THE CONFLICT BETWEEN ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

Historic overview….

- In ancient times Palestine included territory on both sides of the Jordan River
- Palestine was never its own state
- Three great religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islamic (Muslim)

During the first century the Jews were driven out Jerusalem due to the overtake of the Roman Empire
- This dispersion of the Jews is known as Diaspora
- Roman Empire eventually fell and since then it has been ruled by Arabs, the Crusaders, the Mamluk and the Ottoman Empire
Anti-Semitism

- During this time the Jews suffered centuries of persecution which is known as anti-Semitism.
- 19th century conditions improved for the Jews.
- Theodor Herzl became convinced that the solution for the Jews was for them to have their own country.

Theodor Herzl (1860-1904)

- His idea became known as Zionism.
- Comes from the word Zion, a hill in the heart of Jerusalem.
- 1896 organized the 1st international congress of Zionists at Basel in Switzerland.
- Debate over where the “Jewish State” should be: Argentina vs. Palestine.

WWI

- Britain and France encouraged the Arabs to revolt against Turkish rule.
- They made an understanding that independent Arab states would be established at the end of the war.
- Britain’s foreign minister, Arthur Balfour, also made promises to the Jews.

The Balfour Declaration stated “view with favor establishment in Palestine of a nation home for the Jewish people.”
The Council of the League of Nations issued a Mandate for Palestine in 1922. The Mandate was in favor of the establishment for the Jewish people a homeland in Palestine.

In 1939 there was a shift in British policy: Jewish immigration was to be limited.

During WWII, the Nazis launched a program designed to exterminate all Jews. *Holocaust* - 6 million Jews were killed.

The Jewish survivors were referred to as "Displaced Persons" without homes or countries.

1947, the British had had enough and handed the problem to the UN. The UN plan was to divide Palestine into Jewish and Arab states, with Jerusalem under the UN jurisdiction.

The first Arab-Israeli War 1948
- May 14, 1948 the state of Israel was created.
- The armies of Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon all joined to attack the new state of Israel.
- The war lasted just over a year and the Arab states had lost the battle plus Israel had gained a considerable amount of territory.
- The Arabs refusal to accept partition had cost Palestinians dearly: no homeland, 13,000 Palestinians were killed, 370 Palestinian towns and villages were depopulated or destroyed, 750,000 became refugees.

About 200,000 Palestinian Arabs stayed in Israel after the war and Israel granted them citizenship rights.
- Jordan gave Palestinians full citizenship.
- 500,000 living in the Jordanian-occupied West Bank.
- During 1950 and 1960's Palestinians began organizing themselves with the goal of "liberating" Palestine from Israeli control.
- 1964 the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was established in Egypt and Syria.
- The Syrian PLO was founded by Egyptian-born Palestinian Yasir Arafat.
- Arafat began launching guerrilla raids and terrorist attacks in Israel.
THE SIX DAY WAR & ITS AFTERMATH

- Israel gained the Gaza Strip and the West Bank
- Palestinians realized that they could not depend on other Arab countries to get their land back
- Arafat planned to liberate Palestine: “people’s war”
- The fedayeen “freedom fighters” were created under the PLO who would launch guerrilla operations against Israeli targets
- In the 1970’s the PLO gained political influence and was recognized by the Arab League as a legitimate representative of the Palestinian people

OLSO ACCORD-THE WASHINGTON PEACE AGREEMENT

- Yitzhak Rabin, formal general, became Israel’s prime minister in 1992
- Israeli and PLO officials conducted secret negotiations
- Committed to make a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza strip
- Sept 13, 1993 Rabin and Arafat signed a declaration of principles in Washington DC

Olso-1995

- In Sept. 24, Israeli and PLO officials meeting in Taba, Egypt, finalized agreement on the second stage of eventual Israeli withdrawal from Palestinian lands.
- Israeli forces were scheduled to be removed from six Arab cities and 400 villages in the West Bank by early 1996, after which elections would be held for a 82-member Palestinian council, which would possess legislative and executive power in the West Bank and Gaza.
- In Nov.4, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, was assassinated in Tel Aviv by a right-wing extremist who considered Rabin’s crusade for peace a betrayal of the Jewish state.
The mood in the Gaza Strip was joyous yet chaotic Monday as Israeli troops pulled out of Jewish settlements there, officially ending Israel’s 38-year occupation.