

Lee Campbell

Arab-Israeli Conflict: Task 2
Causes of Conflict

Attempts to make peace since 1948 between the Israelis and Arabs have so far failed. Peace talks can't reach agreements despite intervention from President Clinton. Recently violence has broken out again.

The Rival claims to Palestine is a long-term problem, which has gone on for centuries. The Israelis claim that it is there land because god had promised them the land to them in 'The Bible'. The Arabs have a claim for the land because they have been living there for the last 13 centuries because in about the 7th Century the Jews went to Europe.

Jerusalem is also a long-term problem because the Jews believe they should own it all because Jesus Christ preached in the city. King David made it his capital. Solomon also built a temple there and these people are all very important to the Jews. Solomon's temple is even more important to Jews now because all there is left of it is the Western or Wailing Wall. People come from thousands of miles around to see it. Arabs believe that they should have some of Jerusalem because in the city is the spectacular mosques of Al-Aqsa and the Golden Dome mosque. Muslims have a special word for Jerusalem it is 'Al-Quds' which means the Holy Place in Arabic. Israel used to own only half of Jerusalem and Jordan had the other half of Jerusalem. Now though Israel have total control over Jerusalem. Because of Jerusalem being a holy city for both countries it creates a lot of Conflict between them.

The problems over War and Occupation are short-term problems. In 1947 Israel was given about half of the country and the Arabs got the West Bank, the Gaza strip and bits of land to the North and South sides of Israel. The Arabs sound like they have not got a lot of land but Israel has got quite a lot of desert that is useless. In the 1948-49 war the Israelis took over a bit of the West Bank and they took the land to the north and south of Israel off the Arabs and they also took over a bit of the Gaza strip. In the 1967 war Israel took over Sinai, the West Bank, The Gaza Strip and they took over the

Golan Heights in Syria. In the 1973 war Israel took over a bit of North Egypt and they took a bit more land of Syria.

All this land getting taken would have built up tension inside Israel. In 1982 Israel withdrew from Sinai and has given Lebanon a bit of its land back. This would have made the Arab countries a bit happier.

Refugee Camps and living in the occupied territories are both examples of short-term problems. Most Palestinian refugees who lived in Israel have moved to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Some Refugees have moved to neighbouring countries like Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. Some have fled to far away place like Iraq. The refugees would have probably fled to Iraq because they know that it will take the Israelis a lot more time to get to Iraq where as people who have fled to neighbouring countries will be invaded sooner because they are nearer to Israel. People have probably moved away because of the chance of a better lifestyle and not as much fighting. People in Refugee camps have a sinister view of the camps. In Jabalaya camp in the Gaza Strip a person says that the camp is in an appalling state because there is no sewer system. People are falling over each other since the camps are so over-populated. The mood in the camp is also said to be downbeat. The whole of the Gaza Strip is mainly made up of several Refugee camp towns. The most offensive thing to the Arabs living in the refugee camps are the smart Israeli establishments with their spacious lawns and Swimming Pools which are far better than the squalor of refugee camps around them. The Zionists consider Arabs as second class citizens and so they don't consider that the Arabs should have equal rights. Evidence that Arabs are treated, as second class citizens are that they have worse punishments when they get sent to jail. The Arabian source also says that the Zionists killed the Arabs in their villages to scare Arabs out of their villages and it says that the Zionists kill the Arabs because the Zionists want to wipe out all of the Arabs. The schools that the Arabs go to do not teach Arab History and they have to learn Hebrew, this is so they will feel they are not Arabians. Education in Arab schools also ends at an early stage, this would be so Arabs don't get that better job and therefore they will not get as much money. The Arabs are also not allowed to represent themselves. The Arab workers are also paid less than the Israeli workers are. So Overall the Israelis are treating the Arabs like the Nazis treated them. Since the Arabs do not get many rights this causes conflict.

The Intifada is a short-term problem. In December 1987 4 Arab Palestinians were killed in a road accident. This was the start of the Intifada.

Before this incident the group were only shouting out slogans. After the accident the protests became violent. The Israeli source says that Israeli soldiers were attacked with rocks, but increasingly with knives and petrol bombs. The Israeli source also says that the Arabs did not allow the Israeli soldiers into their villages and Arab school children were encouraged to attack the Israelis, this is probably because their education stops at an early age. It says that the Israeli soldiers only used plastic and rubber type bullets and only in extreme cases did they use live ammunition, the use of ammunition may create wars and people may have to move because of them. The Israeli soldiers who did abuse their power were sent to jail. In 1991 stabbing of the Israelis became more frequent in Jewish Urban areas and so did murder. The Arab source says that from late 1987 to late June 1991, 983 Arabs had been killed by Israeli troops. That is 3 times the amount of blacks killed by South African troops under Apartheid in the same length of time. More than 120,000 Arabs have been wounded and beaten. 15,000 are prisoners and it says that most prisoners didn't have a trial before they were sent to jail. More than 1,882 houses have been demolished. Many Schools and Universities were closed. It also says that 2 million unarmed civilians were not allowed to leave their homes, this also creates bad feeling between the 2 sides and it is an example of how living in the occupied territories is a disadvantage. The Intifada is another reason for mistrust between the 2 armies.

The PLO terrorism is a short-term problem because it only began in 1970. The terrorism went on until 1987. In the years between 1970-1973 there were 10 hijacked planes. The PLO hijacked the planes. The PLO says they hijack planes to attract attention from the world because if they didn't fight they would never return. The Israelis say they must attack the PLO for the safety of the Israeli citizens and for the sake of stability in the Middle East. A person who was aboard a hijacked plane says that one of the hijackers said that he hated all westerners because of the Americans. The PFLP that are a Palestinian group say that because it is like them being hijacked out of Palestine. The leader of the PFLP said to a German magazine that hijacking planes created more attention than killing 100 Israelis. Yasser Arafat (the leader of the PLO) at first told the PFLP that they were 'harming the revolution'. In the Munich Olympics the PLO organised the 'black September group' who carried out killings and hijackings at the Olympics. A woman at an airport says that when she heard the shooting she thought that the Arabs were coming to kill them, but the Israeli soldiers

‘Came like an angel’ to kill the Arabs she said. The Israeli soldiers saving all these people would have made a good impression on the rest of the world. Another reason for mistrust between the 2 sides is that the Arab terrorist groups have killed Israelis since 1970.

In the last few years encouraged by America, Israel has been trying to end the conflict with the PLO. The idea is to give back some control over some area of the land back to the Arabs and the Arabs will promise peace. If Yasser Arafat agrees to peace it will make the Intifada bigger and more violent. The problem though now is that the PLO and Yasser Arafat are starting to loose control of some of the other Arab groups. Extremists on both sides are not willing to compromise peace on these terms. The hard line Jews say that they will not give in to Arab terrorism and are not giving up the West Bank or the Gaza Strip. Extreme Palestinian Arabs claim that they are only getting little bits of land and they will carry out attacks until they get more land. The Israeli government will not negotiate Jerusalem. Palestinian Arabs say there will be no end to the conflict unless they regain the Arab half of Jerusalem back again. With the 2 extremist sides wanting totally opposite things there will be always tension between them, which may spill over into conflict.

Overall to me it is clear that Jerusalem is the most important issue. This is because if Jerusalem was sorted out there would probably be no more violence and a major war would be avoided if Jerusalem were sorted out. The Refugee camps are also quite an important issue to sort out because from the sources on the Refugee Camp it sounds like people are treated bad there. I think most of the other problems would sort themselves out because the PLO have said that if the Arab part of Jerusalem is given back to them they would deliver peace.