

## Lesson V: The Hope for Peace

### Materials

Each student will need:

- 1) *Unresolved Issues in the Arab-Israeli Conflict*
- 2) *Unresolved Issues in the Arab-Israeli Conflict* graphic organizer
- 3) *Excerpts from the Washington Declaration*
- 4) (optional, for supplemental activity) One of the following readings about the benefits of peace between Israel and Jordan (students will be divided into 5 groups, each of which will read a different document):
  - a. "Sheikh Hussein Bridge Officially Opened"
  - b. "Israeli and Arab Writers to Meet at the Sheikh Hussein Bridge" and "Qualifying Industrial Zone Between Israel and Jordan" (2 short articles)
  - c. "Israel and Jordan Cooperate on Cable Link"
  - d. "Trade Bridge as a Bridge for Peace"
  - e. "The Fourth Israeli Jordanian Business Meeting"

The teacher will need:

- 1) (optional, for supplemental activity) A copy or transparency of *The Bridge of Peace*
- 2) (optional, for supplemental activity) A transparency of *Pictures of the Peace Bridge*

### Note

Please download the latest version of this lesson from [www.icsresources.org/curricula](http://www.icsresources.org/curricula). ICS frequently updates, revises, and strengthens its materials. The ICS website includes a variety of lesson plans, teacher's guides, maps, and primary source materials. Most maps and images are in color if accessed through the website. All materials may be downloaded and shared.

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### Goals

- 1) Students will be able to summarize contrasting perspectives on unresolved issues in the Arab-Israeli conflict.
- 2) Students will be able to discuss how the benefits of peace can overcome obstacles as well as the lessons that can be learned from existing peace agreements.

### Instructional Design

#### Anticipatory Set: The Cost of Conflict

- 1) Ask class to brainstorm a list of the negative effects of international conflicts. Encourage them to think of a variety of negative effects (e.g. physical injuries and casualties,



disruption of trade and business, destruction of infrastructure, feelings of insecurity, giving the international community a negative impression, etc.). Write student ideas on the board.

- 2) (*Optional*) As an alternative to Step 1 above, have students bring in a newspaper or journal article about any current conflict. Have students identify the negative effects of the conflict described in their article. Write the negative effects that students identify on the board.
- 3) Tell students that despite the negative consequences of conflict, some conflicts last for many years even if there are efforts to resolve them. The Arab-Israeli conflict is an example of one conflict that has continued despite efforts to make peace.
- 4) If *Lesson IV* was used, ask students to summarize the major steps toward peace. Write these steps on the board. Students should mention the Peace Agreement between Egypt and Israel, the Oslo Accords, the Peace Agreement between Jordan and Israel, the Disengagement Plan from Gaza, the Arab Peace Initiative, and the Roadmap for Peace.

#### Topic 1: Unresolved Issues in the Arab-Israeli Conflict

- 1) Distribute *Unresolved Issues in the Arab-Israeli Conflict* reading and graphic organizer.
- 2) Instruct students to fill out the graphic organizer by explaining how each of the six issues presents a challenge to resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict. Each of the six boxes on the graphic organizer is labeled with an unresolved issue. Inside each box, students should summarize the conflicting perspectives on the issue. This may be done individually or in mixed-ability pairs.

#### Topic 2: The Desire for Peace

- 1) Write the following data on the board:  
“78% of Israelis and 73% of Palestinians find a two-state solution ‘acceptable’.”

You may also include:

“71% of Israelis and 57% of Palestinians see a two-state solution as the ‘most acceptable’ solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.”

- 2) Inform students that a two-state solution refers to the idea that the solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is for an independent Palestinian state to exist alongside a safe and secure State of Israel. Inform students that most opinion polls consistently show that the majority of Israelis and the majority of Palestinians would accept a two-state solution. Tell them that the data on the board comes from joint Israeli-Palestinian polls. The first poll was released in April 2009 by the OneVoice movement (see below for information about this group). The optional second poll came from a survey overseen by the Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research that was released in March 2010.



- 3) Ask students if they are surprised by the information on the board and why they are surprised or not surprised. Student responses will vary but students might mention that they are surprised because they usually just hear about the conflict and disagreements or that they are not surprised because they can understand how most people would want to find a solution to a conflict that puts their families in danger and makes their lives more difficult.
- 4) Ask students for possible explanations for why the two-state solution has not yet been achieved even though most Palestinians and most Israelis say they would accept it. Student responses might mention that the two groups disagree about important details, that the groups distrust each other, and that those who oppose the two-state solution sabotage the peace process.
- 5) Inform students that the group that sponsored the second poll, the OneVoice Movement, is a grassroots movement with a roughly equal number of members and volunteers in Israel and in the Palestinian Territories. The movement has signed up approximately 650,000 people and has approximately 1,800 volunteer youth leaders. These youth leaders seek to promote peace and a two-state solution. In one project, they sponsored an essay writing contest where Palestinian and Israeli students imagined what their societies would be like in ten years if the conflict ended.
- 6) Ask students how having Palestinian and Israeli students imagine their societies without conflict could promote peace. Student responses might mention that imagining peace might encourage people to consider the possibility of peace, or that thinking about the benefits of peace could encourage people to work toward or make compromises for peace.

### Topic 3: The Path to Peace – A Case Study

- 1) Inform students that they will study the peace agreement between Israel and Jordan in order to better understand the benefits of peace and to see how peace can be possible between Israel and its Arab neighbors.
- 2) Distribute *Excerpts from the Washington Declaration*.
- 3) Inform students that this document is not the actual peace treaty between the two nations. Rather, it is an agreement not to attack each other and a declaration that the two nations will work towards peace. They signed a peace treaty three months later.
- 4) Have students read the document silently and then ask:
  - a. Why do you think Israel and Jordan signed this document before negotiating a peace treaty? Responses might mention that the two sides wanted to agree to general principles before they discussed specifics, that they needed to build trust or common ground, or that major changes require gradual steps.
  - b. Why do you think the document begins “After generations of hostility, blood and tears and in the wake of years of pain and wars . . .”? Responses might mention that it is important to acknowledge the suffering experienced by people and nations, that this sentence helps explain why the two countries are pursuing peace, or that it shows



why this declaration is so significant and such a radical change from earlier Israeli-Jordanian relations.

- c. How do you think agreeing to underlying principles helps nations negotiate a peace treaty? Responses might mention that it gives them a framework to discuss the details of a peace treaty, or that it helps reassure each side about the other side's intentions.
- d. What lessons for other peace processes can you draw from the document? Responses might mention various factors that can help such as American involvement, agreeing to underlying principles, acknowledging the suffering of both sides, or building trust.

#### Supplemental Activity: The Benefits of Peace – A Case Study

- 1) Read *The Bridge of Peace* or project it as a transparency and have a volunteer read it.
- 2) Display *Pictures of the Peace Bridge*.
- 3) Divide the class into 5 groups and assign each group one of the readings on the benefits of the peace agreement that allowed the rebuilding of the Sheik Hussein Bridge. Inform students that they will briefly summarize their article for the class after 10 minutes.
- 4) Have each group summarize their article for the class and then ask the class:
  - a. What benefits has peace in general and “the Peace Bridge” in particular brought to Israel and Jordan? Responses should mention increasing trade, tourism, communication, stability, and business relationships as well as helping to advance the broader Arab-Israeli peace process.
  - b. What role did other countries, specifically the US and Japan, play in fostering peace between Israel and Jordan? Responses should mention that the US promoted peace and helped bring the two sides together (this information is in *The Washington Declaration*), and it enabled the two sides to benefit from peace by creating a Qualified Industrial Zone that allows them to send goods to the US without paying tariffs. Japan helped finance the Sheik Hussein Bridge.
  - c. One of the points made in the *Jordan Times* article, “Sheikh Hussein Bridge Officially Opened,” is that the bridge “holds great hope which expresses the will of both nations to go ahead with the peace process.” What role does hope play in making peace? Responses will vary but might include that hope makes peace possible because people believe that things might be better.

#### Closure: Is There a Lesson to Be Learned?

- 1) Ask students: What does the information from the *Unresolved Issues* reading suggest about the challenges to ending the Arab-Israeli conflict? Responses should reflect the fact that ending the Arab-Israeli conflict will be very challenging and that there are no simple solutions.



- 2) What does the poll from the OneVoice movement teach us about peace between Palestinians and Israelis? Student responses might mention that both groups want peace and that the desire for peace might help make peace possible, or that the desire for peace is, by itself, not enough to achieve peace and it remains to be seen if both sides are able to make the difficult compromises necessary to achieve peace.
- 3) What does the peace agreement between Jordan and Israel teach us about peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors? Responses should mention that peace is possible.
- 4) How can the success of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty be used as a building block for future agreements? Responses might mention that Israel and Jordan achieved peace by first taking initial steps to build trust and agree to general principles, that international involvement helped, or that the benefits of the peace could help convince others to make peace.
- 5) Have students discuss how involved, if at all, the US should be in advancing peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors. Responses will vary but might include the difficulty of resolving the conflict or the importance of the US in the peace agreement between Jordan and Israel.
- 6) (optional) If *Lesson 1* was used, display the “What We Want to Know” transparency from the anticipatory set. Have students identify questions that they can now answer or begin to answer. Have students provide answers to those questions.



## Unresolved Issues in the Arab-Israeli Conflict

Progress has been made toward solving the Arab-Israeli conflict. Both Egypt and Jordan, which were among the five Arab states that invaded when Israel declared independence, have peace treaties with Israel. Israel has endorsed the idea of an independent Palestinian state, a key Arab demand, and supported the creation of a Palestinian government called the Palestinian Authority. The Arab League, which declared in the Khartoum Resolution of 1967 that Arab states would not make peace with Israel, would not recognize Israel, and would not negotiate with Israel, has now stated that the Arab states would accept peace if Israel meets the demands in the Arab Peace Initiative. However, a comprehensive peace remains difficult to achieve because there are major unresolved issues that divide Israel and the Arab governments.

### **Final Borders**

In the 1967 Six-Day War, Israel gained control of Gaza and the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt, the West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan, and the Golan Heights from Syria. Following the war, Israel stated that it would return most of the land in exchange for peace and recognition of its right to exist as an independent state. Israel insists that it must retain control of some of this land for its security. Israel's territorial gains in 1967 provided it with borders that could be defended more easily against invading armies. It also provided better sites for radars to detect and respond to incoming air attacks. Israel argues that it has been attacked and threatened by its neighbors since its founding, that it gained the territory in a war of self-defense, and that binding UN resolutions recognize its right to secure borders. Arab governments state that Israel must completely withdraw to its pre-1967 borders. They argue that Israel cannot keep any land gained by war, no matter what the circumstances.

Disagreements about final borders affect negotiations with the Palestinians over the future of the West Bank (Jordan relinquished its claim to the West Bank in 1988) and negotiations with Syria over the Golan Heights; Israel completely withdrew from the Sinai Peninsula after Egypt and Israel signed a peace treaty in 1979 and it completely withdrew from Gaza in 2005.

### **Settlements**

Returning to the 1967 borders is also complicated by the existence of Israeli communities in the West Bank known as settlements. Israel originally established settlements to serve as security outposts for Israel's main population areas and to restore Jewish communities that were destroyed when Arab states invaded in 1948. However, beginning in the 1970s, the number of settlements grew and many Israelis moved there for religious or nationalist reasons. These Israelis felt that Jews should have the right to live anywhere in the historic Jewish homeland where they purchase land or receive government permission to build on public land.

Most Arabs feel that settlements are illegal and that Israelis cannot live on land gained in the 1967 War. The Palestinian Authority has gone so far as to make selling land to Jews a capital offense that is punishable by death. Israel is also criticized for its security measures to protect Israeli settlers. For example, checkpoints designed to stop attackers are criticized for making travel more difficult for Palestinians. Israel argues that security measures are necessary to save lives and that the claim that settlements are illegal is politically motivated. It states that Jordan (which gained control of the West Bank in 1948) was the first government in history to prohibit Jews from settling there and that settlements do not displace Arab inhabitants. Therefore, Israel insists on the legitimacy of the settlements though it is willing to discuss removing them, as it

removed the settlements in the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza. However, Israel argues that some of the largest settlements should remain part of Israel in a future peace agreement with the Palestinians. For the most part, Arab governments insist that Israel should completely withdraw to the pre-1967 lines.

Israeli and Palestinian negotiators have both accepted the principle of a land-swap in which Israel would give up land elsewhere in exchange for keeping large settlements. However, the two sides have not been able to agree on details such as which land would be swapped.

### **Jerusalem**

Arab governments demand that Israel recognize an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital. Israel has endorsed the idea of an independent Palestine, but most Israelis feel that Jerusalem should remain Israel's undivided capital. They argue that Judaism's most important holy sites are in East Jerusalem, that Jerusalem was the undivided capital of previous Jewish states, that Jews everywhere have expressed deep connections to Jerusalem for millennia, and that Jews lived in East Jerusalem from antiquity until 1948. In 1948, the Jewish community in East Jerusalem was evicted by the conquering Jordanian army. From that time until June 1967, Jews were not allowed to enter East Jerusalem where the Jewish holy sites are located. As a result, most Israeli Jews are reluctant to give up control. They point out that under Israeli rule all religious groups have access to and control over their own holy sites.

Palestinians argue that some of the most holy Islamic sites are in East Jerusalem and must be part of a Palestinian state. Palestinians claim that they will maintain free access to the religious sites of all religious groups. They also highlight the facts that Jerusalem is an important cultural center for Palestinians and that most of the residents of East Jerusalem are Palestinian.

### **Security Needs**

Israel and Arab governments disagree about how to balance Israel's security needs with Palestinian independence. Israel argues that if it is prepared to give up tangibles (territory) for intangibles (the promise of peace), its citizens need to feel confident that they will be safe in their country. For example, Israelis insist that the West Bank must be demilitarized with no heavy weapons such as tanks. They point out that within its 1967 borders Israel is only nine miles wide at its narrowest point. This makes it difficult to respond to an attack and leaves it vulnerable to being cut in half by invading armies. Banning heavy weapons from the West Bank would help ease Israeli concerns. Palestinians insist that their state should not be different from other states, so there should not be restrictions.

There is also disagreement on how to protect Israel from individuals and organizations that carry out terrorist attacks because they do not recognize Israel's right to exist. After 2005, when Israel removed its civilian and military presence from Gaza, rocket attacks from terrorists in Gaza increased dramatically. Israel feels that a peace agreement must include provisions to keep Israelis safe. Palestinians feel that their country should not be treated differently than other countries and therefore a peace agreement should not include these sorts of provisions.

### **Refugees**

Another major unresolved issue is the status of the approximately 700,000 Palestinian refugees who fled their homes in 1948 and their descendents. Today, the number of refugees and their descendents approaches 4 million individuals who live in Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, other Arab countries, the West Bank, Gaza, and elsewhere. They claim a "right of return" to Israel that Israel rejects. Most Israelis argue that there would be no refugees if Arabs had accepted the UN

Partition Plan and had not attacked the fledgling State of Israel. They point out that the Israeli Declaration of Independence guaranteed full equality for non-Jews and that approximately 20% of Israel's citizens are Arabs who chose to remain in Israel during the war and their descendents. Most Arabs counter that Israeli forces played a role in creating the refugee population and the cause of the conflict should not affect the right of refugees.

Israel argues that other groups in similar situations have not had a right of return and binding UN Resolutions do not give Palestinian refugees a right of return. Instead, these Security Council Resolutions only mention a "just settlement of the refugee problem." Israelis point out that this wording includes the equal number of Jewish refugees who fled Arab countries due to persecution, often having their properties confiscated and their citizenships revoked. Most of these Jewish refugees settled in Israel and today approximately half the Jewish population of Israel is of Middle Eastern or North African descent. Many Israelis feel that since they absorbed Jewish refugees from Arab states, the Palestinian territories and the Arab states should have absorbed Arab refugees.

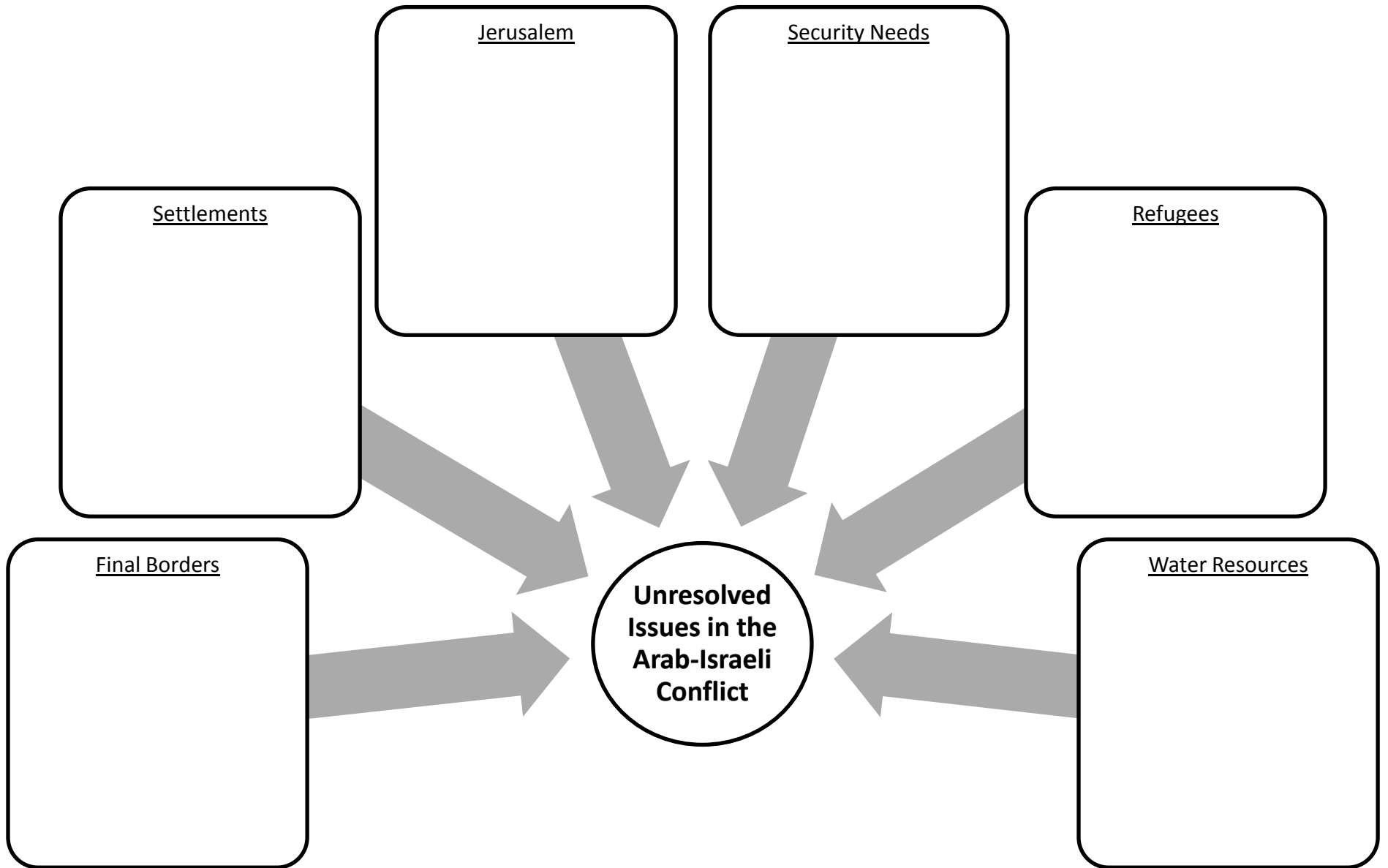
One of the major reasons Israel opposes a Palestinian right of return to Israel is that if Israel accepted it, Jews could become a minority and would no longer have national self-determination and a guaranteed refuge from antisemitism. Many see this as equivalent to the destruction of Israel. Instead, Israel says that Palestinians should have a right to return to an independent Palestinian state, but not to Israel. Some Palestinians and Israelis have suggested that recognizing the plight of the Palestinian refugees and giving them some form of monetary compensation might be a solution, but other Israelis feel this is too much of a concession and other Palestinians feel it is insufficient.

### **Water Resources**

The rights to use water resources are major political issues that impact the Arab-Israeli conflict and peace process. For example, in 1964, Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon attempted to divert rivers that supplied Israel with water. After issuing warnings, Israel launched military strikes to prevent the plan. Agreements over how to share water resources were important parts of the 1994 peace treaty between Israel and Jordan and of the 1995 agreement between Israel and the Palestinians known as Oslo II. They also influence peace talks between Syria and Israel. Syria insists that Israel withdraw completely to the pre-1967 lines. Israel rejects this demand, but has expressed willingness to withdraw to the pre-1948 line instead. Israelis argue that they should not return land that Syria captured when it invaded in an attempt to destroy Israel. The pre-1948 line and the pre-1967 line are close to each other, but the issue is very sensitive because withdrawing to the pre-1967 line would give Syria partial control over the Sea of Galilee, one of Israel's major water resources. This is a major security concern for Israel.

The distribution of water resources also impacts negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Underground aquifers cross the borders between Israel and the West Bank and between Israel and Gaza. Though the Palestinian Authority and Israel agreed how to share this water in the 1995 Oslo II agreement, many Palestinians feel the agreement should be changed because it gives Israel a much larger share of the water. They argue that Oslo II was an interim agreement and that the final agreement should give them rights to more of the water. Many Israelis feel the agreement should not be changed. They argue that water rights do not depend simply on dividing water evenly, but rather are shaped by the history of water use, with those who first accessed the water and put it to use gaining first rights. They feel the issue was already the subject of negotiations that reached a mutually agreed upon decision and should not be renegotiated.

**Graphic Organizer**



## **The Washington Declaration: Israel - Jordan - The United States; July 25th, 1994**

Excerpts:

A. After generations of hostility, blood and tears and in the wake of years of pain and wars, His Majesty King Hussein and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin are determined to bring an end to bloodshed and sorrow. It is in this spirit that His Majesty King Hussein of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, Mr. Yitzhak Rabin of Israel, met in Washington today at the invitation of President William J. Clinton of the United States of America. This initiative of President William J. Clinton constitutes an historic landmark in the United States' untiring efforts in promoting peace and stability in the Middle East. The personal involvement of the President has made it possible to realise agreement on the content of this historic declaration.

The signing of this declaration bears testimony to the President's vision and devotion to the cause of peace.

B. In their meeting, His Majesty King Hussein and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin have jointly reaffirmed the five underlying principles of their understanding on an Agreed Common Agenda designed to reach the goal of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace between the Arab States and the Palestinians, with Israel.

1. Jordan and Israel aim at the achievement of just, lasting and comprehensive peace between Israel and its neighbours and at the conclusion of a Treaty of Peace between both countries.

2. The two countries will vigorously continue their negotiations to arrive at a state of peace, based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 in all their aspects, and founded on freedom, equality and justice.

3. Israel respects the present special role of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in Muslim Holy shrines in Jerusalem. When negotiations on the permanent status will take place, Israel will give high priority to the Jordanian historic role in these shrines. In addition the two sides have agreed to act together to promote interfaith relations among the three monotheistic religions.

4. The two countries recognize their right and obligation to live in peace with each other as well as with all states within secure and recognized boundaries. The two states affirmed their respect for and acknowledgment of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every state in the area.

5. The two countries desire to develop good neighbourly relations of cooperation between them to ensure lasting security and to avoid threats and the use of force between them.

C. The long conflict between the two states is now coming to an end. In this spirit the state of belligerency between Jordan and Israel has been terminated.

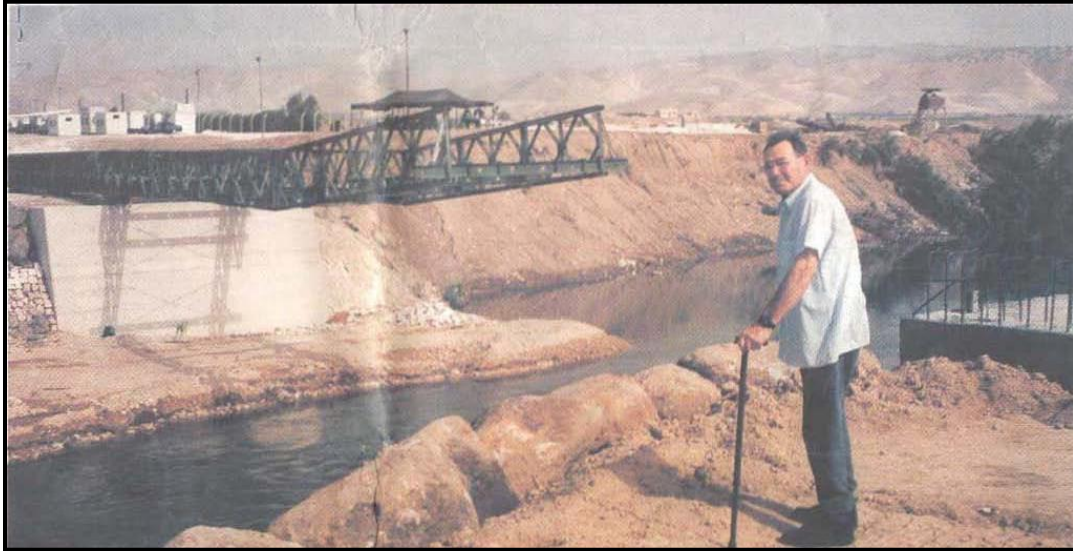
D. Following this declaration and in keeping with the Agreed Common Agenda, both countries will refrain from actions or activities by either side that may adversely affect the security of the other or may prejudice the final outcome of negotiations. Neither side will threaten the other by use of force, weapons, or any other means, against each other and both sides will thwart threats to security resulting from all kinds of terrorism.

## The Bridge of Peace

The peace treaty between Israel and Jordan in 1994 provided the possibility of commerce and civil relationships between the two countries for the first time since 1948. Before it was destroyed in 1946, the Sheikh Hussein Bridge was a major crossing over the Jordan River on a road that connected the Jewish town of Beit Shean to the town of Irbid in Transjordan (today the country of Jordan). This road remained fractured at the Jordan River, the border between the two countries, until the bridge was rebuilt and officially opened in November 1998. Financed by the Japanese, it is also known as the Peace Bridge. The rebuilding of the bridge and the benefits that have resulted for both countries provide clear evidence that peace improves the lives of both Arabs and Israelis.

## Pictures of the Peace Bridge

The picture below shows the Sheik Hussein Bridge being rebuilt:



The picture below shows the bridge after it opened. The sign says “Peace” in Arabic, English, and Hebrew.



## Sheikh Hussein Bridge Officially Opened

From the *Jordan Times*

Tuesday, August 24, 1999

AMMAN (Agencies) — Jordan and Israel on Monday officially opened the Japanese-funded border crossing facility at Sheikh Hussein Bridge linking the two countries, describing it as a key pillar of their peace treaty.

“This bridge is one of the cornerstones of the edifice of peace which we all hope to build upon,” Foreign Minister Abdul Ilah Khatib said in a speech at the ceremony.

Khatib said Japan is considered a real economic partner in the development of the Middle East and by financing the project it has proved its support for closer cooperation towards building the future of the region.

He paid tribute to the late King Hussein who had sought comprehensive and just peace, and praised the efforts of the late Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin who was a part of such endeavours.

Khatib's Israeli counterpart David Levy told attendees at the ceremony that: “This is a small bridge but it holds great hope which expresses the will of both nations to go ahead with the peace process.”

Khatib walked the short distance to the Israeli side to shake hands with Levy and then both linked up with Japanese Ambassador to Jordan Koichi Matsumoto for the cutting of the ribbon in the middle of the bridge.

The chairman of the standing committee on foreign affairs in Japan's parliament, Koki Chuma, said: “It is Japan's sincere hope that lasting peace will be attained soon (in the Middle East) in order to bring about stability and development in this region.”

“It is a great honour for Japan to have an opportunity to participate in such a project which is one of the fruits of the peace process and the peace treaty between Jordan and Israel,” he said.

According to Chuma the 90-metre-long and 12-metre-wide bridge cost JD 4.2 million. It is considered a major route through which Jordan can export goods to Israel and its port in Haifa for shipment to the US and European markets.

The Japanese firm Sumitomo Construction Co. Ltd. built the Jordanian side of the bridge and the Jordanian border post under a \$7 million grant from Tokyo.

Jordan contributed JD3 million for the infrastructure, while Israel spent an unknown amount to build its own section of the bridge.

Construction was finished in March 1998, and the bridge was opened to passenger traffic — mostly businessmen and tourists — and goods in November 1998.

The Sheikh Hussein Bridge and the Wadi Araba crossing in southern Jordan are the only two overland border crossings between Israel and Jordan, unlike the King Hussein Bridge, known to Israelis as the Allenby Bridge, which joins Jordan and the West Bank.

The four-lane suspension bridge is located in northern Jordan around 50 kilometres south of Lake Tiberias.

Khatib said he hoped that the new bridge will help bolster the volume of trade and further facilitate the movement of travellers between Jordan, Israel and Palestinian territories.

Overall annual trade between Jordan and Israel hovers around \$40 million.

He reiterated Jordan's support for the resumption of Syrian-Israeli and Lebanese-Israeli negotiations, saying "we are concerned with the achievement of a comprehensive peace which can be attained through negotiations and we hope progress will be achieved on the Palestinian-Israeli track as soon as possible since the Palestinian issue constitutes the essence of the problem."

Khatib said Levy had briefed him on Israel's contacts with European Union officials who visited the region lately to discuss the peace process.

Khatib said he urged his Israeli counterpart to move ahead with steps towards the implementation of the Wye River accord and the release of the detained Palestinians in Israeli jails so that progress can be achieved in the peace process.

## Israeli and Arab Writers to Meet at Sheikh Hussein Bridge

From babelmed.net, a multicultural network of journalists from the whole Mediterranean

January 31, 2005, Sheikh Hussein Bridge



Israeli, Palestinian and Arab writers from around the world will meet at the Sheikh Hussein Bridge on Tuesday, February 15, 2005 for a unique literary gathering. The Bridge, which is an international crossing point between Israel and Jordan, serves as a powerful symbol of hope, a link to understanding and a passageway over conflict.

January 31, 2005, Sheikh Hussein Bridge



The one-day encounter is a brainchild of international publishers and cultural institutions that work with authors from the Middle East, and has been coordinated by Deborah Harris of the Harris-Elon Agency, Israel. With the goal of providing a dynamic platform for sharing views and experiences, an opportunity for voices from both sides of the bridge to be heard, some 50 writers and 100 publishers have confirmed their participation thus far. Among the writers attending the event are Leila Sebbar and Chaled Fouad Allam, Algeria; Ahmet Altan, Turkey; Abdel Kader Benali, Morocco; Jaber Yassin Hussein, Iraq; and A.B. Yehoshua, David Grossman, Sayed Kashua, Yehudit Katzir and Alona Kimhi, Israel.



Samir el-Youssef, Palestinian writer attending from London, said, "Only by meeting each other can we, Palestinians and Israelis, truly know how close or distant we really are; how easy or difficult it will be to live together. We don't have the luxury of avoiding this encounter; it is the duty of Palestinian and Israeli intellectuals and writers to gain such knowledge and render the experience for our communities." Israeli writer Etgar Keret, also participating, said, "If we, writers from both sides, can't find the empathy, or the imagination, to see the other and to try and understand the other, then who will?"

Babelmed Editorial Team

## Qualifying Industrial Zone between Israel and Jordan

From the website of the Center for International Environmental Law

The Jordan Industrial Joint Gateway Project is actually two industrial complexes on either side of the Jordan River between Israel and Jordan. While the Israeli project will be small, and is meant mainly for offices, warehouses and export and trade-related activities, the Jordanian side will be a full-fledged industrial complex flanking the Jordan River. The project will permanently alter the character of the Jordan River Valley, which is overwhelmingly rural.

This project grew from the interest of Israel and Jordan to promote regional economic growth. An agreement to set up Qualified Industrial Zones (QIZ) between Israel, Jordan and the United States is a primary reason for the cross-border development scheme. Under the QIZ agreement, goods produced in Qualified Industrial Zones in Jordan, with a minimum percentage of value added in Israel, are eligible for export to the United States without tariffs. This creates a strong incentive for cross-border transactions, as goods go back and forth across the Israeli-Jordanian border in preparation for export. This sort of joint economic activity has been publicly promoted as a means of creating greater economic ties between Israel and Jordan that will lead to more normal peaceful relations between the two countries. Therefore, these types of joint projects enjoy strong political backing in both countries and are supported by many NGOs.

The project sponsor is FIBI Investment House Ltd., which is a subsidiary of FIBI Holdings, the Safra banking group's business arm in Israel. The project is located on the banks of the Jordan River, 8 kilometers south of the Sheikh Hussein Bridge. The Jordanian side will be more than 50 hectares in size to start, with plans for expansion to 127 hectares in the future. The project also entails the construction of a new bridge between Jordan and Israel that will be used to facilitate trade and export activities.

The Jordanian part of the enterprise will require an investment of \$30 million. The IFC is considering a \$15 million loan. When complete, the project may employ up to 14,000 Jordanians, with a large percentage of the goods produced traded through Israel, under the free trade conditions described above.

## Israel and Jordan Cooperate on Cable Link

From *Communications Week International*

October 25, 1999

Neal Sandler

The construction later this year of two 10-kilometer fiber optic cables linking Israel and Jordan will mark the first regional telecommunications project between Israel and any of its Arab neighbors. The links, which cost a total of \$3.5 million and are due to be operational from February 2000, are expected to result in greater competition in both countries.

The agreement between Tel Aviv-based Bezeq International Ltd., a wholly owned subsidiary of Bezeq Telecom, and Amman-based Jordan Telecommunications Company (JTC), was announced last month in Amman during a visit by Israeli communications minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer.

The resumption of peace talks between Israel and the Palestinian Authority following the May election of Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak has led to a warming up of economic ties between the two countries.

"Telecommunications cooperation is key to expanding the economic ties between Israel and Jordan as well as in the Middle East," said Ben-Eliezer during his visit to Jordan.

In fact, Iraqi-born Ben-Eliezer is also proposing the construction of a similar fiber optic cable between Israel and Egypt. On 18 October the Israeli minister met with his Egyptian counterpart, Ahmed Nadif, for discussions on a proposed fiber optic link similar to the one to be built between Israel and Jordan.

Construction of the two Israel-Jordan cables, which will have a total capacity of 10 gigabits, is slated to begin by the end of the year. The fiber optic cables will link the countries at two locations: at either the Allenby or Sheikh Hussein bridge border crossings; and at the southern border between the two countries at the towns of Aqaba, Jordan and Eilat, Israel.

At present all communications between Israel and Jordan are through microwave links. "This often means that the traffic between the two countries is routed via the US or western Europe," said On Yogev, president and chief executive of Bezeq International.

Ben-Eliezer added that this is due to a lack of direct connections and is both costly and a waste of resources for all sides.

### Inter-country traffic

Initially, the two cables will handle the traffic between Israel and the Palestinian Authority to Jordan. Voice traffic between Israel and the Palestinian Authority and Jordan ranks fourth in terms of the number of call minutes for both Bezeq International and JTC.

Data traffic is currently insignificant, but this is likely to change according to the two operators.

But the significance of the link goes far beyond improving voice traffic between the two countries. "This will give us a direct link to the FLAG cable for the growing telecommunications traffic from Israel to the Far East and via the Suez Canal to Europe," noted Bezeq's Yogev.

He added that the Jordanians will have an additional option for their traffic to Europe and the United States via the Med-1 cable. The \$80-million Med-1 cable, which links Israel to Cyprus and Italy, began operating in March and has a capacity of 20 gigabits.

### Room for growth

"Only half a giga is currently being utilized," said Amos Lasker, president of privately owned Tel Aviv-based Med-1 Submarine Cables Ltd. The owners include several Israeli telecommunications companies including Aurec Ltd. and Globescom Ltd., as well as Telecom Italia and the state-owned Cyprus Telecommunications Authority (CYTA).

"With our capacity we can handle all the future growth of Israel, Jordan and the Palestinians for the next five to seven years," said Lasker.

The new fiber optic links between Israel and Jordan are expected to handle voice primarily, but Bezeq International hopes that JTC will opt to use the cables for Internet services, creating additional traffic, because Israel has a better connection to the IP backbone than Jordan.

Telecommunications cooperation still only exists between Israel and a few of its Arab neighbors. In early October Lebanese authorities arrested several people for making calls to parties in Israel.

## Trade Bridge as a Bridge for Peace

From the Konrad Adenauer Foundation

Mar. 22, 2007

### 5th Annual Israeli-Jordanian Business Meeting

The Sheikh Hussein Israeli-Jordanian business meeting, organized in cooperation between the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and the Israel-Jordan Chamber of Commerce, has become an institution bringing together business people as well as politicians and diplomats. On March 21, 2007, a large number of business people from Jordan and Israel met again under the tents especially built for this event at the Sheikh Hussein border crossing between Israel and Jordan. In spite of last minute program changes and the non-participation of Minister Shimon Peres and Minister Eli Yishay, who had to attend an urgent government meeting, the fifth Israeli-Jordanian Annual Business Meeting proceeded successfully.

Four days before the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, one could not help relating to the Coal and Steel Union that had led to the development of the Common Market and of the European Union. Could the European model be used in the Middle East, asked Dr. Hänsel, Representative of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung to Israel. The existing trade agreements between Jordan, Israel and the USA or the European Union such as the Qualified Industrial Zones (QIZ) agreement and the "Pan EuroMED Cumulation" have already brought important achievements as well as the consolidation of bilateral agreements. Eastern Mediterranean countries and most particularly Jordan and Israel share a common goal and the promotion of trade and economic ties can help attain peace and stability in this region.

For the representatives of the European Commission in Israel and in Jordan, the expansion of peace and stability to the Middle East and the Mediterranean Basin is indeed of strategic interest for the EU. Through its European Neighborhood Policy, the EU wants to give the neighborhood countries the opportunity to take part in different policy cooperation in key sectors such as energy or transport, it wants to encourage the neighbors such as Jordan and Israel to improve their relations and while including all parties - such as the Palestinian Authority - in the process. And one of the keys to this achievement is the promotion of trade and economic ties.

Relating to the success of the QIZ trade agreement, the Representative of the European Commission in Israel, Ambassador Cibrian-Uzal, considers the PanEuroMed projects in the region as more ambitious on the long-term basis. To enhance the trade agreements between Jordan and Israel, the European Investment Bank is ready to finance many projects such as building a railroad linking the city of Irbid in northern Jordan to the Israeli port of Haifa. This railroad of 70 km would increase and improve bilateral trade as well as export to the USA and Europe by reducing the hurdles that currently hamper a smooth transfer of goods between Jordan and Israel.

For Dr. Okleh, Director General of the Jordanian Ministry of Industry and Trade, the significance of the QIZ and the PanEuroMed Cumulation agreements, from which Jordan and Israel benefit, must not be demonstrated. Moreover, trade and business relations between both countries are important components of the peace agreement but other dimensions must be taken into

consideration. Based on bilateral relations alone, the peace process is limited and restricted. It is important to address the problem of the Palestinians and work for a real integration of the economies of the region.

The American economic counselors confirmed that QIZ related trade to the USA constantly increases and described the business relations between Israel and Jordan as a good and complimentary cooperation, which, however, has not yet achieved its full potential. There still exists much room for upgrading and expansion. Sectors such as medical tourism at the Dead Sea, pharmaceutical products, high tech agriculture and tourism look very promising and both countries should benefit from improving their cooperation. Moreover, there is an urgent need for reform of the labor sector in Jordan and for output improvement in order to compete with the Asian economies, especially China and India.

Mr. Melzer, Director of the Israel–Jordan Chamber of Commerce as well Mr. Hirsch, Deputy-Director of the Israeli Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor surveyed the impressive development of the last 10 years. The 1997 treaty has proven its worth to both Israel and Jordan, boosting Israeli exports to Jordan as well as Jordanian exports to the US. During the period January - November 2006 Israeli export to Jordan was up 10% compared to the same period last year. The total value of goods exported was US\$110 million. Most of the exports are raw materials shipped to the QIZ production facilities in Jordan. But both also expressed the need to look beyond the current QIZ agreements that deal, for example, with mass-produced textiles and instead to concentrate on manufactured products and industrial innovation. The 2006 PanEuroMed Cumulation agreement with the EU will also bring this kind of diversity that should benefit the economy of both countries.

Ways to solve the technical problems faced by the Jordanian businessmen at the border crossing to Israel and at the port of Haifa were discussed and Mr. Melzer as well as Mr. Gabi Bar reiterated that all efforts must be made to improve and facilitate the trade cooperation with Jordan and encourage even more the dialogue between Jordanian and Israeli businessmen. The Sheikh Hussein Bridge over the Jordan River is not only a trade bridge but also a bridge for peace.

Catherine Hirschwitz

## The Fourth Israeli Jordanian Business Meeting

From the Konrad Adenauer Foundation



18. Jan. 2006

Sheikh Hussein Bridge Border Crossing

As in the past four years a large number of business people from Jordan and Israel did not hesitate to brave the cold and very rainy weather to gather once again under the tents especially built to this effect at the Sheikh Hussein border crossing between Israel and Jordan. This important yearly meeting, organized in cooperation between the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the Israel Jordan Chamber of Commerce continues to attract more than ever business people as well as politicians and diplomats. The Israeli Jordanian Business Meeting of 18 January 2006 successfully achieved three goals: to give the opportunity to business people and ministry officials to meet their counterparts and exchange information, to hear first hand about the latest or future trade agreements and their implementations and allow people from both sides of the border to meet in a neutral environment and get better acquainted.

The presence of many representatives of the US embassies and especially of the EU Delegations in Israel and Jordan demonstrated the significance of this meeting at the political level as well. They all agreed that the promotion of trade and economic ties can help attain peace and stability in this region. As a clear example of such achievements that can also apply to the Middle-East, the EU Ambassador to Israel, Mr. Cibrian-Uzal, related to the European history of the last 50 years, starting from the setting up of the Common Market leading to the European Union as well as the commercial and economic relations that had developed with eastern Europe in the early 90's and had permitted a quicker integration of the former east bloc countries.

The business relations between Jordan and Israel today can be described as a good and complimentary cooperation which has not yet achieved its full potential. There still exists much room for upgrading and expansion. Sectors such as medical tourism at the Dead Sea, pharmaceutical products, high tech agriculture and tourism look very promising and both

countries should benefit from improving their cooperation. In the field of tourism, regional cooperation is slowly developing, following the meeting of the Egyptian, Jordanian and Israeli ministers last September. Moreover, there is an urgent need to compete with the Asian economies, especially China and India. To that goal Israel and Jordan should look beyond the current Qualified Industrial Zones agreements (QIZ) that deal, for example, with mass-produced textiles and instead they should concentrate on manufactured products and industrial innovation. In the wake of existing research cooperation programs, the investment in more complex, expensive and sophisticated products would create more jobs and higher income and as a result bring more prosperity.

This meeting did not only put forward the great achievements and the consolidation of the bilateral agreements. It also presented the latest developments and emphasized the new protocol of the Israel – Jordan Trade Agreement, which entered into force in September 2005. Whereas the first business meetings concentrated more on the Israel – Jordan – US Qualified Industrial Zones agreements that came into effect in 1996, the new bilateral trade agreement puts the accent on the Pan EuroMed initiative that started 10 years ago with the Barcelona process and proceeded in 2003 with the European neighborhood policy. This initiative will be soon put into effect between Israel, Jordan and the European Union. Beyond these relations, Europe also sees the importance of Israeli – Palestinian – EU trilateral trade relations (the Paris protocol) in which Jordan could be involved. In view of this new trade policy and its tremendous potential, the organizers realized the need to open the floor to specialists and for the benefit of all business people present, they consecrated most of the second session to an intensive, technical but practical survey of the "Pan EuroMED Cumulation" agreement in which 41 countries participate.

While most speakers stressed the need to go beyond the current Qualified Industrial Zones agreements, the European representatives were also eager to emphasize that the QIZ agreement and "Pan EuroMED Cumulation" do benefit both countries and should lead to more liberalization and the creation of a regional free trade area by 2010. Meetings are scheduled between Jordan, Israel, the US and the EU in order to further upgrade the trade relations between Israel and Jordan and find ways to export this model of economic relations to the entire region.

Catherine Hirschwitz

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