

## Lesson 8: The Current Conflict

*Key message:* The conflict is currently at an impasse, with key unresolved issues: borders, Jerusalem, settlements, refugees, and security.

### What to Bring

- Handouts 8.1, 8.2, 8.3a

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### 1. Orientation

- Takeaways from last class; questions
- Objective for this class
- Timeline (handout 8.1)

### 2. Where Are We Today?

- Israel's borders: Annexed East Jerusalem and Golan Heights, returned Sinai to Egypt, withdrew unilaterally from Gaza
- Palestinian Authority has limited control in West Bank; Hamas controls Gaza
- Jewish settlements in West Bank
- Palestinian refugees from 1948 and their descendants in camps in Gaza, West Bank, and neighboring Arab countries; others integrated but not fully assimilated

### 3. Video: Renewing the Peace Process

- Watch video (4'13", online [here](#), download [here](#)) of President Obama's speech, September 2009. Follow along with transcript (handout 8.2)
- What are Obama's main points? (peace is possible; negotiations; two-state solution; security, incitement and settlements; urgency; American interest)

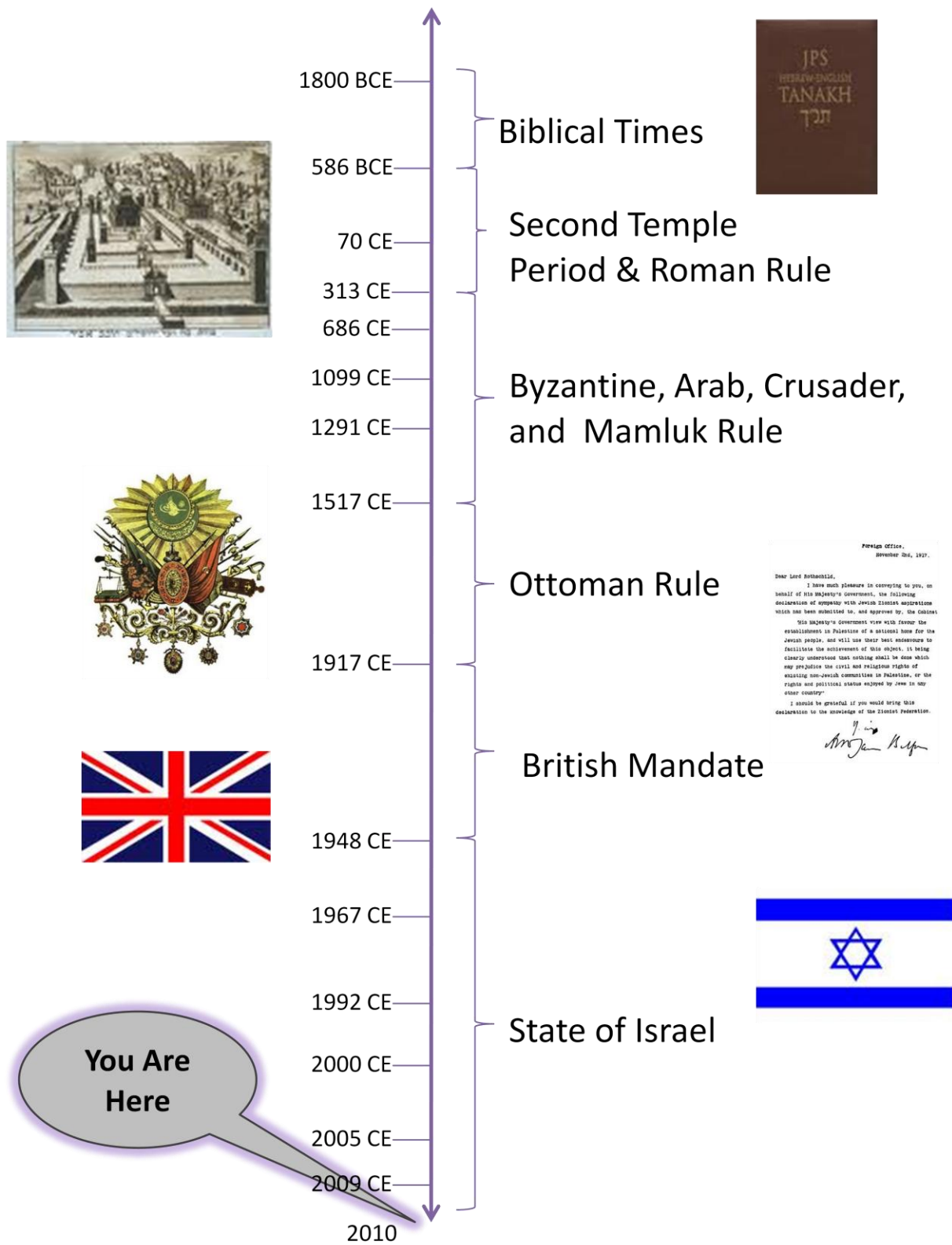
### 4. Peace Negotiations: Simulation

- Review the list of current stumbling blocks in the negotiations: borders, Jerusalem, settlements, refugees, and security.
- For each issue, divide the students into two teams: Israeli and Palestinian negotiators. (The identity of each group switches from issue to issue, or the groups are re-divided each time.) Each side must state its case, then try to reach a compromise on each issue.
- Try to draw on material learned in previous class sessions!

### 5. Discussion

- Is peace possible? Why or why not?
- What can be done to improve the chances for peace?
- Is there anything that we, as individuals living in the U.S., can do to further the cause of peace?

# Timeline: Lesson 8



# ***President Obama Speech, September 22, 2009***

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**THE WHITE HOUSE**  
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

September 22, 2009

## **REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT AT BEGINNING OF TRILATERAL MEETING WITH ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU AND PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY PRESIDENT ABBAS**

Waldorf Astoria Hotel  
New York, New York  
12:26 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Please be seated, members of the delegations.

I have just concluded frank and productive bilateral meetings with both Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Abbas. And I want to thank them both for appearing here today. I am now looking forward to this opportunity to hold the first meeting among the three of us since we took office.

As I said throughout my campaign and at the beginning of my administration, the United States is committed to a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. That includes a settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that results in two states, Israel and Palestine, in which both the Israeli people and the Palestinian people can live in peace and security and realize their aspirations for a better life for their children.

That is why my Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and my Special Envoy George Mitchell have worked tirelessly to create the context for permanent status negotiations. And we have made progress since I took office in January and since Israelis -- Israel's government took office in April. But we still have much further to go.

Palestinians have strengthened their efforts on security, but they need to do more to stop incitement and to move forward with negotiations. Israelis have facilitated greater freedom of movement for the Palestinians and have discussed important steps to restrain settlement activity. But they need to translate these discussions into real action on this and other issues. And it remains important for the Arab states to take concrete steps to promote peace.

Simply put, it is past time to talk about starting negotiations -- it is time to move forward. It is time to show the flexibility and common sense and sense of compromise that's necessary to achieve our goals. Permanent status negotiations must begin and begin soon. And more importantly, we must give those negotiations the opportunity to succeed.

And so my message to these two leaders is clear. Despite all the obstacles, despite all the history, despite all the mistrust, we have to find a way forward. We have to summon the will to break the deadlock that has trapped generations of Israelis and Palestinians in an endless cycle of conflict and suffering. We cannot continue the same pattern of taking tentative steps forward and then stepping back. Success depends on all sides acting with a sense of urgency. And that is why I have asked Secretary Clinton and Senator Mitchell to carry forward the work that we do here today.

Senator Mitchell will meet with the Israeli and Palestinian negotiators next week. I've asked the Prime Minister and the President to continue these intensive discussions by sending their teams back to Washington next week. And I've asked the Secretary of State to report to me on the status of these negotiations in mid-October.

All of us know this will not be easy. But we are here today because it is the right thing to do. I look forward to speaking with my colleagues. I'm committed to pressing ahead in the weeks and months and years to come, because it is absolutely critical that we get this issue resolved. It's not just critical for the Israelis and the Palestinians, it's critical for the world, it is in the interests of the United State. And we are going to work as hard as necessary to accomplish our goals. Thanks.

END -12:29 P.M. EDT

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-beginning-trilateral-meeting-with-israeli-prime-minister-netanyah>

## ***Key Issues of the Conflict***

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Israeli Position</b>	<b>Palestinian Position</b>	<b>Justifications? Compromise possible?</b>
<b>Borders</b>	Adjustments to the pre-1967 armistice lines to include some West Bank territory with some possible land swaps to compensate Palestinians.	Pre-1967 Armistice lines, including eastern Jerusalem, with no adjustments.	
<b>Jerusalem</b>	Prime Minister Barak offered the PA eastern Jerusalem at Camp David in 2000, and Prime Minister Olmert floated dividing Jerusalem.  Rising popular opposition to redividing Jerusalem.	Eastern Jerusalem must be capital of future Palestinian state.	
<b>Jewish Settlements</b>	“Natural growth” of settlements is permitted, but no new settlements are. Illegal outposts to be removed.  Borders adjusted to incorporate largest Jewish settlements into Israel. Uproot other settlements.	Israel must cease expanding settlements.  All Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza must be removed.	
<b>Refugees</b>	Palestinian refugees have no right to settle in Israel, but can settle in future Palestinian state.  There is no international law of “right of return.”  Jewish refugees from Arab lands should also receive recognition and compensation.	All Palestinian refugees have the right to return to their former homes in Israel and receive compensation.  Israel must recognize the “right of return” even if most refugees choose not to go to Israel.	
<b>Security</b>	Terrorism must end.  The PA must be demilitarized.	PA must have security forces.	

Source: StandWithUs, <http://www.standwithus.com/TEACHINGTOOLS/il101pU10.asp> (Activity 1)

## ***Key Issues of the Conflict: Teacher's Guide***

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Israeli Position Justifications</b>	<b>Palestinian Position Justifications</b>	<b>Compromise possible?</b>
<b>Borders</b>	Jews have legal, historic and security claims to this land, and security is of paramount importance.	Israelis have no legitimate claims to any land in the West Bank and Gaza.	
<b>Jerusalem</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jerusalem has had a Jewish majority for over 130 years.</li> <li>• Temple Mount is Judaism's holiest site.</li> <li>• Jerusalem has never been the capital of any state but ancient Judea.</li> <li>• Israel protects the religious freedom and holy sites of all religious groups in Jerusalem.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Al Aqsa Mosque is Islam's third holiest site, and Jerusalem (Al Quds) is holy to Muslims.</li> <li>• Arab majority in East Jerusalem</li> </ul>	
<b>Jewish Settlements</b>	80% of Israeli settlers live along the pre-'67 armistice lines. Minor border adjustments would bring them into Israel proper, and other land could be swapped to compensate.	No Jewish settlements should exist in the future Palestinian state.	
<b>Refugees</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arab states launched the war that caused the refugee problem.</li> <li>• Palestinian claim runs counter to the logic of a two-state solution.</li> <li>• Jewish refugees from Arab lands must be accounted for.</li> <li>• Arab leaders have always threatened to destroy Israel demographically through demanding a "right of return."</li> </ul>	Israel is responsible for causing the Palestinian refugee problem, and the refugees are entitled to the international law of "right of return."	
<b>Security</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If terrorism doesn't end during the peace process, how can Israel be sure terrorism will end later?</li> <li>• Israel has been repeatedly attacked from the West Bank during previous wars. The West Bank is close to Israel's population and economic centers. It cannot risk endangering its population.</li> </ul>	Israel will have security once the Palestinian state is established.	

Source: Adapted from StandWithUs, <http://www.standwithus.com/TEACHINGTOOLS/il101pU10.asp> (Activity 1)