western banks as the private property of the corrupted Arab leaders. This benefits both the Arab leaders and the large western banking interests.

The probability of ending the arms race is very low for a number of reasons that are not the subject of this article. Suffice it to say that there may be alternatives to the arms race that will enable the military organizations, arms manufacturers, financial and banking interests, and governments to satisfy their needs to the point where they will not oppose these alternative solutions. And even if a moratorium were placed today on arms sales to the Middle East, the already in-place “simple” weapons represent a serious threat to international stability.

Fact No. 12: The United States and the New Middle East

At the time of the first American war with Iraq in 1991 (“Desert Storm”) and at the signing of the tragic Oslo Agreement in 1993, there were those who used terms like “New World Order” and “New Middle East” to describe the ambitions of those who initiated these actions. Nothing of the sort came about. On the contrary, in both cases the “new” looked very much like or perhaps worse than the “old”.

However, since 9/11, the United States has invested men, materiel and prestige in attacking Afghanistan and Iraq in an attempt to bring about major international changes, particularly in the Muslim world and the Middle East. Despite the demonstrations and accusations issuing forth from Europe, the Third World countries and the Arab world, there is ample evidence to support the belief that the United States is undertaking actions in Asia, the Middle East and perhaps in Africa, not for imperialistic reasons but to replace regimes that threaten the world and to send a signal to potential terrorists and their supporters that the free world is not passive.

So far, under the present American administration these efforts have not been given any grandiose name and it is still too early to evaluate the results. It is also too soon to determine whether the United States will retain its resolve to continue these efforts.

At present, there are marked indications that the United States intends to remake the world in a way that will correct the errors caused by the refashioning of the Middle East after World War I. At that time, the Western powers created an artificial Middle East that is a root cause of many of today’s problems. During the 20th century, the tragedies and the deaths of millions caused by the results of the Versailles Treaty and the failure of world government such as the League of Nations and the United Nations captured the world’s attention. The League of Nations, the abortive child of the World War I peace efforts, was unable to stop Italian and German fascism and Japanese imperialism. These were defeated in war, and the threat of Communism that arose to take their place as a threat to freedom collapsed, after much bloodshed and sorrow, in a whimper. The United Nations, the child of the Second World War, has proven to be more feckless than the League of Nations. Perhaps this is due to the fact that the League of Nations, although ineffective and doomed from the start, was made up of real nations. Many of the states in the United Nations could not be defined as nations other than in the formal sense. By the last decade of the 20th century the “isms” that had plagued the world for 80 years were gone. Their absence has uncovered a new and potentially more dangerous threat – militant Islam combined with terror.

Almost a century later, the United States is in a position and perhaps has the will to undo the tragic mistakes that made the 20th century the bloodiest in history. General Michel Aoun, speaking at the *Institut d’Etudes Politiques* in Paris, on June 5, 2003, about America’s resolve to fight terrorism said,

...some skeptics will doubt this radical American transformation, or in the least, underestimate it because they still do not understand its magnitude or its sincerity, and remain driven to this position by a long history of American policies that are high on principle but poor on real frontline achievements. In effect, for a long time the Americans practiced an often-absurd policy of complacency, tolerating not only dictatorial regimes but also the most fundamentalist of regimes, as long as they served their economic or political interests. The support they provided the *Mujahedeen* in Afghanistan – the future *Taliban* and Osama bin Laden – in their fight against the Soviet Union is one such telltale example of the absurdity of this policy. However, this policy, which was

tolerated in both its direct and collateral losses was contracted out, i.e. it was limited to third-party victims even when these were US allies or plain innocent peoples, could no longer be acceptable when its consequences and primary targets became the United States itself, in its people and its land. The direct attack, of which the American superpower was the victim and by its very nature trespassed over all conventions of war and resistance, left the United States with no choice but total and global war against terrorism.

Fact No. 13: Definition of the Holy Land

At the Aqaba summit meeting in early 2003, which was essentially another in the long series of photo opportunities that mark diplomacy in the Middle East, President Bush announced that the Holy Land must be divided between two peoples – the Palestinians and the Israelis. Most of the world currently advocates a two-state solution.

This is not the place to discuss the definitions of these “two peoples” since the background of the “Palestinians”, as noted above, is questionable and the “Israelis” include Arab citizens who define themselves as Palestinians. And, as the Jewish state, Israel is really only a part of the Jewish people who live dispersed all over the world – the corporate headquarters, as it were.³⁰

What is relevant to this discussion is the definition of the “Holy Land”. Finding a working definition is somewhat awkward because of the changes over the years. Under the Turks, the general area west of the Jordan River that now includes Israel, Judea, Samaria and part of Lebanon, was ruled from Damascus and was generally known as southern Syria. The Palestinians have no designation since they have neither historical background nor tradition that enables defining a land associated with them. The Jewish definition of the Holy Land is a *halachic* one and delineates those areas in which certain laws are applicable. Within the Jewish definition, there are various schools of thought, since the Jewish kingdoms and various regimes included areas that were both extremely limited as well as extremely broad – in some cases reaching as far north and west as the Euphrates River. *Halachic* definitions would, in any event, not be acceptable by anyone for practical purposes.

Consequently, the only reasonable and acceptable working definition of the Holy Land is the most recent one – that associated with the Balfour Declaration, the League of Nations and the United Nations. This includes both sides of the Jordan River and stretches from the Mediterranean Sea to the border of Iraq. In other words, the area that now includes the State of Israel and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Thus, President Bush’s comment about sharing the Holy Land has already occurred. There is Jewish sovereignty on the smaller section (the approximately 25% west of the Jordan River) and Arab sovereignty on the remaining and larger section.

At the moment, the Arab portion is an area where a Bedouin king of the *Hashemite* family from Arabia rules over a population composed of an overwhelming majority (80%) of Palestinian Arabs.

Indeed, Rabbi Benny Elon, the Minister of Tourism in the Sharon government, is lobbying in the United States for a solution that he calls “logical, humane and viable”. Elon has formulated a plan that he believes will represent a viable alternative to the establishment of another Palestinian state west of the Jordan.

Elon argues that the only force strong enough to enable his solution to be implemented is America. And the only way to influence America is through grassroots support in the US public. The success of his solution depends on it being taken seriously in the Congress and the Senate; if it is considered feasible in the American legislature, it will not be ignored by the Arab states, particularly those which depend upon American support and largesse, primarily Egypt and Jordan. Elon feels that a two-state solution that involves the establishment of a Palestinian state west of the Jordan River is an idea that flies in the face of Bush’s religious beliefs as a Christian and against the national security interest of the US to achieve stability in the Middle East.

In Elon's words,

My plan is based on the understanding that a Palestinian state west of the Jordan River is a failed proposition. Such a state will have no economic viability. It will have no territorial contiguity. It will be a destabilizing force that will immediately work to undermine Israel and Jordan by force and political subversion. And it will have international legitimacy in the UN to do so. Until 1988, both Jordan and every Israeli government understood this.

My plan is based on a regional solution that recognizes the fact that Jordan is Palestine. The only way to solve the problem with the Palestinians is to reduce it to a border dispute between two already existing states – Israel and Jordan. If we can reconceptualize the way we view the problem then we can solve it. It moves from an existential conflict to a territorial border dispute like Alsace-Lorraine.³¹

Elon's plan includes the following points:

1. Immediate dissolution of the Palestinian Authority, a non-viable entity whose existence precludes the termination of the conflict.
2. Israel will uproot the Palestinian terror infrastructure. All arms will be collected, incitement will be stopped and all the refugee camps, which serve as incubators for terror, will be dismantled. Terrorists and their direct supporters will be deported.
3. Israel, the US and the international community will recognize the Kingdom of Jordan as the only legitimate representative of the Palestinians. Jordan will once again recognize itself as the Palestinian nation-state.
4. In the context of a regional development program, Israel, the US and the international community will put forth a concerted effort for the long-term development of Jordan, to rehabilitate its economy and enable it to absorb a limited number of refugees within its borders.
5. Israeli sovereignty will be asserted over Judea, Samaria and Gaza. The Arab residents of these areas will become citizens of the Palestinian state in Jordan. The status of these citizens, their connection to the two states and the manner of administration of their communal lives will be decided in an agreement between the governments of Israel and Jordan (Palestine).
6. Israel, the US and the international community will allocate resources for the completion of the exchange of populations that began in 1948, as well as the full rehabilitation of the refugees and their absorption and naturalization in various countries.
7. After implementation of the above stages, Israel and Jordan (Palestine) will declare the conflict terminated. Both sides will work to normalize peaceful relations between all parties in the region.

The merits and shortcomings of Elon's plan are not the subject of this essay other than to note that the normalization of relations between Israel and any or all of the Arab states is something that can neither be dictated nor declared. It is the result of years of education and support by the Arab governments and media. Israel has peace treaties with both Jordan and Egypt but her attempts at normalization have not been reciprocated. The best that can be expected is formal relations that may some day be followed by normal relations. Thus, Item 7 in Elon's plan is not achievable in the immediate future but should be considered a long-term goal. That is still an achievement and a major step toward eventual real peace.

Conclusion

As noted in the Introduction, the purpose of this article is to provide a realistic framework for understanding the Arab-Israel conflict. The 13 basic facts described above present, to the best of this writer's knowledge, an accurate picture of the regional character of the encounter between Israel and its neighbors. Any solution

proposed for resolution of this struggle that does not take into account the reality depicted above is doomed to failure.

Endnotes

- ¹ Bernard Lewis, *The Middle East – A Brief History of the Last 2,000 Years*, Touchstone Books, NY, 1995.
- ² Samuel P. Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations”, *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1993, p. 22.
- ³ Bernard Lewis, “The Roots of Muslim Rage”, *The Atlantic Monthly*, vol. 266, September 1990, p. 60, cited in Huntington, op. cit.
- ⁴ This is discussed in more detail in Basic Fact Number 2.
- ⁵ Krauthammer, “The New Crescent of Crisis: The Global Intifada”, *Washington Post*, February 16, 1990.
- ⁶ David Bukay, *Total Terrorism in the Name of Allah*, Ariel Center for Policy Research, 2002.
- ⁷ This section is highly informed by David Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, Avon Books, NY, 1989.
- ⁸ Stephen Schwartz, author of *The Two Faces of Islam: The House of Saud from Tradition to Terror*, directs the Islam and Democracy Program at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies in Washington.
- ⁹ Dore Gold, *Hatred’s Kingdom: How Saudi Arabia Supports the New Global Terrorism*, Regnery, 2003.
- ¹⁰ *National Post*, December 2003.
- ¹¹ The following paragraphs are highly informed by a memorandum (in Hebrew) entitled *Geder Hafrada – Ashluya Misukenet* (The Security Wall – A Dangerous Illusion), IDF Colonel (ret.) Moshe Leshem, April 2003.
- ¹² Such a wall was set up along Highway 6 in the region near the PLO controlled city of Kalkilya. It did not prevent terrorists from digging under it and shooting at an Israeli car, killing a seven-year-old child.
- ¹³ Qasam missiles fired from Gaza are a feature of daily life in Negev communities like Sderot.
- ¹⁴ An incident (December 2003) in which violent protesters including both Israeli Jews and foreigners wearing Arab *kaffiyas* attempted to tear down the fence in the area of Elkana resulted in the shooting of two persons by the army. This turned into a major media event and could be a small prelude to the possible scenarios.
- ¹⁵ *Atlantic Monthly*, June 2003.
- ¹⁶ David Fromkin, op.cit.
- ¹⁷ Ruth Wisse, *Opinion Journal*, June 16, 2003.
- ¹⁸ Eugene V. Rostow, “The Legal Context of the Middle East Peace Talks”, *Policywatch*, The Washington Institute, February 24, 1992. Former Assistant Secretary of State, Eugene Rostow also wrote: “Israel has a stronger claim to the West Bank than any other nation or would-be nation [and] the same legal right to settle the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem as it has to settle Haifa or West Jerusalem.” The Fourth Geneva Convention, in the view of many, including the late Professor Julius Stone, does not apply to Israel and its presence in Judea, Samaria (the West Bank), and the Gaza district. The convention defines itself strictly in its second clause: “The present convention shall apply to cases of partial or total occupation of the territory of a High Contracting Party.” The territories of Judea, Samaria and Gaza, of which Israel took possession (in a defensive war) in 1967, were not territories of a High Contracting Party. Judea and Samaria did not belong to Trans-Jordan nor did Gaza belong to Egypt. Professor Stone wrote: “It is clear that in its drafting history, Article 49 as a whole was directed against the heinous practice of the Nazi regime during the Nazi occupation of Europe in World War II...”
- ¹⁹ The pertinent parts of the United Nations Charter are the following: Chapter XII, Article 76 and 77.
- ²⁰ See the opinion of Justice Barak, Israel Supreme Court Reporter, 42(4) 617, p. 645.
- ²¹ Joan Peters, *From Time Immemorial – The Origins of the Arab-Jewish Conflict Over Palestine*, Harper and Row, NY, 1984.

- ²² Joan Peters, *op.cit.*
- ²³ Professor Bernard Lewis, *Commentary*, January 1975.
- ²⁴ Professor Philip Hitti, Arab historian to Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, 1946.
- ²⁵ Delegate of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations Security Council, 1956.
- ²⁶ These reasons include anti-Semitism, Holocaust guilt and other psychological, political and probably commercial considerations.
- ²⁷ *The Jerusalem Post*, July 16, 2003.
- ²⁸ The statistics in this section are based upon research accomplished and presented in an article by Yehuda Harel in *Nekuda*, (Hebrew), April 2003.
- ²⁹ Yahya Sadowski, *Scuds or Butter: The Political Economy of Arms Control in the Middle East*, Brookings Institute, February 1993.
- ³⁰ Just to add to the confusion, during World War II, the composition of the Palestine Brigade of the British Army was over 90% Jews.
- ³¹ In 1989, in his autobiography, *Warrior*, Ariel Sharon argued that Jordan was the Palestinian state. He said then that Palestinians in the West Bank should be granted political rights in Jordan, while living under Israeli security control among Israeli Jews.