

Pictorial History of Israel 1800s to 1999 Speaker Notes

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- Modern Zionism, the belief that the Jewish people have a right and a need to re-establish their own nation-state in their historic land, began in the 1800s, *(click)*, in the face of pogroms and other forms of antisemitism. *(click)* Theodore Herzl was a major leader of the Zionist movement.
- *(click)* In the 1800s and the early 1900s, the area that is known today as Israel was controlled by the Ottoman Turks. It was known as “Palestine” to Westerners but not by Turks or Arabs. *(click)* Throughout this period, significant numbers of Jews from Eastern Europe and Muslim lands began immigrating to Palestine. Some Arabs feared the increased Jewish population and attacked Jewish communities; other Arabs began to move into the areas of Jewish settlement because of economic growth *(click)* triggered by Jewish agriculture and manufacturing.

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- *(click)* In 1914, the First World War broke out between the “Central Powers” (including Turkey) and the “Allied Powers” (including Great Britain). *(click)* In 1917, Britain’s foreign secretary, Lord Balfour, promised British support for a “Jewish national home in Palestine.” When the war ended in 1918, *(click)* England was in control of Palestine. The League of Nations gave Britain a mandate to rule Palestine. According to the Palestine Mandate, *(click)* Britain was to encourage “close settlement by Jews on the land.” That determination was first made at a February 1920 meeting in London, attended by the Allied powers. Two months later, at the San Remo Conference (held in San Remo, Italy), the Allied powers confirmed the pledge contained in the Balfour Declaration concerning the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine. Formalized by the League of Nations in 1922, the Mandate recognized “the historical connections of the Jewish people” to the land in which they would be “reconstituting” their national home.
- *(click)* Increased opposition to the Jewish presence resulted in Arab attacks and riots and Britain, which had formerly favored Jewish settlement, began to back off its promise. *(click)* In 1922, Britain took 77 percent of the Palestine Mandate—all the land east of the Jordan River—and created the Arab emirate of “Transjordan.”

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- **(click)** As Hitler rose to power and **(click)** persecution of Europe's Jews increased, **(click)** the need for a Jewish haven became critical. **(click)** Arab rioting also grew and the British, looking for a solution, **(click)** recommended a partition of western Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab state. The Peel Commission plan, including partition, was accepted with reservations by the Jews but rejected by the Arabs. In 1939, **(click)** the British issued a "White Paper" limiting Jewish immigration severely for five years, after which it was to cease altogether.

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- **(click)** Six million Jews were murdered in the Holocaust during World War II, **(click)** many of whom could have found refuge in Palestine. **(click)** In 1947, the U.N. General Assembly voted for partition of the land, the United Nations now supervising the former League of Nations' Palestine Mandate, and Britain, the mandatory power, having announced its intention to leave. The Jews accepted this new partition but the Arabs rejected it.
- **(click)** On May 14, 1948, Israel's first prime minister, David Ben Gurion declared Israel's independence. **(click)** The next day, five neighboring Arab countries attacked, planning to wipe out the new state. Fighting lasted through the beginning of 1949, at which point the Arab nations agreed to an armistice. **(click)** Israel had won more territory than had been allocated it originally by the U.N. partition plan but at the cost of more than 6,000 killed, nearly one percent of the Jewish population.
- **(click)** Somewhere between 472,000 and 650,000 Arabs fled their homes, most out of fear of the Jews (a fear instilled in them by their leaders) or at their leaders' urging. A small number were also driven out by Jewish forces during the fighting. Instead of absorbing their Arab brethren, the surrounding Arab nations set up camps in which refugees were kept in misery. Jordan occupied the West Bank and eastern Jerusalem, while Egypt took the Gaza Strip. Neither country tried to establish an Arab "Palestine."
- **(click)** While thousands of Arabs from Israel were forced by Arab host countries to live in squalid refugee camps, about 820,000 Jews fled from Arab lands, with 586,000 resettled in Israel. For a few years many lived in tents or temporary huts in refugee camps. But like the

160,000 Arabs who chose to stay, they all became full-fledged citizens of Israel and the new nation struggled to absorb them. For instance, food was rationed in the early years.

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- **(click)** The cease-fire drawn up by the United Nations between Israel and its neighbors was almost immediately violated by the Arabs. Over the next five years (1951-1955) almost 1,000 Israelis were killed by terrorist groups called *fedayeen* based in Arab-controlled territory.
- **(click)** In 1956, President Nasser of Egypt illegally blocked Israeli shipping **(click)** through the Straits of Tiran at the tip of the Sinai and took over the Suez Canal. The British and French, legal owners of the canal, secretly plotted with Israel to regain control. **(click)** In the space of 100 hours, Israeli troops with British and French help, took the entire Sinai Peninsula. Under international pressure, Israel gave up land it had gained, but was guaranteed right of free passage through the Straits and U.N. peacekeepers were to reduce Egyptian-sponsored anti-Israel terrorism.
- **(click)** By 1964, various Palestinian Arab terrorist groups merged into the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Its goal was the destruction of Israel. Under the leadership of Yasir Arafat, terrorist attacks were mounted against Israeli targets. During this time the Arab states did not call for the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

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- **(click)** In 1967, Egypt, Syria, Jordan and other Arab countries mobilized their troops, expelled U.N. peacekeepers from the Sinai and called for Israel's destruction. Egypt again closed the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping. **(click)** Israel preemptively attacked, winning decisively in the Six-Day War. Israel gained the Golan Heights, which the Syrians had used for shelling Israel's northern towns, as well as the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, the entire Sinai and **(click)** eastern Jerusalem.
- **(click)** Israel proposed to return nearly all the territory it had gained in exchange for peace with the Arab countries, but Arab leaders, meeting in Khartoum, issued three "Nos"—No to peace with Israel, No to negotiations with Israel and No to recognition of Israel. By the fall, **(click)** the U.N. Security Council agreed on Resolution 242 calling on Israel to yield unspecified land in return for recognition by and peace with neighboring Arab countries. Israel accepted the resolution; Arab countries rejected it.
- **(click)** In 1973, Egypt and Syria attacked Israel on Yom Kippur. Despite initial losses, Israel won. **(click)** In Security Council Resolution 338, the United Nations called for implementation

of Resolution 242 and negotiations between the parties. Israel accepted the resolution; Arab countries rejected it.

- **(click)** President Anwar Sadat of Egypt, who had started the Yom Kippur War, decided to pursue another path and signed a peace treaty in 1979—making his the first Arab country to recognize Israel. **(click)** In return for peace, Israel returned the entire Sinai, including Israeli developed oil fields and destroying new Israeli towns and villages.

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- **(click)** In the 1970s, the Palestine Liberation Organization was thrown out of Jordan after trying to overthrow the king, and moved to southern Lebanon. There it played a major role in plunging that country into civil war. At the same time, Arafat continued to attack Israel. **(click)** In 1982, Israel invaded Lebanon and defeated the PLO and shortly thereafter, **(click)** set up a buffer zone in southern Lebanon.
- **(click)** Although health and human services for Arabs in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip had improved under Israeli administration, Palestinian rioting and violence erupted in the *intifada* (“shaking off”) of 1987. By the early 90s, the *intifada* had, however, largely faded.
- **(click)** In 1993, Israel signed the Oslo Peace Accords with Yasir Arafat of the PLO. Under the plan, Israel handed over major Arab cities for self-rule by the Palestinians. The PLO was to give up the use of terrorism, to stop incitement against Israel and pledged to resolve all future problems through negotiations. After five years, “final status” talks were to take place.
- **(click)** King Hussein of Jordan signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1994.
- **(click)** In 2000, Arafat rejected Israel’s proposal of 97 percent of the West Bank, all of the Gaza Strip and a Palestinian capital in eastern Jerusalem in exchange for peace. **(click)** Arafat launched a second *intifada*, marked by suicide bombings and other Palestinian terrorist attacks against Israelis.