

## **CLEIMUN19**

“Collaboration in a Polarized World: Hope for the Future?”

A Research Report

COMMITTEE: Political

QUESTION OF: Ongoing Arab-Israeli Conflict in the Middle East

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### **Introduction & Background**

The history of the Arab-Israeli Conflict is one of two extremes, both of which believe they have legitimate claims to an area of land, but for separate reasons. The two sides of the conflict were largely created by the actions of the United Nations. One extreme, the Israeli side, believes they have legitimate claims to the land they currently inhabit on the basis of historical and ancestral claims, only desiring peace so that they may remain where they are. The other extreme, the Arab side believes that Israel does not have legitimate claims to the land and utilizes violent means to regain what they believe to be their land. There are lots of media and history surrounding this subject, so it will be difficult to comprehensively cover the entirety of the situation, additional information should be relatively easy to find when researching for your specific country (research material in the works cited). I will try my best to provide you with a thorough enough base to begin your research.

After World War I the Ottoman Empire was partitioned to imperial nations, Britain was given dominion over Palestine. As, surrounding Arab states became independent from their imperial nations and Arab nationalism was becoming prominent during World War II the creation of

Palestine as a secular Arab state became a popular movement. During this time, Jews from Europe, North Africa, and Middle Eastern Arab countries, part of what is referred to as the Jewish Diaspora, started a movement called Zionism, the belief that Jews have the right to return to the land of which their ancestors were forced out of. The Zionist movement brought forth hundreds of thousands of Jews over the 2000 years of Jewish exile, most of whom settled in scattered ancient Israeli cities along the northern Mediterranean border such as Tel Aviv and Haifa.

After World War II the British announced its support for the creation of Palestine, which had not yet reached its full independence, as a haven for Jews in support of Zionism. The Arabs currently residing in Palestine reacted to this with hostility seeing it as a violation of negotiations made to Palestine in exchange for fighting in World War II. This is when the United Nations General Assembly stepped in with “The Two State Solution”, or resolution 181, which effectively split Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state, Israel and Palestine respectively. Surrounding Arab states, such as Egypt, Syria and Iraq, instantly declared war on the newly declared state of Israel. Israel successfully defended itself and additionally annexed land reserved for Palestinians by resolution 181 adding to the catastrophic Palestinian refugee conflict caused by the creation of Israel. This conflict has raged on much the same to this day despite multiple efforts at reconciliation and peace. It has grown from a domestic issue to a worldwide debate with countries like the USA and Britain refusing to acknowledge Palestine as a sovereign state and countries that are part of the Arab League refusing to recognize Israel while the United Nations recognizes the sovereignty of both.



## Past Efforts To Solve This Problem

After Israel declared its independence the western allies, including France Britain and the US, used Israel as a proxy in regard to the balance of power in the Middle East (eventually providing them with nuclear capabilities). The most notable of these events was the Suez crisis, in which the United Kingdom and France allied with Israel to invade Egypt to take the militarily controlled Gaza Strip and to open up the Suez Canal for trade. This caused even more hostilities between Israel and the Arab league leading to the “Six Days War” which left Israel in control of even more territory. This conflict eventually culminated with the first effort to solve hostilities in the region, the Camp David Accords which effectively negotiated peace between Egypt and Israel without Palestine as party.

Hostilities between Israel and Palestine, unfortunately still existed and Israel soon declared war on Lebanon. Israel eventually withdrew from Lebanon but an uprising of Infitida, Palestinians

against Israeli occupation of militarily obtained territories like The West Bank and The Gaza Strip, started off the Hamas movement. This marks the second attempt at peace, based on security council resolutions 242 and 338, the Oslo Accords. The Oslo Accords goal was to create a lasting peace agreement between Israel and the PLO (The Palestinian Liberation Organization) by conceding land such as the Gaza Strip and the West Bank while not creating an independent Palestinian state. It should be noted, however that while Israel withdrew from Gaza it maintained some military control over it. The peace that ensued after the Oslo Accords was soon broken; however, when Israel was forced to take military action against militant Hamas groups in Gaza. No further solutions have been proposed since then and violence still plagues this region now.

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### **Questions to Consider**

- ❖ Who has legitimate claims to the land (who does your country recognize)?
  - ❖ Is the situation largely caused by the actions of other countries and the UN, or is it internally caused, if so does this give external countries the right to interfere in this domestic conflict?
  - ❖ Is it possible to maintain the two state solution or will one faction inevitably control all of Palestine/Israel?
  - ❖ Who is responsible for Palestinian refugees, what is to be done with the peoples who will be displaced by many past and future solutions to this conflict?
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