

"THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT"

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Abstract: *The Arab—Israeli conflict, which at first had a zero-sum, protracted nature, has changed over time because of effective conflict management that has made conflict reduction and even resolution possible. However, without the active encouragement of the USA, the learning process could not be developed.*

Key words: *incompatible, approximately, international city, contributed, conflict, institutionalization.*

INTRODUCTION

The Arab—Israeli conflict is not a single conflict, especially when analyzing and evaluating movements toward new forms of behavior in a given conflict system. The differences in the rate and scope of learning in each conflict influenced differently the shifts in conflict management, and from conflict management to conflict resolution. An initial learning process proved to be necessary for shifting from regulation to institutionalization, but this was not sufficient to move from institutionalization to resolution. There was a need for a further and deeper learning process to enable conflict resolution.

In May 1948 and the First Arab—Israeli War which immediately followed. The modern roots of the conflict are commonly traced back to the late nineteenth century. In the face of increasing persecution and state-sponsored anti-Semitic attacks across Tsarist Russia and Eastern Europe in the 1880s, Zionism emerged as the ideological solution by calling for a homeland for the Jews in their ancestral home Eretz Israel or “Land of Israel.” Between 1881 and 1948 the percentage of Jewish population in Palestine had risen from 5 percent of the total (mostly Muslim) population to 33 percent. A series of violent clashes between the Jewish and Arab communities in 1920, 1921, 1929, and 1936–39 prompted Britain, which received a mandate over Palestine from the League of Nations at the end of First World War, to find solutions to the incompatible demands of the Jewish and Arab communities; however, its efforts did little more than exacerbate the nascent conflict and alienate the Arab and Jewish communities.

Indeed the British had played an important role in sowing the seeds of the conflict by promising the same land to the two peoples: first to Arab leader Hussein bin Ali al-Hashimi in 1916 in exchange for his help to defeat the Ottomans, while in 1917 the Balfour

Declaration, issued by the foreign secretary, expressed the commitment of the British government to the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.

By 1937 the British had come to the realization that the only solution was a surgical separation of the two communities, when the Royal Peel Commission recommended the partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states. Following the end of the Second World War there was increased pressure on Britain, not least from U.S. president Harry Truman, to allow Jewish survivors of the Holocaust to enter Palestine. However, the mandatory authorities refused to allow unrestricted Jewish immigration for fear of alienating the Arab population.

By 1947, with Jewish and Arab violence reaching unprecedented levels, Britain decided to refer the question of the future of Palestine to the nascent United Nations. On November 29, 1947, the UN General Assembly passed Resolution 181 which called for the partition of mandatory Palestine into a Jewish state and Arab state, with Jerusalem designated as an international city.

The Jewish community in Palestine accepted the resolution but the Arabs rejected it as an unjust solution to the problem. Following the termination of the British mandate on May 14, 1948 the state of Israel was established, leading to its invasion by the armies of Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq the following day. In 1949 UN mediator Ralph Bunche helped to conclude four bilateral armistice agreements between Israel and Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. Known as the Green Line, the armistice borders between Israel and its Arab borders remained unchanged for nearly two decades: Egypt was in control of the Gaza Strip, Jordan in of the West Bank of the River Jordan including East Jerusalem (including the Old City and its Holy Sites), while Israel's territorial gains meant that it increased in size from the 55 percent allocated to it in the UN partition resolution to 78 percent of mandate Palestine at the end of the First Arab–Israeli War including West Jerusalem. Known as the War of Independence by Israelis, it is remembered as the Nakba, or catastrophe, for the Palestinians for their loss of land and the expulsion and departure of approximately 750,000 Palestinians from their homes during the war.

Since then the plight of the Palestinian refugees and their right of return has been one of the core issues of the Arab–Israeli conflict and more recent negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians. The origins of the First Arab–Israeli War, and especially the roots of the refugee problem, have since been fiercely debated by scholars. In the 1980s the Israel State Archive released to the public previously classified governmental records pertaining to this period, which gave rise to scholarly debates between “Old” and “New” historians about which party bore the ultimate responsibility for the origins of the war and the birth of refugee problem.

The Second Arab–Israeli War – the Suez War of 1956 – came following years of cross-border infiltrations of guerrilla groups (Fedayeen) into Israel, and Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser's decision to nationalize the Suez Canal and to close the Straits of Tiran at its southern tip to Israeli and Israel-bound shipping. At the same time, Israel's approach to

asserting its borders, primarily via military retributions against Arab villages (most famously the October 1953 Qibya raid which resulted in dozens of civilian deaths) further contributed to the escalation of hostile relations between Israel and its neighbors.

In October 1956 Israel colluded with France and Britain, who wished to maintain their strategic interests in the region, to attack Egypt and force it to reopen the Suez Canal. However, despite the successful military campaign the plan backfired and the three allies were forced to withdraw their forces amidst the condemnation of the United Nations and unprecedented cooperation between the United States and Soviet Union to bring the crisis to an end. The Suez War was followed by a decade of relative calm; however, in June 1967, the conflict entered a new phase which changed the maps and politics of the Arab–Israeli conflict and the international community’s attention to it.

CONCLUSION

The June 1967 War, or Six-Day War, came as a result of a series of miscalculations by the Arabs, Israelis, and the Soviets. With the Egyptian and Syrian armies massed on its borders (though not assuming offensive postures), Israel launched pre-emptive strikes and within six days it captured the Gaza Strip and Sinai Peninsula from Egypt, the Golan Heights from Syria, and the West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan, which joined the war in the first day despite warnings from Israel to stay out of the fighting.

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