

Hahn, Middle East Notes

Three overlapping contexts:

Cold War

Palestinian-Israeli Conflict

Arab Nationalism

Who wants what?

US wants...

- Political stability so as to discourage Soviet meddling
- stability in the oil market
- anticommunist governments committed to the US side in the Cold War (no neutralists)
- end to conflict – peace between Arabs and Jews
- Jewish homeland

Soviet Union wants...

- to expand its influence into another region
- to secure allies to undermine the US position
- oil concessions

Israel wants...

- Security (through land acquisition)
- recognition as a nation
- to be a Jewish state
- to be a democracy

Egypt/Iran (more nationalist states) want...

- An end to British imperialism and economic exploitation

The ability to run their own countries without western interference

More equitable social structure

Saudi Arabia/Jordan (more conservative, pro-Western states) want...

Financial security

Status quo social structure

Elites to stay in power

Protection from radicals

Stability in the oil markets

Respect from the West

US policy in the Arab-Israeli Conflict

What are the US options and what are the pros and cons of each option?

Why is there no peace between Jews and Arabs?

Neither side will make concessions

No basis for compromise

Israeli security based on military prowess, not compromise with Arabs

Embittered Arabs want to gain territory at the expense of Israeli and stop Israeli expansion

Being anti-Israel pays political dividends for Arab politicians whose legitimacy was shaky

US prioritizes Cold War; doesn't provide leadership to resolve the impasse

Truman administration still deeply divided over Middle East policy

Eisenhower Agenda

- 1- end the Arab-Israeli conflict
- 2- convince Arabs the US is genuinely impartial
- 3- play an active role in settling disputes and signing permanent treaties

Face the same obstacles as Truman did

But as conflict produces instability, the fears of Soviet meddling increase

Need to intervene before domestic politics kicks in for 1956 election

Alpha plan

- repatriate refugees
- share water resources
- set permanent borders
- US kicks in \$1 billion in aid and guarantees borders
- Arabs end sanctions against Israel
- UN controls Jerusalem

Suez Crisis 1956

- Nasser nationalizes the Suez Canal company
- Eisenhower wants peaceful solution but faces Anglo-French intransigence and Arab nationalism (Nasser's actions were popular in the Arab World)
- Isolate Israel from the crisis so as not to escalate tensions
- Brits, French, Israelis collude to seize the canal and depose Nasser
 - Arab-Israeli dispute and canal crisis are linked making things tougher on US
- Eisenhower strongarms belligerents to accept terms of a UN cease fire

US and Arab Nationalism

Why did US oppose nationalists?

Some nationalists are leftist-oriented; not necessarily communist but susceptible to Soviet manipulation

Some regimes deny civil liberties, confiscate property, outlaw dissent

Nationalists are anti-American – resent US wealth, cultural insensitivity, and racism

Having ousted the imperialists, new regimes resemble police states

Eisenhower Doctrine → a Middle Eastern country can request American economic assistance or aid from U.S. military forces if it was being threatened by armed aggression from another state.

Intended to “contain” the Soviet presence in the Middle East.