

POLITICS AND SOCIETY IN ISRAEL

IRE215

SPRING 2020

Session 12



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On The Agenda For Today

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■ **Peace in the Middle East => The Israel/Palestinian Conflict**

■ **Recap**

- The Second Intifada
- The Security fence/West Bank Barrier
- 'Road Map' to Peace
- Annapolis Conference (2007)
- **Contemporary Developments**

■ **End-Term Papers**

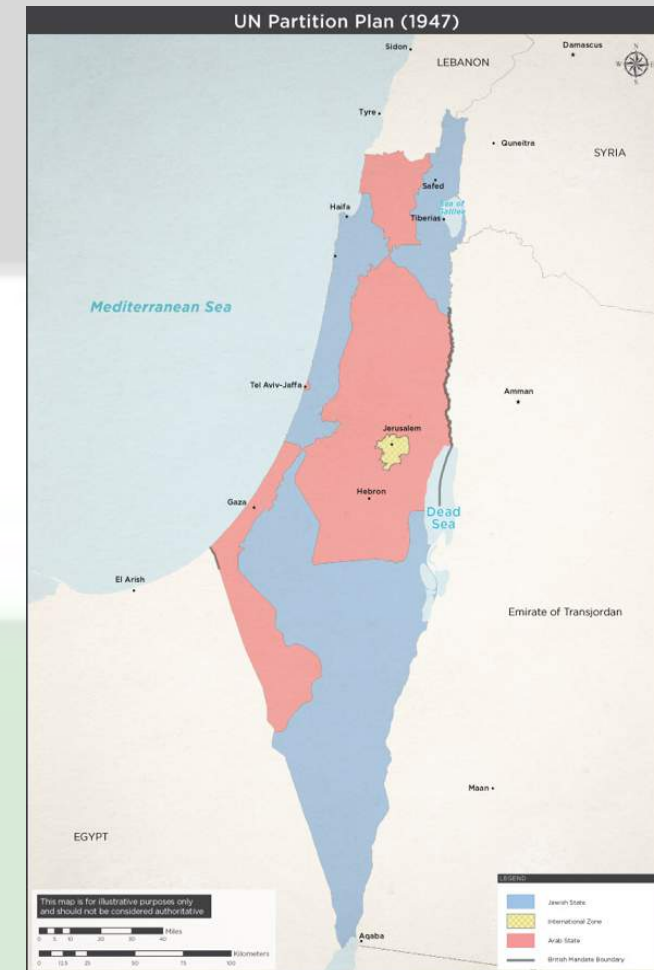
■ **Analysis**

- Conflicted Positions
- Potential Solutions
- Obstacles to Peace
- What does the future hold?

Recap

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- Conflict over **territory** + **religious** component, since the 19th century
- **Jewish self determination: Zionism**
- **1922-1948:** Jewish community in mandatory Palestine grew (80k => 650k)
 - **Friction with local Palestinian Arabs increased**
- November 1947: The **Partition Plan** of the UN
- 1964: The **Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO)** formed in Cairo, under **Yasir Arafat**



Recap

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- Successive wars resulted in minor shifts of territory until the **Six-Days War (1967)** => Israel captured the **Sinai Peninsula, Golan Heights, East Jerusalem, West Bank**
- **UN Resolution 242: 'Land for peace'**
 - The **Jarring initiatives (1967-1971)**
 - The **Rogers Plan (1969)**
- Many **Palestinians** turned to the **PLO + violent resistance**



Recap

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- **Yom Kippur War (1973)**
- **Israel** returned the Sinai Peninsula to **Egypt** in exchange for **peace** (1979)
 - **Palestinian issue left unresolved**
=> Surge in violent uprisings of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip **First intifada** (1987-1993)
- **The Oslo Accords: Landmark moments** in the pursuit of peace in the ME



The Oslo Accords (1993, 1995)

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- Secret negotiations between the government of **Israel** and the leadership of the **PLO** resulted in **two** separate agreements
- Ratified in Washington (1993: Oslo I) and Taba, Egypt (1995: Oslo II)
 - **First agreements** between **Israel** and the **PLO**
 - **Mutual recognition**
 - Created the **Palestinian Authority** + limited **autonomy** over the West Bank and Gaza



Post Oslo Accords

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- **1995:** Prime Minister **Rabin assassinated** in TLV
- **1998:** Palestinian officials accused **Israel of not following through** on IDF withdrawals from **Gaza + Hebron** (West Bank) as set by the **Oslo Accords**
 - **PA failing to adequately police Gaza + the West Bank**
- **Early 2000:** **Accelerated** construction of **new Jewish settlements** in the West Bank
 - **Palestinian violence** against Israeli citizens **increased**



Camp David Summit (II)

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- July 11-24, 2000 (Arafat, Barak, Clinton)
 - Clinton's, Barak's terms in office were ending, wanted to 'cease the day'
- **Goal:** to negotiate a **final settlement** of the **Israeli-Palestinian conflict** in accordance with the 1993 **Oslo agreement- failed**
 - Israel + US made a few **offers**, such as a Palestinian state comprised of four cantons, **no counter proposals**, Clinton accused Arafat of not being sincere
 - **Another round-** White House (December 19-23, 2000)- **failed**



The Second Intifada

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- Followed the **failed Camp David Summit**, expansion of Jewish settlements in the West Bank + Israeli PM **Sharon** visited the **Temple Mount- provocation**
- September 2000: **Palestinian militants** declared a '**Second Intifada**', calling for **increased violence** against Israel
 - '**Al-Aqsa Intifada**'
- **Some provisions of the Oslo Accords** remain in effect, many have long been **abandoned**

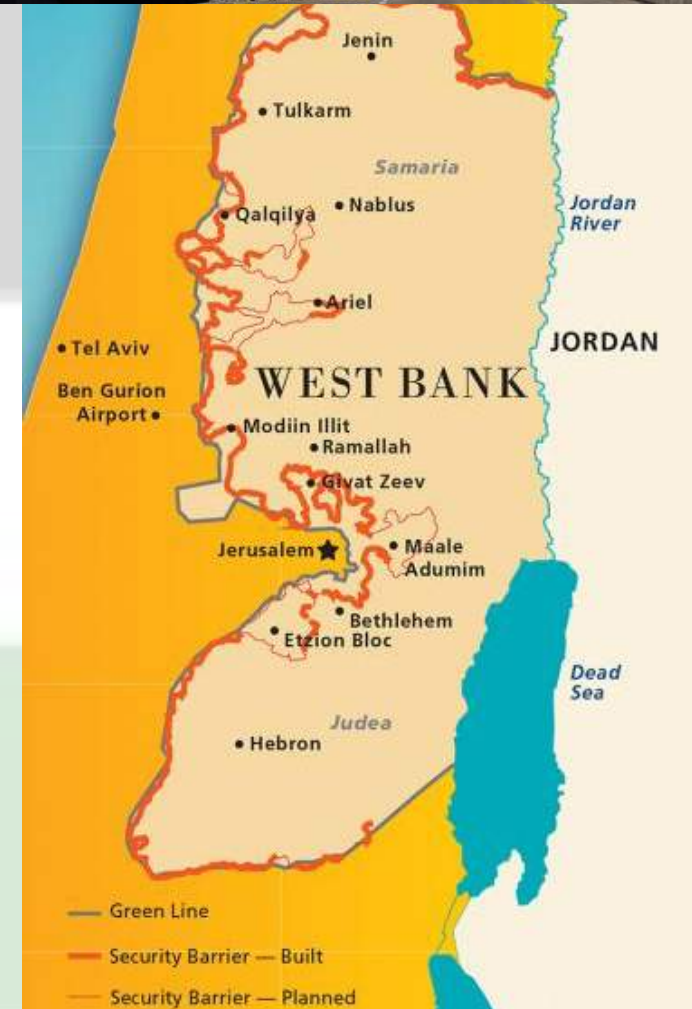


The 'Security Barrier'

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- Massive rise in Palestinian **suicide bombers** in Israel
- 2002: Israel starts building a **barrier** between it and the West Bank (the **security wall/West Bank Barrier**)
 - Goal: to prevent infiltrations of terrorists into Israel
 - Effective: Dramatically **reduced** suicide bombings
- **Heavily disputed path-** cut into Palestinian land
- Illegal according to the ICJ (2004)
- **2005: Palestinian violence decreased (Israeli withdrawal from the **Gaza strip**)**



Hamas and The Gaza Strip



- **Hamas:** Most influential Palestinian militant movement + Islamic fundamentalist party
- 2005: Israel **unilaterally withdrew** from the **Gaza Strip**
- 2006: **Hamas won** the Palestinian Parliamentary election, **defeating Fatah** (the party of the PA's president Mahmoud Abbas), set the stage for a **power struggle**
- 2007: Hamas forcibly took over the Gaza Strip in the '**Battle of Gaza**'
 - Since attaining power, Hamas maintained its **refusal to recognize** the state of **Israel**, leading to **crippling economic sanctions**
 - **Increased rocket fire from Gaza to Israel**

'Road Map' for Peace

- A **peace plan** developed by the EU, Russia, UN, and the US, presented to the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli government (2003)
- A three-phase peace process that culminates with the **creation of a Palestinian state** in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip
 - Meant to **solve the conflict**
- The Road Map stipulated a detailed time table for each one of its phases (3 years overall)



Annapolis Conference

- 2007: Israel, PA, hosted by US in Maryland
- **Expectation: Revival of the 'Road Map for Peace'**
- The **two states solution** to Israeli Palestinian conflict- 'on the table'
- A '**Joint Understanding**' was signed => Launch continuous bilateral negotiations for peace + implement the 'Road Map'



Contemporary Developments

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- 2012 => **Upgraded** status for the **Palestinian Authority** in the UN
 - "Non-member observer **entity**" => "Non-member observer **state**"
- 2013 => US attempted to **revive the peace process**
 - Disrupted when **Fatah** formed **unity government** with **Hamas** (2014)
- 2014 => **Military confrontation** between the **Israeli** military and **Hamas**
 - Ended with a **cease-fire** deal brokered by Egypt
- 2015 => Widespread **violent protests** + 'lone wolf' **knife attacks**
 - Israel places **checkpoints** and **roadblocks** in the West Bank

Contemporary Developments

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- March 2018 => **Violent riots** at the **Gaza** Border, organized by **Hamas**
 - **Explosive balloons, kites** from Gaza caused fires in Israel
 - Increased **rocket** launching from Gaza
- May 2019 => **Ceasefire** between Hamas and Israel
 - Attacks decreased but didn't stop
- Trumps' **Peace Plan for the Middle East** =>
 - Not New
 - Favors the Israeli position



Contested Positions

Sir Arthur James Balfour
Br. Foreign Secretary

Israel =>

- **The Land/Settlement**
 - We were here first (ancient times)
 - **Balfour** promised us a **homeland** (1917)
 - We've made a desert into a productive land



*“His Majesty’s Government views **with favor** the **establishment in Palestine** of a **national home for the Jewish people** and will use their best endeavors to **facilitate the achievement of this object**, it being clearly understood that **nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine...**”*

Contested Positions

Israel =>

■ Security

- The Holocaust proved that we **need a state**
- Won't give up land taken until we have a **guarantee of safety**: dangerous neighborhood

■ Faith

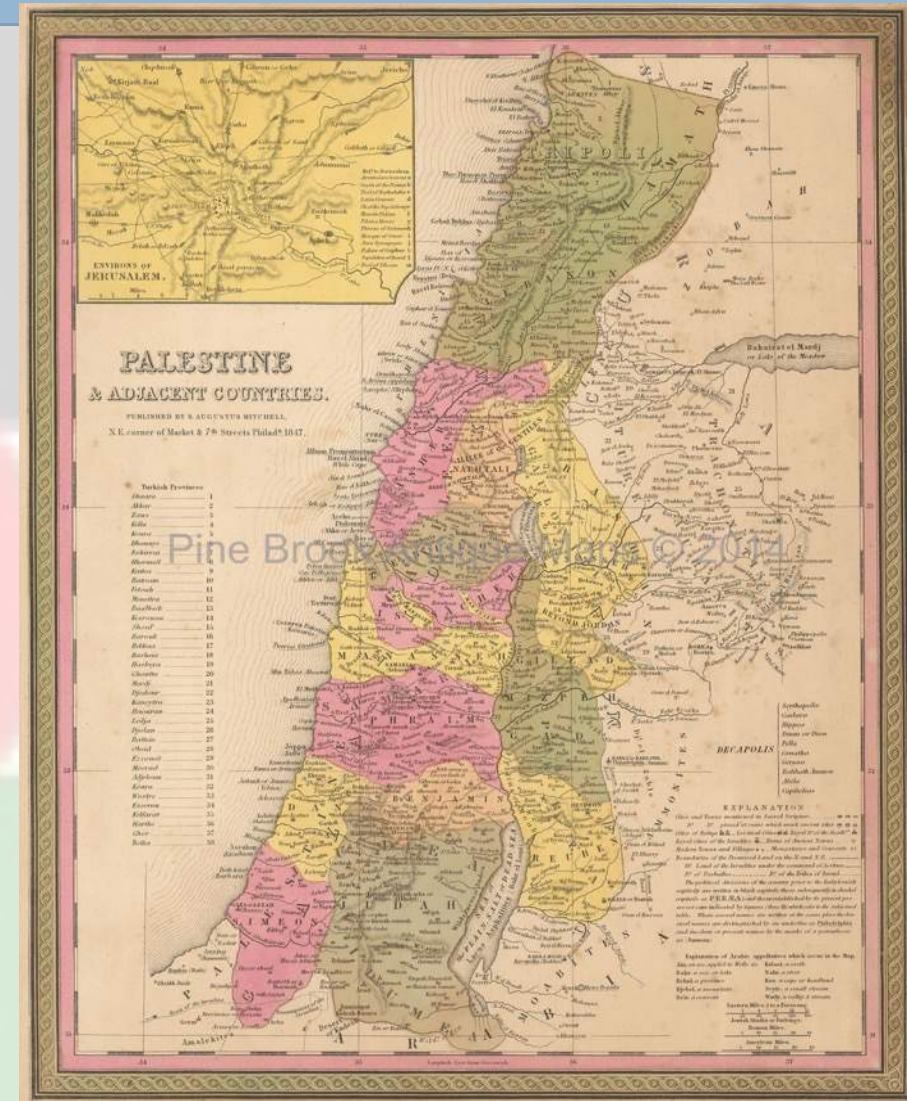
- 'Zion'/Israel as God's home for the Jewish people

Contested Positions

Palestine =>

■ The Land/Settlement

- We've lived here for centuries
- The Brits promises us independence (**McMahon- Hussein Agreement**)
- Jewish immigration was making us a minority in our own land- we had to fight



Contested Positions

Palestine =>

- **Security**
 - A nation without a state cannot survive
- **Faith**
 - Jerusalem is holy to Islam



Dome of the rock

Obstacles to Peace

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- **Control of Jerusalem**
- **Borders of the Palestinian State**
- **Palestinian Refugees Right of return**
- **Jewish Settlements in the West Bank**
- **Security for Israel**



Potential Solutions to the Conflict

- The **'One state solution'**
 - Includes all the present territory of Israel + the West Bank (Gaza Strip?)
 - A **single bi-national state**
 - **Jewish state** with a larger Arab minority
 - A **united Palestine**



Potential Solutions to the Conflict

■ The 'Two States solution'

- Borders?

- The Oslo accords (1993)

- Trump's Peace Plan

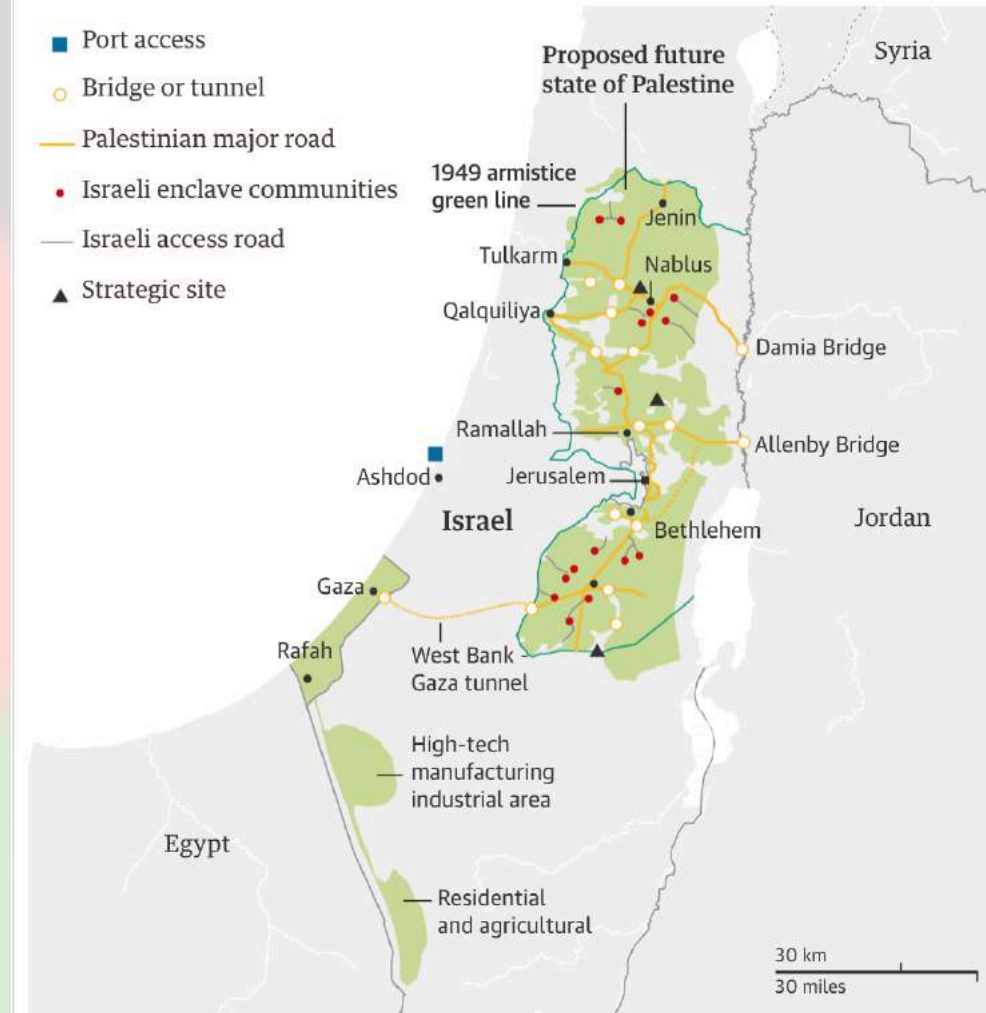
- **Nothing new** or revolutionary

- Favoring **Israeli interests**

- **Palestinian state- smaller** than envisioned by the Oslo agreement (1993)

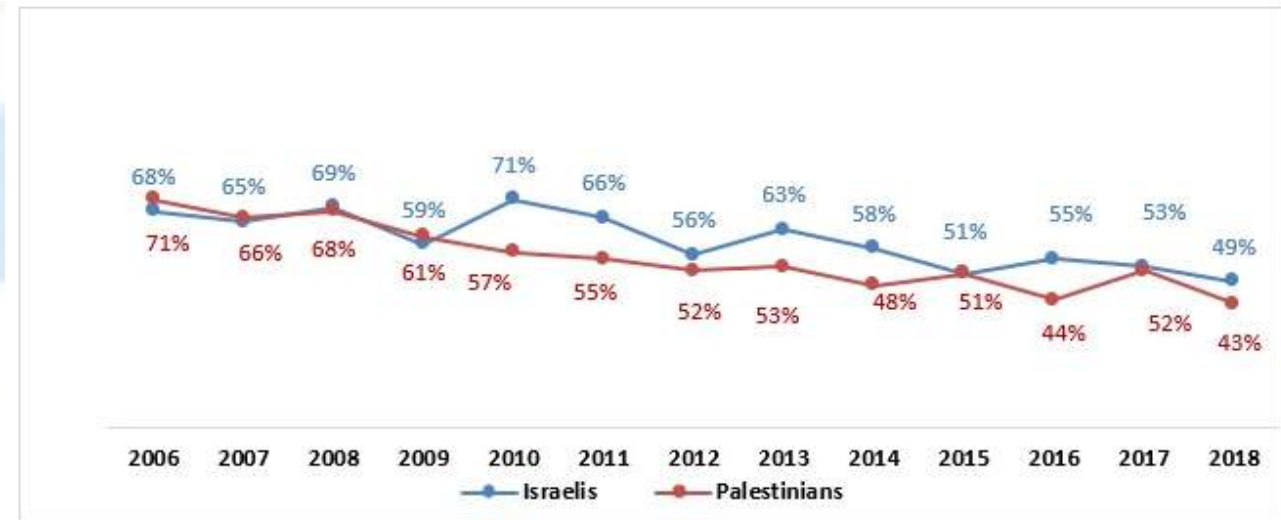
- **Preconditions** for Palestinian independence

Trump's proposed plan for Palestine



Potential Solutions to the Conflict

- The 'Two States solution'
 - Declining support for the two-state solution, specially among young adults
 - Still seems to be the most favourable solution
 - Annexation of the Jordan Valley in July (2020)?



Israeli Jews



Palestinians

Why did Peace Talk Failed?

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- Bad timing, artificial deadlines, insufficient preparation, lack of support (US president, regional states), inadequate confidence-building measures, leaders lacking courage, scepticism, absence of personal chemistry and trust, etc.
- Most common => **Extremists** allowed to **set the agenda** + **neglect of Palestinian bottom-up economic development and state-building**
- Past peace talks were predicated on **both parties** wanting a **two states solution**, while **at least one party** prefers to **maintain the status quo**

Why did Peace Talk Failed?

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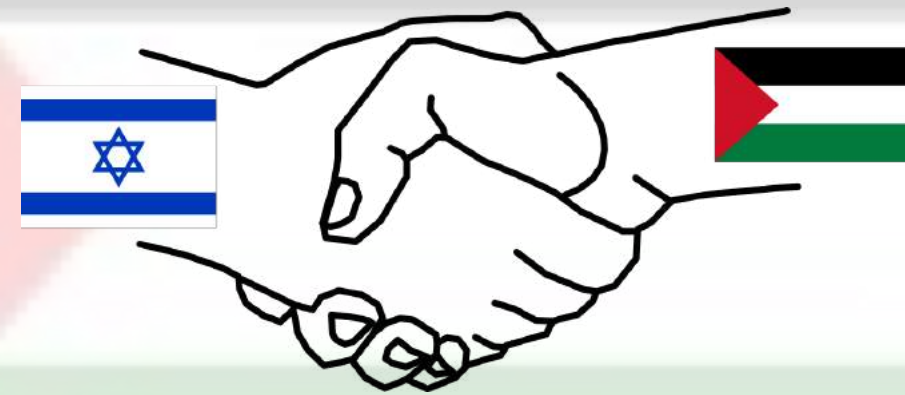
- The **Palestinians** chose **no agreement** over one that did not meet their **minimal conditions** (persisted)
 - Hope for **international support** for a plan along these lines: pressure Israel into an agreement
 - The **status quo** has been made **more bearable**
- **Israel** has consistently opted for the **status quo** rather than such an agreement
 - The costs of **SUCH deal** are much higher than of **NO deal** (social, security, economic, etc)



Why did Peace Talk Failed?

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- **Advantage** to ending the Israeli/Palestinian conflict:
 - **Open relations** (economic + diplomatic) with **Arab states**
 - Blow to efforts to **delegitimise Israel**
 - **Normalizations of relations** with other nations
- **Moral costs** of occupation for Israeli society?
- Relations with the **Jewish Diaspora**?
- **Consequences of maintaining the status quo** from an Israeli point of view are tolerable => it is illogical to expect Israel to opt for an agreement



What Does the Future Hold?

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- **An agreement now is preferable** when considering a **potentially bleak future**- is it really?
 - Can wait and see if the potential threats materialise (and if so, sign a deal then): a strategy of waiting served Israel so far
- **Rising support for right wing parties/the Palestinian national moment + Hamas**
- **Agreement is only possible** when at least **one party** has an **incentive** to make **significant concessions/bear the costs of an agreement**
- **Status Quo** stays in place

End-Term Papers

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- 10 Pages **maximum** including footnotes, excluding references
 - Times new Roman, size 12, line spacing: double space
- ‘Final paper writing guidelines’ available in the IS
- Submission deadline (via IS) => **26.06.2020**

**Thank you for your attention and your
interest in the course!**

Questions???

Feedback???