

History and Current Events of Israel (1800s - Present)

The 1800s

- In the 1800s, the area that is known today as Israel and that was known in the West for centuries as Palestine, had been controlled for more than 300 years by the Ottoman Turks. Neither the non-Arab Ottomans nor their various Arab subjects referred to that small portion of the Ottoman Empire the Jews had long known as *eretz Yisrael*—the land of Israel—as Palestine. The empire was divided into districts, *vilayat*, and sub-districts, *sanjaks*, none of them named Palestine. British troops drove the Turks out of the area during World War I. Shortly after the war, the League of Nations—an international organization established by the victorious Allies—awarded Britain the Palestine Mandate. This made it the administrative authority over the mandatory lands, which originally extended to both sides of the Jordan River.
- The population of what would become British Mandatory Palestine was sparse. At various times throughout the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, Western travelers remarked on how desolate it was and how few inhabitants it had. Still, there was a larger population of Arabs (Muslims and Christians) than Jews, though both peoples lived in the land.
- The 1800s was a period of growing nationalism, particularly in Europe, North and South America and Australia and New Zealand. *Nationalism* can be defined as the belief that a people who share a common language, history and culture should constitute an independent nation.
- Jewish nationalism, or Zionism, as it came to be called, was further stimulated by a series of antisemitic outbursts. Although most Jews in Western Europe already had been accorded most rights as citizens, they still were looked upon with suspicion and even revulsion by many non-Jews. In Eastern Europe, mob attacks or *pogroms* showed many Jews that their place in European society was tenuous at best.
- Perhaps the greatest of the Zionist leaders was Theodore Herzl, an assimilated Austrian Jew who, because of French antisemitism in the late 1800s, saw the need for a Jewish state. Working with other Jewish leaders, Herzl came to advocate its re-creation in the birthplace of the Jewish people, and sought to have it endorsed by major countries. In the 1880s, some European Jews began to found agricultural communities in *eretz Yisrael*.
- Arab nationalism also began to grow in this period, though in a less focused fashion. Some Arab intellectuals dreamed of freedom from Ottoman Turk rule and a return to what they portrayed as the greatness of past Arab-Islamic civilizations. But they did not define specific territories that should be nation-states. Most Muslim Arabs from what would become British Mandatory Palestine thought of themselves as residents of “Greater Syria,” if they thought in national terms at all.

The 1900s

- Zionism inspired some Jews to settle in their ancient homeland. Scores of new towns sprang up while even more people moved to cities with ancient Jewish communities, like Jaffa and Jerusalem.
- Much of the time, Jewish settlers purchased marginal land because that was all that was available. The communities were built on territory frequently purchased from absentee Arab landlords in Beirut or Constantinople. At times, the land also was claimed by Arab peasants who said their families had worked it for generations even though they might not have been its legal owners. This led to friction between the Jewish settlers and local Arabs.
- The growing influx of Jews in this decade, which continued throughout the century, had a profound effect on the Arab population. Soil reclamation by Jewish farmers in the countryside and the growth of Jewish-owned and developed industry in the cities drew more and more Arabs, both legal internal migrants and illegal immigrants from outside, into a prospering Jewish-led Palestine. At the same time, Arabs attacked Jewish communities, especially in remote settlements.

The 1910s

- This decade saw one of the most significant changes to the map of the area, brought about largely by events outside the Middle East. In 1914, the First World War erupted. Germany, Austria and Turkey (the core of the Ottoman Empire)—the Central Powers, waged war against primarily Great Britain, France, Russia and eventually the United States—the Allied Powers.
- In the Middle East, the British were concerned with protecting the shipping lanes that passed through the Suez Canal in Egypt (which they oversaw although it was nominally part of the Ottoman Empire) to their colony in India. Seeking allies to help protect the lands bordering these areas, the British turned to Sherif Hussein, ruler of Mecca in Arabia. Arabia at that time was divided into small semi-kingdoms that owed allegiance to the Turks but which detested their rule. In return for a promise to lead an Arab uprising against the Turks, Hussein was offered some sort of future Arab state by the British Foreign Office. Boundaries of that state were vague. Some Arab sources contend that they included what would become Mandatory Palestine, but Sir Henry MacMahon, who made the promise, asserted that Palestine was not included in the offer.
- In 1917 Foreign Secretary Lord Balfour pledged British support for a “Jewish national home in Palestine.” The British were seeking allies including Palestinian Jews and Jews elsewhere. London believed that the support of the Jews of Germany and the United States might assist its war effort. There also was a strong sentiment among many in Britain that the Jews deserved a state of their own in their ancient homeland, as well as a feeling of gratitude toward one Zionist leader, chemist Chaim Weizmann (later first president of Israel) for his help in the British war effort. All of these factors led to the Balfour Declaration.

- During World War I, Great Britain defeated the Turks. The Jews of Palestine assisted in the fighting. Sherif Hussein and his sons led an Arab revolt that helped the British take Damascus and other parts of the former Ottoman Empire. However, most Palestinian Arabs who fought supported the Turks. The British now controlled the area known in the West as Palestine, which included what are Israel and Jordan today, as well as the Golan Heights, Judea and Samaria (West Bank) and Gaza Strip.
- The League of Nations was established in 1919 by the World War I Allies in an effort to prevent further wars and to deal with the defeated Central Powers. Arab delegates to the League voiced opposition to a Jewish state in Palestine, while Jewish leaders advocated it. Arab spokesmen also rejected the idea of an Arab Palestine separated from “Greater Syria.”

The 1920s

- The decade began with the League of Nations granting Britain a mandate to rule Palestine. Mandate areas were territories surrendered by Turkey or Germany after World War I and inhabited by people judged not yet able to govern themselves. Such areas and populations thus were put under the control of an Allied power, with the future prospect of independence. According to the terms of the Palestine Mandate, 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.
- Syria, which was to have been the central territory of the Arab state promised by Britain to Sherif Hussein, became instead part of a French Mandate. Arabs were angered that the promise to them had been broken and riots broke out. In Palestine, the hostility was turned against Jews with deadly attacks in 1920 in Jerusalem, Jaffa, Tel Aviv and other places. The Haganah, a Jewish defense organization, was formed in the face of continued Arab violence. The British temporarily suspended Jewish immigration to appease the Arabs, an action which violated the terms of and a central reason for their Palestine mandate.
- Shortly thereafter (1922), the British unilaterally altered the mandate again. The British Foreign Office concluded that support of the larger Arab population was more important than that of the relatively small Jewish one. At the same time, the family of Sherif Hussein (the Hashemites) was in dire straits: a rival clan, the Saudis, with whom the British also had made an alliance, had encroached steadily on Hashemite territory in Arabia. In an attempt to placate the Hashemites, the British installed one of Hussein’s sons, Abdullah, as emir of Transjordan, a new territory carved out of approximately 77 percent of the original Palestine Mandate. Jews were forbidden to settle in this semi-autonomous land (later renamed “Jordan”), a further violation of the League of Nations’ stipulations.

- The British habit of installing rulers they thought could control local Arab populations had disastrous effects for the Jews of Palestine. Disregarding the outcome of a local Muslim election, the British appointed Haj Amin al-Husseini, a violent antisemite, as the Grand Mufti, or supreme Muslim religious authority, of Jerusalem. Al-Husseini became the leader of anti-Jewish sentiment among the Arabs. Jews were immigrating in substantial numbers, and Arab opposition to their presence grew stronger. In 1929, Husseini instigated Arab rioting throughout Palestine, which left 135 Jews dead and 350 wounded.
- The decade ended with the collapse of world financial markets, exemplified by the stock market crash in New York in October, 1929. Wide-scale unemployment and economic depression would contribute to Jewish vulnerability in the next decade. Many people, seeking a solution to their problems, flocked to communism or fascism. Both totalitarian ideologies targeted the Jews. Communists saw in Jews and Zionism “retrograde” religious and national identities; the fascists, especially German Nazis, considered Jews an “inferior race” that subverted non-Jewish societies.

The 1930s

- The need for a haven for the Jewish people grew continually more urgent throughout the 1930s. Adolf Hitler rose to power in Germany and intolerable restrictions were imposed on German Jews. Other nations in Europe behaved similarly, and antisemitism flourished.
- In Palestine, Great Britain began to issue a series of directives, or “White Papers,” that restricted Jewish immigration. The Jews, responding to Arab pressure and antisemitism among many British diplomats and politicians and realizing that the provisions of the Mandate were being violated, took matters into their own hands. They did all that they could to help their brethren into Palestine, even if it violated the Mandate and was “illegal” according to British authorities.
- Incited by speeches calling for violence from leaders like Grand Mufti al-Husseini, Palestinian Arabs rioted throughout Palestine. In 1936, more than 100 Jews were murdered as were many local Arab leaders, Christian and Muslim, who opposed al-Husseini.
- In response to the violence, the British established the Peel Commission. The commission proposed dividing what was left of Mandatory Palestine into a Jewish state, an Arab state and a British zone around Jerusalem. The Jewish leadership accepted the compromise with reservations; the Arabs rejected it. Britain, facing war with Germany and in need of newly discovered oil in Arabia and access to its colonies in Asia, also rejected the plan.
- Worse was to come. As Nazi savagery erupted in *Kristallnacht* (the Night of Broken Glass, November 9-10, 1938), with massive destruction of Jewish property in Germany, attacks against Jews and eventually mass deportations to concentration camps, the British government issued still another “White Paper.” Called by the Jews of Palestine the “Black

Paper,” it limited Jewish immigration to 75,000 annually for five years, after which majority rule in a unitary state would begin. After the five years, Arabs were still expected to be the majority, and it was expected they would ban further Jewish immigration. Jewish land purchases also were restricted. Unable to escape to *eretz Yisrael*, and refused admittance in significant numbers in the Allied countries, millions of Jews were trapped in Europe, destined to perish in the Holocaust. By September 1939, Hitler had invaded Poland and World War II began.

The 1940s

- Nazism swept over Europe. No country was willing to take in the large numbers of Jewish refugees and the land that had been pledged to them by the League of Nations was barred by the British “White Paper.” The dilemma of the Jewish community of Palestine (the *Yishuv*) was acute. Nonetheless, Jews volunteered in droves to fight for the British; by war’s end the British had established a Jewish Brigade of over 5,000. As David Ben-Gurion, the future first prime minister of Israel said: “We shall fight the war against Hitler as if there were no White Paper, and we shall fight the White Paper as if there were no war.”
- Meanwhile the leader of Palestine’s Arab community, the Grand Mufti, sided with the Nazis and escaped to Iraq, where he helped with a brief pro-Nazi take-over of the Iraqi government. When that eventually failed, he issued a summons to *jihad* (holy war) against Britain and fled to Berlin to assist Hitler. *Der Fuehrer* promised to help him annihilate all Jews in Arab lands.
- By the war’s end in 1945, only 115,000 Jews had managed to escape Nazi-ruled Europe to Mandatory Palestine. More than six million Jews were murdered in Nazi concentration camps and in round-ups throughout occupied Europe. Those who had survived sought refuge in other lands, but Great Britain refused to open the doors to Palestine. Pogroms broke out against Jews in Arab countries and fighting between Arabs and Jews in Palestine intensified. Britain did little to stop the violence so the Haganah and other armed Jewish groups united to defend Jews.
- By 1947 a number of former Allied countries finally decided to assist the hundreds of thousands of “displaced people”—Jews who had survived the Holocaust. Another Palestine partition plan was approved, this time by the United Nations, heir to the League of Nations, on November 29, 1947. Once again, Palestine was to be carved into a Jewish and an Arab state, with Jerusalem an international zone. Once again, the Jews accepted the partition plan and the Arabs rejected it.
- Over the next six months violence between Palestinian Jews and Arabs escalated as the British began their withdrawal. On May 14, 1948 the State of Israel was declared. Prime Minister Ben Gurion urged Arabs within the Jewish-allocated territory to stay and help build the country as citizens with equal rights. The next day, the armies of five Arab countries attacked. Those Palestinian Arabs who did not join in the fighting were urged by their leaders to get out of the way so as to let the Arab armies throw the Jews into the sea.

- The fighting was fierce on both sides. Jews were outgunned and outnumbered, but better organized and more determined. They managed to defeat their enemies. By January, 1949 a cease-fire was agreed upon and Israel had managed to gain territories beyond those allotted by the U.N. plan (but less than had been envisioned under the original Mandate). Jordan captured half of Jerusalem, including the Jewish Quarter of the Old City and the Western Wall, the holiest site at which Jews are permitted by rabbinic tradition to pray. The terms of the cease-fire called for Jewish access to the Wall, but the Arabs refused to honor their commitment and leveled ancient synagogues in the Old City as well.
- As a result of the conflict, somewhere between 420,000 and 650,000 Arabs fled their homes. A minority were forced out as a result of military action by Israel but the majority left either out of fear of the Jews instilled in them by their leaders or at the urging of those leaders. Instead of integrating their Arab brethren, Arab countries—Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Egypt—set up “camps” in which refugees were kept in miserable conditions.
- Some parts of Mandatory Palestine that were to have become an independent Arab state according to the 1947 U.N. plan came under control by Egypt and Jordan. Egypt’s armies occupied the Gaza Strip while Jordan annexed Judea and Samaria, which it renamed “the West Bank.”

The 1950s

- While hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs were forced by their fellow Arabs to live in squalid refugee camps, another 160,000, who had remained during the war, became citizens of the new Jewish state. At the same time, the opening of floodgates of immigration to Israel brought in huge numbers of Jews from Arab lands and from Europe, eventually more than 687,000. The new nation, its population doubled, struggled to absorb them.
- Losing the war to Israel was devastating for many Arabs, psychologically as well as physically or economically. When it was rumored that King Abdullah of Jordan was considering making peace with Israel, a Palestinian Arab assassinated him. Soon (1952) King Farouk of Egypt was overthrown, to be replaced by the fiery Colonel Gamal Nasser who promoted a militant form of pan-Arab nationalism, the belief that all Arabic speaking peoples should be united into one nation, or at least that Arab identity transcends nationality. While his pretensions never materialized, despite the short union of Syria with Egypt, he inspired other Arab states in opposition to the “foreign” presence of Israel in their midst.
- The U.N. cease-fire between Israel and its neighbors was violated almost immediately by the Arabs. Terrorist groups called *fedayeen* were sent by Arab countries to attack civilians. Over the next five years (1951-1955) terrorists murdered almost 1,000 Israelis.
- In 1955, Egypt’s Nasser began a build-up of weaponry from the Soviet Union, which had begun a decades-long practice of aiding anti-Western Arab states in their attempts to

destroy Israel. Nasser soon took even more drastic steps, blocking Israeli shipping (an act of war according to international law) from its southern port of Eilat from passing the Straits of Tiran and nationalizing the Suez Canal.

- British and French shareholders, the legal owners of the canal, were ejected and they feared that their shipping through the canal could be blocked. They plotted with Israel to attack Egypt and regain control of the canal. In October 1956, Israeli troops, in coordination with British and French strikes around the Suez Canal, took the entire Sinai Peninsula, hoping to end the menace to Israel's economic livelihood and to suppress the *fedayeen* attacks.
- The victory was short-lived. Under pressure from the United States and Soviet Union, all three nations were forced to withdraw. Israel agreed, on condition that the United Nations would station troops in the Sinai as a buffer between Egypt and Israel. The United Nations also promised to take control of the Gaza Strip, curtail terrorist activities and guarantee that the Suez Canal would be open to Israeli ships. These obligations were soon ignored.
- In 1959, a group of Arabs in Kuwait led by Yasir Arafat formed an organization called Fatah, a reverse Arabic acronym meaning "Movement for the Liberation of Palestine." In time, this group, dedicated to "freeing Palestine"—that is, Israel—from Jewish hands, would grow in numbers and influence.

The 1960s

- By 1964, various Palestinian Arab groups including Fatah coalesced into the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The PLO was dedicated to the destruction of Israel and its replacement by an Arab country from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea. Under the leadership of Arafat, terrorist attacks against Israeli targets were launched.
- By the mid-1960s, Israel's northern communities were being bombarded regularly by Syrian artillery on the Golan Heights (originally part of the Palestine Mandate). Meanwhile, President Nasser of Egypt resumed calling for the destruction of the Jewish state. In May 1967, Egypt broke its agreements and closed the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping again, an act of war under international law and the U.N. Charter. The United Nations did nothing.
- Supported by their Soviets allies, Egypt massed nearly 100,000 soldiers and 1,000 tanks on Israel's borders. Syrian, Jordanian, Lebanese, Iraqi and Saudi troops also moved to surround Israel. The U.N. peacekeeping force in Sinai was ejected by Nasser while Israel sought, in vain, assistance from Britain, France and the United States. Radio Cairo announced, "The Arab people is firmly resolved to wipe Israel off the map."
- In response to the threat, Israel preemptively attacked. In the first few hours of what came to be known as the Six-Day War, it destroyed Egypt's numerically superior air force while it was still on the ground, swiftly gaining control of the Sinai, Gaza and the Straits of Tiran. Although Israel had sent messages to King Hussein that it would not attack Jordan if left

alone, the Jordanians began to bombard western Jerusalem. The Israeli counterattack left the Jewish state in control of the strategically important hill country of the West Bank as well as eastern Jerusalem. Jews would again be free to visit their holy sites in Jerusalem, Hebron and elsewhere. According to the United Nations Relief and Works Administration, about 525,000 Arabs fled—including 175,000 who also left their homes in 1948-1949, most to Jordan. By 1971, Israel had repatriated about 40,000. On the last two days of the war, Israel turned to the Syrian menace and in bloody fighting took the Golan Heights.

- Israeli officials anticipated quick peace negotiations. But Arab leaders meeting soon after the fighting issued the three “Nos” of Khartoum—No to peace with Israel, No to negotiation with Israel, and No to recognition of Israel. By the fall of 1967, the U.N. Security Council took up the issue and after intense discussion and debate over the wording, agreed on Resolution 242. This called on Israel to withdraw from unspecified land in return for secure borders, recognition by, and peace with neighboring Arab countries. Israel accepted the resolution; Arab countries uniformly rejected it.
- Defeat on the battlefield did not end the Arabs’ struggle against the Jewish state. Aggression took a new form in 1968 with the first Palestinian Arab hijacking of a commercial jetliner. The strategy of attacking civilians, Jews and non-Jews, whether Israeli or not, gained the Palestinian movement both international notoriety and eventual recognition.
- In keeping with a security proposal put forward by a leader of Israel’s Labor government (the Allon Plan), Israel began to build Jewish communities in Judea and Samaria (the West Bank) and in the Gaza Strip to secure minimum “strategic depth” and reclaim ancient Jewish sites. Judea and Samaria were seen by many Israelis as the cradle of Jewish civilization. Some of the new communities were reconstituted Jewish towns that Arab armies had wiped out during the War of Independence. The Arabs of the West Bank and Gaza were not expelled from their homes and were in fact given freedom of movement, with eastern Jerusalem Arabs being offered the option to become Israeli citizens. Few Jerusalem Arabs took Israel up on the offer.

The 1970s

- Having lost its West Bank base of operations in 1967, the PLO established itself in Jordan. But by 1970 it had begun to threaten the stability of the state and the Hashemite throne. In September, King Hussein counterattacked Palestinian strongholds, killing thousands and driving more through Syria into exile in Lebanon. Over the next 10 years, Palestinian terrorists would use Lebanon as a base to attack and kill many Israeli civilians.
- The border between Egypt and Israeli-held Sinai was also far from quiet, with attacks from Egyptian guns in violation of post-1967 agreements. These grew into the War of Attrition along the Suez Canal. In 1973, Egypt and Syria, aided by Russian arms, launched a major attack against Israel on Yom Kippur. After extremely difficult fighting and with the help of U.S.-supplied weapons, Israel defeated the Arab armies. The U.N. Security Council called for a cease-fire, adopting Resolution 338, which called for prompt implementation of Resolution

242 and negotiations. Israel accepted Resolution 338; Egypt and Syria accepted the cease-fire but rejected the rest of the measure.

- Israel's neighbors found a new weapon. OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries), an oil-producing cartel dominated by Arab states, raised petroleum prices to record highs and announced an embargo against the United States, letting the world know that support for Israel would have drastic economic effects. In this period, the U.N. General Assembly, the same body that had recommended reestablishment of a Jewish state in the 1947 partition plan and later admitted it as a member, adopted a Soviet-originated, Arab-endorsed resolution equating Zionism with racism. Oil-rich Arab countries, allied with the Soviet Union and its satellites (who had their own Cold War reasons for marginalizing America's ally, Israel), had found an effective weapon.
- The PLO's move to Lebanon was disastrous for that tiny country. Palestinian gunmen attacked not only Israel but also Lebanese Christians and other groups. By 1975, open warfare broke out, pitting Palestinian Arabs against Christian and Muslim militias who were also fighting each other. Syria intervened and established shaky ceasefires between the Lebanese factions, but these did nothing to stop attacks against Israel.
- The decade ended, however, in what seemed to be a miraculous event. President Anwar Sadat of Egypt, who had succeeded Nasser and who had started the 1973 Yom Kippur War, called for peace between the two sides. Negotiations between Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin led to the 1978 Camp David Accords and 1979 Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty.
- According to that American-mediated agreement, Israel had to withdraw its troops and citizens from the Sinai and restore it to Egyptian control in return for normal diplomatic relations with Egypt, guarantees of freedom of passage through the Suez Canal and other nearby waterways and a restriction on the number of troops Egypt could place in the Sinai Peninsula. The peace was vehemently opposed by the PLO and by other Arab countries; Arafat rejected parts of the agreement that envisioned Palestinian autonomy. The ensuing peace between Egypt and Israel was a "cold" one. Egypt largely refused to normalize economic, cultural and political relations with Israel as called for by the treaty. Indeed, Egyptian-controlled communications media became a vehicle for virulent antisemitism.

The 1980s

- Although Israel had achieved a formal peace with one of its neighbors, a new threat loomed beyond its borders. Iraq's dictator and an unbending foe of Israel, Saddam Hussein, had begun to build a nuclear reactor with French help. Israel feared the next step would be the construction of a nuclear weapon, so in a daring 1981 mission, its air force destroyed the reactor before it could become operational. Although condemned by many countries at the time, the wisdom of the action became apparent as Saddam's desire for weapons of mass destruction materialized in the years leading to Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

- In October 1981, President Sadat of Egypt was assassinated by Islamic extremists belonging to an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood. (The Brotherhood had helped spawn Fatah in the 1950s and Hamas and al-Qaeda in the 1980s). An ominous warning was sent to all Arab leaders who might consider making peace with the Jews.
- In 1982, Israel invaded Lebanon in response to PLO shelling and the inability of the U.N.'s south Lebanon "peace-keeping" force to stop anti-Israel terrorism. Israel's army, under General Ariel Sharon, reached as far as Beirut, the capital, in which Arafat and the PLO were trapped. Under international pressure, Israel allowed Arafat and 10,000 terrorists to retreat into exile in Tunisia and other Arab states, while Israel set up a security zone in southern Lebanon. During the months Beirut was under Israeli control, Phalangists—a Lebanese Christian party with its own militia and allied with Israel—massacred Palestinian Arabs in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps. An Israeli investigating commission found Israeli leadership indirectly responsible for not anticipating the possibility of violence.
- Iran, which had been transformed after 1979 under Ayatollah Khomeini from an ally of Israel into an Islamic fundamentalist theocracy, established Hezbollah, a Shiite Muslim terrorist organization operating in Lebanon. Hezbollah was dedicated to driving Western influence out of Lebanon and to destroying Israel.
- In 1984, Operation Moses brought approximately 7,000 African Jews from the ancient Jewish community of Ethiopia to Israel.
- Although health and welfare of Arabs in the West Bank and Gaza had improved markedly under Israeli administration, opposition to Israeli rule grew, erupting in the *intifada* ("shaking off") of late 1987. Scenes of children throwing stones at Israeli troops dominated the airwaves, but the reality soon grew more deadly with the use of Molotov cocktails, guns and explosives. Initially a home-grown uprising against Israeli rule, the *intifada* soon came to be dominated by PLO leadership operating from Tunis. This was abetted in part by the 1988 decision of Jordan's King Hussein to give up any claim to the previously annexed West Bank territories and by his acquiescence to propaganda claims, widely accepted internationally, that the PLO was the "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people." The *intifada* continued into the early 1990s, diminishing gradually in the face of Israeli counter-pressure.
- In the late 1980s, the Muslim Egyptian Brotherhood helped found a new Sunni fundamentalist organization among the Palestinian Arabs. It was known as Hamas. Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement—designated a terrorist organization by the United States, Israel and other countries—continued the Brotherhood's policy of providing social and educational services for Muslims and was adamantly opposed to co-existence with Israel. Hamas declared in its 1988 covenant: "There is no other solution for the Palestinian problem other than jihad. All the initiatives and international conferences are a waste of time and a futile game."

The 1990s

- The 1990s began with yet another threat from Iraq. Saddam Hussein invaded nearby Kuwait and menaced petroleum-rich Saudi Arabia. This roused the United States and other nations to launch the first Persian Gulf War. Israel stayed out of the fighting, but Iraq launched missiles against the Jewish state. Many Palestinian Arabs cheered as Israeli cities were attacked.
- When the fighting ended with Iraq's defeat in Kuwait, followed by the unrelated collapse of the Soviet Union, America seized what it saw as an opportunity to broker peace in the region. It brought together representatives of Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinian Arabs for the first time in official face-to-face talks, in Madrid (1991). Nothing substantive came of those talks, but connections made there between Israeli and Palestinian representatives would lead to the Oslo Accords.
- Working behind the scenes, a group of negotiators from both sides hammered out an agreement in Oslo, Norway that eventually was accepted by the Israeli government and the PLO. In 1993, under the auspices of U.S. President Bill Clinton, the Accords were signed by Chairman Yasir Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. Under the plan, Israel was to hand over gradually major Palestinian population centers for Palestinian self-rule. A Palestinian police force, having only light weapons, was authorized, and the PLO was to cease all terrorist activity and halt incitement against Israel. All future problems were to be settled through negotiations. Issues such as Jewish West Bank and Gaza Strip communities, Jerusalem's status and the fate of Palestinian "refugees" were to be resolved by future negotiations.
- It seemed as if a new day of peace was dawning, but events of the next decade argued otherwise. Arafat's intentions were apparent the day of the signing ceremony on the White House lawn. In a previously taped message broadcast on Jordanian TV, he stated that the accords were just the first step in the PLO's 1974 "phased strategy" of gaining a foothold in order to "liberate" all of Palestine. Nonetheless, in 1994 Arafat became head of the Palestinian Authority. He soon moved to eliminate all opposition in territories that came under his control, starting with the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area in the West Bank, and quashed freedom of the press. Suicide bombers from areas under Palestinian control began to attack Israeli civilians. Arafat falsely claimed he was doing all he could to stop attacks.
- The growing number of attacks had its effect on Israeli citizens and public opposition to the Oslo process grew. In 1994, a Jewish extremist killed 29 Muslim worshippers in Hebron. This act was condemned almost universally by the Israeli public. Tragedy struck again the following year when a young Jew, opposed to ceding any land controlled by Israel to Arab rule, assassinated Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

- At the same time, Israel’s agreement with the PLO gave Jordan, with its Palestinian majority population, an opportunity to become the second Arab country to formally recognize Israel, signing a peace treaty in 1994.
- Throughout the rest of the 1990s, suicide bombers and other terrorists attacked buses, malls, and street gatherings, killing hundreds of Israeli civilians and foreign visitors. Arafat continued to claim he was fighting terrorism but did little or nothing to stop the increased violence. Palestinian newspapers, TV, schools and mosques were filled with anti-Israel hatred, despite a pledge to cease incitement. Nonetheless, Israel continued through the end of the decade to cede administration of Arab-populated territory in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to the Palestinian Authority.

2000

- In **May** 2000, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak ordered the unilateral withdrawal of all Israeli troops from south Lebanon where they had been deployed to protect Israel’s northern border since the 1980s. Israel fully complied with United Nations stipulations which also called for Lebanon to deploy its troops to the area.
- Instead, the Syrian and Iranian-backed Hezbollah, designated a terrorist organization by the United States and other countries in addition to Israel, took over. Better armed and organized than the Lebanese army, Hezbollah—the Shiite “Party of God”—still controlled the area in the summer of 2006, in violation of a U.N. Security Council resolution, with approximately 13,000 rockets aimed at Israel.
- In **July**, President Bill Clinton convened a summit between Israel and the Palestinian Authority at Camp David, Maryland. Prime Minister Barak offered the PA a chance to negotiate a new Palestinian state on more than 95 percent of the West Bank and 100 percent of the Gaza Strip with Palestinian control over parts of Jerusalem as well as religious sovereignty over the Temple Mount area (holy to Jews, but also to Muslims as the Haram al-Sharif) in exchange for peace with Israel. Arafat rejected the proposal, and was criticized by the United States, Egyptian, Saudi Arabian leaders and others.
- By the fall, tensions were boiling, with Palestinian television intensively broadcasting emotional scenes of violence from the *intifada* of the late 1980s. On both **September 27** and **28**, Israeli soldiers were killed by Palestinian Arabs.
- Also on the 28th, after consulting with Palestinian security forces, Ariel Sharon, then leader of the opposition Likud Party, made a public visit to the Temple Mount, declaring it part of Israeli territory for eternity (in line with official Israeli government policies.) The al Aqsa mosque, which Muslims claim as their third holiest site, is also on the Temple Mount.
- The day after Sharon’s visit, Palestinian Arabs rioted in the West Bank, Jerusalem and elsewhere in Israel. Jewish worshippers at the Western Wall fled as Arabs stoned them from

above; Israeli police entered the Temple Mount area by force to put down the attack. Palestinian security personnel and others turned their weapons on Israelis and the so-called “al Aqsa intifada” had begun. Much of the press repeated as fact the official Palestinian line that Sharon’s visit had provoked a spontaneous uprising but the truth, as indicated later by Palestinian spokesmen, was that Arafat had been planning violent action at least since receiving international criticism for rejecting the Camp David peace offer.

- Clashes, shootings and bombings erupted in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, as well as terrorist attacks in Israel. In Gaza, a Palestinian father and son apparently were caught in a cross-fire between Israeli soldiers and Palestinian gunmen. When 12-year old Mohammed al-Dura allegedly was killed, he became an instant “martyr” in the Arab world and beyond, thanks to a 24-hour news cycle that played and replayed video clips of his “tragic shooting.” (Later studies indicate that al-Dura could not have been killed by Israeli soldiers, who did not have the necessary line of fire. But if indeed the events were not staged, then al-Dura likely was shot by Palestinian gunmen who were in position nearby.)
- In Nablus (Shechem), the Tomb of Joseph, a Jewish shrine, was overrun and burned by Palestinian Arabs. An Israeli soldier bled to death at the site when he could not be evacuated for treatment.
- In **October**, two Israeli reservists took a wrong turn in the West Bank city of Ramallah and were arrested by Palestinian Authority police. A mob stormed the police station, beat the soldiers to death, and threw their mutilated bodies into the street. The gruesome event was captured on video. Palestinian authorities attempted to censor news media coverage of the murders, but one Italian television network did not surrender its tape and the lynching was broadcast internationally.

2001

- Despite the escalating violence, the PA and Israeli representatives met for one more round of negotiations at Taba in the Sinai. Israel once again proposed a West Bank and Gaza Strip state with eastern Jerusalem as its capital in exchange for peace, but Arafat still refused.
- Mounting Israeli casualties helped bring down the Barak government and Ariel Sharon was swept into power as Israel’s eleventh prime minister.
- Bombings, shootings and other violence continued unabated. Children and families especially were targeted in what amounted to a reign of terror. In **June**, 21 youths were blown up at the Dolphinarium disco in Tel Aviv while 15 more innocents were killed at the Sbarro Pizzeria in downtown Jerusalem in **August**.
- Israel responded with targeted killings of terrorists, military incursions into territory previously ceded to Palestinian Authority (PA) rule and occasional attacks against PA security forces, in some cases warning of impending raids to clear the area of bystanders.

- Enmity toward Israel spread internationally. Antisemitic acts increased sharply throughout Europe. In August, a U.N. conference held in Durban, South Africa and ostensibly dedicated to fighting racism, became a forum for defaming Israel and the Jewish people.
- **September 11:** Mass terror comes to the United States. Approximately 3,000 American and other non-combatants died at the hands of al Qaeda, led by Osama bin Laden. In some Palestinian towns public celebrations followed. In contrast, Israelis swamped hospitals to donate blood.

2002

- Official Palestinian claims of lack of responsibility for anti-Israel violence were seen to be false when, in **January**, Israel intercepted the Karine-A, a vessel loaded with sophisticated weaponry. Arafat's attempt to disassociate himself from the Iranian shipment helped seal U.S. President George W. Bush's negative view of the PLO leader.
- Murderous attacks against the Jewish state peaked in **March** on the eve of Passover with the suicide bombing of the Park Hotel in Netanya; 29 Israelis, a number of them Holocaust survivors, were killed as they sat down to a holiday Seder.
- Israel then launched a major counter-terrorism intervention into the West Bank. In Operation Defensive Shield, its troops returned to towns and cities throughout the Palestinian-ruled territories previously vacated by Israel as part of the Oslo self-rule process. Palestinian spokesmen and many in the Western press claimed that Israel had massacred civilians in the incursion, but the truth was different. In Jenin, Israel lost 23 soldiers by seeking out gunmen in house-to-house searches rather than bombarding the refugee district from the air. The Palestinian claim of 500 or more "massacre victims" in Jenin proved to be 55 dead, nearly all armed combatants.
- In **May**, Prime Minister Sharon visited Washington where he presented President Bush with documents taken from Arafat's headquarters during Operation Defensive Shield. These proved that Arafat was directly involved in funding terrorists.
- In **June**, President Bush publicly called for American support for a Palestinian state but only after the Palestinian Arabs had rid themselves of leaders tainted by terrorism.
- Due to the Israeli army's return to Palestinian population centers and aggressive counter-terrorism, attacks began to diminish over the summer. Another key measure in diminishing terrorist attacks was the beginning of construction of a high-tech West Bank security barrier to prevent infiltrations.

- Arab violence continued, however. In **November**, al Qaeda claimed responsibility for attacking a resort in Mombasa, Kenya frequented by Israelis and for nearly downing a flight to Tel Aviv.

2003

- In **March**, as American troops massed near Iraq, Arafat seemed to comply with U.S. demands for reform of the corrupt, inefficient Palestinian Authority. Reluctantly, he appointed his ally, Mahmoud Abbas as Palestinian prime minister.
- In a lightning strike across Iraq, American and allied troops overthrew the regime of dictator Saddam Hussein, sanctioned by the United Nations for violating restrictions imposed after the first Persian Gulf War, including, it was believed by Western intelligence agencies, resumption of programs for weapons of mass destruction. Hussein, who had massacred many Iraqis, also had helped bankroll the families of Palestinian suicide bombers.
- On **May 1**, the “Quartet” (the United States, the United Nations, European Union and Russia) unfurled a “road map” for peace, which envisioned the creation of a democratic, peaceful Palestinian state by 2005. It also called for the Palestinian Authority to restrain and dismantle terrorist networks. At a summit held in the Jordanian city of Aqaba in June, Prime Minister Sharon publicly acknowledged the need for a Palestinian state and Abbas committed himself to ending Palestinian violence.
- The violence, however, did not end. Arafat refused to give up control of his many “security forces” while other terrorist groups like Hamas and Islamic Jihad continued to wage war against the Jewish people. Although these groups, as well as PA forces, claimed to be sticking to a *hudna* (cease-fire), their actions belied their words. On **August 19**, an attack on a Jerusalem bus killed 23 Israelis, including seven children.
- Israel continued to build its West bank security barrier, condemned by the United Nations General Assembly in a resolution. The vote passed 144–4, with only the United States, Israel, and two tiny Pacific Island nations opposing it. Nonetheless, the barrier, along with actions of the Israeli Defense Forces, began to reduce the number of successful Palestinian attacks against noncombatants.
- By the fall, Abbas had resigned as PA prime minister, stymied by Arafat’s refusal to cooperate and his own lack of public support. The job of Palestinian prime minister fell to another Arafat lieutenant, Ahmed Qurei, who soon proved to be ineffective as well in the face of Arafat’s maneuverings.
- A suicide bombing in **October** at a Haifa restaurant frequented by both Arabs and Jews killed 21. Israeli jets bombed a terrorist training base in Syria, serving notice to that country that it could not support murderers without consequences.

2004

- In **February**, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon stunned Israel and the world with an announcement that he would seek to remove unilaterally all Israeli citizens from Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip (known for their agricultural production, including that from greenhouses) and from four communities in the West Bank, stating that their presence in hostile, largely Palestinian-populated areas was no longer tenable.
- In **March**, Israel killed the leader of Hamas, Sheik Ahmed Yassin, and then in April, his successor, Abed al-Aziz Rantissi. Despite their roles in murdering hundreds of innocents, much of the world protested Israel's "extra-judicial" killings of the Hamas leaders.
- In **April**, Prime Minister Sharon and President Bush exchanged letters, in which the president appeared to agree that some Israeli communities built in the West Bank likely would remain part of Israel in any future settlement reached between Israel and the Palestinian Arabs.
- In **July**, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague, Netherlands, produced an advisory opinion holding that Israel's security fence was illegal, despite the fact that the barrier was credited with saving scores of Israeli and foreign lives and that many legal experts asserted that the court lacked jurisdiction in the matter.
- Over the four years of al Aqsa *intifada* attacks, Palestinian gunmen had been working on improving the range and effectiveness of Qassam rockets with which they had targeted Jewish communities in the Gaza Strip. In the fall of 2004, rockets began to fly over the 1950 Israel-Egyptian armistice line and land in Israeli towns like Sderot, causing death and injury. Israel responded with counter-strikes, trying to uproot the organizations and workshops in which the rockets were manufactured. Silent when rockets fell on Jewish homes, the United Nations condemned Israel for responding in self-defense.
- In **November**, Yasir Arafat, who had been confined by Israeli troops in his headquarters in Ramallah most of the time since 2002, died of an undisclosed illness in a Paris hospital. He was surrounded by family and cronies squabbling over who would succeed him and who would control the vast sums that he had siphoned from international donations to the Palestinian cause.

2005

- In **January**, elections were held in Palestinian self-rule territories for the first time since 1996. Mahmoud Abbas, a long-time leader of Arafat's Fatah organization and briefly Palestinian prime minister in 2004, was elected president of the Palestinian Authority. Although there were some indications of voter fraud, many nations—including Israel—accepted him as the legitimate winner.
- In **February**, Sharon and Abbas met at a summit in Sharm el-Sheikh, at which both men pledged to institute a cease-fire. Sharon insisted that Abbas work towards eliminating

terrorism in the Palestinian territories. Regardless, dismantling the terrorist infrastructure—the arms and organizations—did not take place as required by the Oslo agreements and the 2003 “road map” sponsored by the “Quartet” of the United States, Russia, United Nations and European Union.

- The Palestinian self-rule territories saw a surge in internal fighting among armed groups and families. Members of Prime Minister Abbas’ own Fatah movement went on rampages, demanding jobs, special treatment and a continuation of violence against Israel.
- In **August**, more than 8,000 Jewish residents of the Gaza Strip (as well as all Israel Defense Forces) and of four communities in the northern West Bank (Samaria communities Ganim, Kadim, Homesh and Sa-Nur) were removed from their homes by the Israeli government. In the Strip, Palestinian Arabs celebrated by burning the newly empty synagogues.
- Weeks after forming a new political party, “Kadima,” in the wake of challenges from within Likud, its leader, Prime Minister Sharon, was incapacitated by a series of strokes.

2006

- Despite Israel’s evacuation of the Gaza Strip, Palestinian terror groups continued to fire occasionally deadly Qassam rockets into Israel.
- The election of Holocaust-denier Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as president of Iran in the summer of 2005 highlighted that country’s nuclear threat against Israel. In **January**, Iran—which was believed to be developing nuclear weapons—openly declared that it was restarting its uranium enrichment program despite international treaty obligations not to do so.
- On January 26, Palestinian Arabs voted in elections for the Palestinian Authority’s legislative council. Hamas, the terror organization whose charter calls for a Palestinian state from “river to sea” (i.e. all of Israel) won. Israel declared it would not deal with a Hamas-led government as long as it continued to reject Israel’s legitimacy and refused to end anti-Israel terrorism.
- In late January and early **February**, deadly riots erupted across the Muslim world, ostensibly in response to the publication in a Danish newspaper of satirical cartoons depicting Islam’s prophet Mohammed. Many believed that freedom of expression in the West had come under attack.
- In **March**, Ehud Olmert was elected twelfth prime minister of Israel.
- In **June**, Palestinian gunmen attacked an Israeli army post via a tunnel from the Gaza Strip, killing two soldiers and capturing Corporal Gilad Shalit. The IDF responded by re-entering Gaza after having evacuated all Israeli civilian and military presence there almost a year before, attempting to rescue the kidnapped soldier and to end the barrage of rockets and mortars fired at Israel from the Strip.

- Shortly after the Gaza attack, Hezbollah gunmen infiltrated Israel from Lebanon, killing eight soldiers and kidnapping two others under cover of rocket attacks against northern Israel. The Israeli military responded, and Hezbollah continued firing rockets at northern Israeli communities. Scores of civilians were killed and hundreds of thousands fled or took shelter in bunkers. After nearly a month of Israeli-Hezbollah fighting in Lebanon and rocket attacks into Israel, a United Nations-brokered ceasefire was put into place. Israel temporarily weakened Hezbollah in Lebanon, killing approximately 700 gunmen. An estimated 500 Lebanese non-combatants also died. Israeli war deaths were 119 soldiers, 43 civilians.
- By **December**, Hezbollah had made enough of a comeback to try to overthrow the Lebanese government by means of massive street demonstrations that shut down Beirut, the capital. It began rearming extensively, violating U.N. Security Council Resolution 1701, which called for, among other things, all Lebanese paramilitary groups to disarm.

2007

- Despite rivalry and frequent armed clashes between their followers, long-time Fatah leader and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, leader of Hamas, forged a shaky unity government in **February**.
- At roughly the same time, bonds between Presidents Ahmadinejad of Iran and Bashar al-Assad of Syria were further strengthened by vows to work together to defeat the United States and Israel. Iranian influence could be seen throughout the Middle East, including alliances with Hamas in the Gaza Strip and continued strong ties via Syria with Hezbollah in Lebanon.
- Despite calls by the U.N. Security Council to cease nuclear activities, in **April** President Ahmadinejad of Iran declared his country now was able to enrich uranium on an industrial scale, part of the process needed to make fuel for nuclear bombs.
- In **June**, Hamas forces attacked Fatah in the Gaza Strip. More than 100 Gazans were killed in the “five-day war” in which Hamas drove Fatah out of the Strip. President Abbas dissolved the unity government and formed a new Palestinian emergency cabinet with jurisdiction only in the West Bank under Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, leaving Hamas in complete control of the Gaza Strip.
- In **July**, President George W. Bush called for a Middle East peace conference in the fall to be led by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and to include Palestinian Arabs, Israelis and regional neighbors who supported creation of a new Arab Palestinian country as part of a “two-state solution,” as well as pledging support to Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas’ West Bank-based government.

- The same month, the Arab League sent its first formal delegation to Israel to officially present a peace offer: The League would recognize Israel in exchange for Israeli withdrawal from all the West Bank, Gaza Strip and eastern Jerusalem, the creation of a Palestinian state and agreement to a solution to the problem of Palestinian refugees from the 1948 war and their descendants (which to most Palestinian Arabs meant the “right to return” to their original homes inside Israel. It should be noted that none of the four U.N. resolutions adopted after Israel’s War of Independence to deal with refugees established such a right, and that the Arab countries voted against them in part for that reason.)
- In **September**, Israel destroyed a secret Syrian installation, later reported to be a nuclear facility, near Deir al-Zor in northeastern Syria.
- The Annapolis Conference was held in **November**. In **December**, Israeli and Palestinian negotiators began formal talks to launch another U.S. brokered peace process. Although no official map has ever been released, Prime Minister Olmert’s peace plan is said to have offered the Palestinian Arabs extensive land swaps in exchange for areas of large Jewish settlement blocks, a free passage route from Hebron to the Gaza Strip and re-dividing Jerusalem to give areas with large Arab populations to the new Palestinian state. PA President Abbas rejected the proposal in 2008 with no counter-offer.
- 2007 drew to a close with a significant drop in Israeli deaths due to suicide bomb attacks. Hamas, however, increased terror attacks from the Gaza Strip on southern Israel.

2008

- In **January**, Palestinian Arabs in the Gaza Strip fired rockets and mortars at nearby Israeli communities. Terrorists fired a Katyusha rocket with extended range from Gaza into northern Ashkelon.
- Hamas succeeded in manipulating a credulous press, alleging that Israel strangled the territory and turned off its power. The Gaza portion of the Palestinian legislative council convened during the day by candlelight in a curtain-closed room to score additional public relations points.
- In **February**, a Hamas suicide bombing in the Israeli town of Dimona, killed one Israeli and injured 23.
- Also this month, Hezbollah terror chief Imad Mugniyeh was assassinated in Damascus. He was believed responsible for, among many attacks, the bombing of the U.S. Marine barracks at Beirut in 1983, the hijacking of TWA flight 847 and the torture murder of U.S. Navy diver Robert Stethem in 1985.

- In **March**, eight yeshiva students were shot dead by an Arab resident of eastern Jerusalem in a terror attack at the Merkaz HaRav Yeshiva in Jerusalem.
- In **November**, Senator Barack Obama (D-Ill.) won the U.S. presidential election, defeating Senator John McCain (R-Ariz).
- Muslim terrorists attacked a Chabad House in Mumbai, India, killing the rabbi, his pregnant wife and seven others. The Chabad attack was one of 10 coordinated assaults in India's largest city and financial capital, in which at least 173 people were murdered and more than 300 were wounded.
- Under Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Israel Defense Forces launched Operation Cast Lead in **December**, a three-week offensive to halt mortar and rocket fire and other attempted attacks on Israel by Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and other terrorist groups from the Gaza Strip.

2009

- In **January**, Israel declared a ceasefire to end Operation Cast Lead in the Gaza Strip. Hamas rejected Israel's ceasefire call, but its leadership announced its own ceasefire 12 hours later. Contrary to Palestinian claims, much press coverage and the U.N.'s Goldstone Commission report, but in accord with later admissions by Hamas, Israel asserted that at least half the approximately 1,400 Arab fatalities during Cast Lead were of Hamas and other combatants; many of the non-combatants essentially were "human shields" among whom Hamas and other Palestinian terrorists sought cover, in violation of international law.
- In **March**, Likud Party chairman Benjamin Netanyahu was sworn in as Israeli prime minister and head of a new government. The Kadima Party (led by Tzipi Livni) had won the election the previous year but had been unable to form a new coalition government with a majority in the 120-seat Knesset (parliament).
- In **May**, Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Barack Obama met at the White House. Netanyahu received a cool reception.
- In a **June** speech in Cairo, President Obama called for a "new beginning between the United States and Muslims." He received criticism for appearing to tie the re-establishment of a Jewish state in *eretz Yisrael* (the land of Israel) in 1948 to the Holocaust, omitting Jewish ties to the land dating back more than 3,000 years.
- In June elections in Iran, incumbent Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (first elected in 2005), claimed victory over challengers including Mir-Hossein Mousavi and Mehdi Karroubi, formerly prominent in the Islamic revolutionary movement. Many Iranians charged voter fraud. Widespread protests and rioting took place in Tehran and other cities, the largest anti-

regime demonstrations since the 1979 Iranian revolution. Iranian security forces suppressed demonstrations, killing many and arresting more.

- Also this month, Prime Minister Netanyahu spoke at Bar Ilan University's Begin-Sadat Center, for the first time publicly endorsing the concept of a West Bank and Gaza Strip Palestinian Arab state alongside Israel, in exchange for peace and recognition of Israel as the Jewish state.
- **September** saw the release of the Goldstone report, ostensibly a U.N. Human Rights Council-commissioned analysis of the Gaza war. The report, by a panel led by South African judge Richard Goldstone, accused both Israel and armed Palestinian groups—by which the Goldstone commission meant but did not specify Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and similar terrorist organizations—of war crimes and possible crimes against humanity in connection with Operation Cast Lead. Two months later, the U.S. House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed a resolution denouncing the Goldstone report as “irredeemably biased and unworthy of further consideration or legitimacy.” A year and a half later, Goldstone retracted central accusations against Israel, most notably that Israeli troops had intentionally targeted Arab civilians. (See April 2011)
- In **November**, Prime Minister Netanyahu announced a ten-month freeze on Israeli construction in West Bank communities in a bid to restart stalled peace talks with the Palestinian Arabs. Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas refused to negotiate for the first nine months. Under U.S. pressure, he temporarily returned to the table in the tenth month, at which time he demanded a total freeze, even on new building inside existing settlements and Jewish neighborhoods in eastern Jerusalem, which no Israeli government had accepted. No progress was made.

2010

- In **May**, Israeli naval forces intercepted six ships attempting to break the naval blockade of the Gaza Strip. These ships were said to be an international “humanitarian aid” flotilla but actually were chartered by the anti-Israel Free Gaza Movement and IHH, a Turkish Islamic charity thought to have ties to Hamas, al-Qaeda and other terrorist organizations. During the boarding of the lead vessel, the Turkish Mavi Marmara, by Israeli commandos, flotilla participants attacked Israeli personnel with knives and metal bars, and wrested firearms from the troops. After seven Israeli soldiers were wounded, others opened fire and killed nine Turks. This led to international outcry against Israel and increased existing tensions between Jerusalem and Turkey's Islamic-leaning government. No humanitarian supplies were found on the Mavi Marmara. The other ships in the flotilla were stopped without casualties and brought to the port in Ashdod, where the participants were held and then released, and the goods sent overland to Gaza, as they could have been without the publicity-seeking flotilla.

- In **July**, the IDF released declassified intelligence maps indicating that Hezbollah, in the four years following the 2006 Israeli-Hezbollah war in Lebanon, had turned more than 100 villages in south Lebanon into military bases. In March 2011 the IDF determined that there were more than 1,000 weapons sites in southern Lebanon, in violation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1701, adopted after the 2006 fighting and that calls for Hezbollah’s disarmament, among other requirements.
- In **December**, WikiLeaks—the Web site exposing secret documents of the United States and its allies—released classified official papers suggesting close cooperation between Israel and forces loyal to President Abbas when rival Hamas gunmen took over the Gaza Strip in June of 2007.
- Also in December, a large natural gas discovery in the eastern Mediterranean Sea within Israel’s territorial waters was revealed. Large quantities of Israeli natural gas were first discovered in 2009, in Israel’s Tamar field.

2011

- In **January**, Qatar-based Al Jazeera satellite TV network released “The Palestine Papers,” purportedly an official trove of documents, e-mails and minutes of meetings shedding light on 10 years of negotiations between Israeli and Palestinian representatives. The papers suggested greater Palestinian flexibility on key issues, including the so-called refugee “right of return,” than acknowledged publicly.
- This month also brought the “Arab Spring”—anti-regime uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Bahrain, Yemen and protests elsewhere in Arab countries. These led to the overthrow of long-time dictators in Tunisia and Egypt, and civil war with NATO involvement in Libya (leader Muammar Gaddafi was killed in October by rebel forces), and large-scale bloody repression in Syria. Whether the upheaval will lead to the establishment of Western-style democracy in some Arab states, the rise of Islamic extremism empowering groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood, regrouping of old autocracies or emergence of new dictators remained to be seen. Israel found itself in an even less stable Middle East and the United States lost long-time partners in the fight against al-Qaeda and related Islamic radicals.
- In **March**, terrorist attacks on Israelis included the murder of five members of the Fogel family in Itamar in Samaria (northern West Bank) and a bomb explosion opposite Jerusalem’s central bus station, killing one person and injuring 39.
- Israel thwarted an Iranian attempt to smuggle weapons into the Gaza Strip via the sea, seizing the “Victoria,” a German-owned ship with more than 50 tons of weapons, including sophisticated missiles.

- The United States vetoed a U.N. resolution declaring that settlements were “illegal.” However, Washington still labeled the Jewish communities in the West Bank “illegitimate.” This position contradicts the League of Nations’ Palestine Mandate, Article 6, which called for “close Jewish settlement” on the land west of the Jordan River. The Mandate’s Article 6 is upheld by the U.N. Charter’s Article 80.
- In an **April** Op-Ed piece in *The Washington Post*, Judge Goldstone retracted his statements accusing Israel of crimes against humanity, stating that Israel did not intentionally target civilians in the Gaza Strip. Many major news media all but ignored the retraction of key charges in the U.N’s “Goldstone commission” report.
- Hamas and Fatah signed a new unity agreement this month. Hamas refused to renounce anti-Israel terrorism, accept previous Palestinian-Israel agreements or recognize Israel’s legitimacy. These conditions had been set by the diplomatic “Quartet” of the United States, United Nations, European Union and Russia for Quartet acceptance of Hamas in the PA.
- The month of **May** brought “Nakba Day,” (*nakba* is an Arabic word meaning “catastrophe” and used by many Palestinian Arabs and other Arabs and Muslims to recall the “catastrophe” of the creation of the state of Israel), including violent riots along Israel’s borders. Fatah, Israel’s “peace partner,” called for a third *intifada*.
- Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden was killed in Pakistan by United States Navy SEALs. Hamas and Fatah-affiliated terrorist groups condemned his killing. Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood honored him with the title “sheikh,” defended “resistance” against the United States as “legitimate,” and endorsed attacks on Israeli civilians saying, “We will resist them until they don’t have a country.”
- This month also brought a “war of words” among Palestinian Authority President Abbas, U.S. President Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu:
 - First, PA President Abbas wrote a *New York Times* commentary in which he misrepresented Arab-Israeli history, in part by including stories about Arab refugees from what became Israel in 1948 that contradict his own past admissions and well-documented facts of the period.
 - Two days later, President Obama, in a speech at the State Department discussing Middle East events and in anticipation of Prime Minister Netanyahu’s visit to Washington, declared: “The borders of Israel and Palestine should be based on the 1967 lines with mutually agreed swaps, so that secure and recognized borders are established for both states.”
 - Over the next several days, Prime Minister Netanyahu—first in a press conference with President Obama, then in a speech to the registered American pro-Israel lobby AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee), and again while addressing

Congress—stressed that Israel was prepared to make “painful concessions” to reach peace. However, he asserted:

1. Israel’s pre-1967 boundary with the West Bank—the 1949 Israeli-Jordanian armistice line—was “indefensible”;
 2. Jerusalem—the physical, historical and spiritual center of Judaism and the Jewish people—cannot be divided;
 3. Palestinian Arab refugees and their descendants may be absorbed by a new Palestinian state but not Israel.
- In late May, President Abbas declared Prime Minister Netanyahu’s speech full of “lies and distortions.”
- After cooperating more or less with Israel for four years in restricting transit to and from the Gaza Strip following Hamas’ 2006 election victory, Egypt dropped many restrictions on its Rafah border crossing with Gaza.
 - In a **June** commemoration of “Naksa,” (an Arabic term for the “setback” suffered by Arabs in losing eastern Jerusalem, the West Bank, the Golan Heights, the Gaza Strip and Sinai in the Six-Day War that began on June 5, 1967), hundreds of Palestinian Arab rioters attempted—with official Syrian acquiescence—to infiltrate Israel in two locations on the Syrian border. They were rebuffed by the IDF, determined to prevent a repeat of “Nakba Day,” in which rioters infiltrated Israeli territory. Syrian television claimed that 20 rioters were killed and 225 wounded; Israel reported fewer casualties.
 - In **July**, a Palestinian Authority summer camp for children named three of its divisions after Palestinian terrorists. Earlier, a Fatah summer camp group and a college class were also named after terrorists.
 - In **August**, eight Israelis were killed and 30 wounded during a terror attack along the Israeli-Egyptian border; five Egyptian police and/or soldiers were killed during Israeli retaliatory actions; Israel subsequently expressed regret for their deaths.
 - The Israeli Defense Force (IDF) continued to deploy the defensive missile system Iron Dome to protect cities and towns from rocket attack, primarily from Hamas in the south and Hezbollah in the north. The system worked, albeit with some technical difficulties, and was to be followed by the deployment of a strategic missile defensive system, Magic Wand.
 - Congress advanced a measure to block U.S. funding to any United Nations member or group supporting an upgrade of the Palestinian Authority’s diplomatic status to statehood or sovereign observer level. The U.S. State Department criticized Congress’ action.
 - In **September**, thousands of Egyptians mobbed the Israeli embassy in Cairo, and Israel was forced to airlift 86 Israelis (diplomats and their families) to safety. Anti-Israel sentiment in

Egypt had been vociferous since the border deaths of five Egyptian soldiers at the hands of Israeli forces searching for terrorists following the August attack.

- A U.N. “anti-racism” event, Durban III, was held in New York City; Israel and major Western nations boycotted it, rejecting it as antisemitic.
- Ignoring President Obama’s plea to drop his bid for a unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) for a state of Palestine and to instead negotiate directly with Israel, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas spoke to the U.N. General Assembly, requesting formal recognition of a Palestinian state comprised of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and eastern Jerusalem. Addressing to the General Assembly soon after, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that Palestinian Arabs need to recognize Israel as the Jewish state and make peace with it before being awarded a state of their own. If necessary, the United States planned to veto the Palestinian statehood bid at the Security Council.
- Antisemitism and anti-Israel activity increased on U.S. college campuses. The movement calling for boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) against Israel gained traction, with anti-Israel groups calling for the boycott of Israeli goods such as Ahava cosmetics as well as divestment from companies such as Caterpillar, Hewlett Packard and Motorola for doing business with Israel.
- In **October**, unrest and instability continued in Egypt as elections were postponed. Riots apparently instigated by members of the Muslim majority against the Coptic Christian minority continued, resulting in the killing of dozens of Copts and the destruction of Christian churches.
- After months of fighting between Libyan dictator Muammar Qaddafi’s forces and anti-Qaddafi rebels, the insurgents gained control of Libya and killed Qaddafi. However, Libya remained divided among tribes, Islamists and secularists, regions and former Qaddafi supporters and opponents.
- The first free election in Tunisia’s history brought the Islamist party Ennahda to power. It had been banned under deposed President Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali, accused of being a Muslim extremist group.
- Israel and Hamas agreed to a prisoner swap, freeing Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, held in the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip for more than five years, in return for 1,027 Palestinian Arabs (many convicted and jailed for murders of Israelis and Americans) held in Israel prisons. Hamas immediately called for the abduction of more Israeli soldiers to use as bargaining chips to secure the freedom of thousands more Palestinian prisoners.
- Egypt agreed to free American-Israeli citizen Ilan Grapel in return for 25 Egyptians held in Israel. Grapel was accused of spying for Israel, a charge Israel denied.

- Turkey threatened military action against Israel and Cyprus for drilling for natural gas in areas of the Mediterranean Sea it claims is under its jurisdiction; in reaction, Israel increased its security and military cooperation with Cyprus and Greece.
- The sophisticated Stuxnet virus was reported to have slowed down Iran’s nuclear weapons program, yet the actual damage done remained uncertain.
- Palestinian Arabs continued to refuse to negotiate with Israel unless Israel accepted their preconditions; Israel Prime Minister Netanyahu again offered to freeze construction in Judea and Samaria in return for negotiations, a concession rejected by Palestinian Authority President Abbas who demanded a moratorium that included Jerusalem.
- Britain changed its war crimes law, which had been used to threaten Israelis considering travel to the country with arrest for such crimes. In 2009, former Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni canceled a trip to Britain when a warrant for her arrest was issued on war crimes charges linked to Israel’s Gaza campaign in that year.
- The Iranian regime was accused of being behind a foiled plot to kill the Saudi ambassador on U.S. soil and to bomb the Saudi and Israeli embassies in Washington, D.C.
- Missile barrages from the Gaza Strip hit southern Israeli towns and cities; one Israeli from Ashkelon was killed, and Israel retaliated, killing 10 terrorists.
- Syria threatened to attack Western interests throughout the Middle East if NATO countries intervened militarily in its spreading internal upheaval.
- The United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) voted overwhelmingly to approve full Palestinian membership. This was part of a continuing attempt by the Palestinian Authority for full recognition as a state. Israel feared that, among other things, the Palestinian Arabs would use membership in UNESCO to lay claim to Jewish holy sites. The United States, Canada, Germany and Holland voted against Palestinian membership. Britain and Italy abstained. The United States noted it was required by law to deny funds to UNESCO under the circumstances.
- In a pro-Israel *New York Times* Op-Ed piece, Judge Richard Goldstone wrote: “In Israel, there is no apartheid. . . . Nothing there comes close to the definition of apartheid under the 1998 Rome Statute.” Goldstone, who served on South Africa’s Supreme Court during the apartheid era, most recently had been known for a U.N. report on Israel’s “Operation Cast Lead,” which became a touchstone for anti-Israel polemics. Goldstone later retracted many of the report’s defamatory statements against Israel and, in this latest Op-Ed, defended Israel’s counter-terrorism measures.

- In **November**, much more evidence was gathered about Iran’s growing nuclear program.
 - Intelligence provided to U.N. nuclear officials showed that Iran’s government had mastered the critical steps needed to build a nuclear weapon.
 - Intelligence gathered by Israel ahead of a report by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) indicated that Iran had tested nuclear triggering technology and modified ballistic missiles to carry nuclear warheads. Israeli sources stated that their latest evidence proved that Iran’s nuclear program was designed to produce weapons rather than for civil purposes, as Tehran claimed. Shimon Peres, the president of Israel, said that the international community was moving closer to pursuing a military solution to the stand-off.
 - A report released by the International Atomic Energy Agency showed that Iran had a secret enrichment program, was simulating nuclear explosions, working on nuclear triggers and developing a nuclear warhead. The report said that Iran had made preparations for an underground nuclear test.

- A former Iranian intelligence official who defected claimed that Tehran helped plot the September 11 attacks. The defector said that in addition to helping devise the plan, Iran supplied training in “airliner hijacking” and provided “material support for hundreds of al Qaeda fighters” after September 11, 2001.

- Israel’s reserves of natural gas, under development in the offshore Mediterranean, were poised to rise substantially in the near future, as estimates were revised upward.

- A massive explosion at a military arms depot near the Iranian capital Tehran killed at about 20 top commanders of Iran’s Revolutionary Guard, including Gen. Hasan Tehrani Moghaddam, the general who founded and led the country’s missile program. A second mysterious explosion occurred in an Iranian nuclear facility, near the city of Isfahan.

- As Egyptian control of terrorists and Bedouin smugglers in the Sinai Peninsula weakened, Israel continued building a border fence along its boundary with Egypt, to prevent the infiltration of terrorists and refugees and asylum seekers from Africa.

- Three U.S. officials, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Ambassador to Belgium Howard Gutman criticized Israel, indicating that the United States believed Israel to be responsible for the impasse in negotiations with the Palestinian Authority. Panetta said that the Israelis should just “get to the damn table” to negotiate; Clinton claimed equality for women in Israel was being undermined by fervently Orthodox Jews, and that Knesset bills aimed at limiting foreign funding for anti-government organizations would weaken democracy; and Gutman made statements implying that Israel’s treatment of the Palestinian Arabs was a key cause of international antisemitism.

- Amid mounting casualties in Syria, the U.N. Human Rights Council strongly condemned Syria for “gross and systematic” violations by its forces, including killings, that it said may amount to crimes against humanity.
- Iran captured what appeared to be an advanced U.S. unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV, or drone), likely endangering U.S. military secrets. This raised concern that a U.S. or Israeli mission to destroy Iran’s nuclear capabilities might become more difficult.
- Rival Palestinian factions reached an agreement to admit Hamas (the Islamic Resistance Movement) into the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The membership would be a significant step toward unifying Palestinian leadership, and potentially clear the way for Hamas, which rules the Gaza Strip, to promote itself as the leader of all Palestinian Arabs.
- Iran threatened to close the Strait of Hormuz if increasingly severe economic sanctions were imposed upon it by the United States and other nations.
- The United States announced a \$30 billion deal to sell to Saudi Arabia 84 new F-15 fighter jets, as well as to upgrade 70 older jets.
- In late **December**, the president of the new nation of South Sudan visited Jerusalem. This was his first foreign visit as president. Israel supported South Sudan in its effort to secede from Islamist-ruled Sudan and become an independent state.

2012

- In **January**, Islamists in Egypt prepared to take control of the Egyptian parliament. Led by the Muslim Brotherhood, they stated that they would never recognize Israel and that Egyptians should be prepared for war.
- Hamas co-founder Mahmoud Zahar stated that there is no Israeli occupation of Gaza, according to the *Ma’an* Palestinian news agency. Yet, in a report issued in the name of the U.N. secretary-general, the United Nations continued to refer to “occupied Palestinian territory, specifically, the Gaza Strip.”
- At the end of a ten-day military exercise, Iran claimed it tested a missile that could hit Israel and U.S. bases in the Middle East.
- Since “Palestine” was voted into UNESCO last year, Palestinian officials attempted to designate the Machpelah (Tomb of the Patriarchs) in Hebron a Palestinian “World Heritage Site.” Palestinian Arab representatives claim that the burial place of the Jewish patriarchs and matriarchs is a mosque. Israelis and Jews worldwide fear Palestinian and/or Muslim religious authorities will attempt to prohibit or restrict Jews from praying there, as they did

with the Western Wall before 1967 and have done at the Tomb of Joseph in Nablus (Shechem).

- An Iranian university professor and nuclear scientist was killed in a bomb blast in Tehran. Tehran blamed Israel for the assassination, a charge Israel denied.
- Greece and Israel pledged to boost defense cooperation during a visit to Greece by Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak. Traditionally pro-Arab, Greece did not officially recognize Israel until 1991.
- Turkey stated that it will not allow its territory to be used for a strike on Iran. The U.S. military has bases in Turkey.
- Iran announced that its underground nuclear installation near Qom would be operational soon, thus reaching another milestone in Iran's effort to become a nuclear power.
- Anti-Israeli, antisemitic incitement common among Palestinian Arabs continued. The Palestinian Authority's principal Islamic religious leader, Mufti Muhammed Hussein, declared that killing of Jews should be a religious goal. His statement highlighted continuing antisemitic incitement by PA representatives and agencies, in violation of the 1995 Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement and other pacts.
- In his State of the Union address, President Obama said: "Let there be no doubt: America is determined to prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon, and I will take no options off the table to achieve that goal. But a peaceful resolution of this issue is still possible, and far better, and if Iran changes course and meets its obligations, it can rejoin the community of nations."
- The head of the Palestinian negotiating team, Saeb Erekat stated that from the Palestinian Arabs' standpoint, peace negotiations with Israel have ended. Israel said that it is willing to resume negotiating with the Palestinian Arabs without preconditions.
- In **February**, IDF Intelligence head Aviv Kochavi reported that Israel's enemies had 200,000 rockets and missiles pointed at the country, and could reach all parts of Israel—even the ostensibly safe "center" of Tel Aviv and its suburbs.
- A report released by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) stated that Israel is the second most highly educated country in the world. Canada was ranked first.
- It became public that PA President Mahmoud Abbas and Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal reached an agreement in Cairo on December 22, 2011, on national reconciliation and a

strategic partnership. However, the two sides have not officially cemented their new partnership.

- In the twelfth such strike in the past year, saboteurs blew up an Egyptian pipeline that supplied natural gas to Israel and Jordan.
- Continuing the hostile policies of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s Islamist Justice and Development Party, Turkey blocked an Israeli plan to contribute a missile ship to NATO’s “Active Endeavor” mission in the Mediterranean Sea. NATO patrols against ships suspected of involvement in terrorism.
- Terrorist bombers attacked Israel embassy staffers in India. In New Delhi, the wife of Israel’s defense attaché was injured by shrapnel, along with three Indians. Israel accused Iran of being behind this attack as well as a thwarted car bomb attack in Tbilisi, Georgia. A reported attempt on Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barack’s life was foiled in Singapore. Iranian and Hezbollah operatives were suspected. Also, a terrorist plot to attack Israeli interests in Bangkok, Thailand, went awry, as three bombs exploded prematurely.
- Prime Minister Netanyahu paid an historic visit to Cyprus, this being the first time an Israeli leader visited the nearby island nation. Relations between Israel and Cyprus have been historically chilly, but in the face of turmoil in the Middle East, both states were interested in upgrading ties.
- A Gallup Poll asked Americans if they felt favorably or unfavorably toward several countries. The results for Israel were: 71 percent favorable, 24 percent unfavorable. Israel’s “very favorable” rating of 29 percent was the highest in the past 23 years, while its overall favorable rating was the highest since 1991. (It was 79 percent just after the First Gulf War.)
- In **March**, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu visited the United States and Canada, meeting with U.S. President Obama and Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper. It was reported in the Israeli press that Obama offered to give Israel advanced “bunker buster” bombs and long-range refueling planes—if Israel agreed not to attack Iran during 2012.
- More than 150 rockets were fired at Israel from the Gaza Strip, while the Iron Dome system intercepted more than 50. Two of the rockets exploded near Gedera, only 25 miles south of Tel Aviv. Rockets were also fired toward Ashkelon, Ashdod and Beersheva. In an exchange of fire, at least 24 Palestinian Arabs were killed, the majority of them terrorists—including 14 from Islamic Jihad—and four civilians. At least one million Israelis were forced to take cover.
- Egypt’s new parliament, dominated by two pro-Sharia (Islamic law) groups, the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafists, voted unanimously to expel Israel’s ambassador and raised doubts about the future of the 1979 Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty.

- Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu said his country could not afford to wait much longer for diplomacy and sanctions to deter Iran’s nuclear program. Speaking to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), Netanyahu said all options are on the table to keep Iran from obtaining a nuclear bomb.
- An increasing number of Israeli military and intelligence officials advocated not striking Iran in the near future. Ex-Mossad Chief Meir Dagan stated that fomenting regime change was a better tactic.
- Additional large quantities of oil and natural gas were discovered off the coast of Tel Aviv. The find is 15 miles offshore, and surveys indicate the area could yield as much as 232 million barrels of oil and 1.8 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. In the meantime, the cut-off of Egyptian gas supplies and the faster-than-expected depletion of existing gas fields had cost the Israeli economy an estimated \$4 billion.
- Nearly 200,000 West Bank Palestinian patients and those accompanying them were granted entry permits to Israel for medical treatment in 2011, a 13 percent increase from 2010.
- A U.S. State Department spokesman refused to state that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel, instead stating that its status is subject to negotiation.
- March 30th, which marked the Palestinian annual “Land Day,” was intended to be a “Global March to Jerusalem.” It had been widely publicized to encourage “millions of people” from Arab countries, Gaza and the West Bank to crash Israel’s borders. However, only a few thousand appeared at the Gaza border in addition to a few hundred rock throwers in the West Bank and minor protests in neighboring countries.
- Since the beginning of 2012, the IDF foiled more than 10 terror attacks originating in Sinai. Islamic terrorist groups have become a major security risk to both Israel and Egypt. In April alone, Islamic extremists launched rockets at Eilat and besieged an outpost of the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) in the Sinai desert until their demands were met² the release of those who carried out attacks in 2004 and 2005 that killed 125 people at the Red Sea resorts of Sharm el-Sheikh, Dahab and Taba.
- The U.N. Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People convened in Geneva on Palestinian “political” prisoners held in Israeli prisons. Israelis were equated with Nazis and Palestinian Arabs with Holocaust victims. The committee claimed Jews have no historical ties to the Land of Israel and justified violence on Israelis in the name of self-determination. The committee was created by the U.N. General Assembly in 1975 to implement the infamous “Zionism is racism” resolution. Though the resolution was rescinded 16 years later, the U.N.’s anti-Israel campaign continues.

- Publicized details about imprisoned Fatah leader Marwan Barghouti's 2002 interrogation indicated that he had confessed to giving instructions and money to Fatah terrorist groups who murdered Israeli citizens. Barghouti, sometimes spoken of as a successor to Mahmoud Abbas, is serving five consecutive life sentences and an additional 40 years for his part in terror attacks. Barghouti said that one reason he chose to take part in the terror attacks against Israelis was to bolster his reputation in the West Bank and give him priority over leaders who "didn't dirty their hands."
- During an **April 60 Minutes** segment, "Christians of the Holy Land," CBS Television correspondent Bob Simon blamed Israel for what he termed an exodus of Palestinian Christians from the West Bank. Simon made his statement during an interview with Israeli Ambassador to the United States Michael Oren. In actuality, although the percentage of Christians has decreased due to an increase in the Muslim population, the actual number of Christians in the area has increased since Israel took control of the territory.
- The British newspaper *The Guardian* stated in a photo caption that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel. Three days later *The Guardian* issued a "correction" that Jerusalem was wrongly referred to as Israel's capital and instead described Tel Aviv as Israel's capital.
- Egypt terminated its agreement to provide natural gas to Israel.
- A Palestinian court sentenced a West Bank Arab to death for selling a home in Hebron near the Cave of the Patriarchs to Jews. He was arrested shortly after several Jewish families moved into the house last month. He reportedly was tortured and quickly tried and sentenced to die by a PA court. Palestinian law forbids the sale of property to Jews.
- Historian Benzion Netanyahu, father of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, died at the age of 102. He was well known for his contributions to Jewish and Zionist history.
- Israel received a fourth Dolphin submarine from Germany and has ordered two more. The new sub, called "Tanin" (alligator), was to be operational in 2013. According to military sources, the submarines are equipped to carry Israel-made cruise missiles with a range of 900 miles and the ability to carry nuclear warheads, giving Israel "second-strike" capabilities in case of a nuclear attack.
- At a rally in Amman, Jordan, thousands of Jordanians demanded an end to the country's 1994 peace treaty with Israel, and the expulsion of the Israeli ambassador.
- In the face of increasing hostility and civil war in Syria, satellites spotted movements of Syrian heavy missile launchers toward Syria's borders with Turkey and Israel. Syria threatened that in the event of foreign military intervention on its soil, it would not hesitate to fire missiles at Israel and Turkey in order to ignite a large-scale regional war.

- In a surprise move, Israel’s Likud and Kadima parties agreed to form a unity government, thus averting the prospect of early elections. Prime Minister Netanyahu and Kadima Chairman Shaul Mofaz completed the unity agreement hours before the Knesset was expected to approve its own dissolution and set September 4 as the date for the next elections. The agreement collapsed 70 days later over disagreement about how to expand the military draft and national service to exempted ultra-Orthodox yeshiva students.
- Israel mobilized six reserve battalions (approximately 400 soldiers per battalion) and the military received the government’s permission to mobilize sixteen more, a security measure due to potential problems in the Sinai Desert and the volatile situation in Syria.
- In a televised address, Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah said his terrorist group was capable of striking any target in Israel. Nasrallah claimed “the days when we fled and they did not are over. . . . Today we are not only able to hit Tel Aviv as a city but, God willing, we are able to hit specific targets in Tel Aviv and anywhere in occupied Palestine.”
- Israel struck oil again, this time off the Tel Aviv coast. Developers estimate that the find includes more than 100 million barrels of oil, worth \$10 billion.
- Palestinian Authority President Abbas again rejected Prime Minister Netanyahu’s offer to resume negotiations without preconditions.
- The International Olympic Committee rejected an Israeli call for a moment of silence at the 2012 London Games to mark the 40th anniversary of the Munich terrorist attack in which PLO terrorists murdered 11 Israeli athletes.
- Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Seyed Hassan Firouzabadi said threats and pressures cannot deter Iran from its revolutionary causes and ideals. He stressed that “the Iranian nation is standing for its cause, that is the full annihilation of Israel.” The top military official reminded that “the Iranian Supreme Leader considers defending Palestine as a full religious duty and believes that any kind of governance and rule by anyone other than the Palestinians is an instance of usurpation.”
- Sen. Mark Kirk (R.-Ill.), proposed language for the 2013 foreign appropriations bill that would require the U.S. government to confirm how many Palestinian Arabs currently served by the U.N. Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)—the body tasked with providing assistance, protection and advocacy for Palestinian refugees—are actually refugees, that is, people permanently displaced by Israel’s 1948 War of Independence or the 1967 Six-Day War. This move, opposed by the White House and State Department, could result in a change of status for millions of Arabs designated by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency as Palestinian refugees but who are in fact their descendants. Other groups of international refugees have not “inherited” refugee status. Approximately 30,000 Palestinian Arab

refugees from among the estimated 420,000 to 650,000 who fled what became Israel in 1948 are believed still to be living.

- A piece of clay was found during archaeological excavations at the City of David, in Jerusalem, bearing the name of the city of Bethlehem in ancient Hebrew script. The shard dates to the First Temple period (1006 – 586 BCE), making it the first tangible evidence of Bethlehem's existence in ancient times.
- Another computer virus —Flame—was reported to have attacked Iranian computers, as well as computers in other Middle East countries. It was considered to be part of a cyber-espionage and warfare campaign against Iran. Officials said that Stuxnet and possibly Flame likely were the work of U.S. and Israeli experts.
- Satellite imaging confirmed that Iran conducted a clean-up operation, razing two buildings near a suspected nuclear-trigger test site inside of its Parchin military complex. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) unsuccessfully demanded access to this site. In the meantime, Iran increased output of low-enriched uranium, and total production in the last five years would be enough for at least five nuclear weapons if refined much further, the Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS) said.
- A court in Istanbul, Turkey approved indictments against four senior Israeli military figures for involvement in a raid on the Turkish vessel Mavi Marmara, which had been trying to breach Israel's naval blockade of the Gaza Strip in May 2010. Israel has insisted that its soldiers acted in self-defense when they killed nine attacking Turks, and a U.N. report subsequently found that Israel's naval blockade was legal and appropriate.
- Israel transferred the bodies of 91 Palestinian terrorists, including several suicide bombers who murdered dozens of Israelis, to Palestinian authorities, saying it hoped the move would help restart peace efforts. The Palestinian Authority and Hamas both planned official memorial ceremonies since they regard the terrorists as heroes.
- In **June**, Mohammed Morsi, a senior member of the Muslim Brotherhood, was declared the winner of the presidential election in Egypt. He defeated Ahmed Shafiq, a retired general and previous prime minister under President Mubarak. Morsi's win raised fears about the growing Islamization of Egyptian society.
- The Israeli High Court of Justice ruled that the state must dismantle five apartment buildings in Ulpana, on the outskirts of the Beit El settlement. The court ruled that they were built without permits on land classified by the state as belonging to private Palestinian Arabs.
- UNESCO's World Heritage committee approved an emergency Palestinian bid to place the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem on its list of World Heritage in Danger sites. Israel and

the United States strongly opposed the bid, arguing that the church was not under threat, a position backed by a U.N. experts committee. The Palestinians joined UNESCO earlier this year, in a move seen as part of a wider Palestinian attempt to win global recognition for a state of Palestine in the disputed territories.

- An Israeli government-appointed judicial commission headed by retired Supreme Court Justice Edmond Levy presented its report on settlements and outposts in the West Bank. It stated that Israel's presence in the West Bank was not occupation and recommended that the state grant approval for Jewish settlements there. And though the findings comported with Israel's long-standing interpretations of the League of Nations' Palestine Mandate (including Article 6, encouraging "close Jewish settlement" on the land), U.N. Charter (Article 80, upholding Mandate Article 6), the 1924 Anglo-American agreement, the Fourth Geneva Convention, U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 and the diplomatic record underlying the resolution, the findings prompted widespread criticism and condemnation.
- In **July**, an Hamas leader, Ibrahim Hamed, who planned suicide bombings in which scores of Israelis were murdered, was sentenced by Israel to 54 life prison terms.
- The U.S. Presbyterian General Assembly voted 333-331, with two abstentions, to reject a proposal to divest from three companies that do business with Israel's security forces. The proposal demonized Israeli self-defense and threatened Christian-Jewish relations.
- Lockheed Martin Corp. said it planned to deliver 20 state-of-the-art F-35 fighter planes in 2016. Israeli airmen would train in the United States and return to Israel at the beginning of 2017. The transaction will cost approximately \$2.7 billion.
- Israel and China signed agreements to build an Eilat railway, linking the port of Eilat to the ports of Ashdod and Haifa, permitting shippers to bypass the Suez Canal. Such a rail line would lessen the impact of any Egyptian blockage of Israeli access to the Suez Canal.
- An Israeli tour bus carrying dozens of vacationers in the Bulgarian resort city of Burgas exploded in a terrorist bombing, killing five Israelis and a Bulgarian driver, and injuring more than 30. Bulgarian investigators said agents of the Iranian-back Lebanese Hezbollah perpetrated the attack.
- A World Bank report concluded that the Palestinian economy was not strong enough to support a state, and that Palestinian economic growth was unsustainable due to its heavy reliance on foreign aid. Israeli restrictions also were cited as an impediment to Palestinian investing; Israel said restrictions were based on security requirements.
- U.S. President Barack Obama signed the bipartisan U.S.-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act, which provided additional support for various Israeli defense systems as

well as the extension of loan guarantees for Israel and encouragement of an expanded role for Israel within NATO.

- In **August**, violence increased near Israel's border with Sinai. Early in the month, terrorists killed at least 15 Egyptian policemen in an assault on a police station. A week later, Egyptian security forces arrested suspected terrorists after a firefight in Egypt's north Sinai region. The Egyptian army deployed large anti-terrorist forces in parts of Sinai, ostensibly to crush terrorist activity there yet without consulting Israel. This violated the 1979 Camp David peace accord between Israel and Egypt since Egyptian military presence in Sinai is limited according to the treaty.
- More Syrian government and military officials defected to rebel forces, including Brig. Gen. Manaf Tlass, a member of the Syrian president's inner circle and senior officer in the Republican Guard, and Syrian Prime Minister Riyad Farid Hijab.
- The Palestinian Authority, despite its Oslo Accords commitment to stamp out terror and anti-Israel incitement, began building a mausoleum in Ramallah to honor 11 terrorists who murdered eight civilian hostages and three IDF soldiers in the 1975 attack on Tel Aviv's Savoy Hotel.
- In a speech published on his Web site, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said the ultimate goal of world forces must be the annihilation of Israel and that "liberating Palestine" would solve all the world's problems. He also told a rally that Israel is a "cancerous tumor" that will soon be destroyed.
- Members of the United Church of Canada, the country's largest Protestant denomination, voted to affirm a motion supporting a boycott of goods produced in Israeli communities on the West Bank and in eastern Jerusalem.
- The annual Shanghai Jiao Tong report listed three universities in Israel (Hebrew University, the Technion Israel Institute of Technology and the Weizmann Institute) among the world's top 100 universities. Hebrew University and the Technion ranked 38th and 39th in science.
- An Israeli judge ruled that Israel was not responsible for the death of Rachel Corrie, the American woman run over by a military bulldozer in 2003 as she protested the demolition of Palestinian homes in the Gaza Strip. The report called her death a "regrettable accident." Her family and anti-Israel groups have tried to portray Corrie as a "martyr" to Palestinian "resistance."
- PA President Mahmoud Abbas once again denied the Jewish connection to Jerusalem, on the 43rd anniversary of an attempt by an Australian Christian to set fire to al Aqsa mosque. According to Abbas, "the fire, set by a criminal under the eyes of the Israeli Occupation

Authorities, was the first attack in a series aiming to demolish al Aqsa mosque and build the alleged Temple in order to uproot its citizens, Judaize it and eternalize its occupation.” His statement insisted that all Israeli excavation work in Jerusalem and tunnels underneath the mosque “will not undermine the fact that the city will forever be Arabic, Islamic and Christian.” It concluded “that there will be no peace or stability before our beloved city and eternal capital is liberated from occupation and settlement.”

- In **September**, the Democratic Party deleted a platform reference to Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, then reinserted it during the party’s convention preceding the November 2012 election. The 2012 Democratic Party platform was silent on the Palestinian refugee issue, whereas the 2004 and 2008 platforms stipulated that, as part of the peace process in creating a Palestinian state, “the issue of Palestinian refugees” should be resolved “by allowing them to settle there, rather than in Israel.”
- Foreign terrorism against the United States included attacks in Libya and Egypt. The September 11 attack on the U.S. Consulate in Benghazi, Libya resulted in the murder of Ambassador Chris Stevens and three other American staffers by groups sympathetic to al-Qaeda.
- PA President Mahmoud Abbas addressed the U.N. General Assembly, and asserted that the peace process with Israel was dead. He claimed that the only course open was to impose a solution rather than reaching one through negotiations.
- Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu also addressed the U.N. General Assembly. Displaying a drawing of a bomb, he explained the three stages of enriching uranium and drew a red line, showing the stage at which Iran must be stopped. He said all attempts to persuade Iran to halt its progress toward developing a nuclear weapon (including economic sanctions) had failed so far, and he urged the world to impose a strict red line on Iran to prevent war.
- Egypt requested that Israel reassess the 1979 Camp David Accords—to alter sections that limit Egyptian military presence in Sinai. Only through this change, Egypt said, can Egyptian forces defeat armed groups in Sinai and reestablish security for both Egypt and Israel. Israel was skeptical about making this amendment because Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi and the dominant Muslim Brotherhood have a radical, anti-Israeli ideology.
- Israel's Interior Ministry reported that in August, only 199 infiltrators crossed into Israel from Egypt, compared to 2,000 in August 2011. The ministry attributed the drop to the near-completion of the security fence along Israel’s southern border.
- Iran established a training base in northern Nicaragua near the border with Honduras that reportedly was used by Hezbollah.

- In **October**, Israel shot down an unmanned drone that entered its airspace from the Mediterranean Sea, marking the first time in at least six years that a hostile aircraft penetrated Israel's airspace. Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah claimed responsibility, saying the device was built by Iran. In November, Nasrallah asserted that Hezbollah **missiles** could strike all of Israel.
- More than 3,500 American service members joined Israeli counterparts for *Exercise Austere Challenge 2012* in Israel. U.S. forces manned Patriot anti-missile systems, an Aegis ballistic missile defense ship and various other air defense systems. The Israelis fielded more than 1,000 service members and tested the Iron Dome short-range missile defense and the medium-to-long range Arrow 2 and David's Sling systems.
- An Iranian missile production and warehouse facility in Sudan was destroyed in an air attack. Both Iran and Sudan accused Israel of being responsible, which Jerusalem denied.
- In **November**, Arab Knesset member Aatef Karinaoui discussed El Amal Lat'gir ("Hope for Change" in Arabic), the first pro-Israel Arab party and his plan to run in the Knesset elections in January 2013. By forming this party, he hoped for full integration and cooperation with Israel, "a wonderful place for Arabs. . . the only democracy in the Middle East."
- Egypt's President Mohammed Morsi attempted to seize additional power, effectively making himself a dictator and placing himself beyond the law, including issuing a decree shielding his decisions from judicial review. Egypt erupted in violent protests. After days of protests, Morsi agreed to a partial retreat.
- On November 14, Israel launched Operation Pillar of Defense in response to incessant rocket attacks from *the Gaza Strip*. The operation began when the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) assassinated Ahmed Jabari, the head of Hamas' terrorist operations against Israel. During the next eight days, the IDF targeted more than 1,500 terrorist sites across the Strip and destroyed most of Hamas's [longer-range missiles](#). Of the 1,506 rockets fired from Gaza, more than 800 struck Israel, damaging a relatively small number of homes, schools and other civilian infrastructure, but some reaching Tel Aviv and Jerusalem for the first time. Four hundred and twenty-one rockets on trajectories likely to hit populated areas were intercepted by the Iron Dome. Many of the rockets fired at Israel from Gaza were provided by Iran.
- On November 29, the U.N. General Assembly voted overwhelmingly to grant "Palestine" the status of "non-member observer state." This date was the 65th anniversary of the Partition Plan for Palestine (U.N. Resolution 181)—which proposed dividing what remained of British Mandatory Palestine (the land west of the Jordan River) into a Jewish and an Arab state. The plan was accepted by the Jews and rejected by the Arabs. PA President Mahmoud Abbas

ostensibly chose the anniversary of this resolution to show what he considered to be the basis of a “two-state solution.” The Palestinian Authority planned to use the upgrade in status to fulfill two political objectives: (1) to declare all disputed lands in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Israel as Palestinian “occupied territory” and (2) to change the status of Palestinian terrorists in Israel’s prisons to “freedom fighters” and “prisoners of war.”

- On the same evening “Palestine” was granted non-member observer state status, Palestinian U.N. representative Riyadh Mansour opened an exhibit in the public entrance hall of the U.N. New York headquarters, which included depicting all of Israel as Palestine, matching the logo on the cover page of Mahmoud Abbas’ speech to the General Assembly.
- Amid condemnation by the United States, European nations and others, the Israel Land Authority approved new construction in eastern Jerusalem neighborhoods. Israel also announced building in the roughly four square mile E-1 development area connecting the Maaleh Adumim suburb to Jerusalem. Israel’s position is that building a Jewish-populated corridor to Maaleh Adumim would prevent the division of Jerusalem and establish a defensible line along its eastern border, without presenting a problem for Palestinian contiguity.
- In **December**, fighting continued between Syrian government forces and rebel forces. According to a U.N. representative, more than 70,000 Syrians had been killed in the fighting.
- Egyptians voted in favor of a new constitution, considered a victory for President Mohammed Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood. The opposition argued that the charter promoted Islamic law while curbing civil liberties in general, women’s rights and those of religious majorities such as the Coptic Christians in particular.
- The Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America (CAMERA) released a comprehensive study of the *New York Times* for July-December 2011, detailing an anti-Israel double standard in the paper’s coverage of the Jewish state and its neighbors, Palestinian Arabs in particular.
- Israel announced that it would build an improved security fence along its border with Syria to prepare for possible instability after the potential fall of President Bashar al-Assad. The improved fence was intended to strengthen an existing barrier along the 59-mile armistice line in the Golan Heights, and would include cameras and trenches.

2013

- In **January**, PA President Mahmoud Abbas mandated that official Palestinian documents carry a “State of Palestine” emblem. A U.S. State Department spokesperson expressed United States opposition to Abbas’ request, saying. “You can’t create a state by rhetoric and with labels and names . . . You can only create a state, in this context, through bilateral negotiations.”

- PA President Mahmoud Abbas reportedly requested Israel to allow the resettlement of 150,000 Palestinian Arabs in the West Bank who fled the Syrian civil war. After Israel agreed as long as those to be resettled relinquished their so-called “right of return” to Israel, he withdrew his request.
- A report by a team of U.S. nonproliferation experts stated: “Based on the current trajectory of Iran's nuclear program, we estimate that Iran could reach critical capability in mid-2014.” It defined “critical capability” as the point at which Iran would be able to produce enough weapon-grade uranium for one or more bombs without detection by the West. The report also stated the United States and its allies should intensify sanctions on Tehran before Iran reaches that point and that President Obama should state that military action will be taken to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. However, other experts believed Tehran already had enough enriched material for several nuclear weapons.
- In 2010 videos disclosed in January, 2013, Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi described Jews as “bloodsuckers who attack the Palestinians, these warmongers, the descendants of apes and pigs” and urged Egyptians to “nurse our children and grandchildren on hatred toward Zionists and Jews.” In a meeting in Cairo with U.S. senators requesting an explanation, Morsi implied that Jews control American communications media and claimed his comments were taken out of context. Although the White House called the remarks “deeply offensive,” it did not postpone or cancel the delivery of F-16 fighter jets and 200 Abrams main battle tanks to Egypt.
- Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said a “real and fair” accord with the Palestinian Authority cannot include relocation of masses of Jews from the main settlement blocs: “There is a common acceptance [in Israel] that the so-called settlement blocs will remain part of Israel in any settlement, and that's where the majority of construction is taking place. I am confident that President Obama understands that only a sovereign Israeli government can determine what Israel's interests are.” Netanyahu’s words followed Obama’s statement to journalist Jeffrey Goldberg that “Israel doesn't know what its own best interests are.”
- *Freedom House*, a U.S.-based non-profit organization that conducts research and advocacy on democracy, freedom and human rights listed Israel as the only “free” state in the Middle East in its latest *Freedom of the World* annual report. Ranking the world’s countries by political rights and civil liberties, it characterized Jordan, Syria, Algeria, Bahrain, Iraq, Iran, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen as “not free.” Egypt, Lebanon, Tunisia, Kuwait, Libya, Morocco and Turkey were classified as “partly free,” while both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip were “not free.”

- Israel successfully tested an upgraded version of the Iron Dome missile defense system, which intercepted a heavier and longer range missile than a Fajr rocket—the type fired at Tel Aviv and Jerusalem by Hamas in November, 2012.
- Facebook temporarily shut down Israeli Arab journalist Khaled Abu Toameh’s account, purportedly for “security reasons.” Facebook claimed he had posted an item—which documented corruption in the Palestinian Authority—violating its terms of use. The account was reactivated after considerable criticism.
- A U.S. congressional report stated that the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) had been operating a signals intelligence (SIGINT) listening station in the Golan Heights, providing intelligence for Lebanon’s Hezbollah since 2006. The report also noted that Iran’s Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS) had been providing Hezbollah with logistical and material support, and using Hezbollah as a proxy in its intelligence operations.
- Israel’s January 22 parliamentary elections gave the ruling Likud and Israel Beitenu parties a reduced plurality, with 31 of the Knesset’s 120 seats. Yesh Atid (There is a Future), led by former newscaster Yair Lapid, emerged as the second-largest party, with 19 seats. Habayit Hayehudi (Jewish Home) led by Naftali Bennett, placed third with 12 seats.
- On January 27, International Holocaust Memorial Day, *The Times of London* published a cartoon of Prime Minister Netanyahu building a brick wall with bodies of Palestinian Arabs embedded and using their blood as mortar. Rupert Murdoch, the paper’s owner, issued an apology published by the *Times*, called the image “grotesque” and “offensive.”
- News reports claimed that Israeli warplanes blew up a truck convoy carrying advanced anti-aircraft weapons along the Syrian-Lebanese border. The weapons were said to be destined for Hezbollah.
- Cisco Systems, the world’s largest maker of networking equipment, agreed to buy Israel’s Intucell Ltd. for about \$475 million, gaining technology that helps wireless carriers manage their networks.
- The U.N. Human Rights Council issued a report saying Israel “must immediately initiate a process of withdrawal of all settlers from the occupied Palestinian territories.” Israel called the report biased. At least half a million Israelis live in Judea, Samaria and eastern Jerusalem.
- In **February**, a U.S. State Department-funded study concluded that Palestinian textbooks rarely demonize Israel or incite hatred against the Jewish people and that both sides use texts with a one-sided view of their conflict. Israel’s Education Ministry rejected the findings, stating, “The attempt to create a parallel between the Israeli and Palestinian educational systems is completely unfounded and lacks any basis in reality”.

- Bulgaria released a report following its investigation of the July 2012 terrorist attack in the city of Burgas that murdered five Israeli tourists and a Bulgarian driver, accusing Hezbollah of responsibility.
- An Egyptian court ordered authorities to destroy tunnels between Egypt and the Gaza Strip, which have been used for smuggling weapons, consumer goods and dual-use items to and from the Strip. Egyptian security forces sent sewage through the tunnels as part of the effort to flood them, while Gazans, reportedly, kept some open by continuous pumping.
- Israeli soldiers provided medical care to wounded Syrians who approached the frontier on the Golan Heights and transported them to a hospital in Israel for further treatment. This was the first instance of Syrians fleeing their country's civil war being assisted in Israel. A field hospital was then erected on the Golan so wounded Syrians would not have to be moved into Israel proper.
- Intel's Israeli subsidiary more than doubled its exports in 2012 to \$4.6 billion. The world's No. 1 computer chip maker, Intel is Israel's largest private employer, with more than 8,000 employees. In 2012, the company accounted for 20 percent of Israel's high-tech exports.
- Israel conducted a successful test flight of its Arrow 3 interceptor over the Mediterranean Sea. The system is designed to defend against ballistic missiles from countries such as Iran.
- Yityish Aynaw, 21, a former Israeli army officer born in Ethiopia who came to Israel with her family at the age of 12, became the first Ethiopian-Israeli to win the Miss Israel pageant.
- **March** began with Turkey's PM Recep Tayyip Erdogan calling Zionism a "crime against humanity" and comparing it to fascism. His remarks were widely criticized, including by U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Canadian Foreign Minister John Baird.
- Security forces broke up a Hamas terror cell in Hebron that planned attacks on Israeli targets. The cell was led by a Hamas member in the Gaza Strip who had been released in the prisoner exchange that freed captive soldier Gilad Shalit.
- A U.N. report cast doubt on Israeli responsibility for the death of the infant son of a BBC employee during Operation Pillar of Defense in November 2012. Images of BBC journalist Jihad al-Mishrawi tearfully holding his 11-month-old baby's corpse spread throughout the world, with Israel blamed for the death. The report, released by the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, suggested the two were hit by shrapnel from a rocket fired by Palestinian Arabs aimed at Israel, which missed its mark.

- Iran stepped up military support to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, continuing the transfer of weapons into Syria from Iraq, Turkey and Lebanon.
- In anticipation of U.S. President Barack Obama's visit to Israel, Prime Minister Netanyahu ordered the suspension of all new construction in eastern Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, including a ban on new construction bids. Seventy-seven U.S. senators signed a letter urging President Obama to stand by Israel. The letter asked the president to warn Palestinian Arabs not to use their new status as a U.N. observer state to take action against Israel, informing them that their relationship with the United States would be jeopardized should they seek action against Israel at the International Criminal Court.
- On March 18, after six weeks of coalition talks, PM Benjamin Netanyahu formed a new government, Israel's 33rd. The coalition members agreed to an arrangement of four parties: Likud-Beytenu (31 seats), Yesh Atid (19), Jewish Home (12) and HaTnua (6), for a total of 68 members in the 120-seat Knesset.
- President Obama arrived in Israel for a three-day visit, followed by a one-day meeting with Palestinian Arabs. His agenda included discussing three strategic security issues with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu: Iran's nuclear program, the situation in Syria and Israeli-Palestinian diplomacy. Some of the visit's key issues:
 - Affirming the Jewish people's history in the land of Israel, dating to biblical times. President Obama's words contrasted with his June 2009 Cairo speech, during which he implied that Israel's existence was rooted in the Holocaust and seemed to equate Palestinian grievances to Jewish suffering during the Holocaust.
 - Insisting on recognition of Israel as the Jewish State by Palestinian Arabs, rejecting preconditions to peace negotiations with Israel and emphasizing that the Palestinian side could not expect a settlement freeze ahead of talks. President Obama also asked Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas not to go to the International Criminal Court (ICC) for any reason.
 - Requesting Netanyahu apologize to Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Recep Erdoğan for Israel's seizure of the Mavi Marmara and the deaths of eight Turks and one Turkish-American who attacked Israeli commandos in 2010. The commandos stopped the Turkish ship leading a small flotilla trying to breach Israel's naval blockade of the Gaza Strip. Netanyahu complied, calling Erdoğan to express regret for any mistakes on the Mavi Marmara and to offer compensation to the families of the dead blockade runners. (Subsequently, the attempt to advance U.S. desires for an Israeli-Turkish reconciliation failed because of a disagreement between the two leaders over compensation to be paid, which was also followed by Erdoğan's refusal to return an envoy to Israel until the blockade on Gaza was removed).

- In response to requests from Washington, Israel agreed to renew the transfer of tax funds it collects for the Palestinian Authority. Israel had frozen tax revenue transfers after “Palestine” earned recognition as a nonmember observer state at the United Nations in November, 2012. Nearly one billion shekels (\$281,706,000) had been withheld to offset the Palestinian Authority's debt to the Israel Electric Corporation and other Israeli businesses.
- Israel moved closer to energy independence as natural gas from the Tamar reservoir in the Mediterranean Sea, 56 miles west of Haifa, began flowing to a terminal in the Israeli port of Ashdod. The Tamar field is predicted to supply 50 to 80 percent of Israel's natural gas needs over the next 10 years.
- On **April 3**, Israeli journalist Amira Hass wrote in an op-ed piece for the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz*, that “throwing stones is the birthright and duty” of Palestinian Arabs. Her words elicited a huge outpouring of angry reactions in Israel, including from the mother of a three-year-old Israeli girl who was critically injured in a West Bank road accident triggered by stone-throwing a month earlier.
- A report published on the eve of Holocaust Remembrance Day noted a 30 percent increase in anti-Semitism worldwide in 2012. The report, by Tel Aviv University's Kantor Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry, said the past year had seen “an alarming rise in the number of terrorist attacks and attempted attacks against Jewish targets, and an escalation in violent incidents against Jews worldwide.”
- The Egyptian military continued demolishing tunnels linking the Gaza Strip and Sinai Peninsula, after destroying approximately 250 in March.
- A new Israeli television channel broadcasting news 24 hours a day in English, French and Arabic was launched this summer. It could be accessed online at <http://www.i24news.tv/en/>.
- Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad resigned on April 14. The United States and other Western governments viewed Fayyad favorably as a financially honest influence in Palestinian affairs and free of terrorist associations. Bowing to international pressure, President Abbas reappointed him as prime minister in May.
- The Israel Security Agency (Shin Bet) reported 33 unsuccessful attempts to kidnap IDF soldiers in the West Bank from January through April 2013, compared with 24 thwarted attempts during all of 2012. Senior Israeli officials said the prisoner exchange that secured the release of Gilad Shalit encouraged Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist groups to attempt additional kidnappings.
- According to a report issued by the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, Israel's population numbered 8,018,000. This included 6,042,000 Jews (75.3 percent), 1,658,000 Arabs (20.7

percent) and 318,000 non-Arab Christians and others (4 percent). Since the previous Independence Day, Israel's population grew by 137,000, including 19,500 immigrants. Outside of Israel, there are an estimated 5.5 million Jews in the United States, 500,000 in France, 380,000 in Canada and 290,000 in Britain, with a world-wide total of approximately 13,800,000 Jews today.

- The Palestinian Authority's 2013 budget allocated almost \$1 billion for defense, which is about 28 percent of the total, compared to 16 percent for education and 10 percent for medical services. This included paying the salaries of 95 percent of “defense employees” in the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip. Approximately four percent of the Palestinian budget (\$60 million), is spent on payments to the families of terrorists incarcerated in Israeli prisons.
- Hours after a pair of terrorist bombings at the Boston Marathon on April 15 killed two and wounded at least 100, a chief doctor at Massachusetts General Hospital credited Israelis with teaching his team how to respond to such attacks.
- The United States demanded the resignation of senior U.N. human rights official Richard Falk for his comments blaming American policy in the Middle East for the Boston bombings. Mr. Falk, a professor emeritus of international law at Princeton University, has a long history of anti-Israel bias. He has compared Israel's treatment of the Palestinian Arabs to Nazi atrocities and has described Israel's embargo on Gaza as a crime against humanity.
- A Palestinian terrorist stabbed 31-year-old Israeli Evyatar Borovsky of Yitzhar to death at a bus stop at the Tapuach Junction in Samaria. A father of five, the victim was the first Israeli to be murdered in a terror attack in Judea and Samaria since 2011. Palestinian Authority President Abbas’ Fatah movement proclaimed the murderer a hero.
- U.S. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel made his inaugural visit to Israel, meeting with Prime Minister Netanyahu in Jerusalem. During their meeting, Hagel stated, “This is a difficult and dangerous time. This is a time when friends and allies must remain close, closer than ever. I'm committed to continue to strengthen this relationship.”
- The Judea Military Court sentenced Waal al-Arjeh to two life sentences and 58 years for the 2011 murder of Asher Palmer, 25, and his infant son, Yonatan, killed when al-Arjeh threw a stone through the windshield of their car. Al-Arjeh, who had worked for the Palestinian Authority security forces, headed the group in charge of “developing” this method of killing Jews.
- Israel shot down an unmanned drone from Lebanon, presumably sent by Hezbollah, off its northern coast.
- The French Court of Appeals in Versailles ruled that Israel did not violate international law by building a light rail line in eastern Jerusalem. The ruling came in response to a 2007

Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) lawsuit. The judges ruled that international treaties applied to lands Israel captured in 1967 and that those conventions—including the Hague Convention of 1907—state that the ruling power “can and even must establish normal, public activity” in that territory.

- A Pew Research Center global survey showed that out of all Muslim respondents, Palestinian Muslims polled highest in favor of suicide bombings as a justifiable means “to defend Islam.” Forty percent of Palestinian Muslims consider suicide bombings as often or sometimes justified, while 49 percent take the opposite view.
- In **May**, Arab countries endorsed a Middle East peace plan that would allow for small changes in Israel's pre-1967 armistice line boundaries. Israeli leaders have consistently stated that the 1967 lines could not be the basis for a peace agreement between Israelis and the Palestinian Arabs.
- The Israeli Air Force was believed to have again struck military targets near Damascus, Syria, including a chemical weapons storage facility and a shipment of advanced Iranian ballistic missiles. Israel suspected the shipment was intended for Hezbollah.
- Google replaced the words “Palestinian territories” with “Palestine” in its English and Arabic versions. A Google spokesman said the company followed the lead of several international organizations: (1) the United Nations, which upgraded the Palestinian Arabs’ status to “non-member observer state” in November of 2012; (2) the International Organization for Standardization, which following the U.N. vote relabeled its three-letter code for the area as “State of Palestine”; and (3) ICANN (the Internet Corp. for Assigned Names and Numbers), which more than a decade earlier granted the area its own suffix (“.ps” for web addresses). Israel criticized the Internet giant for “getting involved in international politics.”
- Prime Minister Netanyahu paid an official visit to China, the first by an Israeli head of government since 2007. Two-way trade between China and Israel increased from \$50 million in 1992 to \$9.91 billion in 2012. The two main goals of the trip were to (1) open the Chinese market to Israeli companies and (2) press for tougher action over Syria and on Iran's nuclear program.
- University of Cambridge physicist Professor Stephen Hawking withdrew from the fifth President's Conference in Jerusalem, stating his support for an academic boycott of Israel. Nitsana Darshan-Leitner, Director of the Shurat HaDin-Israel Law Center, responded that Hawking’s “whole computer-based communication system runs on a chip designed by Israel's Intel team.”
- Another significant natural gas presence was reported at a well about 47 miles northwest of Haifa, near the Tamar field, which already supplies gas to Israel.

- To counter cyber threats against major Israeli computer systems, including significant attacks from Iran and its Lebanese allies, Israel opened a “cyber gym” to help corporate security trainees learn counter-moves. Eventually, security staff from around the world will be able to learn at the cyber gym.
- Upheavals in Arab and Muslim countries throughout the Middle East were accompanied by attacks on Christians, many of whom were forced to escape Syria, Egypt, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and other countries in Africa. Dozens of churches in the Middle East were destroyed.
- U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry concluded two months of talks with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to define the framework for renewed negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Arabs. The framework included holding direct talks without preconditions and refraining from provocative statements or actions. Kerry also announced a \$4 billion economic plan to revitalize the Palestinian economy, subject to other countries’ investments. The Palestinian side rejected the offer as an attempt to extract political concessions from them, while prior to Kerry’s visit, the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv announced that continued Israeli settlement activity was illegitimate. The statement contradicted the League of Nations’ Palestine Mandate, Article 6, which calls for close Jewish settlement west of the Jordan River; the Anglo-American Convention of 1924 that endorsed Britain’s exercise of the Mandate; and the U.N. Charter, Chapter XII, Article 80, that upholds the League’s mandate, including Article 6.
- Thirteen years after the purported death of 12-year-old Muhammad al-Dura during the al-Aqsa *intifada*, an Israeli government review discredited a report, from French public television station France 2, that said he was killed by Israel Defense Forces (IDF) fire. Widely covered internationally, al-Dura became one of the second *intifada*’s most widely disseminated anti-Israel symbols. The IDF had initially accepted responsibility for the Gaza incident, but an inquest had concluded that the boy was not hit by IDF fire. In March, 2002, German television station ARD broadcast a documentary suggesting that al-Dura was more likely to have been hit by a Palestinian bullet than an Israeli bullet. At the end of May, 2013, Philippe Karsenty, a French media commentator, was convicted of defamation for calling the incident “staged” and for suggesting France 2 had doctored the material.
- In **June**, an Israeli military source confirmed that Russian and Iranian technology gave the Syrian government troops new advantages in their battle against the rebels. The technology and weapons included surveillance drones, anti-mortar systems that trace the source of mortar fire, monitoring equipment to gather intelligence about rebel positions and jamming devices to block communications.
- Rami Hamdallah, a linguistics professor and president of An-Najah University in Nablus, replaced Salam Fayyad as Palestinian prime minister. Fayyad, whom many considered a reformer and realist, never had full political backing from President Abbas. Hamdallah, on

the other hand, has no political experience, causing concern about his capabilities as prime minister.

- The Israeli southern security fence has proved successful in keeping out infiltrators. In June of 2012, more than 2,000 had infiltrated Israel; in May and June of 2013 only two infiltrators were reported, their attempts ending in capture.
- Israeli defense officials stated that Hezbollah has been trying to establish a strategic position on the Syrian side of the Golan Heights to facilitate attacks on Israel. To counter potential attacks and prevent Syrian fighting from spilling into Israel, Israeli military engineers initiated the construction of a new “smart fence” to replace the existing low fence.
- A U.S. consulting firm reported that Israel is the largest exporter of unmanned aerial systems, or drones, surpassing aerospace companies in the United States.
- The IDF uncovered several tunnels under the security fence designed to keep terrorists from entering Israel from the West Bank.
- Hassan Rouhani won Iran’s presidential elections. Although presented both by the Iranian regime and Western media as a “reformist,” Rouhani is a regime loyalist, serving as secretary of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council for 16 years. During his tenure, Rouhani led the crackdown on a 1999 student uprising and struck a conciliatory posture as Iran’s top nuclear negotiator while presiding over the secret advance of the nuclear program, helping the Iranian regime evade Western scrutiny. He also served on a special committee that plotted the 1994 bombing of the Jewish community center in Buenos Aires which murdered 85 and wounded hundreds more. Before his inauguration, Rouhani said, “The Zionist regime has been a wound on the body of the Islamic world for years and the wound should be removed.”
- In a continuing attempt to deny Jewish history in Jerusalem, the Palestinian Authority’s Religious Affairs Minister Mahmoud Habbash warned that Israel’s plans to build an egalitarian prayer area near the Western Wall would be seen as an attempt to “Judaize” holy sites in Jerusalem and viewed by Arabs and Muslims as a declaration of war.
- The Israeli start-up company OrCam developed a device giving the visually impaired the ability to read. The device (also called OrCam) is a small camera hooked onto a pair of glasses connected to a portable computer that fits in the wearer’s pocket.
- Google Inc. acquired the Israeli company Waze for a reported \$1.1 billion. Waze is a social-mapping, traffic navigation start-up.

- On **July 3**, Egypt's military led by army chief General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi deposed Mohammed Morsi, the country's first democratically elected president. The military suspended the constitution and installed an interim government. Morsi rejected the generals' actions as a "military coup." Egyptian security forces also arrested at least 38 senior leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood. U.S. President Obama stated that Washington was "deeply concerned" by the actions of the Egyptian military, and urged it to "move quickly and responsibly to return full authority back to a democratically elected civilian government."
- On July 4, America's Independence Day, singer Alicia Keys performed to a sold-out Tel Aviv concert despite pressure to cancel her trip from author Alice Walker and other proponents of the anti-Israel Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement.
- A series of events indicated the Palestinian Authority's continued unwillingness to normalize relations with Israel and highlighted the anti-Israel climate in the West Bank:
 - PA Chairman Mahmoud Abbas awarded the "highest order of the Star of Honor" to terrorist Nayef Hawatmeh, leader of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP). The DFLP, a faction of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), for which Abbas succeeded Yasser Arafat as chairman, carried out many deadly terror attacks in the 1970s, including the infamous murder of 22 schoolchildren and four adults in a school at Ma'alot in northern Israel.
 - West Bank Arabs demonstrated outside PLO headquarters in Ramallah, condemning meetings between PLO officials and Israeli politicians as a form of normalization with Israel. Leaders of Fatah and other Palestinian factions condemned these meetings as well.
 - A military funeral was held by the Palestinian Authority for Ahmed Abu al-Sukkar, a former Fatah terrorist who was involved in a 1975 bombing in Jerusalem's Zion Square that killed 14 and injured more than 60. PA President Abbas published a statement describing Abu al-Sukkar as a faithful fighter for the Palestinian cause.
- Israel carried out an air attack near Latakia, Syria that targeted advanced Yakhont antiship cruise missiles sold to Syria by Russia. The missile represented a threat to Israel's naval forces and raised concerns that it might be provided to Hezbollah.
- Israel tested what was believed to be an advanced Jericho missile, which reportedly has a range of about 4,350 miles and can carry a warhead weighing more than 2,205 pounds.
- The European Union published a binding directive forbidding any funding, cooperation, awarding of scholarships, research funds or prizes to any Israelis residing beyond the 1949 armistice line, including in Judea and Samaria, eastern Jerusalem and the Golan Heights. The

regulation requires that any agreement or contract signed by an EU country with Israel include a clause stating that Jewish communities beyond the armistice line are not part of the state of Israel.

- The European Union added the “military” wing of Hezbollah to its list of terrorist organizations. In response, Prime Minister Netanyahu said, “I welcome the fact that the EU has also declared Hezbollah to be a terrorist organization In recent years, the State of Israel has invested great effort in explaining to all EU member states that Hezbollah is the terrorist arm of the Iranian regime and perpetrates attacks around the world. . . . Hezbollah is one organization, the arms of which are indistinguishable.”
- In a bid to resume talks between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, the Israeli government agreed to release 104 Palestinian terrorists over nine months. All were imprisoned either prior to the 1993 Oslo Accords or immediately after, and have served between 20 and 28 years of their sentences.
- Studies showed that birth rates of Arabs and Jews in Israel were converging. From 2000 to 2012, the number of Arab births in Israel remained consistent at 40,000 per year. Over the same period, Jewish births rose from 95,000 to 130,000. Fertility rates reportedly have been declining throughout the Arab world in recent years.
- A U.S. federal appeals court found unconstitutional a law giving thousands of Americans born in Jerusalem the option of listing “Jerusalem, Israel” as their birthplace on U.S. passports. The court found that the law passed by Congress in 2002 “impermissibly intrudes” on the foreign policy powers of the president.
- The death toll in Syria was reported to be more than 100,000, with civilians bearing the brunt of the fighting. More than 100 Syrian casualties from the civil war were sent discreetly to Israel for lifesaving treatment.
- In **August**, radical Islamic terror enclaves grew on Israel's border with Syria, as the number of non-Syrian *jihadi* rebels grew from 300 to almost 10,000 in the southern Golan. Israel continued to rebuild the border fence, added observation posts, intelligence-gathering means, and upgraded the quality of Israeli forces deployed along the border.
- Israelis and Palestinian Arabs held several rounds of talks. It was their first substantive negotiations in nearly five years.
- Since the deposing of President Mohammed Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood in July, the Egyptian military cracked down on terrorism in Sinai. There were approximately 1,500 *jihadi*s in Sinai, in 15 to 20 cells with varying ideologies, some in line with al-Qaeda.

- The Jewish Agency airlifted 17 Jews from Yemen to Israel, prompted by concerns for the safety of Yemen's remaining Jewish population in the wake of growing threats from radical Islamist groups including al-Qaeda. Since 2009, 151 Yemeni Jews escaped to Israel (over 50,000 escaped since early 1900's), while fewer than 90 Jews remain in Yemen today.
- Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that Iran installed 7,000 centrifuges since June, including 1,000 upgraded models with enhanced uranium enrichment capabilities.
- On August 21, more than 1,400 Syrian men, women and children were killed in a nerve gas attack by Syrian President Bashar-al-Assad forces on rebel-held areas east of Damascus. The United States, Israel and other intelligence sources confirmed that the Syrian regime used chemical weapons against its own people.
- The Israeli government decided to allocate \$2.6 billion to resolve land disputes and promote economic development within the Bedouin sector in the Negev. The plan included building thousands of new housing units, expanding and developing existing settlements and establishing new Bedouin settlements.
- A study by *Bloomberg* ranked countries based on life expectancy and per capita cost of health care. Hong Kong, Singapore, Japan and Israel took the top four spots. The United Kingdom came in 14th, Canada 17th, and the United States 46th. Israel's life expectancy is 81.8 years, and health care costs per capita were \$2,426. By comparison, Americans have a life expectancy of 78.6 years and spend \$8,608 per capita.

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- In **April**, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abba's Fatah movement agreed to form a unity government with Hamas, designated a terrorist organization by the United States, Israel and other countries and sworn to the destruction of Israel. This Fatah-Hamas agreement prompted the Israeli government to pull out of peace talks.
- In **June**, Israeli teenagers Eyal Yifrach, Gilad Shaar and Naftali Frenkel were kidnapped. Israeli security forces launched an intensive search for the three in the West Bank, which Hamas and its allies attempted to disrupt by firing mortars and rockets from the Gaza Strip into Israel. The discovery of the teenagers' bodies 18 days later led to an apparent revenge killing of Palestinian teenager Mohammed Abu Khdeir.
- In **July**, Israel launched Operation Protective Edge in response to increased rocket fire from Gaza. The war began with airstrikes, then led to a ground invasion that destroyed more than 30 Hamas terror tunnels into Israel. During the 50-day war, there were many more fatalities among Palestinian Arabs (approximately 2,100) than among Israelis (approximately 70), in large part due to the fact that while Hamas again used its Gaza residents as human shields as it had fighting with Israel in 2008-2009 and 2012, Israel had built extensive networks of shelters, warning and anti-rocket systems. After Hamas violated 11 cease-fire proposals or agreements, a final cease-fire was reached on August 26th.

- Israel and Egypt shared an interest in cracking down on Islamic terror groups in the Sinai Peninsula and in targeting Hamas. Israel also reportedly found tacit common ground with Sunni Muslim governments in Saudi Arabia, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates in opposing Islamist radicals.
- Israel faced new threats at its border with Syria from al-Qaeda-affiliated terror groups, Hezbollah and Iran. After violence on the Syrian side, the United Nations moved its threatened peacekeeping forces to the Israeli side of the Golan. Israel built an improved security fence against infiltration. Although barely reported, Israel has been quietly helping Syrian refugees throughout the war, both medically and with supplies.
- The relationship between Turkey and Israel continued to deteriorate, with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan accusing Israel of “genocide” and “terrorism” against the Palestinian Arabs. He also claimed Israel’s “barbarism has surpassed even Hitler’s” and refused to consider renormalizing relations with Israel.
- Threats from Islamic extremists intensified. The Islamic State terrorist group, also known as the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) or the Islamic State in the Levant (ISIL) was the most prominent, conquering large portions of Iraq and Syria and beheading American journalists James Foley and Steven Sotloff (who also held Israeli citizenship) and two British citizens, David Haines and Alan Henning. ISIS posted videos of their brutal murders on YouTube.
- Energy-independent Israel is now supplying natural gas to its neighbors. In September, Israeli energy companies signed a multi-billion dollar deal with Jordan to provide it with off-shore natural gas.
- Antisemitism increased worldwide, especially in Europe, to levels not seen since the Holocaust. French Jews made aliya to Israel in markedly increased numbers.
- Anti-Israel and antisemitic activity continued to grow on American college campuses, including regularly held “Israel Apartheid Week” and BDS (“boycott, divestment and sanction”) events. Supporters of Israel—Jews and non-Jews—and Jewish students in particular often were targeted for discrimination and intimidation.