

The Hamas-Israel War: What's Behind It?

17 October 2023

Peter A. Pettit, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Davenport IA

Introduction

Distinction: This event and the wider/longer conflict

Dimension 1: History

- A. 125 years in three broad segments
 - 1a. 1897-1923 First Zionist Congress to British Mandate and King Abdullah
 - 1b. 1923-1949 Mandate, conflicts, WW II/Shoa, UN 181 partition, Israeli independence, Arab-Israel war, Arab “*nakba*”
 - 2. 1949-1994 Arab-Israel wars; PLO; 1967 land lost by Jordan and Egypt; Military administration and settlements
1979 Egyptian peace – Sinai returned; Gaza to Palestinians
1994 Jordanian peace – West Bank to Palestinian Authority
 - 3. 1995-present “Assassination of peace”; 2nd *Intifada* & violent resistance
Settlement expansion and settler violence
- B. Whose Land Is It?
Competing nationalisms – Zionist & Palestinian Arab
- C. Hamas & Gaza

Dimension 2: Geopolitics

- Ancient Crossroads – Egypt and Mesopotamia
- European/Arab contention in Crusader times (12th c. ce)
- | O | European/Ottoman contention in modernity (16th-19th c. ce)
- | I | US-Western/USSR contention during Cold War (mid-20th c. ce)
- | L | Saudi-Western/Iranian contention most recently

Dimension 3: Religion

- Israel – 20% non-Jewish
- West Bank & Gaza – 2-3% Christian, and 6-7% of global Palestinians
- Religiously motivated minorities:
 - Israel: Religious Zionists, “Judea and Samaria”
 - Palestinians: Hamas, “Islamic Trust”

Dimension 4: Human Nature

Fear of annihilation – cultural and/or literal

Honor/shame society and rational/justice society

Tribalism & fight/flight

Discomfort with unclarity, tension

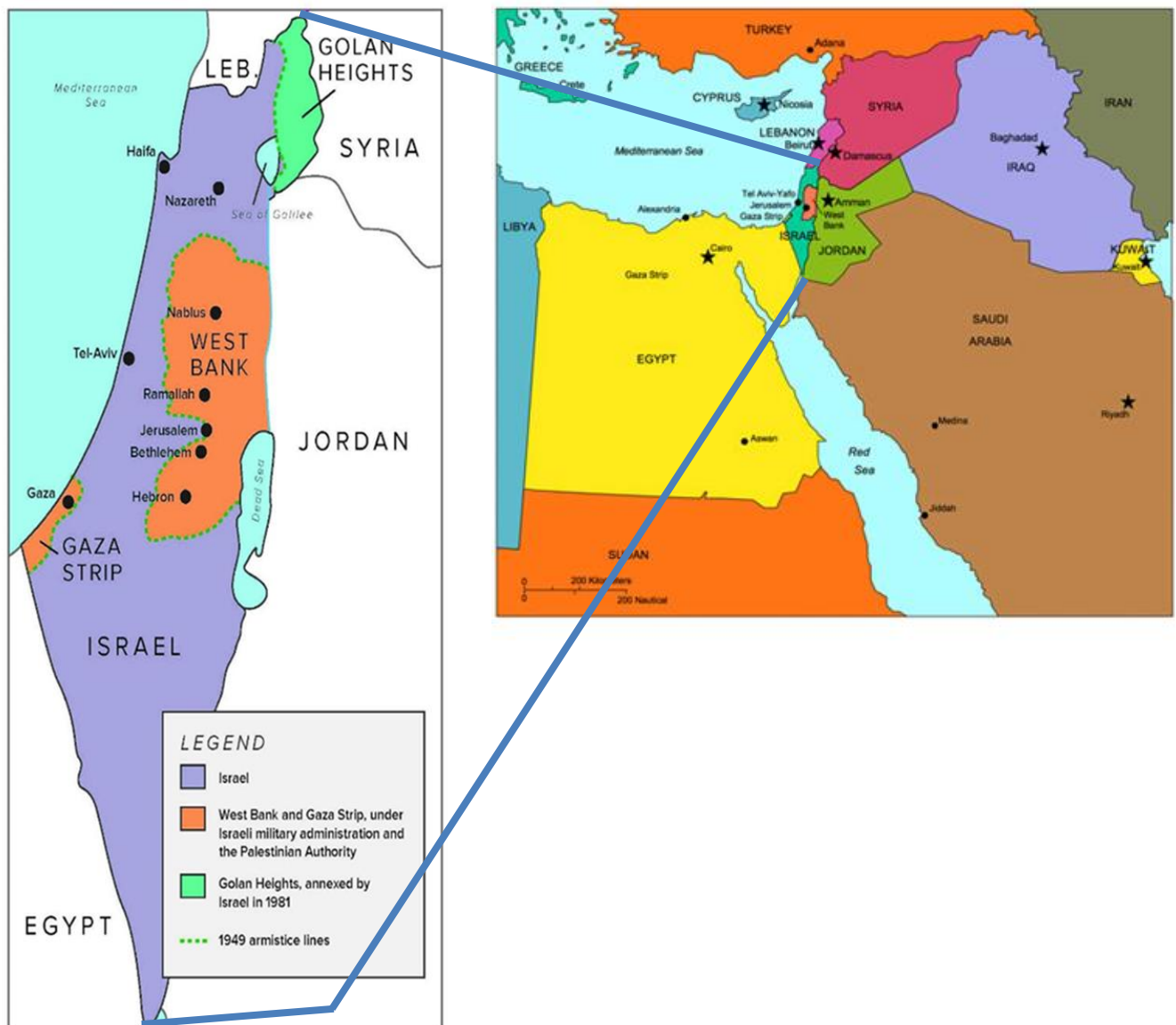
Grief/anger/powerlessness

humility

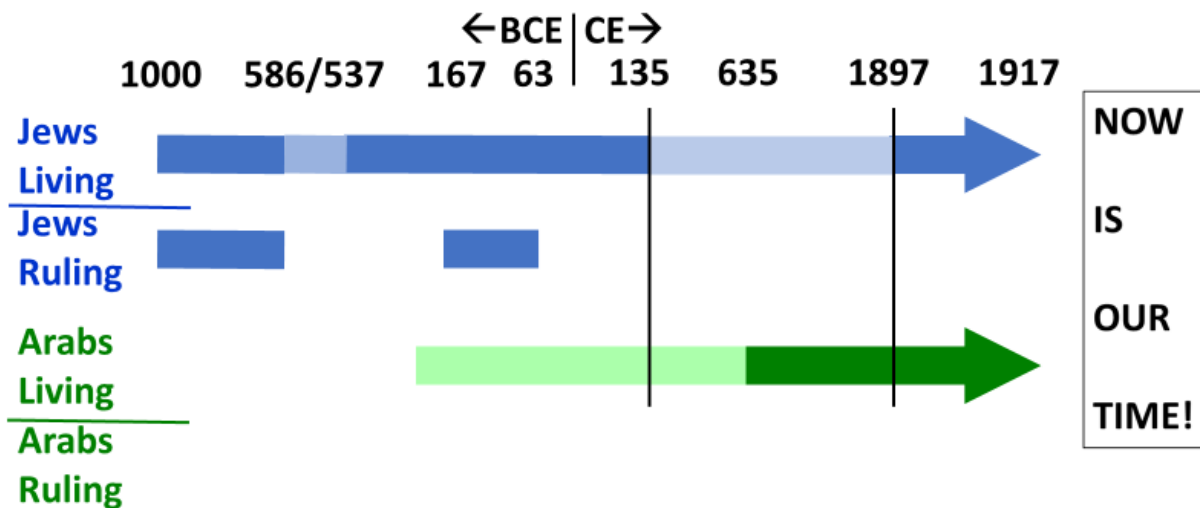
compassion

When involved in a conflict – be aware of these

When observer to a conflict – avoid manipulation of these to involve you



Whose land is it?



Hamas & Gaza

1988 Hamas founded
“Islamic Resistance Movement”
wing of Muslim Brotherhood

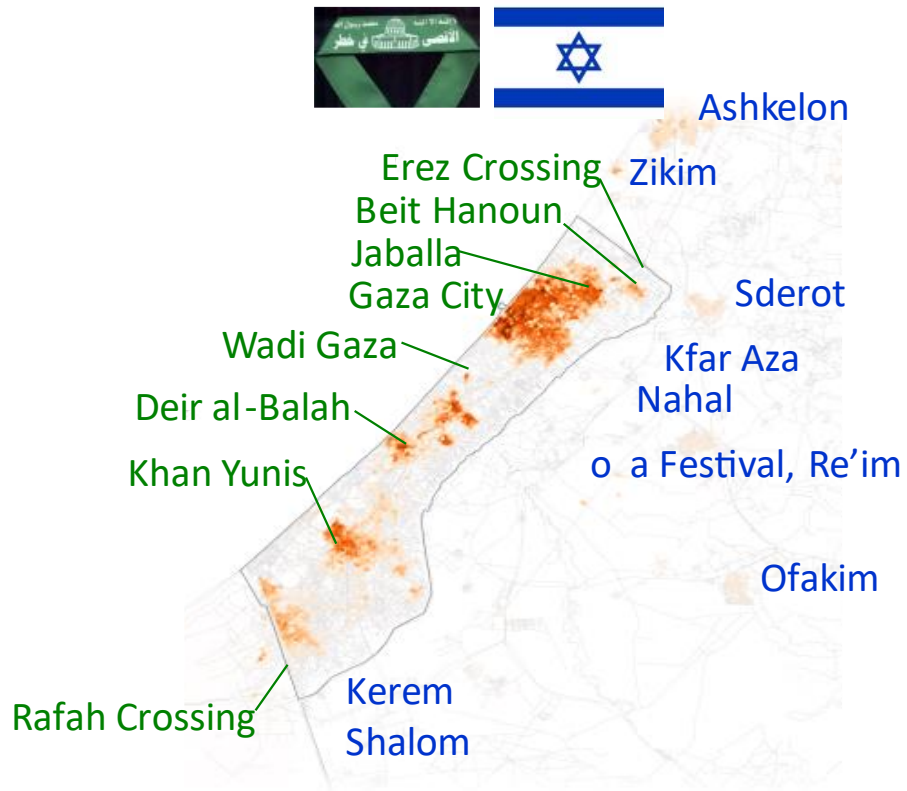
2005 Israeli withdrawal

2006 Hamas takes control

2007 Israel & Egypt impose blockade

Cycles of rocket & infiltration attacks by Hamas
with military response by Israel





For further reading:

Awad, Alex. *Palestinian Memories*. Bethlehem Bible College, 2012.

Cunningham, Philip, et al. *Enabling Dialogue about the Land*. Paulist Press, 2020.

Halevi, Yossi Klein. *Like Dreamers*. Harper, 2013.

Khalidi, Rashid. *The Iron Cage*. Beacon, 2007.

Shindler, Colin. *A History of Modern Israel*. Cambridge, 2008.