

Maps and Timelines of Israel *Answers*

The 1800s

1. Can you locate an area called “Israel”? Can you locate an area called “Palestine”?

In the 1800s there was no area designated either “Israel” or “Palestine” by the Ottoman Turks who ruled the territory.

2. Does the area shown on the map seem to be one country or many units?

The area was divided into many units called *sanjaks* and *vilayats*.

3. What does “nationalism” mean?

Nationalism is the belief that a people who share a common language, history, culture and sometimes ethnicity should constitute an independent nation on a particular land in which it has deep roots.

4. What events in the 1880s may have helped trigger a greater desire for Jews to have a nation of their own? What is a “pogrom”?

The growth of antisemitism, the hatred of Jews and Judaism, manifested especially in violent attacks known as pogroms, occurred in Eastern Europe where millions of Jews lived. This reinforced the conviction of many that they needed a refuge from persecution where they could live in freedom.

5. What steps did Jews take to develop a state of their own?

One step was to leave the countries where they were persecuted and return to their ancestral homeland, *eretz Yisrael* (the land of Israel). They also organized into Zionist groups in Russia and Eastern Europe dedicated to building such a homeland.

6. From which parts of the world did the Jews of the First Aliyah (immigration) come?

Jews of the First Aliyah largely came from Russia, Romania and Yemen.

7. What is Zionism and who was its most famous leader in this period?

Zionism is the national liberation movement of the Jewish people. Theodore Herzl is regarded by most as its greatest leader in this period.

8. Why do you think Herzl felt the future Jewish home should be in the “Land of Israel”?

Eretz Yisrael (often referred to then by Jews and Westerners also as Palestine) was the ancestral home of the Jewish people and the natural place for Jews to stake a claim. Although they had been forcibly expelled from much of the land in antiquity, some Jews had always lived in Israel and over the centuries, groups of Jews had returned to live in Jerusalem and other areas. Additionally, *eretz Yisrael* had always remained the spiritual home of the Jewish people; every year on Passover and Yom Kippur, for example, Jews around the world proclaim “Next year in Jerusalem.”

9. What do you think Herzl meant when he said the future Jewish home should be “secured by law”?

Herzl meant that the Jewish claim to its ancestral homeland needed to be recognized by other nations and confirmed under international law. Territory acquired for the state needed to be obtained legally, not through conquest by aggression.

The 1900s

1. How might have the Jewish National Fund’s (JNF) activities affected what you see on the map on the previous page?

The Jewish National Fund purchased land for Jewish communities in Palestine. A number of the communities that appear on the map were built on land it purchased. During the next decades the JNF purchased even more land on which additional communities were built.

2. What effect do you think events in Europe may have had on the Second Aliyah?

Spreading antisemitism and further pogroms convinced more and more Jews they had no future in Europe and they should consider the Zionist alternative.

3. What connection do you see between the 1907 event shown here and the map on the previous page?

In 1907, Bar Giora, the first Jewish self-defense organization, was formed to protect Jewish communities in Palestine from Arab raiders. As shown on the map, many Jewish communities came under attack in that period.

4. Based on the picture, what do you think was the condition of the land that Tel Aviv was built on?

Tel Aviv was built along the Mediterranean Sea on sand dunes.

5. Based on the information provided here and on the map, do you think that Jews have a legal claim to the land of Israel?

Beyond the indisputable Jewish historical claims to the land of Israel, a strong legal claim applies to the land acquired by the JNF and others through purchase from its owners.

The 1910s

1. What choices did the Jews in Palestine have to make as a result of the conflict between Turkey and Britain in World War I? What choices did they make?

Jews were forced to choose between supporting one or the other country. Turkey controlled Palestine at the time but Britain, under Foreign Secretary Lord Balfour, promised the Jews in 1917 that it would help them secure a homeland in the area. Palestinian Jews supported Britain in the war.

2. Who was Sherif Hussein and what promise did the British make to him? How might that promise have affected the Jews of Palestine?

Sherif Hussein was the ruler of Mecca in Arabia. In return for his promise to lead an Arab uprising against the Turks, the British Foreign Office offered Hussein a future Arab state. The boundaries of the state were not defined at the time. Some Arab sources claim that the potential state included Palestine, which would have put the Jews there under Hussein's rule. The British author of the agreement, Sir Henry McMahon, denied that assertion. Hussein's son and representative later wrote (1919) that if he were to receive his Arab state, he would renounce any claims to Palestine.

3. What promise did Britain's Foreign Secretary Lord Balfour make to the Jewish people?

Lord Balfour promised support for a "Jewish national home in Palestine."

4. How might Britain's successes in World War I have affected the promises it made to the Jewish people? To the Arab leader Hussein?

Britain's defeat of Turkey and conquest of Palestine would compel it now to make good on its promises to both the Jews and the Arabs, which were viewed by some as conflicting.

5. Does the area in white shown on the map on the previous page seem more or less than the territory of Israel today?

The area shown on the map is larger than Israel today. It includes the state of Jordan and the Golan Heights.

6. What was the purpose of the League of Nations? What was the significance of the League of Nations adopting the Balfour Declaration?

The League of Nations was established by the Allies after World War I in an effort to prevent further wars and to deal with the defeated Central Powers. By incorporating the Balfour Declaration into its own Palestine Mandate, the League endorsed the Zionist claim to a homeland in the land of Israel.

7. What was the Arab reaction to the idea of carrying out the Balfour Declaration?

Arab delegates to the League of Nations' conferences opposed a Jewish state in Palestine.

The 1920s

1. What was Britain obligated to do in Palestine by the League of Nations?

Britain was obligated to work to establish a homeland for the Jews in Palestine and to encourage "close settlement by Jews on the land."

2. What was the Arab reaction to the Mandate and how did the Jews of Palestine respond?

Arabs rioted against Jews. The Jews formed self-defense organizations like the Haganah to guard against those attacks.

3. What did Britain do in 1922 that affected its Mandate in Palestine? How were the Jews of Palestine affected by this decision?

The British installed Abdullah as emir of Transjordan, which they carved out of the Palestine Mandate. Jews were forbidden to settle in this kingdom and the area reserved for the Jewish homeland was decreased in size by 77 percent.

4. How did Britain's 1922 White Paper affect the Jews of Palestine?

The 1922 White Paper effectively declared only a small number of additional Jews would be allowed to enter Palestine and to buy land. This violated of the provisions of the Mandate and hindered Jews from establishing their homeland.

5. What was the connection between the Saudi conquest of Arabia and Britain's decision regarding its ally Abdullah?

Since the Saudi clan had encroached steadily on Hashemite territory in Arabia, Britain felt obliged to compensate its former ally, especially since the original promise of one great Arab state was no longer being taken seriously by the Saudis. It gave the Hashemite Abdullah the territory of Transjordan.

6. What were relations between Arabs and Jews like by the end of the decade?

Relations between Arabs and Jews, already damaged by Arab attacks in 1920, worsened by the end of the decade. Arab rioting throughout Palestine in 1929 left 135 Jews dead and 350 wounded.

7. What is fascism? How might have economic conditions during the worldwide depression led to its growth? How did this affect the Jews of Europe?

Fascism is a dictatorial philosophy of government that glorifies the state and assigns it control over most aspects of national life. As economic conditions worsened in Europe, especially after 1929, people looked for a solution to their ills. Fascists, exalting "pure nationalism," promised aggressive, centralized government would expand the economy and replace ineffective, corrupt democratic parties. Jews, seen as outsiders by many Europeans, were increasingly marginalized and became targets of fascists.

8. How did the Great Depression affect the Jewish community in Palestine?

One positive side of the Depression was that real estate prices declined, allowing Palestinian Jews to purchase more land.

The 1930s

1. How did Hitler's rise to power relate to the Jewish people's need for its own homeland?

As Adolf Hitler and his Nazi Party consolidated their rule, more and more restrictions were placed on German and Austrian Jews, making their lives unbearable. Having a homeland of their own as a refuge in dangerous times would have allowed these Jews to escape and survive. Indeed, Hitler originally simply wanted to expel all Jews.

2. Why was there “unauthorized” Jewish immigration into British Mandatory Palestine during the 1930s and 1940s?

Great Britain’s restrictions on Jewish immigration came at the very moment when escape from Hitler and other antisemitic European leaders was most needed. Unauthorized Jewish immigration helped save tens of thousands of fleeing Jews.

3. Were Britain’s immigration restrictions legal or illegal?

The restrictions were a violation of the Mandate that had been given to Britain in 1920 by the League of Nations. In it, Britain was obligated to *encourage* Jewish settlement, not restrict it.

4. What was the Arab reaction to the worsening condition of Jews in Europe and their attempts to enter Palestine?

Arabs rioted throughout Palestine against the Jews; more than 100 Jews were killed.

5. What compromise did the British devise in 1937? What were the Jewish and Arab reactions to the proposal?

The British Peel Commission suggested dividing the land into a Jewish and an Arab state. The Jews accepted the plan (while disagreeing with details) and the Arabs rejected it outright.

6. Why did the British government reject the Peel Commission plan prepared by its own experts?

Great Britain faced war with Germany and needed Arab oil and access to its colonies in Asia, on routes through areas heavily populated by Arabs. The Jewish population in Mandatory Palestine, on the other hand, was relatively small—and had less impact on the British.

7. How did the 1939 White Paper affect the Jews of Europe? What impact did it have on the Jews of Palestine?

The 1939 White Paper closed Palestine, the only large potential haven, to the Jews of Europe. Eventually six million who could not escape Hitler died in the Holocaust. White Paper limits on Jewish immigration and land ownership also meant that Jews in Palestine would remain a minority in the land, while illegal Arab immigration continued largely unchecked.

The 1940s

1. What was the significance for Palestinian Jewry of the 1941 meeting between Hitler and Haj Amin al-Husseini?

The meeting underscored the alliance between Hitler and the Palestinian Arab leader. Hitler’s promise to help Husseini in the “destruction of the Jewish element residing in the Arab sphere” was a mortal threat against the community.

2. How did Hitler’s “Final Solution” relate to the Zionist call for a Jewish homeland?

Hitler’s “Final Solution” made it unarguable that the Jewish people required a refuge in which they could live free of persecution and defend themselves.

3. Why do you think the Haganah and other Jewish groups took up arms against the British in 1946?

The Haganah and others concluded Britain was not living up to its promise to assist the Jews in building a homeland in Palestine and would not do so. After the Holocaust and with hundreds of thousands of survivors languishing in Europe in displaced persons camps (some were former concentration camps), their patience had run out.

4. What compromise did the United Nations propose in 1947 and what were the Jewish and Arab reactions? How did this compromise differ from the League of Nations’ original Mandate of 1920?

The U.N.’s compromise plan would have divided the remaining Mandatory Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab state, a plan the Jewish leadership accepted but which was rejected by the Arabs. This compromise differed from the original League of Nations Mandate which had designated all of Palestine, including what would become Jordan, as the area in which Jews could build a future homeland.

5. What rights did the Jewish leaders of Israel offer the Arabs when they declared independence?

Arabs who lived in the Jewish-designated section of Palestine were offered equal rights and full citizenship.

6. What became of the Palestinian Arab state that the United Nations proposed in 1947?

Although much of the area designated by the United Nations for an Arab state fell under either Jordanian control (the West Bank) or Egyptian (the Gaza Strip), no Palestinian Arab state was created there.

The 1950s

1. Why was there a massive wave of immigration to Israel in the 1950s?

In the wake of Israel’s War of Independence, the Jews of Arab countries were subject to persecution and expulsions. More than 800,000 (most of the total number of Jews in those lands) fled; nearly 600,000 immigrated to Israel. There they joined hundreds of thousands of European Jewish refugees from World War II.

2. Did the cease-fire agreements Israel reached with its Arab neighbors in 1949 hold?

No. The cease-fire agreements were broken almost immediately and Israel was attacked by *fedayeen*, an Arabic word for guerrillas acting as terrorists.

- 3. What does pan-Arabism mean? How did it threaten the new state of Israel?**

Pan-Arabism was a movement for the unification of all Arabic-speaking people. If all Arab states worked together against Israel, the threat to its existence would be magnified.
- 4. Find the Straits of Tiran on the map. How would Egypt's closure of it affect Israel?**

Closing the Straits of Tiran meant Israel would lose its outlet to the Indian and Pacific Oceans, and its economy would suffer. Such unprovoked blockades are acts of war.
- 5. Find the Suez Canal on the map. What does "nationalize" mean? Why did Britain and France want to recapture the canal?**

Nationalization results when a state seizes a business or an enterprise that had formerly been owned or operated by private individuals or a private company. The Suez Canal was owned by British and French stockholders. They would lose the income derived from the Canal and both countries' shipping, military and civilian, could be blocked if Egypt wished.
- 6. Did Israel keep the Sinai? What post-war promises were made about the Sinai?**

Israel captured the Sinai in the 1956 campaign and then returned it to Egypt with the promise that Israel could use the Suez Canal as well as the Straits of Tiran at the southern end of the Red Sea. Egypt almost immediately violated the agreement, but Israel did receive a U.N. buffer force in the Sinai to help guard its border with that country.

The 1960s

- 1. Look at the map on the Palestine Liberation Organization's emblem on the previous page. Does it look like the PLO aimed to divide the land between Jews and Arabs?**

The map on the emblem shows all of post-Jordan British Mandatory Palestine. This indicates the PLO wished to "liberate" all the land, not just the areas that had been offered to the Palestinian Arabs in 1947.
- 2. What does "preemptively" mean? Why did Israel attack its neighbors preemptively?**

"Preemptively" means acting in such a way as to deter or prevent an anticipated threat. Israel acted preemptively in 1967, not only because its neighbors were threatening to destroy it but also because they had massed armies on its borders with that intention.
- 3. Once the Arab countries were defeated in the 1967 war, did they attempt to make peace with Israel?**

They issued three "Nos"—No to peace with Israel, No to negotiation with Israel, and No to recognition of Israel.
- 4. What did U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 require Israel to do? What were the Arab nations required to do?**

U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 called on Israel to withdraw militarily from unspecified parts of the land conquered, which included the Sinai Peninsula, Gaza Strip,

West Bank (Judea and Samaria), eastern Jerusalem and Golan Heights in return for recognition by, and peace with, neighboring Arab countries.

5. Why did Palestinian Arabs hijack commercial airliners?

Attempts to destroy Israel militarily had failed, prompting attacks on “soft” targets, including passenger planes, as attempts to publicize their cause and intimidate Israel and its supporters.

6. Why did Israel begin to build Jewish communities in the areas taken in the 1967 war? Was this forbidden by U.N. Security Council Resolution 242?

Israel began to build Jewish villages and towns in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Sinai and Golan for security reasons and because it viewed the West Bank (Judea and Samaria) in particular as the cradle of Jewish civilization. Although there was much debate about the political advisability of settlements, Resolution 242 did not forbid such action.

The 1970s

1. What types of activities did Palestinian terrorists engage in during the 1970s? With whom did they come into conflict? (Look carefully at all events on this page.)

Palestinian Arabs attacked Israeli citizens, including children and Olympic athletes during this period. They also fought against Jordanians and Lebanese, causing thousands of Arab deaths.

2. Why was the 1973 war also known as the “Yom Kippur War”? Who was directly involved in the fighting? Who was indirectly involved in the conflict?

The 1973 war was known also as the “Yom Kippur War” because Egypt and Syria attacked Israel on the Jewish holy day. The Russians and the Americans were indirectly involved in the conflict by supplying weaponry to the Arabs and the Israelis, respectively.

3. What role did the United Nations play in the aftermath of the 1973 war? What were the Israeli and Arab reactions to the Security Council’s requests?

The United Nations brokered a cease-fire and, by means of U.N. Security Council Resolution 338, tried to get both sides to negotiate on the basis of 1967 Resolution 242. Israel accepted Resolution 338. Egypt and Syria agreed to the ceasefire but rejected the call to negotiate and implement Resolution 242’s requirement for “secure and recognized boundaries” and an end to all states of belligerency.

4. What is an “embargo”? Whom did the Arab members of OPEC target with their embargo and why?

An embargo is a government order prohibiting the movement of ships into or out of a port or a ban on trade with a foreign nation. The Arab members of OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) targeted the United States (and others) for their support of Israel, refusing to sell them oil.

5. What is “racism”? Why did the U.N. General Assembly pass the “Zionism-is-Racism” resolution in 1975?

Racism is the belief a particular race is different from and either inferior or superior to others and the discrimination or prejudice which follows from that belief. The General Assembly passed a Soviet-inspired, Arab-adopted resolution equating Zionism with racism after Arab countries blackmailed nations with threats of oil embargoes if they didn’t go along with the resolution. They were supported in this by the Soviet Union—angry at the defeat of its Arab allies in the 1973 war—and its satellites who sought to marginalize and weaken America’s ally Israel.

6. Why did Syria enter Lebanon in 1975? Did its presence help with Israel’s security needs?

Syria ostensibly went into Lebanon to impose peace among sides fighting a civil war in that country. It occasionally managed to force short-lived cease-fires among Christians, Muslims, Druze, and Palestinian Arabs, but essentially used a “divide-and-conquer” policy supported by secret police tactics to control Lebanon. Syria did nothing to stop Palestinian Arabs in Lebanon from attacking Israel.

7. What was the significance of the 1979 peace treaty between Israel and Egypt? Looking at the map, what did Israel give up for peace?

This was the first formal peace treaty between Israel and an Arab nation. According to the agreement, Israel had to withdraw from the Sinai and restore it to Egyptian control in return for normal relations with Egypt. Israel gave up oil fields it had developed and important airbases it had built, the new town of Yamit and surrounding communities, as well as strategic depth in order to make peace with its neighbor.

The 1980s

1. Why did Israel, which doesn’t border Iraq, attack Iraq’s nuclear reactor?

Israel feared Iraq, under the dictator Saddam Hussein, was attempting to develop a nuclear weapon that could threaten its existence.

2. What lesson might other Arab leaders “learn” from what happened to President Sadat of Egypt?

Sadat was assassinated by Egyptian Islamic fundamentalists in 1981. Other Arab leaders might conclude it was dangerous to make peace with the Jewish state.

3. Why did Israel invade Lebanon? How did this war affect Palestinian Arabs? Did this mark the end of attacks on Israel’s northern border?

Israel went into Lebanon in response to PLO shelling and the inability of U.N. forces in southern Lebanon to keep peace. Israel expelled Yasir Arafat and 10,000 PLO gunmen and set up a security zone in southern Lebanon. However, a new group, Hezbollah, organized and financed by Iran, began attacks against Israel.

- 4. In 1975, Israel was described in a United Nations General Assembly resolution as being a racist country. What event in this period clearly refuted that notion?**

In 1984 Israel rescued thousands of black Ethiopian Jews and welcomed them as Israeli citizens.

- 5. What was the “*intifada*”? Who began it and who came to control it?**

The first *intifada* began when Palestinian Arabs in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank began rioting against Israel late in 1987. At first, the uprising was spontaneous but it eventually fell under the control of the PLO leadership in Tunis.

- 6. What is Hamas and what are its beliefs?**

Hamas is a Palestinian Muslim organization associated with Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood and sworn to the destruction of Israel. The United States, the European Union and Israel all consider Hamas a terrorist group.

- 7. How did the king of Jordan’s declaration that the PLO was the only “legitimate representative of the Palestinians” become a source of trouble for Israel?**

King Hussein’s abandonment in 1988 of all previous claims to the West Bank and legitimizing the PLO meant that Israel no longer had a legitimate, established government with which to make peace. Instead it found itself forced to deal with an organization that rejected its existence, labeled terrorism against civilians “resistance,” and sought to “free” all of Palestine for the Arabs—that is, to expel the Jews from Israel.

The 1990s

- 1. In 1981, Israel destroyed Iraq’s nuclear reactor, fearing that Iraq might use it to make a nuclear bomb. Based on this period’s events, how would you evaluate that decision?**

Saddam Hussein’s missile attacks on Israel might have been far deadlier had he possessed a nuclear capability. Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait might have been impossible to reverse and Saddam could have blackmailed the entire region.

- 2. What was the significance of the U.S.-led Madrid conference of 1991?**

It was the first time for public, face-to-face talks among Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Palestinian representatives.

- 3. What were the Oslo Accords? What did they obligate Israel to do? What were the Palestinian Arabs obligated to do?**

The Oslo Accords were agreements between Israel and the PLO. The key stipulation was that all conflicts were to be settled by negotiations, not violence or terrorism. Israel was to gradually hand over major Palestinian cities for self-rule. The PLO was to give up the use of terrorism and stop incitement against Israel and Jews. “Final Status” talks were to take place by 1998.

4. Did the Palestinian Arabs live up to their obligations? Based on the map on the previous page, did Israel live up to its obligations?

Palestinian Arabs did not live up to their obligations and continuously launched attacks on Israeli civilians that were not stopped by the Palestinian Authority. Additionally, the PA aired vehemently anti-Israel TV programs and radio shows. Israel complied with its obligations as agreed, giving up control over 40 percent of the territories, in which approximately 90 percent of the Palestinian Arabs lived.

5. With which nation did Israel achieve peace in this decade?

Israel signed a peace treaty with Jordan that both sides have honored.

6. Did Palestinian Arabs create a democracy in the areas under their control?

Yasir Arafat and the Palestinian Authority did not create a democracy in the Palestinian territories. Instead, they eliminated virtually all opposition to Arafat's rule and quashed freedom of the press.

7. Were Palestinian Arabs the only extremists in this period?

Unfortunately, there were Jewish extremists too, though they were few in number. One killed 29 Muslims praying in a Hebron mosque; another assassinated Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. Although their actions were violent and shocking they did not enjoy any wide-spread support within Israeli society, in contrast to the actions of Palestinian extremists.

The 2000s

1. What was Israel's offer to the Palestinian leadership at Camp David? What was the Palestinian response?

Israel offered the Palestinian Arabs a state in more than 95 percent of the West Bank and all of the Gaza Strip as well as parts of eastern Jerusalem. Palestinian leaders rejected the offer and launched the so-called "al-Aqsa Intifada."

2. What were the major elements of President Bush's 2002 speech and 2004 letter about Israel and the Palestinian Arabs?

In 2002 President Bush called for the creation of a Palestinian state but only after the Palestinian Arabs rid themselves of Arafat's corrupt regime, elected new leaders untainted by terrorism and moved toward democracy. In 2004 President Bush wrote a letter to Prime Minister Sharon stating that new "facts on the ground" since the 1967 Six-Day War—including major Jewish communities in the disputed West Bank (Judea and Samaria)—make it unrealistic to expect an Israeli withdrawal to the 1949 armistice lines.

3. What is the purpose of Israel's security barrier? What was international reaction to it and why?

The security barrier was begun during the second *intifada* to keep additional suicide bombers and other terrorists from the West Bank out of Israel. It helped radically reduce the number of attacks. Palestinian Arabs and the United Nations condemned the barrier. The majority of

world opinion opposed the barrier in part because it was charged that the barrier would encompass much Arab territory. But the barrier takes in less than eight percent of the West Bank. According to U.N. Resolution 242, the status of this territory is still to be negotiated, and meanwhile, Israel has the right to take precautions there it needs to defend itself.

4. Who is Mahmoud Ahmadinejad? What is his significance?

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was elected president of Iran in 2005, then claimed re-election in Iran's 2009 elections though many suspected voter fraud. Protests and rioting about the results were violently suppressed and many protesters were killed. Ahmadinejad continued to call for Israel's destruction, and his country reportedly was close to attaining a nuclear bomb.

5. What caused the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006? Describe the result and what has happened since then.

In July 2006 Hezbollah terrorists attacked Israel from Lebanon with rockets and conducted a cross-border raid, resulting in the killings of three and the capture of two Israeli soldiers. Five of the soldiers sent to rescue the captives also were killed. Hezbollah launched more rockets into towns across northern Israel, targeting civilians. Israel first bombed and shelled Hezbollah targets in Lebanon, then invaded. The fighting forced hundreds of thousands of Israelis either to flee the north or take refuge in bomb shelters. A cease-fire was brokered in August of 2006 with Hezbollah battered but hardly eliminated. Hezbollah, with the aid of Syria and Iran, has ignored U.N. Security Council Resolution 1701, which called for "the disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon." Instead it re-armed well beyond its 2006 levels, with missiles capable of hitting population centers throughout Israel.

6. Who took over the Gaza Strip in 2007?

The Palestinian terrorist group Hamas seized control of the Gaza Strip from Fatah, headed by Mahmoud Abbas after a five-day civil war.

7. What was the purpose of Operation Cast Lead?

Operation Cast Lead was a three-week offensive launched by Israel Defense Forces (IDF) under Prime Minister Ehud Olmert in December 2008. Its purpose was to halt frequent mortar and rocket fire and other attempted terrorist attacks by Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and other terrorist groups on Israel from the Gaza Strip.

8. Describe Israel's peace proposal to Mahmoud Abbas in 2008 and after.

In 2008 Abbas rejected an offer from Prime Minister Ehud Olmert for a Palestinian state on more than 97 percent of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and eastern Jerusalem, plus "land swaps" to make up the 2.5 percent retained by Israel. In 2009 Abbas refused to negotiate with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for the first nine months of a ten-month freeze on Israeli construction in West Bank communities, coming to the table only in the last month. At that time, he insisted that he would only negotiate if there was a total building freeze, including in eastern Jerusalem neighborhoods. This was something that Palestinian leaders had not demanded before and that no Israeli government was likely to agree with.

9. What concept did Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu publicly endorse in 2009 for the first time?

Prime Minister Netanyahu publicly endorsed for the first time the concept of a West Bank and Gaza Strip Palestinian Arab state alongside Israel.

10. What is the Goldstone report? What did Judge Goldstone do in regard to the report in 2011?

The Goldstone report, ostensibly a U.N. Human Rights Council-commissioned analysis of the Operation Cast Lead, was released in September 2009. The report by a panel lead by South African judge Richard Goldstone, accused both Israel and armed Palestinian groups (Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and other terrorist organizations) of war crimes and possible crimes against humanity connected with the Gaza fighting. In November 2009 the U.S. House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed a resolution denouncing the report as “irredeemably biased and unworthy of further consideration or legitimacy.”

11. Describe what you know about the 2010 and 2011 flotillas bound for the Gaza Strip and Israel’s naval blockade of the area.

In May of 2010 Israeli naval forces intercepted six ships attempting to break its naval blockade of Gaza. The blockade was to prevent arms from reaching Hamas and other terrorist groups by sea. These ships were said to be an international “humanitarian aid” flotilla but were actually 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 commandos. After seven Israeli soldiers were wounded, others opened fire and killed nine Turks aboard the ship. This led to international outcry against Israel and increased existing tensions between Jerusalem and Turkey’s Islamist-leaning government. No humanitarian supplies were found on the *Mavi Marmara*. The other five ships in the flotilla were stopped without casualties.

A new flotilla that was set to sail to the Gaza Strip in June 2011 was aborted in Greek ports. In July one ship declared its destination as Alexandria, Egypt in order to leave Greek waters but headed to the Gaza Strip instead. Israel took over the ship without incident.

12. What is the Arab Spring? What is its impact on Israel?

“The Arab Spring” began in January of 2011. Anti-regime uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Bahrain, Yemen and protests elsewhere in Arab countries led to the overthrow of long-time dictators in Tunis, Cairo, Tripoli and Sanaa. There was hope that the upheaval would lead to the establishment of democracy in some Arab states, but also fear that the rise of Islamic extremism empowering groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood, could lead to the emergence of new Islamic dictators.

The result by Fall 2011 was a less stable Middle East. Israel was already affected. For instance, on “Nakba Day” (commemorating what many Arabs call the “catastrophe” of the May 1948 creation of the state of Israel), Syria was accused of engineering protests on the

Golan Heights to distract attention from the killing of more than one thousand Syrians by the regime of Bashar al-Assad to suppress anti-government demonstrations. Israel was wary that Egypt might renounce its treaty since President Hosni Mubarak was overthrown and the Muslim Brotherhood as well as anti-Israeli secular groups appeared to be rising.

13. Who was Osama bin Laden, and what did he do? Why?

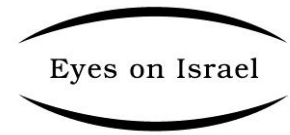
Osama bin Laden was the founder of Al-Qaeda, the terrorist organization responsible for the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on the United States as well as many other mass-casualty attacks against civilian and military targets. He believed in *jihad* (Islamic holy war) to overthrow what he called corrupt, insufficiently pious Arab governments and to reestablish the Sunni Muslim caliphate and avenge the “injustices” perpetuated by the United States including “oppressing” Muslims in the Middle East. He was also an antisemite who preached the need to kill Jews and eliminate the state of Israel. In April 2011, after a decade-long hunt, he was killed in Pakistan by United States Navy SEALs.

14. How do U.S. President Barack Obama’s and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s views about Israeli-Palestinian negotiations differ?

President Obama believes that “the borders of Israel and Palestine should be based on the 1967 lines with mutually agreed swaps,” with both states having secure and recognized boundaries. Prime Minister Netanyahu stresses that Israel is prepared to make “painful concessions” to reach peace. However, he asserts that Israel’s pre-1967 armistice lines were “indefensible,” that Jerusalem—the physical, historical and spiritual center of Judaism and the Jewish people—cannot be divided, and that Palestinian Arab refugees and their descendants may be absorbed by a new Palestinian state but not by Israel.

15. What dangers does Israel face from beyond its borders?

Israel is surrounded by enemies calling for its destruction. Iran, close to attaining nuclear weapons, persists in attempting to extend its reach in the Middle East and Persian Gulf region. Its use of Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in the Gaza Strip remain major threats to Israel. The “Arab Spring” created an even more unstable Middle East. The civil war in Syria with President Bashar al-Assad using chemical weapons against rebel forces reached a death toll estimated at 170,000. The threat of radical Islam rose to new proportions. Most prominent is Islamic State (also known as ISIS and ISIL), growing in Syria and Iraq and known for filming beheadings of two American journalists (one of whom was also an Israeli citizen) and two British citizens, then posting those beheadings on YouTube. Palestinian Arabs continue to attempt to win statehood outside of negotiations with Israel (as required by international diplomatic initiatives), which will potentially lead to new violence. Incessant anti-Israel incitement continues to intensify in Arab and other Muslim countries. Feeding off anti-Israeli sentiments have been persistent defamation and delegitimization efforts in the West against Israel, steadily growing in Europe and on many American college campuses. These include the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement and anti-Zionist, anti-Jewish Internet Web sites. Hostility toward Israel continues in the United Nations and by many non-governmental “human rights” organizations.



But with continued growth of Israel's high-tech sector and relative economic strength, its military adaptability and innovations, discovery and development of off-shore natural gas and oil fields, and educational levels and overall accomplishments and well-being of its people, the Jewish state continues to respond to both challenges and opportunities.