

# ESSAY PLANS:

## ARAB – ISRAELI CONFLICT

[Responsibilities of players]

**It was primarily because of Israel's provocative actions that aggravated the AIC from 1948-2000.**

### Thesis

- AIC 50 years of regional instability that saw 4 wars, prolonged period of violence involving Israelis, Palestinians and Arabs
- While Israel's provocative actions contributed aggravated and escalated the conflict, its actions were partly in response to the hostility of the Arab states and uncompromising actions of the Palestinians, who must also be held responsible for exacerbating the AIC.

### Argument 1

Israel's uncompromising goal to maintain the Jewish character of Israel has led to the continued denial of a Palestinian Right of Return and persistent dispossession of Palestinians and obstructed possible resolution to the conflict, prolonging it.

- Since 1948, Israel has insisted that the state should retain its 'Jewish Character' → Promoted the Law of Return which asserts the undeniable right of all Jews to Israeli citizenship while denying Palestinian RoR, leaving them stateless
- Particularly after seizing the OT in 1967 (East Jerusalem, West Bank) → completion of full extent of Eretz Israel also completed al nakbha for the Palestinians
- Israel has held on to the OT and refused to grant Palestinians citizenship as it feared a 'demographic time bomb'; that more Palestinians would dilute and undermine existence of Jewish character
- Made the conflict more intractable as it has made a two-state solution even more impossible with Israeli unwillingness to come to a compromise or give up the land

### Argument 2

Israel's provocation against Palestinians, through the use of violence especially in the Occupied Territories, has led to the escalation and radicalization of the conflict, making it even more destabilizing.

- Since 1967, Israeli settler movement Gush Emunim, encouraged by the governments, has committed to establishing Jewish settlements in OT, sometimes seizing land and property from Palestinians by force
- Violence provoked Palestinians, further increased Palestinian antagonism towards Israelis to the point that they resorted to retaliating with violence
- Lebanon invasion in 1982: massacred Palestinian refugees there → worldwide condemnation reflects that it was an unnecessary/unjustified act of aggression/provocation
- 1987-1991 First Intifada direct result of Palestinian oppression in the OT → Palestinian masses including women and children engaged in mass civil disobedience, stone-throwing, Molotov cocktails, etc.
- Post Oslo, Israeli government abrogated the treaty, continued to encourage expansion of Jewish settlements
- Use of more violent and radical means represented a radicalization of the conflict hence escalating it and making it more difficult to resolve due to the intensification of hostilities

- + AGGRESSIVE expansion of Jewish settlements in the OT made the creation of a contiguous viable Palestinian state even less likely → decreased resolvability of the AIC

### Argument 3

However, it can be argued that Israel was reacting defensively to Arab hostility and out of necessity to ensure state survival, especially before 1967, during which Arab states were the primary provocateurs of conflict.

- Arab states and Israel went to war in 1948 out of opposition to Israel's right to exist and next over its support of Britain and France against Egypt during the Suez crisis
- Arab's refusal to recognize the state of Israel and their perception of Israel as a defender of Western interests in the region → constant position of hostility for much of 1948-2000
- Must recognize that Israel in 1967 was a pre-emptive strike!! Insecurity was provoked by Nasser's decision to order UN troops out of Sinai and blocking Israeli trade shipping routes
- EVEN after 1967 when Pan-Arabism declined, Arab hostility maintained
  - '3 Nos' at 1967 Khartoum: no peace, no recognition, no negotiation with Israel
  - Iran's sponsoring of Hezbollah to undermine Israeli security
  - Economic warfare → boycott of Israeli goods
- This added to Israeli insecurities, making it more difficult for Israel to compromise and provoking it to reciprocate hostility and violence → perpetuating and prolonging the conflict, making peace even less possible

### Argument 4

Israel's aggressive stance and provocative actions were certainly also in response to Palestinian's radical, uncompromising stance and approach which provoked Israeli insecurity

- Secular Palestinian groups like PLO, PFLP, Black September have been using violent means to advance their claim to a Palestinian state, provoking Israeli insecurity
  - 1965-6: Fatah (armed wing of PLO) conducted 76 terrorist raids against Israel
  - 1970 downing of El Al plane bound for Tel Aviv
  - 1972 Black September attacks – murdering Israeli athletes at Munich Olympics
  - First intifada 1987
- Post-1967, PLO approved the use of terrorism against Israel
- Non-recognition between Palestinians and Israelis was MUTUAL up till 1993
- Post-Oslo, PLO equally responsible for exacerbating conflict because both sides abrogated treaty; Arafat and Fatah continued to agitate in OT for more territory
- Hamas which refused to negotiate with Israel and was not part of the 1993 Oslo accords continued to engage in violence in the OTs e.g. suicide bombings, street violence, culminating in the Second Intifada in 2000

### Argument 5

Moreover, rather than due to Israeli provocation, the radicalization of the Arab Israeli Conflict was more a product of the much broader evolution in the Middle East leading to the rise of Islamic fundamentalism

- Conflict became more uncompromising and intractable since the 1980s, with the conflict being increasingly seen in religious terms instead of secular terms
- Due to the rise of Islamic Fundamentalism beginning with the Iranian Revolution in 1979, which increased religious consciousness throughout the Muslim world → Palestinians began to define Israel in religious terms, saw themselves as being oppressed as Muslims

- Led to the rise of jihad, which justified violent means → rise of militant Islamic groups e.g. Hamas established in 1987, conducted numerous suicide bombings and other attacks against Israel, Hezbollah executing cross-border attacks
- Violence has led to Israeli unwillingness to negotiate with Palestinians as it views them as terror groups
- Rather than Israel alone, these militants and their violent and radical approach to the conflict are also equally responsible for the intransigence and escalation of the conflict.

### Conclusion

- While Israel is partly responsible for the failure to peacefully resolve the conflict and hence its escalation and prolongation, blaming Israel alone oversimplifies the issue and completely sidesteps the role of Arabs and Palestinians whose responses continued to aggravate the conflict and fuel Israel's insecurity.
- Whether it was more of the Israeli's fault or the Arabs/Palestinian's fault differed across time
- Pre-1967, Arab states were arguably more responsible than Israel being the provocateur of the 1948 and 1956 conflict
- Post-1967, with Israel in a position of power and regional dominance, it has been the aggressor and should be held more responsible for perpetuating the conflict

**Israel's national security concerns have been the greatest stumbling block to peace. Assess the validity of this statement.**

### Thesis

- While Israeli's prioritizing of national security over peaceful resolution of conflict has contributed to the failure to obtain peace in the Middle East, these national security concerns were not completely unjustified and hence other actors, namely Arabs and Palestinians, were equally guilty for obstructing peace between both Arabs and Israelis and Israelis and Palestinians by similarly prioritizing their own security concerns over conflict resolution, and for continually provoking Israeli insecurity.

### Argument 1

Israel's equation of national security with state survival has led to its uncompromising stance of maintaining the 'Jewish character' of Israel, reducing the possibility of conflict resolution through a two-state solution and peace between the Israeli and Palestinians more elusive

- Eretz Israel
- Refusal to return OT to Palestine, Syria and Egypt, defying international calls (i.e. UN A/RES/242 and others) because fear that more Palestinians would undermine existence of Jewish character
- Makes two-state solution (which is the only viable compromise and genuine solution to the conflict) nigh on impossible

### Argument 2

Israel's pursuit of national security through violent means, especially in the OT, has antagonized Palestinians and led to the radicalization of the conflict, making the conflict more intractable and further reducing possibility of peace between Israelis and Palestinians

- Settler movements
- Lebanon 1982 massacre of Palestinian refugees
- Abrogating the treaty in 1993

- Provoked First and Second Intifada

### Argument 3

Israel's prioritization of strategic concerns over compromise has led to its unwillingness to return occupied lands to the Arab states, sustaining Arab-Israeli tensions and obstructing peace between Arabs and Israelis.

- Dispute with Syria over water → control of water resources → refusing to give up Golan Heights
- Vs returned Sinai Peninsula because it was mostly desert and held no strategic importance for Israel

### Argument 4

However, it would be myopic to just blindly blame Israel for the failure to restore peace in the region, because its national security concerns are not entirely unfounded. Their insecurity was fueled by Palestinians and Hamas' uncompromising violent actions and attacks, and hence it is the Palestinians who are culpable of preventing peace.

- 65-66: PLO 76 terrorist raids
- 1970 downing of El Al, 1972 Black September
- Hamas and suicide bombing since 1980s
- Intifada 1 and 2
- Mutual non-recognition + PLO abrogated treaty in 1993 as well with Arafat and Fatah agitating for territories in the OT

### Argument 5

It can also be argued that Israel was reacting defensively to Arab hostility and out of necessity to ensure state survival, especially before 1967, during which Arab states were the primary provocateurs of conflict and were hence the greatest stumbling block to peace.

- Arab states and Israel went to war in 1948 out of opposition to Israel's right to exist and next over its support of Britain and France against Egypt during the Suez crisis
- Arab's refusal to recognize the state of Israel and their perception of Israel as a defender of Western interests in the region → constant position of hostility for much of 1948-2000
- Must recognize that Israel in 1967 was a pre-emptive strike!! Insecurity was provoked by Nasser's decision to order UN troops out of Sinai and blocking Israeli trade shipping routes
- EVEN after 1967 when Pan-Arabism declined, Arab hostility maintained
  - '3 Nos' at 1967 Khartoum: no peace, no recognition, no negotiation with Israel
  - Iran's sponsoring of Hezbollah to undermine Israeli security
  - Economic warfare → boycott of Israeli goods
- This added to Israeli insecurities, making it more difficult for Israel to compromise and provoking it to reciprocate hostility and violence → perpetuating and prolonging the conflict, making peace even less possible

### Argument 6

Israelis have also not always been a stumbling block to peace; there have been times when Israel has shown its willingness to compromise national security for peace between the Arabs and Israelis.

- 1978: Camp David, returned Sinai to Egypt in exchange for peace and recognition and non-invasion guarantee
- 1993 Oslo

- 1994: peace treaty with Jordan

### Conclusion

- **no one state's pursuit of interest is alone to blame for the unresolved conflict** → it is the **clash of interests** and **mutual refusal to compromise and negotiate** that has made the conflict intractable
- However, who was more to blame did change over time
  - Arabs more responsible before 1967 as their security concerns were less legitimate given that they were the aggressors and were more powerful
  - Israelis more responsible after 1967 as their security concerns were delegitimized due to their newfound position of strength and dominance

### **Israel's reluctance to negotiate was the main factor hindering the resolution of the AIC from 1967-2000.**

#### Thesis

- 1967: turning point because Israel victory in Six Day war, gaining huge swathes of territory and becoming the aggressor
- Has displayed some unwillingness to negotiate largely in terms of giving up land it gained as OT since 1967 six-day war and in refusing to establish Palestinian right of return
- BUT it has not been entirely unwilling to negotiate and has instead acceded to 2 peace accords in this period
- Israel is also not entirely to blame, as its reluctance to negotiate must be recognized as a reaction to the uncompromising stance and means of the Palestinians which have provoked its insecurity, as well as the Arab State's hostility towards Israel which has continued to persist

#### Argument 1

Israel's intransigence and unwillingness to compromise on the issue of establishing the Palestinian 'Right to Return' and a Palestinian state in order to preserve its 'Jewish character' has been the main roadblock to a two-state solution, which is widely perceived as the only means to a genuine peaceful resolution of the AIC.

- Eretz Israel – giving Palestinians rights would trigger a demographic time bomb, Palestinians would dilute Jewish character → unacceptable → hence it has refused to negotiate on giving Palestinians citizenship
- Advanced this uncompromising end through uncompromising means → aggressive settlement movements which seized Palestinian property and lands → reduced possibility of two-state solution by occupying nearly all Palestinian land
- Made two-state solution elusive, making existing conflict between Israelis and Palestinians even more intractable, making resolution even less unlikely

#### Argument 2

Israel's unwillingness to compromise with the Arab states on the return of the Occupied Territories has led to the perpetuation of hostility/heightening of tensions between the Arabs and Israelis, hindering a peaceful resolution of conflict between the Arabs and Israelis.

- Ignoring international calls to return territory e.g. Resolution 242, UNSC resolutions
- Holding on to Golan Heights for security reasons (ownership of water resources) and Gaza Strip → completion of Eretz Israel and to continue to ensure its own stronghold on power

### Argument 3

However, Israel was not entirely reluctant to negotiate throughout 1967-2000, as it had negotiated and committed to peace agreements with Arab States and the Palestinians, which did increase the possibility of the resolution of the AIC.

- Agreed to the Camp David accords 1978 which concluded a peace agreement with Egypt – returning Sinai Peninsula in return for recognition and assurance of non-conflict → increased possibility of resolution of conflict between Arab and Israelis
  - First instance of an Arab state recognizing Israel's right to exist → increasing the possibility of such instances with other states in the future
  - Reduced possibility of Arab-Israeli conflict because no Arab state would dare attack Israel without the backing of Egypt, the biggest Arab State and army → no more 5<sup>th</sup> Arab Israeli war after 1973
- Signed the Oslo 1993 peace accords whereby they negotiated a treaty that not only gave mutual recognition, and agreed to withdraw Israeli forces from Gaza Strip and W Bank and gave Palestinians right to self-govt
  - Represented a step towards resolution of AIC by displaying possibility of peace and negotiation between Palestinians and Israelis
  - Self-government and withdrawal from OT were signs of moving closer toward the realization of a 2-step solution
- Israel-Jordan peace treaty in 1994

### Argument 4

Additionally, Israel alone is not entirely to blame for being unwilling to negotiate given that its hardened position was fueled in part by the equally intransigent and hostile attitudes and approaches of the Palestinians, who have radicalized the conflict and made Israel even less unwilling to negotiate with them to achieve any settlement

- Mutual non-recognition until 1993
  - 1965-6: 76 terrorist raids in Israel
  - PLO approved terrorism against Israel since 1967
  - 70 downing of El Al airliner bound for Tel Aviv, 1972 Black September attack at Munich Olympics
- Hamas suicide bomber → Israel refuses to negotiate with terrorist organization + fueling insecurity and provoking Israel to prioritise national security over conflict resolution (after 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Intifadas)

### Argument 5

Arab states must also be held responsible for their unwillingness to recognize Israel much less negotiate it, which has also hampered the resolution of the conflict and efforts to establish peace between Israel and Arab states

- Shortly after six day war concluded → Khartoum declaration reaffirming commitment to 3 Nos – No recognition, no peace, no negotiation with Israel
- Rejection of Israel's right to exist → threatens Israel's state survival → continued hostility between Israelis and Arabs
- Economic boycott of Israel's goods
- Iran's sponsoring of terrorist groups like Hezbollah to undermine Israeli security → especially in 1982 Lebanon; cross-border attacks provoked Israel to respond violently, massacring Palestinian refugees in camps

- Made Israel more unwilling to give up OT, which have continued to be a thorn in their relations, preventing them from achieving conflict resolution

#### Argument 6

Ultimately, rather than unwillingness to negotiate, it was Israel's unwillingness to commit to the agreements which it had negotiated that has hindered the peaceful resolution of conflict between Israelis and Palestinians

- Israel abrogated the treaty soon after:
  - Govt continued to encourage expansion of settlements in the OT, freeze on new Israeli settlements on WB lifted in 1996
  - Violent reprisals against Palestinian insurgency in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Intifada
  - Third and final phase of redeployments of Israeli army supposedly by 1997 never carried out
- Qualify: Israel was not solely responsible for this inadequate commitment/implementation of the negotiated agreements → Palestinians had also abrogated the treaty when Arafat and Fatah agitated for territories in OT and were found to have sponsored terrorist activity against Israeli troops and civilians → Palestinians equally responsible for hindering resolution of AIC by negating these efforts

**Explain why the role of the Palestinians became such an important part of Arab-Israeli tensions.**

#### Argument 1

Palestinian dispossession/their oppression by Israel was a rallying point for Arab nationalism and partly motivated Arab states to intensify tensions with Israel, worsening Arab-Israeli tensions

- Especially in 1948, Arab states (Egypt, Syria, Transjordan, Lebanon and Iraq) invaded Israel aiming to destroy it, went to war primarily out of sympathy for Palestinians
- War set the tone for bitter acrimonious relations between Arab and Israeli states which has persisted throughout
- Even later on in the 70s with the decline of pan-Arabism → continued to sponsor Palestinian terrorist organisations/fighting for Palestinian cause e.g. Hezbollah?

#### Argument 2

Palestinians, especially post 1967, have been responsible for the escalation of Palestinian-Israeli tensions because of their uncompromising attitudes towards Israel, which has fueled insecurity and decreased Israel's willingness to negotiate with Palestinians, perpetuating Israel-Palestinian hostility

- Terrorist raids in 1965-6, 1970 El Al, 1972 Black September
- PLO approving use of terrorism

#### Argument 3

Militant Palestinian organisations, use of violence and advancing uncompromising ends has radicalized the conflict, escalating it and making it more violent and intractable, hampering efforts to defuse I-P tensions

- Hamas seeks to establish Islamic state → completely mutually exclusive with Israel's desire to maintain Jewish character of Israel → two-state solution elusive impossible → inability to resolve conflict → I-P tensions continue to escalate because of these radical aims which Israel views as a direct security threat
- Khaled Meshaal: "We (Hamas) believe that Israel has no right to exist"
- Use of *jihad* (holy war) → justifying violent means through religion

- Caused 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Intifada
- While PLO and Israel have already recognized each other, Hamas refuses to do so (undermining efforts of Oslo to improve I-P relations) and Israel likewise as it sees Hamas as terrorist organization and refuses to recognize it

#### Argument 4

Palestinians irresponsibility in committing to the agreements led to resurgence of I-P tensions

- Palestinians abrogated treaty soon after 1993 Oslo:
  - PNA unilaterally doubled armed security personnel, in violation of Oslo
  - Fatah and Arafat continued to agitate for territory in OTs through violent means
  - Arafat found to have sponsored terrorist activity

#### Evaluation

- Across time: played greater role post-1967: Palestinian movements arose mostly after 67 in reaction to the failure of pan-Arabism to advance the Palestinian cause, driving Palestinians to take matters in their own hands
- Greater role in worsening I-P relations than A-P relations
  - Role as rallying point for Arab nationalism ceased after the 1967 defeat, Arab states were more focused on pursuing their own national interests i.e. regaining territories than in addressing Palestinian dispossession
  - Direct actions against Israel and uncompromising ends and means + radicalization of conflict with the advent of militant Islam → contributed to Israeli hostility and partly responsible for intransigence on the conflict
  - Also explains why I-P relations failed to improve despite efforts to do so i.e. Oslo

**TWE was the failure to resolve the AIC (1948-2000) due to the emergence of NSAs since the 1960s?**

#### Argument 1

Emergence of secular Palestinian NSAs drove Palestinians to actively advance their claim to a Palestinian homeland and right of return while adopting increasingly hardline approach against Israel → introduced a new layer of the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians and heightened tensions between them, escalating the conflict and making Israel more unwilling to negotiate

- PLO approving use of terrorism against Israel, 3 'Nos' at Aug 1967 Khartoum Summit
- Fatah responsible for 76 terrorist attacks from 1965-6
- 1970 El Al Airliner downing bound for Tel Aviv, 1972 Black September attack
- Had the effect of fueling Israeli insecurity, provoking it to become even more intransigent and to prioritise national security above conflict resolution → refuse to compromise with organisations/accede demands and hence refusing to recognize Palestinian rights and return lands grabbed
- Israel unwilling to negotiate with 'terrorist organisations', obstructing possibility of real meaningful peace and negotiating settlement agreeable to all

#### Argument 2

Due to NSAs to the extent that the rise of religious fundamentalism radicalised the conflict and made it more intractable with its uncompromising means and ends



- Uncompromising because positions justified with reference to God and were hence perceived as indisputable
- Hamas unwillingness to compromise, suicide bomber attacks, Palestinian intifada that continued to fuel Israel's insecurity
- Jewish Gush Elinum fundamentalist movement that advocated Jewish settlement in OT, which further antagonised Palestinians and complicated conflict

### Argument 3

However, such a view only explains the Israel-Palestinian aspect of the conflict, fails to explain why tension with Israel-Arabs persist. AIC conflict, especially between Arabs and Israelis pretty much the result of state actors' actions → Arab diplomatic and military hostility, and Israel's refusal to return land from OT

- Arab state involvement in wars
  - Provocateur in 1948 – declared war on Israel
  - 1956 – conflict with Israel over Suez conflict
  - 1967 – provoked Israel into pre-emptive strike when Assad ordered UNEF I out of Sinai and blocked Israeli shipping routes
- Refusal to recognize its existence
  - 3 Nos, economic warfare
- Hostility → provoked insecurity of Israelis → drove them to be more uncompromising and refusing to negotiate with Arabs to exchange land for peace (cos Arab states unwilling)
  - Though 1978 Camp David, Syria still unwilling, other Arab states still hostile

### Argument 4

Fails to acknowledge the root causes of the conflict that have persisted from 1948 into the 1960s and is the basis of the NSA's efforts

- ROOT CAUSE is DISPOSSESSION and uncompromising claims to land (made by state actors as well) → which is the basis that NSA uses for its justifications
- Failure to address this is the fundamental explanation/key factor underlying the continued emergence of NSAs, whose aims though varying still relate back to halting dispossession by establishing homeland for Palestinians, regardless of whether it is Islamic or not

## CONSEQUENCES

**One of the most significant consequences of the AIC has been the rise of extremist groups.**

**Assess this view from 1948 to 2000.**

Rise of extremist groups – Hamas, Hezbollah, Black September, Islamic Jihad

Regional instability – wars, militarization + hostility between Arab and Israelis

Dispossession of Palestinians – most enduring consequence, many made refugees

Human cost – violence against Palestinians

Economic consequence

### Conclusion

- Rise of extremist groups in AIC only a small part of a wider phenomenon independent of AIC, merely contributed partly to the impact
- AIC consequences most significant i.e. enduring, long-lasting DIRECT impact on the Palestinians themselves, who are at the heart of the conflict

**The Camp David Accords of 1978-79 achieved a “just, comprehensive and durable settlement” of the conflict between the Arabs and the Israelis. Assess the validity of this statement.**

Thesis

Durable – to the extent that no 5<sup>th</sup> Arab-Israeli war happened

Antithesis

NOT just – Israel did not give up much as Sinai was of little strategic importance

NOT durable in substance – Arab hostility against Israel continued as Israel held on to OT, economic warfare continued, 3 Nos continued

NOT comprehensive – completely sidestepped Israeli-Palestinian issue and did not address root cause of conflict and OT

**HFDYA that the Oslo Accords of 1993 was more successful than the Camp David Accords of 1978 with regard to its impact on the Arab-Israeli peace process?**

How Camp David Accords was successful

- Greatly reduced hostility between Israel and Arab states because no 5<sup>th</sup> A-I war
- Displayed Israeli ability and willingness to compromise

How it wasn't

- Arab hostility towards Israel merely shifted from military to diplomatic conflict but still remained – economic warfare, 3 Nos
- Root cause of conflict not addressed

How Oslo was successful

- Attempted to address issue of Palestinian dispossession
- Mutual recognition between Israel and PLO → great step forward into establishing peace between main players of the conflict

How it wasn't

- No substance – both sides soon abrogated the treaty
- Hamas ignored

Final evaluation

- Oslo Accords not more successful because had no substantial impact on BOTH Arab-Israeli relations and Palestinian-Israeli relations
- Both equally unsuccessful

**Assess the regional and global consequences of the failure to resolve the AIC.**

Regional

- Militarisation and instability – 4 wars
- No regional cooperation
- BUT in the early stages → contributed to Arab nationalism (Pan-Arabism)
- Violence in oT

Global

- Conduit for rise of religious fundamentalism
  - Global attacks
  - Attracting foreign fighters

- Harming the global economy with the 1973 oil crisis – OPEC raised oil prices to protest American actions in the 1973 Yom Kippur war and to pressure other countries to adopt more pro-Arab policy

#### CHANGE AND CONTINUITY

**A sovereignty dispute that developed into a protracted conflict. Assess the validity of this statement with reference to the AIC in the period 1945-2000.**

##### Change

- Sovereignty dispute that evolved into wider regional rivalry between Arabs and Israelis
  - Hostility between Arabs and Israelis leading to Israel's unwillingness to give up OT
- CW aspect
- Religious conflict
  - Politicisation of religion and the emergence of non-state actors and militant Islamists

##### Continuity

- Still fundamentally about the status of East Jerusalem and the Palestinian ROR