UNPACKING ISRAEL THROUGH MAPS

CONTENT

MAP 1

Biblical Israel

While Zionism became a modern political movement in the 19th century, the concept of Jewish autonomy in the Land of Israel dates back thousands of years. Archaeological evidence attests to a Jewish presence in the land during biblical times (e.g. the Merneptah Stele c. 1208 BCE). Ultimately, Jewish sovereignty in Israel ended in 70 CE when the Romans destroyed the Second Temple and sent the majority of Jews into exile. Ever since, the Jewish people have dreamed of returning to their ancestral homeland.

Further learning

Why was Israel called Palestine?
(video)

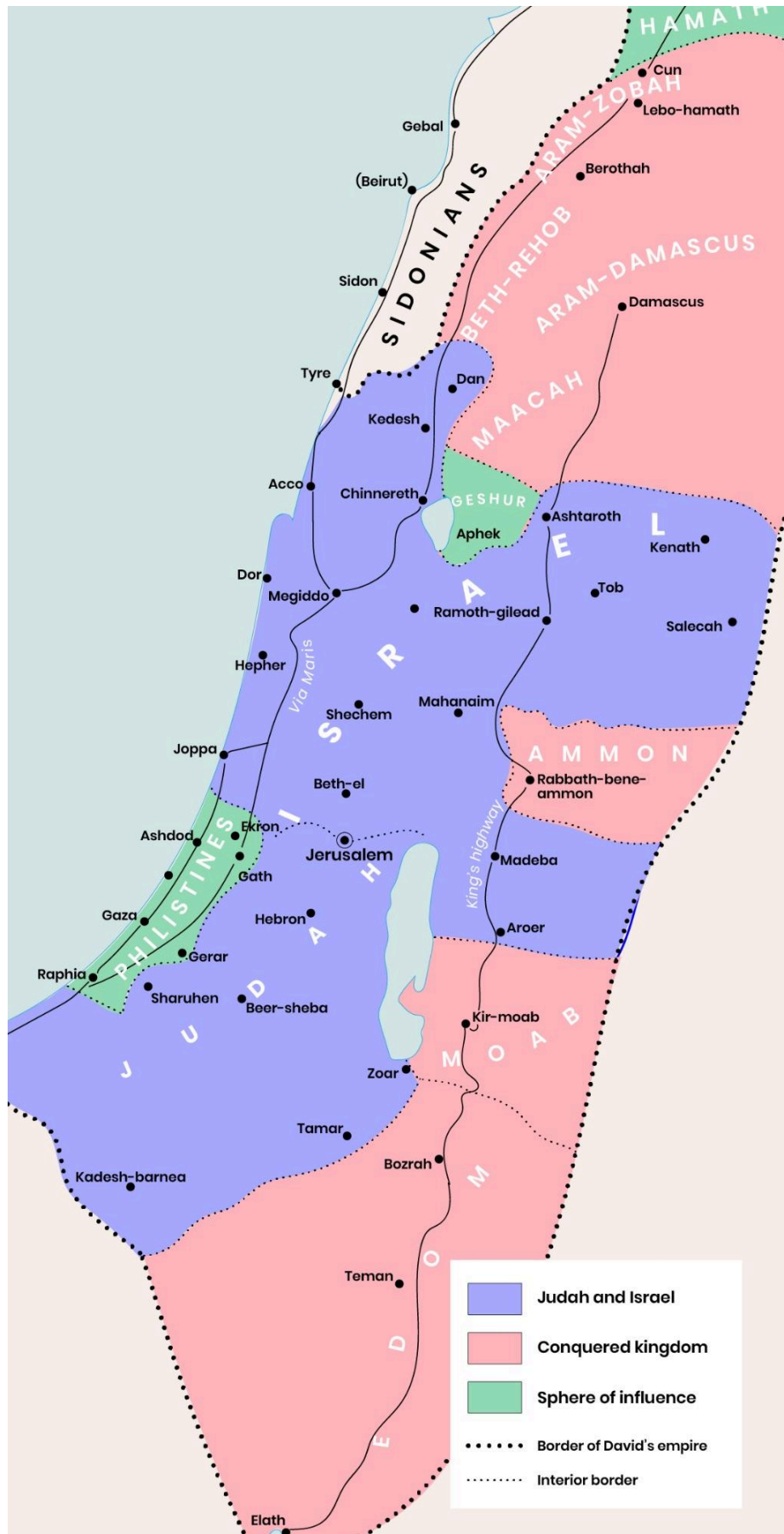The True Origins of Modern Zionism
(video)

The Jewish Connection to the Land
(video)

Macmillan Bible Atlas, page 68

Legend:
- Judah and Israel
- Conquered kingdom
- Sphere of influence
- •••••• Border of David's empire
- ·········· Interior border

MAP 2

Sykes-Picot Agreement 1916

The Sykes-Picot agreement was a secret agreement between the British and French made during WWI to divide the territory of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the war. It is named after its signatories Mark Sykes and François Georges-Picot. Note how the land of Israel (as we know it today) is split between the two territories. The Sykes-Picot agreement was part of a series of contradictory agreements made by the British during this period. The British also promised the Arabs vast territory in the region in the McMahon-Hussein Correspondence (1915-16) and guaranteed their support for a Jewish homeland in Ottoman controlled Palestine in the Balfour Declaration (1917).

Further Learning

[The Sykes-Picot Agreement and the San Remo Conference](#) (video)

[Did a secret 1916 treaty between the U.K. and France create the State of Israel?](#) (podcast)

[What is the Balfour Declaration?](#) (video)

Sykes-Picot Map, *Encyclopædia Britannica*

MAP 3

San Remo Conference 1920

In the aftermath of WWI, the Allied powers met to determine the administration of former Ottoman territories at the San Remo conference. The meeting was attended by representatives of Britain, France, Italy and Japan including their respective prime ministers. The outcome of the conference was the creation of mandates, which involved administrative control over territory by Allied powers until the local population was ready for self-government. The French were granted a mandate over Syria and Lebanon while the British were granted a mandate over the region of Palestine and Transjordan.

Further Learning

[The Sykes-Picot Agreement and the San Remo Conference](#) (video)

[Did a secret 1916 treaty between the U.K. and France create the State of Israel?](#) (podcast)

[British & French - Mandates Map](#)

TURKEY

SYRIA

LEBANON

IRAQ

PALESTINE

TRANSJORDAN

SAUDI ARABIA

EGYPT
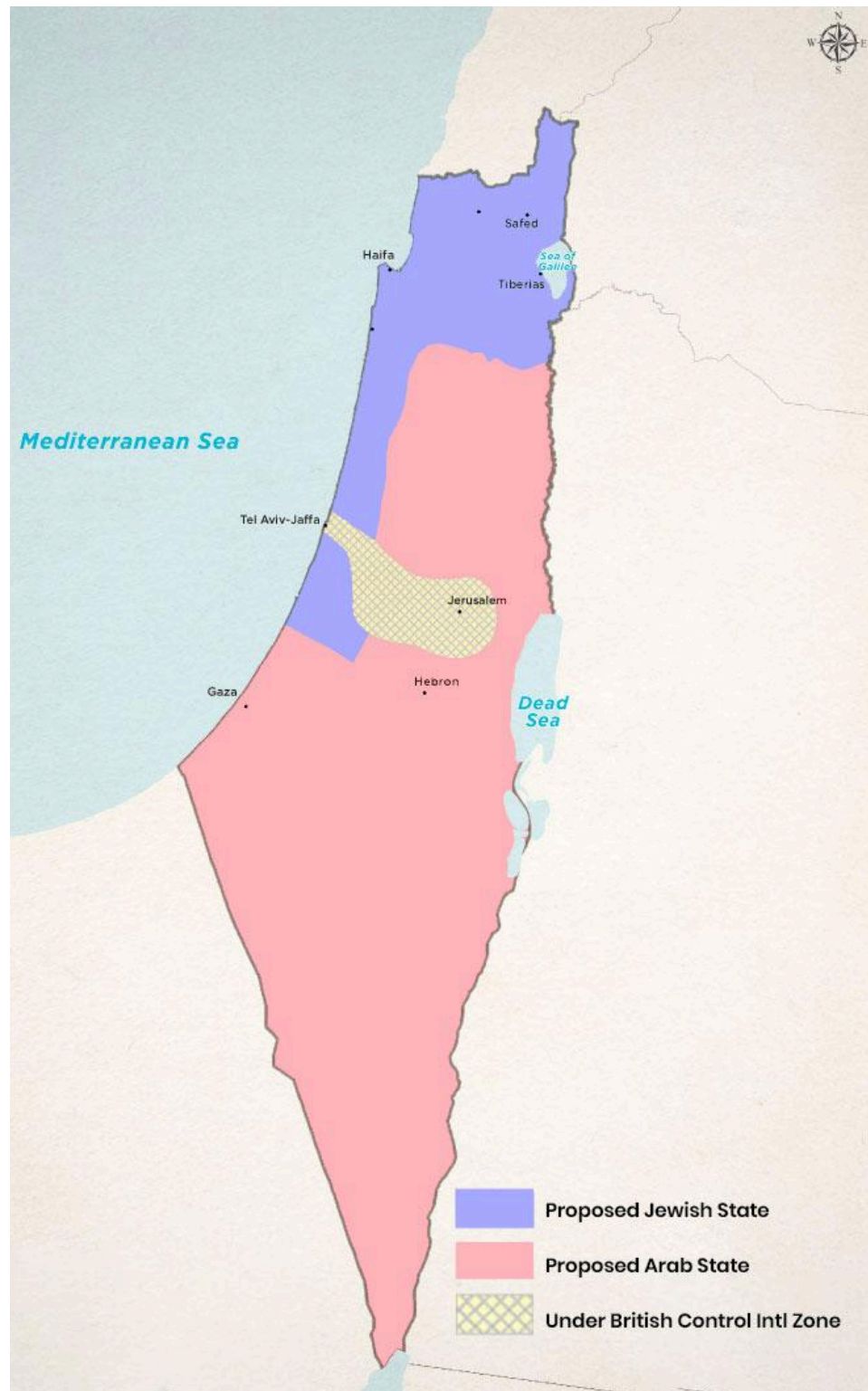
■ British Mandate
■ French Mandate

MAP 4

Peel Commission 1937

The Peel Commission was a British Royal Commission of Inquiry headed by Lord Robert Peel to investigate the conflict between Jews and Arabs in Mandatory Palestine and propose a solution. After hearing testimonies from both sides, the final report suggested ending the British mandate and dividing the land between Jews and Arabs. This was the first official body to suggest partitioning the land. The Jewish leadership debated the plan and, at least in principle, accepted the idea. Meanwhile, the Arab leadership unanimously rejected it. Today, the two-state solution is still commonly regarded as a potential path to resolving the conflict.

Further Learning

[Resolution 181: The Zionist Dream Comes True](#) (video)

Peel Commission Map, IDF Mapping Unit

Proposed Jewish State

Proposed Arab State

Under British Control Intl Zone
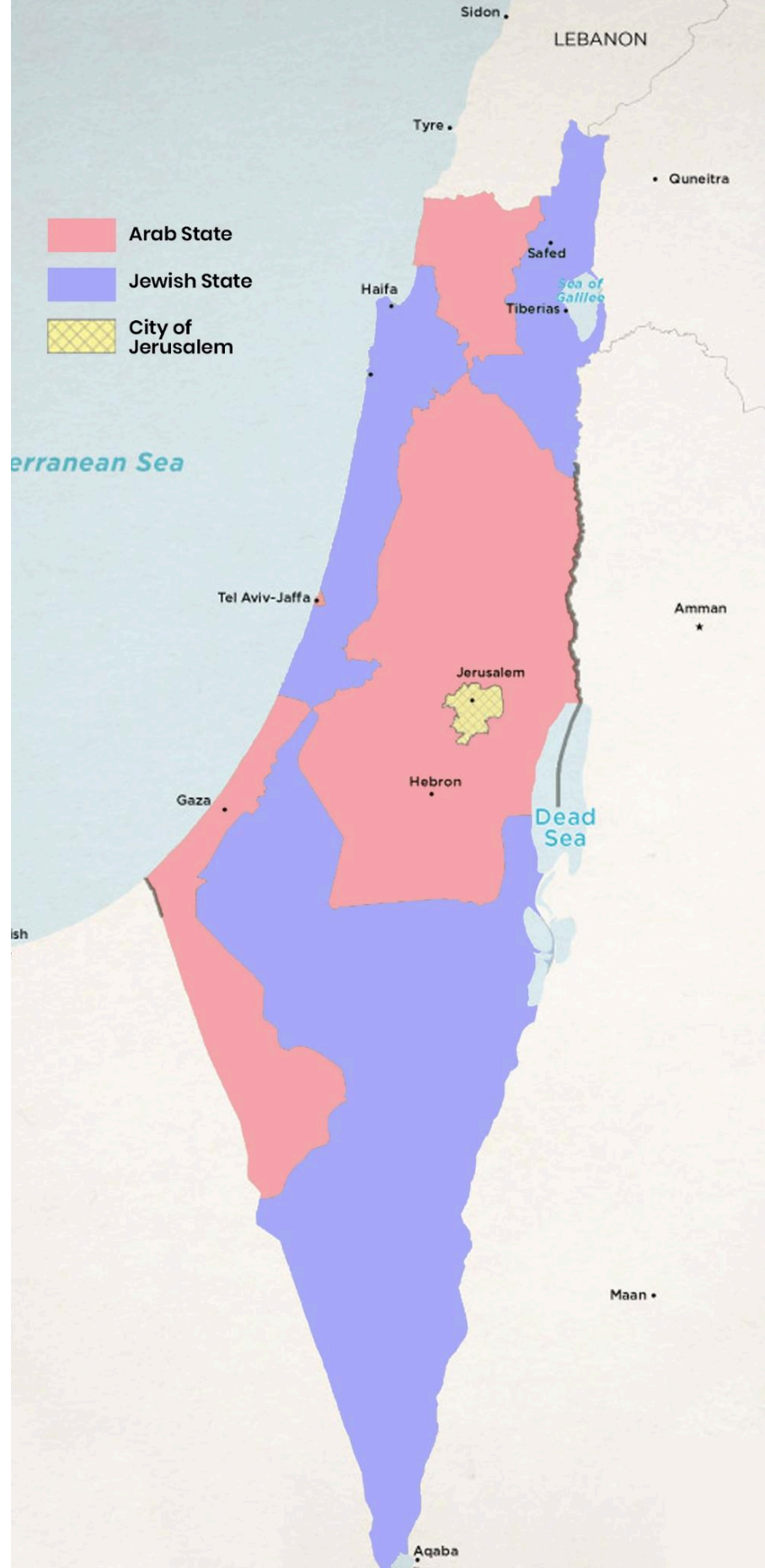
MAP 5

UN Partition Plan 1947

The British intended to end their mandate over Palestine and turned the matter over to the United Nations to resolve. The UN set up a special investigatory committee which recommended partitioning the land and creating two states, one Jewish and one Arab. According to the plan, Jerusalem would be administered by an international regime. On November 29th 1947, the UN General Assembly adopted the plan as Resolution 181 (33 voted for, 13 against, 10 abstained). The plan was accepted by the Jewish Agency while the Arabs rejected it. Following the UN vote, civil war broke out between Jews and Arabs which escalated into a regional war once the British withdrew in 1948.

Further Learning

Resolution 181: The Zionist Dream Comes True

1948: Israel's Battle for Independence

Partition Plan Map

MAP 6

Armistice Lines 1949–1967

On May 14th 1948, David Ben Gurion declared Israel's independence. The next day, the new state was attacked by forces from Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Transjordan and Iraq. At the end of the war, armistice agreements were signed which marked Israel's borders. Israeli territory was larger than the UN partition plan had proposed, meanwhile Jordan controlled the West Bank including East Jerusalem and Egypt controlled the Gaza strip. This border, sometimes known as the "Green Line" because of the ink used during negotiations, was never intended to be a permanent border however it became the starting point for two-state solution negotiations many years later.
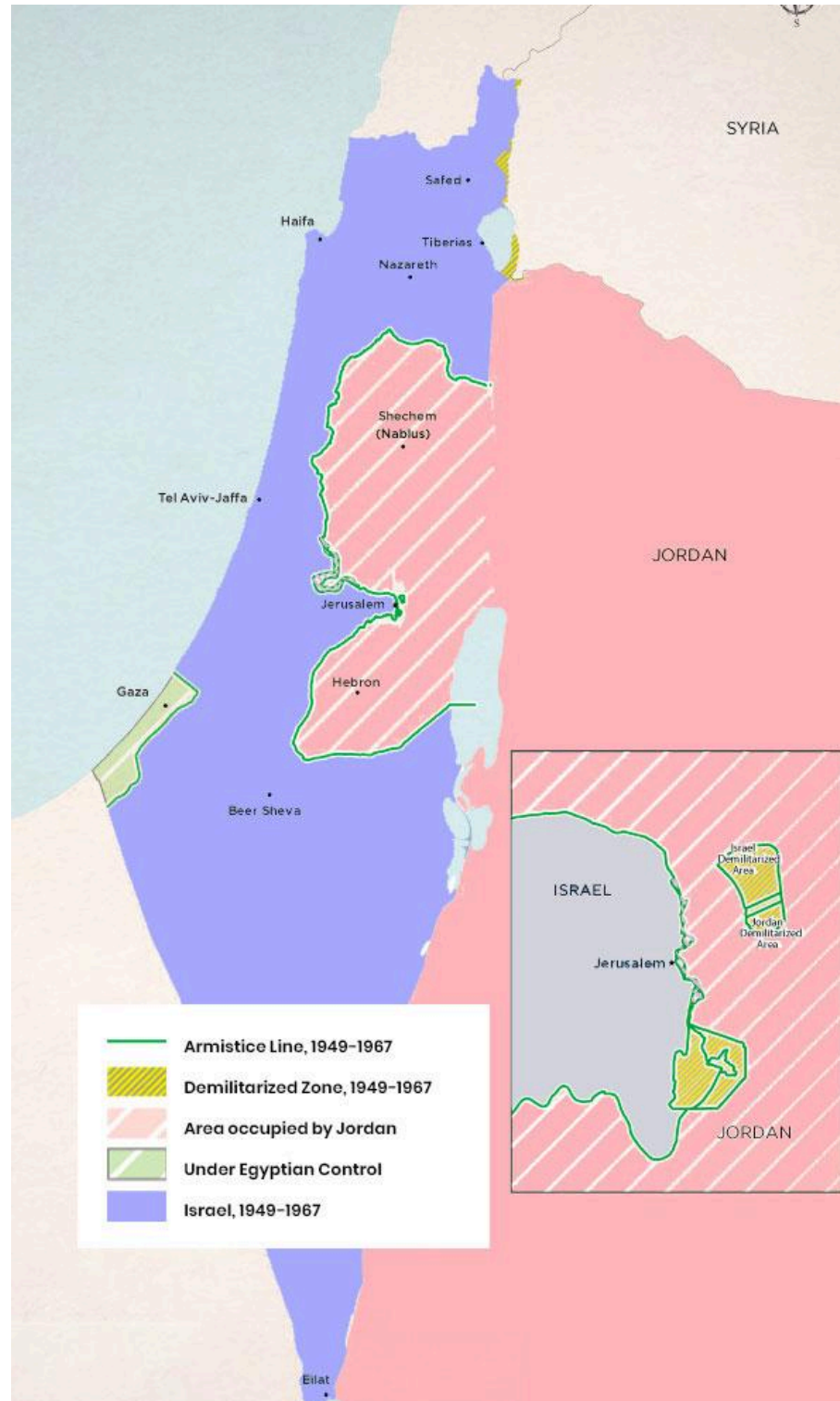
Further Learning

[Israel's War of Independence](#) (video)

[What is Deir Yassin?](#) (video)

[Did Israel expel Palestinian Arabs?](#) (video)

Armistice Lines Map

SYRIA

Safed

Haifa

Tiberias

Nazareth

Shechem (Nablus)

Tel Aviv-Jaffa

JORDAN

Jerusalem

Gaza

Hebron

Beer Sheva

ISRAEL

Israel Demilitarized Area

Jordan Demilitarized Area

Jerusalem

JORDAN

Eilat

Legend:
— Armistice Line, 1949–1967
Demilitarized Zone, 1949–1967
Area occupied by Jordan
Under Egyptian Control
Israel, 1949–1967

MAP 7

Six-Day War 1967

Israel anticipated that neighboring Arab states would invade and launched a preemptive strike on June 5th 1967, which crippled the Egyptian air force. Israel won the subsequent war against Egypt, Jordan and Syria in just six days and massively expanded its territory, tripling in size. Israeli forces captured the Gaza Strip and Sinai peninsula from Egypt, the West Bank (Judea and Samaria) from Jordan, and the Golan Heights from Syria. Significantly, Israel captured and reunified East Jerusalem including the Old City under Jewish sovereignty for the first time in nearly 2000 years from Jordan. Many Palestinians who lived in Gaza and the West Bank now lived in territory controlled by the Israeli military.
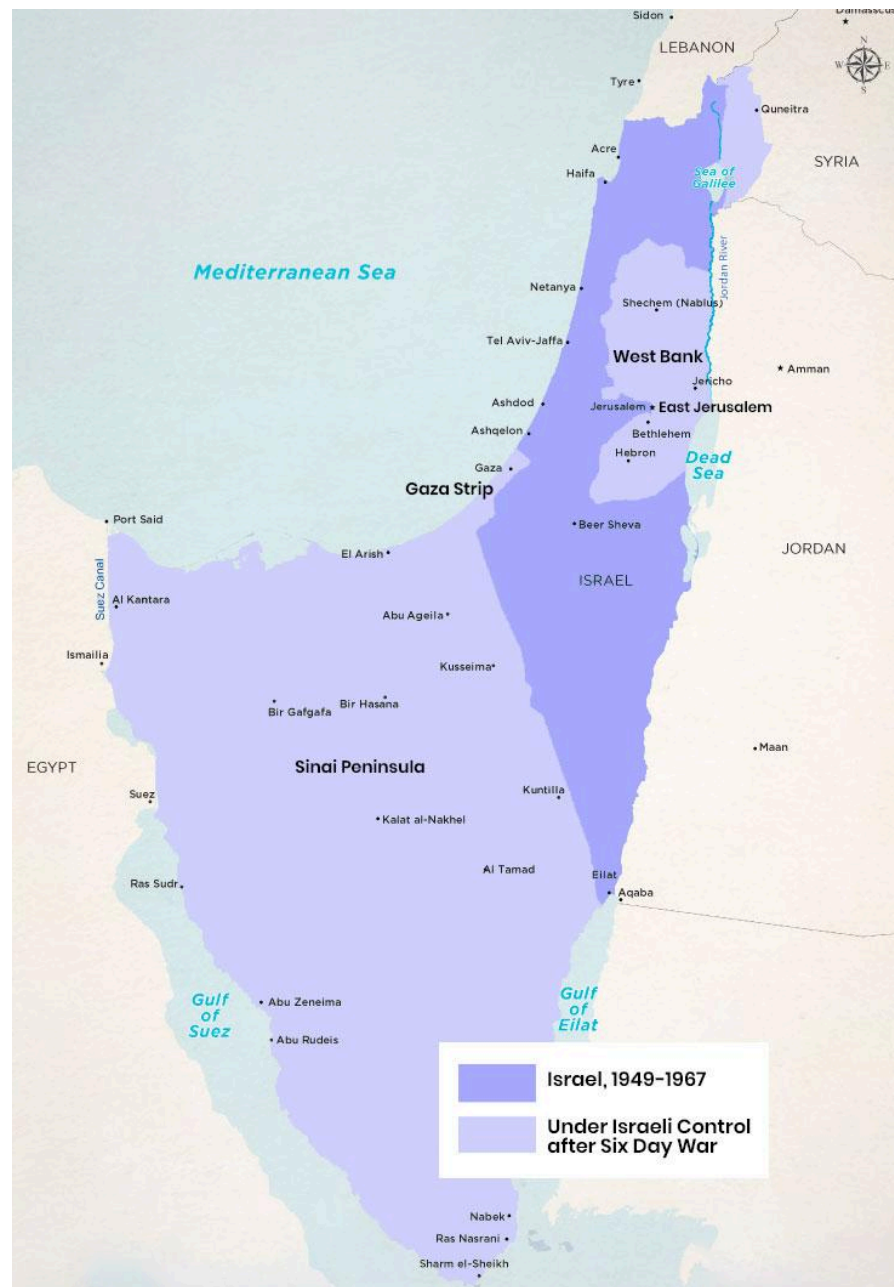
Further Learning

The Six-Day War (video)

Jerusalem Day Explained (video)

What are the Israeli Settlements? (video)

Six Day War Map

MAP 8
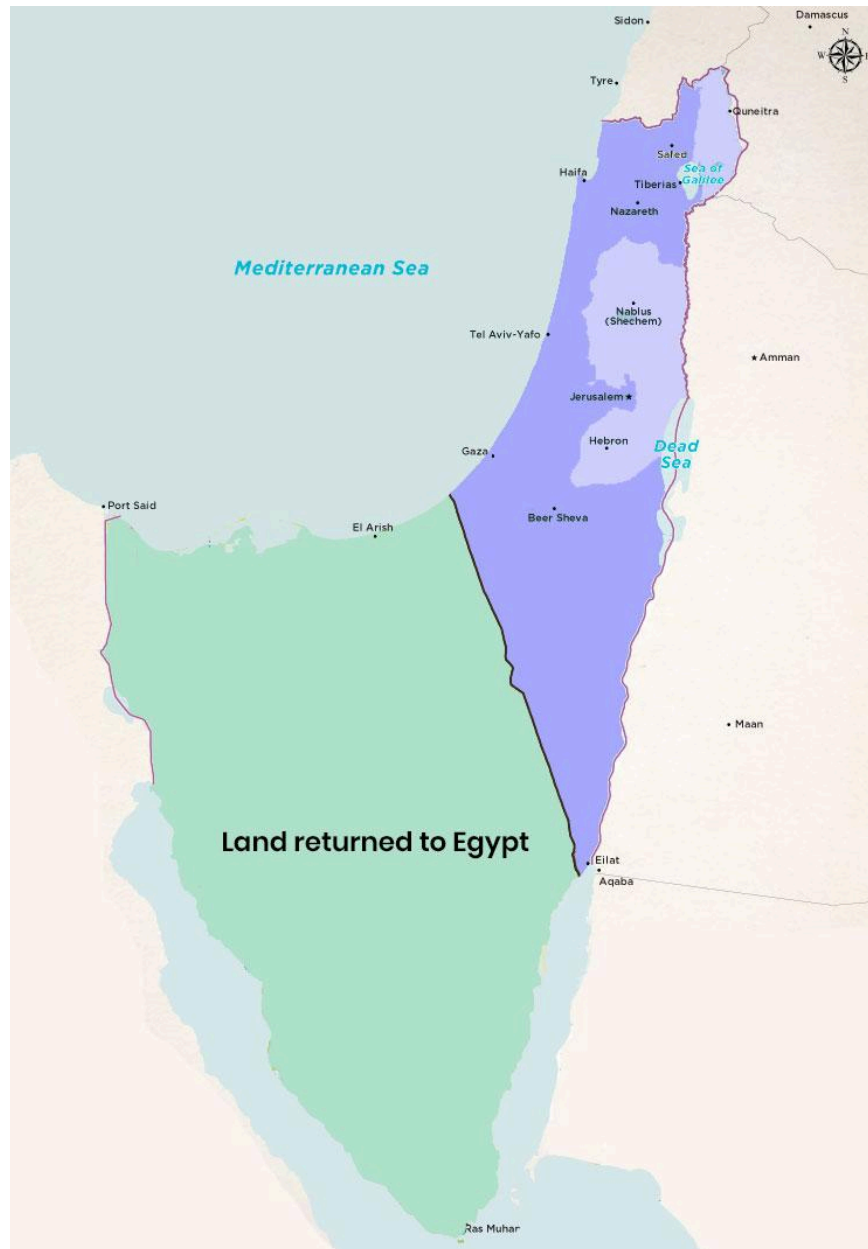
Israeli-Egyptian Peace 1979

In 1979, Egyptian President, Anwar Sadat, and Israeli Prime Minister, Menachem Begin, signed a historic peace agreement. It was the first agreement between Israel and an Arab state. The two countries, who had fought numerous wars ('48, '56, '67, '67-'73, and '73), agreed to mutual recognition and a cessation of a state of war. As part of the agreement, Israel withdrew from the Sinai Peninsula. This involved the painful evacuation of settlements, most notably Yamit.

Further Learning

[Israel & Egypt: a Lasting Peace?](#) (video)

[Yamit: Exchanging Land for Peace](#) (video)

[Sadat's leap: Israel's historic peace breakthrough](#)
(podcast)

Sinai Withdrawal Map
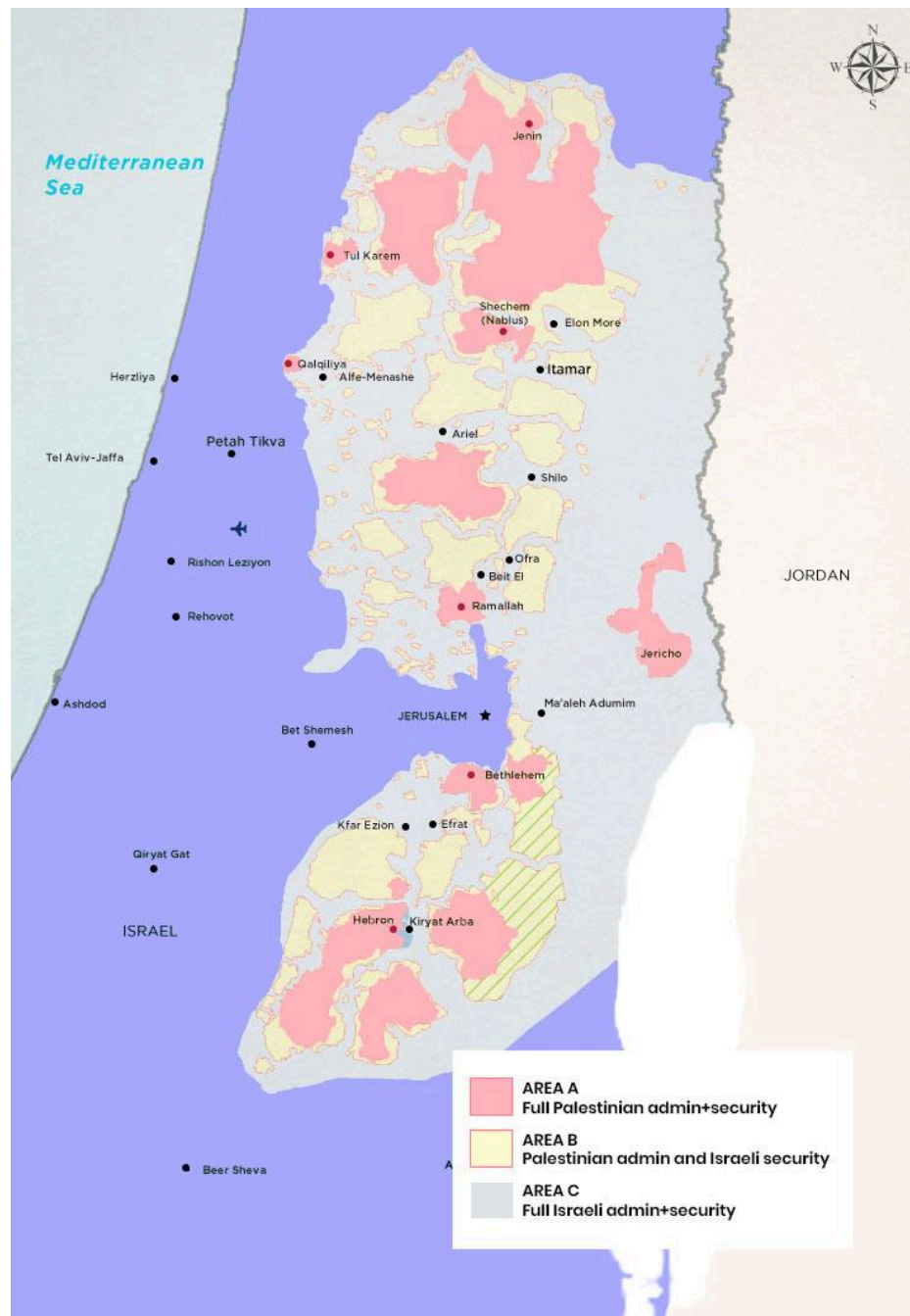
MAP 9

Oslo Accords 1995

The Oslo accords began as a series of secret meetings between Israel and the Palestinian Authority and led to two agreements, signed in 1993 and 1995 respectively. The agreements included mutual recognition and were intended as the first step towards the creation of a Palestinian state. According to the agreements, the Palestinian Authority would gain control of the West Bank in stages. In the first stage, which was enacted, "Area A" was transferred to the Palestinian Authority, "Area B" was jointly controlled by Israelis and Palestinians, and "Area C" remained under Israeli control. The agreement disintegrated following the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzchak Rabin, the failure of the Camp David Summit, and the Second Intifada.

Further Learning

The Oslo Accords (video)

Oslo: The Peace That Wasn't (podcast)

The Life and Assassination of Yitzhak Rabin (video)

Area A, B and C Map
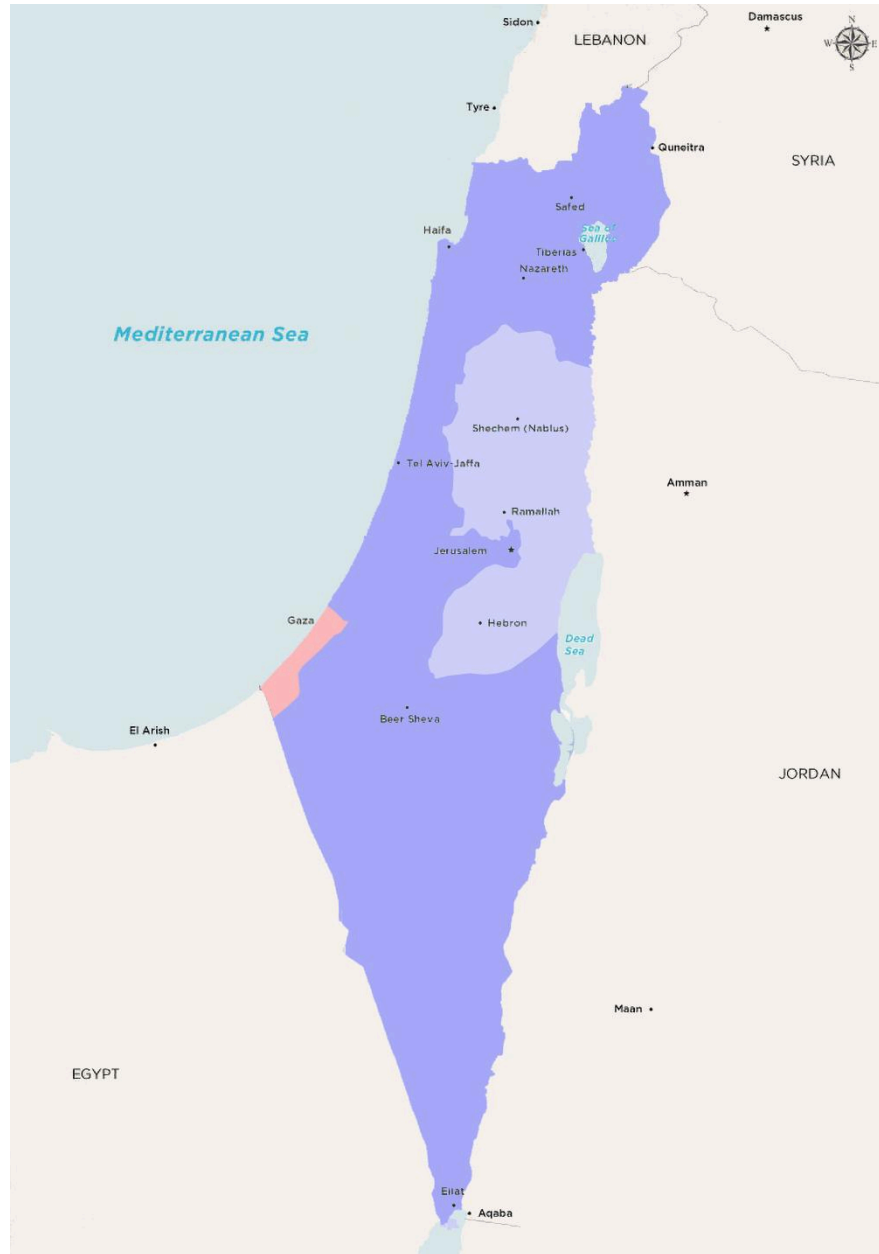
MAP 10

Current Day Israel

This map represents the current boundaries of the State of Israel. Due to the complex nature of the conflict, the map is often presented differently depending on the source. Here is why we have presented this version of the map:

During the 1967 Six-Day war, Israel gained control of expanded territory (see map 7). In the subsequent years, Israel has treated various parts of that territory in different ways. East Jerusalem was effectively annexed by Israel immediately and so it is included in this map. Similarly, the Golan Heights are included as it was annexed by Israel in 1981. The Sinai Peninsula belongs to Egypt since it was returned as part of a peace deal in 1979 (see map 8). Meanwhile, the Gaza Strip is not included in our map since Israel unilaterally withdrew from this territory in 2005 (although it is not an independent country). Finally, we chose to shade the West Bank in a lighter color, since this territory is disputed, has not been formally annexed by Israel, and is currently divided between Israeli and Palestinian Authority control in a complex arrangement - an outcome of the Oslo Accords (see map 9).

Further Learning

The Six-Day War (video)

Israel's Disengagement from Gaza (video)

MAP 11

Middle East Map, Today

It is important to understand the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians in the context of the broader Middle East. According to [Matti Friedman](#) observers would benefit from "zooming out", for example, he notes that "Israel's most potent enemy is the Shiite theocracy in Iran, which is more than 1,000 miles away and isn't Palestinian (or Arab)." It is Iran that funds and supports the terror groups Hamas, Hezbollah and Palestinian Islamic Jihad. Meanwhile, states in the region who oppose Iran are allies or potential allies of Israel. Israel has already reached agreements with the UAE, Bahrain, Morocco and Sudan (the Abraham Accords) and there is speculation that others may follow.

Related Content

[Abraham Accords – Peace in the Middle East?](#) (video)

[Who is Hamas?](#) (video)

[From Friends to Foes: The Story of Israel and Iran](#) (video)