

Key factors contributing to the israeli

Countries



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MASENO UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF DEVELOPMENT AND STRATEGIC STUDIES
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND DIPLOMACY UNIT; THE MIDDLE EAST IN
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS DIR; 307 SECTION A Research on Israel's A.)
Geographical Location B.) Population C.) Ethnic Composition D.) Historical
Background E.) Level of Economic development F.) Nature of Government
SECTION B Discuss the key factors contributing to the Israeli- Palestinian
Conflict.

ISRAEL'S FLAG ISRAEL'S EMBLEM SECTION A. INTRODUCTION The name Israel
has historically been used in common and religious usage to refer to the
biblical kingdom of Israel or the entire Jewish nation. According to the
Hebrew Bible the name Israel was given to the Palestinian Jacob after he
successfully wrestled with the angel of the Lord, Jacob's twelve sons became
the ancestors of the Israelites also known as the twelve tribes, well, that is
from a biblical view.

Israel, officially the state of Israel is a parliamentary republic in the Middle
East along the Eastern shore of the Mediterranean sea, it contains
geographically diverse features within its relatively small area, some if not all
will be discussed in the essay below, in this Essay I will concentrate on
discussing the general information of Israel and that includes its
Geographical location, Population, Ethnic Composition, Historical
background, Level of economic development and the Nature of government.

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

The geography of Israel is very diverse with desert conditions in the south
and snow-capped mountains in the north. Israel is located at 31 degrees north
of the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea in western Asia. It is bounded to

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the north by Lebanon, the northeast by Syria, the East by Jordan and the West Bank, and to the southwest by Egypt with this border also being the border between Asia and Africa. To the west of Israel is the Mediterranean Sea which makes up the majority of Israel's 273km coastline and the Gaza strip, Israel has a small coastline on the Red Sea in the south.

Israel is approximately 20,700km square which includes 445km square of inland waters, Israel stretches 424km from north to south and its width ranges from 114km, at its narrowest point 15km. The Israeli occupied territories include the West Bank 5,879km, East Jerusalem 70km square and the Golan heights 1,150km square. The south of Israel is dominated by the Negev deserts covering some 16000km square more than half of the country's total land area, the north of Negev contains the Judean desert which at its border contains the Dead Sea which at 417m is the lowest point on earth.

The inland area of the Central Israel is dominated by the Judean hills of the West Bank, whilst the central and northern coastline consists of the flat and fertile Israeli Coastal Plain, the northern region contains the Mount Carmel Mountain range which is followed inland by the fertile Jezreel valley, and the hilly Galilee region. The Sea of Galilee is located beyond this and is bordered to the east by the Golan Heights which contain the highest point under Israeli control, a peak in the Mount Harmon Massif at 2,224meters, the highest point in Israel's internationally recognised territory is Mount Meron at 1,083meters that is 3553ft. Israel is divided into four physiographic regions, they are as follows; The Mediterranean Coastal Plain It stretches from the Lebanese border in the north to Gaza in the south interrupted only by Cape

Carmel at Haifa Bay, it is about 40km wide at Gaza and narrows towards the north to about 5km at the Lebanese border; on the right is a side view of the Coastal Plain from Rosh Hanikra Mount. The Central Hills

Inland (east) of the coastal plain lies the Central highland region, in the north of the region lie the mountain and hills of upper Galilee which are generally 500m to 700m in heights although reach a maximum height of 1,208m at Mount Meron. On the right is the Rainbow cave which is a natural arch on the northern ridge of Nahal Betzet. The Jordan Rift Valley East of the Central highlands lies the Jordan Rift Valley which is a small part of the 6500m long Syrian-East African Rift, in Israel the rift valley is dominated by the Jordan River, the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea.

On the right is a picture of the Jordan Rift Valley. The Negev Desert It comprises approximately 12000km square more than half of Israel's total land area, it is geographically an extension of the Sinai Desert, forming a rough triangle with its base in the north near Beersheba, the Dead Sea and the Southern Judean Mountains and it has its apex in the southern tip of the country at Eilat. Historical background

Following World War II, the British withdrew from their mandate of Palestine, and the UN partitioned the area into Arab and Jewish states, an arrangement rejected by the Arabs. Subsequently, the Israelis defeated the Arabs in a series of wars without ending the deep tensions between the two sides. The territories Israel occupied since the 1967 war are not included in the Israel country profile, unless otherwise noted. On 25 April 1982, Israel withdrew from the Sinai pursuant to the 1979 Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty.

In keeping with the framework established at the Madrid Conference in October 1991, bilateral negotiations were conducted between Israel and Palestinian representatives and Syria to achieve a permanent settlement. Israel and Palestinian officials signed on 13 September 1993 a Declaration of Principles (also known as the "Oslo Accords") guiding an interim period of Palestinian self-rule. Outstanding territorial and other disputes with Jordan were resolved in the 26 October 1994 Israel-Jordan Treaty of Peace.

In addition, on 25 May 2000, Israel withdrew unilaterally from southern Lebanon, which it had occupied since 1982. In April 2003, US President BUSH, working in conjunction with the EU, UN, and Russia - the "Quartet" - took the lead in laying out a roadmap to a final settlement of the conflict by 2005, based on reciprocal steps by the two parties leading to two states, Israel and a democratic Palestine. However, progress toward a permanent status agreement was undermined by Israeli-Palestinian violence between September 2003 and February 2005.

In the summer of 2005, Israel unilaterally disengaged from the Gaza Strip, evacuating settlers and its military while retaining control over most points of entry into the Gaza Strip. The election of HAMAS to head the Palestinian Legislative Council froze relations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA). Ehud OLMERT became prime minister in March 2006 and presided over a 34-day conflict with Hizballah in Lebanon in June-August 2006 and a 23-day conflict with HAMAS in the Gaza Strip during December 2008 and January 2009.

OLMERT, who in June 2007 resumed talks with PA President Mahmoud ABBAS, resigned in September 2008. Prime Minister Binyamin NETANYAHU

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formed a coalition in March 2009 following a February 2009 general election. Direct talks launched in September 2010 collapsed following the expiration of Israel's 10-month partial settlement construction moratorium in the West Bank. The area of modern Israel was the birth place of Monotheism, first of Judaism and later of Christianity and contains sites sacred to several Abrahamic religions, including Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Druze and Baha'i.

Although coming under their sway of various empires and home to a variety of ethnicities, it was predominantly Jewish until the Jewish-Roman wars after which Jews became a minority in most regions except Galilee. The region became increasingly Christian after the 3rd century and then largely Muslim after the 7th century Arab conquest. The Arab became a focal point of conflict between Christianity and Islam between 1096-1291 and from the end of the crusades until the British conquest in 1917 was part of the Syrian Province of first the Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt and then from 1517, the Ottoman Empire.

In the mid 19th century, persecution in Europe led to the formation of the Zionist movement, which was able to win international support for a Jewish state on the site of the ancient kingdoms, following the British conquest of Syria in the first World War and the formation of the mandatory state of Palestine, Jewish-Arab tension gradually evolved into the Arab-Israeli conflict, a collision of the Jewish nationalist movement. Israel's independence in 1948 was marked by massive migration of Jews from both Europe and the Islamic world to Israel, and of the Arabs from Israel leading to extensive conflict with the Arab League.

After independence in 1948, the first president of Israel came into power on 17th Feb 1949, he was in office for two terms until 9th Nov 1952, The second president was Yitzhak Ben-Zvi who came into power on 16th Dec 1952, he stayed in office for three terms until 23rd April 1963, the third president was Zalman Shazar who came into power on 21st May 1963 to 24th May 1973, the fourth President was Ibrahim Katzir who came to power on 24th May 1973 to 29th May 1978, the fifth president was Yitzhak Navon who became president of Israel on 29th May 1978 to 5th May 1983, the sixth president of Israel was Chaim Herzog who came to power on 5th May 1983 he ruled for two terms until 13th May 1993, the seventh president was Ezer Weizman who ruled Israel from 3rd May 1993 to 13th July 2000 he stayed in office for two terms, the eighth president of Israel was Moshe Katsar who came to power from 1st August 2000 to 1st July 2007, the ninth and current president of Israel is Mr Shimon Perez who has stayed in office since 13th July 2007.

Most Israeli presidents were involved in national politics of Zionist activities before taking office, some were also distinguished in other fields for example Chaim Weizmann was a leading research chemist who founded the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot; Zalman Shazar was an Author, poet and Journalist, while Chaim Herzog was a military leader, attorney and diplomat. The first Israeli presidents were born in the former Russian Empire which was true of much of the leadership in the early days of the state the first with a Sephardic background was Chaim Herzog, who originally came from Belfast, Northern Ireland. The first president from a Middle Eastern country outside of Israel was Moshe Katsar, who was born in Persia. POPULATION

In 2012, Israel's population was an estimated 7,933,200 people of whom 5,978,600 are Jews, Arab citizens of Israel comprise 1,636,600 of the country's total population, those identified as others make up the remainder of the population, when the state was established, there were only 806,000 residents and the total population reached its first and second million in 1949 and 1958 respectively. The overall population grew by 96,300 people since the end of 2011 a growth rate similar to that of the last eight years. The Jewish population grew 1.8% (similar to past years) while the Arab population grew 2.4% (a rapid decline from the 3.4% annual growth rate in the 1990's). The Christian population grew 1.3% and the Druze population grew 1.7%. Israel's population is considered young relative to the populations of other Western countries. 28% of the population was aged 0-14 while only 10.3% were older than 65 years of age. OECD average is 18.0% (0-14) and 15% (65+). Israel's average age, however, is getting older. In 2011, the average age was 29.5 years as opposed to 27.6 in the year 2000. Average age for males is 28.4 and for women is 30.6 years old. Life expectancy in 2011 was 80 years for men and 83.6 years for women. This life expectancy continues an upward trend of the last decade. Jewish males had a life expectancy 4.2 years higher than their Arab counterparts; while Jewish women had expectancy 3.0 years higher. The Israeli life expectancy is higher than the OECD average. About 40% of Israel's total population lives in the centre of the country (24% in Central region and 16.0% in Tel Aviv area). Approximately 17% of the population lives in the north and another 14% are based in the south. 12% live in both Jerusalem and Haifa regions and another 4% in the West Bank. Just under half of the Jewish population lives in the center of the country, either Jerusalem or Tel Aviv metropolitan

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areas. 60% of the Arab population lives in the north. Jerusalem and the Central region recorded an above average growth rate of 2.5% while Tel Aviv saw one of its lowest, at 0.8%. Israel's population density increased in 2011 to 347 people per every square kilometre (not including the West Bank) as opposed to only 288 people per km² in 2000.

By comparison, Slovenia (whose territory is roughly the same size as Israel's) has a population density of 102 people per km²; Belgium (slightly larger than Israel) has a density of 364 people per km². Tel Aviv is Israel's densest region with 7,522 people per km²; Jerusalem has a density of 1,484 people per km² and Bnei Brak is Israel's densest city with 22,145 people per km². 47,885 couples were wed in Israel over the past year, of which 75% were Jewish and 21% Muslim. 13,042 couples were divorced during the year, 80% Jews. 166,296 babies were born in Israel during 2011, almost exactly equal to the 2010 birth number of 166,255. The number of children per woman in Israel stands at 3, slightly lower than the 3.03 of 2010. Jewish women have an average 2.98 children (a rise of .1 from 2010), which is the highest recorded number since 1977. The number of children for every Muslim woman stands at 3.51; however this is a dramatic decrease from 3.75 in 2010, the literacy level in Israel's total population 97.1%. ETHNIC COMPOSITION Languages Israel is a country of immigrants and its population is comprised of a mosaic people with varied ethnic backgrounds, lifestyles, religions, cultures and traditions. The Jewish people account for 80.5% of the total population of Israel. Israel has two official languages, Hebrew and Arabic. Hebrew is the primary language of the state and is spoken by the majority of the population, and Arabic is spoken by the Arab minority.

Many Israelis communicate reasonably well in English, as many television programs are broadcast in this language and English is taught from the early grades in elementary school. As a country of immigrants, many languages can be heard on the streets. Due to mass immigration from the former Soviet Union and Ethiopia (some 120,000 Ethiopian Jews live in Israel), Russian and Amharic are widely spoken. Between 1990 and 1994, the Russian immigration increased Israel's population by twelve percent. More than one million Russian-speaking immigrants arrived in Israel from the former Soviet Union states between 1990 and 2004. French is spoken by around 700,000 Israelis, mostly originating from France and North Africa.

Religion Israel and the Palestinian territories comprise the major part of the Holy Land, a region of significant importance to all Abrahamic religions - Jews, Christians, Muslims and Baha'is. The religious affiliation of Israeli Jews varies widely: a social survey for those over the age of 20 indicates that 55% say they are "traditional", while 20% consider themselves "secular Jews", 17% define themselves as "Religious Zionists"; 8% define themselves as "Haredi Jews". While the ultra-Orthodox, or Haredim, represented only 5% of Israel's population in 1990, they are expected to represent more than one-fifth of Israel's Jewish population by 2028.

Making up 16% of the population, Muslims constitute Israel's largest religious minority. About 2% of the population are Christian and 1.5% are Druze. The Christian population primarily comprises Arab Christians, but also includes post-Soviet immigrants and the Foreign Laborers of multinational origins and followers of Messianic Judaism, considered by most Christians and Jews to be a form of Christianity. Members of many other religious groups, including

Buddhists and Hindus, maintain a presence in Israel, albeit in small numbers. Out of more than one million immigrants from the former Soviet Union in Israel, about 300,000 are considered not Jewish by the Orthodox rabbinate.

The city of Jerusalem is of special importance to Jews, Muslims and Christians as it is the home of sites that are pivotal to their religious beliefs, such as the Israeli-controlled Old City that incorporates the Western Wall and the Temple Mount, the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Other locations of religious importance in Israel are Nazareth (holy in Christianity as the site of the Annunciation of Mary), Tiberias and Safed (two of the Four Holy Cities in Judaism), the White Mosque in Ramla (holy in Islam as the shrine of the prophet Saleh), and the Church of Saint George in Lod (holy in Christianity and Islam as the tomb of Saint George or Al Khidr). A number of other religious landmarks are located in the West Bank, among them Joseph's tomb in Shechem, the birthplace of Jesus and Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem, and the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron.

The administrative center of the Baha'i Faith and the Shrine of the Bab are located at the Baha'i World Centre in Haifa and the leader of the faith is buried in Acre. Apart from maintenance staff, there is no Baha'i community in Israel, although it is a destination for pilgrimages. Baha'i staff in Israel do not teach their faith to Israelis following strict policy. Education Israel has a school life expectancy of 15 years and a literacy rate of 97.1% according to the United Nations. The State Education Law, passed in 1953, established five types of schools: state secular, state religious, ultra orthodox, communal settlement schools, and Arab schools.

The public secular is the largest school group, and is attended by the majority of Jewish and non-Arab pupils in Israel. Most Arabs send their children to schools where Arabic is the language of instruction. Education is compulsory in Israel for children between the ages of three and eighteen. Schooling is divided into three tiers - primary school (grades 1-6), middle school (grades 7-9), and high school (grades 10-12) - culminating with Bagrut matriculation exams. Proficiency in core subjects such as mathematics, the Hebrew language, Hebrew and general literature, the English language, history, Biblical scripture and civics is necessary to receive a Bagrut certificate. 304] In Arab, Christian and Druze schools, the exam on Biblical studies is replaced by an exam on Muslim, Christian or Druze heritage. In 2003, over half of all Israeli twelfth graders earned a matriculation certificate. The Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv University are ranked among the world's top 100 universities by Times Higher Education magazine. Israel ranks third in the world in the number of academic degrees per capita (20 percent of the population). Culture Israel's diverse culture stems from the diversity of the population: Jews from around the world have brought their cultural and religious traditions with them, creating a melting pot of Jewish customs and beliefs.

Israel is the only country in the world where life revolves around the Hebrew calendar. Work and school holidays are determined by the Jewish holidays, and the official day of rest is Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath. Israel's substantial Arab minority has also left its imprint on Israeli culture in such spheres as architecture, music and cuisine. LEVEL OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT Israel is considered one of the most advanced countries in

Southwest Asia in economic and industrial development. In 2010, it joined the OECD. The country is ranked 3rd in the region on the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index as well as in the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report.

It has the second-largest number of startup companies in the world (after the United States) and the largest number of NASDAQ-listed companies outside North America. In 2010, Israel ranked 17th among of the world's most economically developed nations, according to IMD's World Competitiveness Yearbook. The Israeli economy was ranked first as the world's most durable economy in the face of crises, and was also ranked first in the rate of research and development center investments. The Bank of Israel was ranked first among central banks for its efficient functioning, up from the 8th place in 2009. Israel was also ranked as the worldwide leader in its supply of skilled manpower.

The Bank of Israel holds \$78 billion of foreign-exchange reserves. Despite limited natural resources, intensive development of the agricultural and industrial sectors over the past decades has made Israel largely self-sufficient in food production, apart from grains and beef. Other major imports to Israel, totaling \$47.8 billion in 2006, include fossil fuels, raw materials, and military equipment. Leading exports include electronics, software, computerized systems, communication technology, medical equipment, pharmaceuticals, fruits, chemicals, military technology, and cut diamonds, in 2006, Israeli exports reached \$42.86 billion, and by 2010 they had reached \$80.5 billion a year.

Israel is a leading country in the development of solar energy. Israel is a global leader in water conservation and geothermal energy, and its development of cutting-edge technologies in software, communications and the life sciences have evoked comparisons with Silicon Valley. According to the OECD, Israel is also ranked 1st in the world in expenditure on Research and Development (R&D) as a percentage of GDP. Intel and Microsoft built their first overseas research and development centers in Israel, and other high-tech multi-national corporations, such as IBM, Cisco Systems, and Motorola, have opened facilities in the country. In July 2007, U. S. billionaire Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway bought an Israeli company Iscar, its first non-U. S. acquisition, for \$4 billion. Since the 1970s, Israel has received military aid from the United States, as well as economic assistance in the form of loan guarantees, which now account for roughly half of Israel's external debt. Israel has one of the lowest external debts in the developed world, and is a net lender in terms of net external debt (the total value of assets vs. liabilities in debt instruments owed abroad), which as of 2011[update] stood at a surplus of US\$58. 7 billion. Days of working time in Israel are Sunday through Thursday (for 5 a days 'week'), or Friday (for 6 a days 'week').

In observance of Shabbat, in places where Friday is a work day and the majority of population is Jewish, Friday is a " short day", usually lasting till 14: 00 in the winter, or 16: 00 in the summer. Several proposals have been raised to adjust the work week with the majority of the world, and make Sunday a non-working day, while extending working time of other days, and/or replacing Friday with Sunday as a work day. Israels economy faces

many challenges, some short term and some long term challenges, the short term side, it is inability to duplicate its success in telecommunication industry into other growing industries hampers its economic outlook, its inability to foster larger multinational companies in the last decade also questions its ability to employ large numbers of people in advanced industries.

On the longterm side, Israel is facing challenges on high dependency of the growing number of Ultra or Thodox Jews who have a low level of official labour force participation amongst men, and this situation could lead to a materially lower employment -to-populationratio and a higher dependency ratio in the future , the governor of the Bank of Israel Stanley Fitcher stated that the growingpovertyamongst the Ultra or Thodox is hurting the Israel economy. According to the data published by Ian Fual rsman, 60% of the poor households in Israel are of the Haredi Jews and the Israeli Arabs, both groups together represent 25-28% of the Israeli population NATURE OF GOVERNMENT The Israeli system of government is based on parliamentary Democracy, the prime minister who is Benjamin Netanyahu is the head of government and the leader of the multi party system.

Executive power is exercised by the government, Legislature power is vested in the Knesset, the Judiciary is independent of the Executive and Legislature. The political system of the state of Israel and its main principles are set out in basic laws, Israel does not have a written constitution. For governmental purposes, Israel is divided into six districts. Central District, Haifa District, Jerusalem District, Northern District, Southern District, Tel Aviv which is the capital city of Israel is the six district. The districts are further subdivided into

fourteen subdistrict and into fifty natural regions, administration of the districts is coordinated by the ministry of interior.

In the State of Israel, as in other democratic states, rule is rooted in the following liberal principles and institutions: basic laws that lay down the order of government and the rights of citizens; the holding of elections to the house of representatives based on the principle of the rule of the majority, with the rights of the minority guaranteed by law; the principle of the separation between the legislative branch, the executive branch, and the judiciary, to which the institution of state control has been added; freedom of the press. The Electoral System The elections in Israel are general, equal and secret. On the national level they are held at least once every four years, and on the municipal level at least once every five years. Israel has a system of proportional representation, and the whole state is considered a single constituency. Every party running for election presents a list of candidates, and the number of candidates entering the House of Representatives is proportional to the percentage of support the list receives.

Every citizen over the age of 18, whose name appears in the list of voters, may vote. The Legislature Branch; Knesset The Knesset is the house of representatives of the State of Israel. The Basic Law: The Knesset, states that the seat of the Knesset is Jerusalem, and that upon election it will have 120 members. The law deals with the elections to the Knesset and with the essence of the service, the work and the immunity of the Knesset, its committees and its members. The law does not define the authority of the Knesset and details regarding the way its functions appear in its regulations.

A new Knesset starts to function after general elections are held, which determine its makeup.

The President of the State opens the first session of a new Knesset and immediately passes its running onto the eldest Knesset member. At this meeting the Knesset members declare their allegiance, and the Speaker of the Knesset and his deputies are elected. The Knesset fulfils its functions by means of two arms: the plenary in which all the Knesset members sit and the Knesset committees. The plenary holds debates within the framework of legislation, government statements, motions for the agenda, motions of no confidence and questions, and the deliberations usually end with a vote. The Knesset plenary decides on most issues on its agenda by means of a vote, and resolutions are adopted by a majority.

A majority usually means the majority of those present at the meeting. There are, however, resolutions which require an absolute majority, and others which require a special majority. The function of the committees, in addition to dealing with bills, is to supervise the work of the Government Ministries and to hold debates on issues within the realms for which they are responsible, and which are of public interest. By means of the committees, the Knesset maintains direct contact with the Government Ministries, and receives information from Ministers or their representatives. There are four types of Knesset committees that function on a regular basis: 1. Permanent Committees (12)

Committee for Advancing the Status of Women; Constitution, Law and Justice Committee; Economic Affairs Committee; Education, Culture, & Sports Committee; Finance Committee; Foreign Affairs & Defence Committee; House

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Committee; Immigration and Absorption Committee; Internal Affairs & Environment Committee; Labour and Welfare Committee; Science & Technology Committee; and the State Control Committee. 2. Special Committees Committee on Drug Abuse, Committee on the Rights of the Child, Committee for Foreign Workers. 3. Parliamentary Inquiry Appointed by the Knesset Plenum to deal with particular issues viewed as having special national importance. 4. Ethnic Committees Responsible for jurisdiction over members who have violated rules of ethics of the Knesset or who have been involved in illegal activity outside of the Knesset. In addition, there are two types of committees in the Knesset which convene only when needed: 1. The Interpretation Committee

It deals with appeals against the interpretation given by the Speaker during a sitting of the plenum to the Knesset Rules of Procedure or precedents. The Committee is made up of the Speaker and eight Knesset members chosen by the House Committee. 2. Public Committees It is established to deal with issues that are connected to the Knesset. The members of public committees may be experts in a particular field, public figures, or current or past Knesset members. An example of such a committee is the Public Committee for the Draft of Ethical Guidelines for Knesset Members. The members of the committees are appointed during the first meetings of every new Knesset with the help of an "arranging committee," which is selected for this purpose. Basic Laws

Even though it was stated in the Proclamation of Independence that the Constituent Assembly, which turned into the First Knesset, would draft a constitution for Israel, this was not done due to differences of opinion with

the religious parties. In place of a constitution, it was decided to legislate a series of basic laws, which in the future would together form the constitution. Even now, more than 60 years after Israel's establishment, the task of drafting a constitution has yet to come to fruition. There are several articles in the existing basic laws which can only be amended by an absolute majority (the support of more than 60 MKs) or a special majority (which is large than an absolute majority) of the Knesset members. The existing basic laws are:

President of the State (1964) | The Knesset (1958) | The Government (2001) | The Judiciary (1984) | The Israel Defence Forces (1976) The Capital Jerusalem (1980) | The People's Lands (1960) | The State Comptroller (1988) | The State Economy (1975) Human Dignity and Liberty (1992) | Freedom of Occupation (1994) The Executive branch; the Government Until after the elections to the 13th Knesset, it was the President who assigned the task of forming a new Government to the head of the list with the best chances of succeeding, who was also usually the head of the largest party in the Knesset. The Government required the approval of the Knesset, so that it needed to represent a coalition supported by a majority of the Knesset members, even if not all of its supporters were actual members in it.

The 32nd Government of the State of Israel, which was formed in March 2009, is made up of the following Ministries: Agriculture and Rural Development | Communications | Construction and Housing | Culture and Sports | Defence Diaspora Affairs | Education | Energy and Water Resources | Environment | Finance | Foreign Affairs | HealthImmigrant Absorption | Industry and Trade | Justice | Prime Minister's Office | Public Security |

Religious Services | Science Social Affairs and Social Services | Strategic Affairs | The Interior | Tourism | Transport The President The President of the State is elected by the Knesset in a secret vote, and primarily fulfils ceremonial functions as head of State. Candidates for the presidency are customarily proposed by the large parties, and are usually well-known public figures. The President is appointed for a period of five years, which can be extended by a further five years. The functions of the President are defined in the Basic Law: The President of the State. In addition, the President assumes public functions and activities in accordance with the customs which have crystallized on the issue, and with his personal inclinations.

Amongst the President's formal functions are signing laws (even though he has no control over their content) opening the first meeting of the first session of a new Knesset, receiving the credentials of new ambassadors of foreign states, approving the appointment of civil and religious judges, the State Comptroller and the Governor of the Bank of Israel, pardoning prisoners or commuting their sentences, etc. In the past it was also the President who decided who to approach after general elections with the task of trying to form a new Government, but this function will cease to exist as of the elections to the 14th Knesset, when the Prime Minister will be directly elected. The Judiciary The courts deal with cases of persons charged with a breach of the law. Charges are brought up by citizens against other citizens, by the state against citizens, and even by citizens against the state. The sessions of the courts of law are usually public, unless it is decided to hold closed hearings under special circumstances.

When more than one judge is presiding, and the judges do not agree on a verdict, the opinion of the majority is decisive. Israel does not have trials by jury. The cases brought to the courts are of two types: criminal cases and civil cases. A criminal case is one involving a transgression of the social order, and its intention is to punish the offender, if his guilt has been proven. In a civil case the plaintiff is a private person or association and the defendant is a private person or association. The subject of the trial is the demand that a contract signed between the parties be fulfilled, a debt is returned or compensation is paid for damages caused.

In a civil trial there is no punishment, but a duty to pay financial or other compensation. Freedom of the press The institutions of government in Israel are subject to public scrutiny by the written and electronic media. Public scrutiny is one of the marks and foundations of a democracy, and in Israel it is secured in the principle of freedom of expression which is mentioned in the Declaration of Independence, and is currently being secured in a basic law. REFERENCE 1. Global survey (2006); Middle East Progress Amid Global gains in freedom. 2. Wells, John V. (1990); World Economic Outlook 3. Latest population statistics for Israel; Jewish Virtual Library 17th Sep 2012 4.

Berger Earl; The covenant and the sword; Arab- Israel relations, 1948, London 5. Bregman Ahron ; A history of Israel; New York; Palgrave Macmillan 2002 6. A Arnon and J. Weinblatt; Sovereignty and economic development; The case of Israel and Palestine SECTION B INTRODUCTION The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the ongoing struggle between Israelis and Palestinians that began in the early 20th century. The conflict is wide-ranging, and the term is also used in reference to the earlier phases of the same conflict,

between the Zionist yishuv and the Arab population living in Palestine under Ottoman and then British rule. It forms part of the wider Arab-Israeli conflict.

The remaining key issues are: mutual recognition, borders, security, water rights, control of Jerusalem, Israeli settlements, Palestinian freedom of movement and finding a resolution to the refugee question. The violence resulting from the conflict has prompted international actions, as well as other security and human rights concerns, both within and between both sides, and internationally. In addition, the violence has curbed expansion of tourism in the region, which is full of historic and religious sites that are of interest to many people around the world. Below are the key factors that contribute to the conflict between Israel and Palestine in detail. Mutual Recognition

It is often said that the fierceness of the struggle between the two stems from the fact that both the Israelis and Palestinians claim the same territory as their historical homeland, the main matter here is that for decades Israelis and Palestinians deny each other rights to exist as national entities, this mutual rejection is much more than a conflict over territory, as territory can be fought over, compromised on, carved up and eventually shared, but when each party claims exclusive ownership of the disputed land and is profoundly convinced that the other has no right to exist, there is no way of the quagmire only a fight to finish. Israel often argue that if Palestinian and Arab leaders had not repeatedly refused any compromise over the disputed land especially if they had not rejected out of hand the 1947 UN resolution on the partition of the mandatory Palestine into two states, one Arab the other Jewish, a decision satisfactory to both sides could have been worked out in

time, the Palestinians could not even imagine sharing the land they felt that they were sure that Palestine was theirs by right and there's only thus the emergence of the State of Israel in 1948 descended upon them as an individual and national tragedy.

The Palestinian systematic rejection of Israel's national existence and their dogged refusal to countenance any form of territorial compromise year after year, decade after decade, played into the hands of Israelis leaders from Ben-Gurion in 1948 to Golda Meir and Yitzhak Rabin in the 1970s and 1980s, it enabled them to ignore and deny Palestinians national rights and with a good conscience of that. The Oslo peace process was based upon Israel ceding authority to the Palestinians to run their own political and economic affairs. In return, it was agreed that Palestinians would promote peaceful co-existence, renounce violence and promote recognition of Israel among their own people. Despite Yasser Arafat's official renunciation of terrorism and recognition of Israel, some Palestinian groups continue to practice and advocate violence against civilians and do not recognize Israel as a legitimate political entity.

Palestinians state that their ability to spread acceptance of Israel was greatly hampered by Israeli restrictions on Palestinian political freedoms, economic freedoms, civil liberties, and quality of life. It is widely felt among Israelis that Palestinians did not in fact promote acceptance of Israel's right to exist. One of Israel's major reservations in regards to granting Palestinian sovereignty is its concern that there is not genuine public support by Palestinians for co-existence and elimination of terrorism and incitement. Some Palestinian groups, notably Fatah, the political party founded by PLO

leaders, initially claimed they were willing to foster co-existence depending on the Palestinians being steadily given more political rights and autonomy.

However, in 2010, even Fatah leaders such as Mahmoud Abbas refused to recognize Israel as a Jewish state, while the leader of al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, which is the official Fatah's military wing, publicly disclosed Fatah's "ultimate goal" to be the destruction of the Jewish state, and that Abbas would lie about recognition of Israel following "Zionist and American pressure" for "political calculations" as one of the means to achieve the aforementioned goal. In 2006, Hamas won a majority in the Palestinian Legislative Council, where it remains the majority party. Hamas has openly stated in the past that it completely opposed Israel's right to exist, and its charter states this. Following the release of Gilad Shalit in 2011, Abbas praised his capturing by Hamas and reassured the Arab public he would "never recognize a Jewish state". Israel cites past concessions such as Israel's disengagement from the Gaza Strip in August 2005, which did not lead to a reduction of attacks and rocket fire against Israel—as an example of the Palestinian people not accepting Israel as a state.

Palestinian groups and Israeli Human Rights organizations (namely B'Tselem) have pointed out that while the military occupation in Gaza was ended, the Israeli government still retained control of Gaza's airspace, territorial water, and borders, legally making it still under Israeli control. They also say that mainly thanks to these restrictions, the Palestinian quality of life in the Gaza Strip has not improved since the Israeli withdrawal. Israeli Security Concerns Throughout the conflict, Palestinian violence has been a concern for Israelis. Israel along with the United States and the European Union, refer to the

violence against Israeli civilians and military forces by Palestinian militants as terrorism. The conflict between Palestine and Israel is not only basically a question of Palestinian terrorism that largely threatens the security and existence of Israel, it is also a question of Israeli Military occupation that started in 1967, which provokes Palestinian resistance which then threatens the security of Israel, to go on speaking about Palestinian terrorism without seeing the right of the Palestinians to their freedom and to end their occupation is condemning oneself not to see reality and to remain impotent in reaching a solution, what do the Palestinians want? They want their independent state, and what do the Israelis want? They want their security inside secure borders protected from all attacks or threats, the two requirements are interdependent, after the end of the occupation will bring cessation of all violence and hence the security of Israel, but instead of putting an end to the occupation, the Israeli government maintains it and follows ways-reprisals and recently they declared war which just led to the opposite of security i. e. more Palestinians reaction, violence and hence Israelis insecurity.

Oppression and humiliation imposed upon the Palestinian people can only produce violent Palestinian reactions that threaten the security of Israel. The motivations behind Palestinian violence against Israeli civilians are multiplex, and not all violent Palestinian groups agree with each other on specifics, however a common motive is to eliminate the Jewish state and replace it with a Palestinian Arab state. The most prominent Islamist groups, such as Hamas, view the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a religious jihad. Suicidebombing is used as a tactic among Palestinian organizations like

Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade and is supported by as much as 68% of the Palestinian people.

In Israel, Palestinian suicide bombers have targeted civilian buses, restaurants, shopping malls, hotels and marketplaces. From 1993–2003, 303 Palestinian suicide bombers attacked Israel. The Israeli government initiated the construction of a security barrier following scores of suicide bombings and terrorist attacks in July 2003. Israel's coalition government approved the security barrier in the northern part of the green-line between Israel and the West Bank. Since the erection of the fence, terrorist acts have declined by more than 90%. Since 2001, the threat of Qassam rockets fired from the Palestinian Territories into Israel is also of great concern for Israeli defense officials.

In 2006—the year following Israel's disengagement from the Gaza Strip—the Israeli government recorded 1, 726 such launches, more than four times the total rockets fired in 2005. As of January 2009, over 8, 600 rockets had been launched, causing widespread psychological trauma and disruption of daily life. Over 500 rockets and mortars hit Israel between January–September 2010. Since mid-June 2007, Israel's primary means of dealing with security concerns in the West Bank has been to cooperate with and permit United States-sponsored training, equipping, and funding of the Palestinian Authority's security forces, which with Israeli help have largely succeeded in quelling West Bank supporters of Hamas. Rights on Water Resources

Of the water available from the West Bank aquifers, Israel uses 73%, West Bank Palestinians use 17% and illegal Jewish settlers use 10%, while 10-14% of Palestine's GDP is agricultural, 90% of them must rely on rain fed farming

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methods, Israel's agriculture is only 3% of their GDP but Israel irrigates more than 50% of their land, three million West Bank Palestinians use only 250,000,000 cubic metres per year while six million Israelis enjoy the use of 1.954 billion cubic meters which means that each Israeli consumes as much water as four Palestinians, Israeli settlers are allocated 1,450m cubic per person per year. Israel consumes the vast majority of the water from the Jordan river despite only 3% of the river falling within its pre-1967 borders.

Israel now diverts one quarter of its total water consumption through its national water carrier from the Jordan river, where Palestinians have no access to it whatsoever due to Israeli closures, Israel does not allow new wells to be drilled by Palestinians and has confiscated many wells for Israeli use, Israel sets quotas on how much water can be drawn by Palestinians from existing wells when supplies of water are low in the summer months, the Israeli water company closes the valves which supply Palestinian towns and villages so as not to affect Israeli supplies, this means that illegal Israeli settlers can have their pools topped up and lawns watered while Palestinians living next to them, on whose land the settlements are situated do not have enough water for drinking and cooking. In the Oslo II Accord treaty, both sides agreed to maintain "existing quantities of utilization from the resources. In so doing, the Palestinian Authority established the legality of Israeli water production in the West Bank. Moreover, Israel obligated itself in this agreement to provide water to supplement Palestinian production, and further agreed to allow additional Palestinian drilling in the Eastern Aquifer. Many Palestinians counter that the Oslo II agreement was intended to be a temporary resolution and that it was not intended to remain in effect more

than a decade later. Indeed its name is " The Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement. " This agreement also established the right of the Palestinian Authority to explore and drill for natural gas, fuel and petroleum within its territory and territorial waters.

It also delineated the major terms of conduct regarding regulations on the parties' facilities. In 1999, Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said it continued to honor its obligations under the Interim Agreement. The water that Israel receives comes mainly from the Jordan River system, the Sea of Galilee and two underground sources. According to a 2003 BBC article the Palestinians lack access to the Jordan River system. Numerous foreign nations and international organizations have established bilateral agreements with the Palestinian and Israeli water authorities. It is estimated that a future investment of about US\$1.1bn for the West Bank and \$0.1bn is needed for the planning period from 2003 to 2015. In order to support and improve the water sector in the Palestinian territories, a number of bilateral and multilateral agencies have been supporting many different water and sanitation programs. There are three large seawater desalination plants in Israel and two more scheduled to open before 2014. When the fourth plant becomes operational, 65% of Israel's water will come from desalination plants, according to Minister of Finance Dr. Yuval Steinitz. Palestinian Refugees of the 1948 War Palestinian refugees are people who lost both their homes and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict.

The number of Palestinians who fled or were expelled from Israel following its creation was estimated at 711,000 in 1949. Descendants of these

original Palestinian Refugees are also eligible for registration and services provided by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and as of 2010 number 4.7 million people. A third of the refugees live in recognized refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The remainder live in and around the cities and towns of these host countries. Most of these people were born outside of Israel, but are descendants of original Palestinian refugees. Palestinian negotiators, most notably Yasser Arafat, have so far insisted that refugees have a right to return to the places where they lived before 1948 and 1967, including those within the 1949 Armistice lines, citing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and UN General Assembly Resolution 194 as evidence, although they have privately countenanced the return of only 10,000 refugees and their families to Israel as part of a peace settlement. Mahmoud Abbas, the current Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization accepts that it is " illogical to ask Israel to take 5 million, or indeed 1 million. That would mean the end of Israel. " The Arab Peace Initiative of 2002 declared that it proposed the compromise of a " just resolution" of the refugee problem. Palestinian and international authors have justified the right of return of the Palestinian refugees on several grounds; * A few authors included in the broader New Historians assert that the Palestinian refugees were chased out or expelled by the actions of the Haganah, Lehi and Irgun.

The New Historians cite indications of Arab leaders' desire for the Palestinian Arab population to stay put. Shlaim (2000) states that from April 1948 the military forces of what was to become Israel had embarked on a new

offensive strategy which involved destroying Arab villages and the forced removal of civilians. * However, historian Benny Morris states that most of Palestine's 700, 000 " refugees" fled because of the " flail of war" and expected to return home shortly after a successful Arab invasion. He documents how all around Palestine, Arab leaders advised the evacuation of entire communities as happened in Haifa, 1948. Morris considers the displacement the result of a national conflict initiated by the Arabs themselves. Karsh notes that the Palestinians were themselves the aggressors in the 1948-49 war who attempted to " cleanse" a neighboring ethnic community. Had the United Nations resolution of November 29, 1947, which called for two states in Palestine, not been subverted by force by the Arab world, there would have been no refugee problem in the first place. He reports of large numbers of Palestinian refugees leaving even before the outbreak of the 1948 war because of disillusionment and economic privation. The British High Commissioner for Palestine spoke of the " collapsing Arab morale in Palestine" that he partially attributed to the " increasing tendency of those who should be leading them to leave the country" and the considerable evacuations of the Arab effendi class.

Huge numbers of Palestinians were also expelled by their leadership to prevent them from becoming Israeli citizens and in Haifa and Tiberias, tens of thousands of Arabs were forcibly evacuated on the instructions of the Arab Higher Committee. * The Israeli Law of Return that grants citizenship to any Jew from anywhere in the world is viewed by some as discrimination against non-Jews, especially Palestinians that cannot apply for such citizenship or return to the territory which they were expelled from or fled during the

course of the 1948 war. Since none of the 900,000 Jewish refugees who fled anti-Semitic violence in the Arab world was ever compensated or repatriated by their former countries of residence—to no objection on the part of Arab leaders—a precedent has been set whereby it is the responsibility of the nation which accepts the refugees to assimilate them.

Although Israel accepts the right of the Palestinian Diaspora to return into a new Palestinian state, Israel insists that their return into the current state of Israel would be a great danger for the stability of the Jewish state; an influx of Palestinian refugees would lead to the destruction of the state of Israel. Control over Jerusalem remains one of the core issues in the Israel-Palestinian conflict. During the 1948 Arab-Israeli war West Jerusalem was among the areas captured and later annexed by Israel while East Jerusalem including the Old City was captured by Jordan. Israel captured East Jerusalem during the six day war and subsequently annexed it. The border of Jerusalem is a particularly delicate issue, with each side asserting claims over this city.

The three largest Abrahamic religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—include Jerusalem as an important setting for their religious and historical narratives. Israel asserts that the city should not be divided and should remain unified within Israel's political control. Palestinians claim at least the parts of the city which were not part of Israel prior to June 1967. As of 2005, there were more than 719,000 people living in Jerusalem; 465,000 were Jews (mostly living in West Jerusalem) and 232,000 were Muslims (mostly living in East Jerusalem). The Israeli government, including the Knesset and Supreme Court, is centered in the "new city" of West Jerusalem and has been since Israel's founding in 1948. After Israel captured the Jordanian-

controlled East Jerusalem in the Six-Day War, it assumed complete administrative control of East Jerusalem. In 1980, Israel issued a new law stating, " Jerusalem, complete and united, is the capital of Israel. " At the Camp David and Taba Summits in 2000-01, the United States proposed a plan in which the Arab parts of Jerusalem would be given to the proposed Palestinian state while the Jewish parts of Jerusalem were retained by Israel. All archaeological work under the Temple Mount would be jointly controlled by the Israeli and Palestinian governments. Both sides accepted the proposal in principle, but the summits ultimately failed.

Israel has grave concerns regarding the welfare of Jewish holy places under possible Palestinian control. When Jerusalem was under Jordanian control, no Jews were allowed to visit the Western Wall or other Jewish holy places, and the Jewish cemetery on the Mount of Olives was desecrated. [63] In 2000, a Palestinian mob took over Joseph's Tomb, a shrine considered sacred by both Jews and Muslims, looted and burned the building and turned it into a mosque. [64] There are unauthorized Palestinian excavations for construction on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, which could threaten the stability of the Western Wall. Israel, on the other hand, has seldom blocked access to holy places sacred to other religions.

Israeli security agencies routinely monitor and arrest Jewish extremists that plan attacks, resulting in almost no serious incidents for the last 20 years. Moreover, Israel has given almost complete autonomy to the Muslim trust (Waqf) over the Temple Mount. Israel expresses concern over the security of its residents if neighborhoods of Jerusalem are placed under Palestinian control. Jerusalem has been a prime target for attacks by militant groups

against civilian targets since 1967. Many Jewish neighborhoods have been fired upon from Arab areas. The proximity of the Arab areas, if these regions were to fall in the boundaries of a Palestinian state, would be so close as to threaten the safety of Jewish residents.

Nadav Shragai states this idea in his study for the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, "An Israeli security body that was tasked in March 2000 with examining the possibility of transferring three Arab villages just outside of Jerusalem - Abu Dis, Al Azaria, and a-Ram - to Palestinian security control, assessed at the time that: 'Terrorists will be able to exploit the short distances, sometimes involving no more than crossing a street, to cause damage to people or property. A terrorist will be able to stand on the other side of the road, shoot at an Israeli or throw a bomb, and it may be impossible to do anything about it. The road will constitute the border.' If that is the case for neighborhoods outside of Jerusalem's municipal boundaries, how much more, so for Arab neighborhoods within those boundaries. Palestinians have voiced concerns regarding the welfare of Christian and Muslim holy places under Israeli control. Some Palestinian advocates have made statements alleging that the Western Wall tunnel was re-opened with the intent of causing the mosque's collapse.

Israel considers these statements to be totally baseless and unfounded, and to be deliberately intended to incite aggression and public disorder, and stated this in a 1996 speech at the UN. Israeli Military Occupation in West Bank Occupied Palestinian Territory is the term used by the United Nations to refer to the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip—territories which were captured by Israel during the 1967 Six-Day War,

having formerly been controlled by Egypt and Jordan. The Israeli government uses the term Disputed Territories, to argue that some territories cannot be called occupied as no nation had clear rights to them and there was no operative diplomatic arrangement when Israel acquired them in June 1967.

The area is still referred to as Judea and Samaria by some Israeli groups, based on the historical regional names from ancient times. In 1980, Israel annexed East Jerusalem. Israel has never annexed the West Bank or Gaza Strip, and the United Nations has demanded the "termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for an acknowledgment of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force" and that Israeli forces withdraw "from territories occupied in the recent conflict" - the meaning and intent of the latter phrase is disputed. See Interpretations.

It has been the position of Israel that the most Arab-populated parts of West Bank (without major Jewish settlements), and the entire Gaza Strip must eventually be part of an independent Palestinian State. However, the precise borders of this state are in question. At Camp David, for example, then-Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak offered Yasser Arafat an opportunity to establish an independent Palestinian State composed of 92% of the West Bank, Arab neighborhood of East Jerusalem, and the entire Gaza Strip and dismantling of most settlements. Yasser Arafat rejected the proposal without providing a counter-offer. A subsequent settlement proposed by President Clinton offered Palestinian sovereignty over 94 to 96 percent of the West Bank but was similarly rejected.

Some Palestinians claim they are entitled to all of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem. Israel says it is justified in not ceding all this land, because of security concerns, and also because the lack of any valid diplomatic agreement at the time means that ownership and boundaries of this land is open for discussion. Palestinians claim any reduction of this claim is a severe deprivation of their rights. In negotiations, they claim that any moves to reduce the boundaries of this land are a hostile move against their key interests. Israel considers this land to be in dispute, and feels the purpose of negotiations is to define what the final borders will be.

Other Palestinian groups, such as Hamas, have in the past insisted that Palestinians must control not only the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem, but also all of Israel proper. For this reason, Hamas has viewed the peace process " as religiously forbidden and politically inconceivable".

Control of the Air Space During the Camp David Summit during the summer of 2000, American military experts raised the question of whether the Israeli demand for control of a unified air space over all the territory between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River was essential. Among the justifications provided by Israeli representatives was the danger of aerial terrorism. The Israeli explained their need to be prepared in the event of a suicide attack, carried out by a civilian air craft laden with explosives.

Access to the Israelis air space from the Mediterranean sea to the west is permitted only to planes that have identified themselves and have been identified before they come within 100meters of Israel The Palestinians have demanded control over the Kalandia (Atarot) airfield in Jerusalem, to have it become the international airport of the Palestinian state. They also intend to

establish additional airports for internal Palestinian air traffic. Israel opposes handing over Atarot airfield to the Palestinians since a Palestinian airport adjacent to Israel's capital poses an unacceptable risk. The operation of a Palestinian airport in the West Bank would also entail substantial risks - both in terms of security and in terms of flight safety. Israel would lack the sufficient flight safety.

Israel would lack the sufficient response time required to intercept a hostile response time required to intercept a hostile plane on a mission to attack an Israeli target. In addition, there is the danger of traffic overload in the international corridor between Israel and Jordan, and an overlap of activity (circling) involving Ben-Gurion Airport, Israeli military airports, and civilian airports in the West Bank. The Palestinians repeatedly argue that they insist that peace will bring security. Therefore believe their own interests take precedence over Israel's. Conversely, Israel views its security as a necessary condition for maintaining peace and stability, and cannot agree to proposals that would base its vital security needs solely on diplomatic agreements.

It is only through a mutual understanding of the other party's needs - and by building an effective coordination apparatus to provide fitting solutions to demands on both sides - that a stable and viable agreement can be implemented. In light of the special time, space and topographical conditions of the area, it is not possible to divide the airspace and the electromagnetic spectrum between Israel and a future Palestinian state. For both of these, unified solutions are