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## **Media manipulation of the Israeli Palestinian conflict in the United States**

Alissa Kennedy

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# Media manipulation of the Israeli Palestinian conflict in the United States

## Abstract

This presentation looks to examine media-manipulation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the U.S., including implications in the form of public opinion and policy making. The focus is a history of the conflict itself by presenting it first through the lens of the U.S. using multi-mass media news sources before then presenting media based in the Middle East. By doing so an individual can note the inconsistency and categorical syllogism which occurs. It's important to note, it is difficult to change the fundamental opinions individuals have of this conflict or others, but education on media manipulation can allow audiences the ability to speculate and consider the information being provided through a more sophisticated lens. First, by examining the history of the conflict through world knowledge. Then comparing that history to the current media portrayal by considering content, connotation, and biases. This will be separated via region in order to analyze the way in which mass media is manipulated by the means it's consumed such as Google. By doing so all sides present in the conflict can be viewed.

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## Department

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## First Advisor

Richard Stahler-Sholk

## Second Advisor

Dr. Anita Rich

## Third Advisor

Kathleen H. Stacey

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MEDIA MANIPULATION OF THE ISRAELI PALESTINIAN CONFLICT IN THE UNITED STATES

By

Alissa Kennedy

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Supervising Instructor: Richard Stahler-Sholk Date: 4/10/20

Departmental Honors Advisor: Dr. Anita Rich Date: 4/10/2020

Department Head: Kathleen H. Stacey Date: 4/11/2020

Honors Director: Ann Eisenberg Date: 5/12/2020

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## **Abstract**

This presentation looks to examine media-manipulation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the U.S., including implications in the form of public opinion and policy making. The focus is a history of the conflict itself by presenting it first through the lens of the U.S. using multi-mass media news sources before then presenting media based in the Middle East. By doing so an individual can note the inconsistency and categorical syllogism which occurs. It's important to note, it is difficult to change the fundamental opinions individuals have of this conflict or others, but education on media manipulation can allow audiences the ability to speculate and consider the information being provided through a more sophisticated lens. First, by examining the history of the conflict through world knowledge. Then comparing that history to the current media portrayal by considering content, connotation, and biases. This will be separated via region in order to analyze the way in which mass media is manipulated by the means it's consumed such as Google. By doing so all sides present in the conflict can be viewed.

## **Introduction**

There is no denying the unique position and role that the United States plays in the diplomatic negotiations between Israel and Palestine, which has continued for nearly a century. Most interesting though is the knowledge and manipulation of not only the United States general populace but of Israeli's and Palestinian's as well through mass-media. Although one might speculate whether or not this manipulation was intentional, there is no denying that the abundance of misinformation which is created and spread through broadcasting, news outlets, and the Internet has an impact on the perception of this conflict and can result in disastrous situations which only furthers the loss of life these countries have already experienced. By examining the role of history in current times, the concept of mass-media as well as the implications of it, alongside ideas of accountability, and their prevalence or lack of, there is hope to find a part of each of these nations' truths.

## **History of UN Resolution 242**

In order to understand the media surrounding this conflict, an individual has to understand the history of U.S. involvement and manipulation which has already occurred. On the 22nd November in 1967 the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 242 which

concerned “the grave situation in the Middle East”. This is referring to the Six Day War which involved Israel, Jordan, Syria, and Egypt. The war was the result of growing frustrations between the countries including with water distribution between Syria and Israel, who were both utilizing the Jordan River to farm, Egypt moving troops into the Sinai peninsula to honor its vow to the Soviets, and Jordan baiting Egypt by stating it hid behind the United Nations Emergency Force.<sup>1</sup> On the 5th of June Israel took action against Egypt first, taking control of the Gaza Strip on the 7th of June and Sinai Peninsula on the 9th; then, taking the West Bank on the 8th from Jordan; before finally taking the Golan Heights from Syria on June 10th at 6:30 pm.<sup>2</sup> On the 14 of June Russia called for the condemnation of Israel, which was rejected. On the 14th of July Yugoslavia put forth a resolution which was also rejected. Three months later, after continuous pressure, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 242 drafted by Lord Cardon.<sup>3</sup> This resolution was intentionally manipulated by the use of the English language and indirect clauses such as the first principle in section one (i) which states, “Withdrawal of Israel armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict,” the use of the term State in section two (ii) excluding Palestinians from the issues surrounding them, and the use of the term “refugee” in the second principle, point b which states “For achieving a just settlement of the refugee problem;...”. The very wording of the Resolution may be the reason it was adopted unanimously at the 132nd meeting, but ultimately limits itself in its own request for action.

"Support for the concept of total withdrawal was widespread in the Security Council, and it was only through intensive American efforts that a resolution was adopted which employed

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<sup>1</sup>Stein, Leslie. 2014. *The Making of Modern Israel 1948-1967*. Hoboken: Wiley. 263-268.

<sup>2</sup> Stein, Leslie. 2014. *The Making of Modern Israel 1948-1967*. Hoboken: Wiley. 296-309.

<sup>3</sup> Stein, Leslie. 2014. *The Making of Modern Israel 1948-1967*. Hoboken: Wiley. 321-322.

indefinite language in the withdrawal clause. In the process of obtaining this result, the United States made clear to the Arab states and several other members of the Security Council that the United States envisioned only insubstantial revisions of the 1949 armistice lines. Israel did not protest the approach."<sup>4</sup> This purposeful manipulation of language, led by the United States, caused a misunderstanding between the nations the Resolution vaguely refers to, mainly Egypt, Syria, and Jordan, and Israel following the resolutions passing. Due to the nature of this misunderstanding, further negotiations were prevented from taking place to resolve the vagueness of the clauses. Egypt and Jordan accepted resolution 242 (1967) and considered Israeli withdrawal from all territories occupied in the 1967 war as a precondition to negotiations. Israel, which also accepted the resolution, stated that the questions of withdrawal and refugees could be settled only through direct negotiations with the Arab States and the conclusion of a comprehensive peace treaty. Syria rejected the Council action, maintaining that the resolution had linked the central issue of Israeli withdrawal to concessions demanded from Arab countries.<sup>5</sup> Egypt and Jordan thought that further negotiations would occur after Israel removed itself from the territories it claimed during the Six Day War, which included the previously mentioned West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Golan Heights, and Sinai Peninsula, due to their interpretation of the 242 Resolution. Since the Resolution does not state these territories and only vaguely refers to "the territories," Israel interpreted this to mean they did not have to withdraw from all the territories, or withdraw until negotiations had been made with Syria, Jordan, and Egypt. Since Syria did not

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<sup>4</sup> State Department Study of the Meaning of Resolution 242, by Nina J. Noring of the Office of the Historian, and Walter B. Smith II, Director of the Office of Israeli and Arab-Israeli Affairs, Department of State, *The Withdrawal Clause in UN Security Council Resolution 242 of 1967, Its Legislative History and the Attitudes of the United States and Israel since 1967*, February 4, 1978

<sup>5</sup> *The United Nations and the Question of Palestine*. (Brochure produced by the United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI) DPI/2157/Rev.1 - November 2002 - 50M) 1-4.

accept the Resolution, no negotiations could be made, further preventing Israel from justifying that any withdrawal action be taken on the grounds negotiations had not occurred.

It's also important to note at this point Palestine was not considered a State which restricted the rights and powers of the nation, and the United Nations made a point, specifically the United States of referring to the Palestinians as "refugees" despite this not being the proper definition for the period of time the manipulation began, which has continued to present day.

When examining this point there are several issues which arise: the definition of "refugee" at this time, the implications of the term "refugee" and addressing the Palestinians directly. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (the United Nations Refugee Agency), the definition of "refugee" was described at the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees in 1958, and reads as follows:

(1) Has been considered a refugee under the Arrangements of 12 May 1926 and 30 June 1928 or under the Conventions of 28 October 1933 and 10 February 1938, the Protocol of 14 September 1939 or the Constitution of the International Refugee Organization; Decisions of non-eligibility taken by the International Refugee Organization during the period of its activities shall not prevent the status of refugee being accorded to persons who fulfil the conditions of paragraph 2 of this section; (2) As a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and owing to well founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable

or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it. In the case of a person who has more than one nationality, the term “the country of his nationality” shall mean each of the countries of which he is a national, and a person shall not be deemed to be lacking the protection of the country of his nationality if, without any valid reason based on well-founded fear, he has not availed himself of the protection of one of the countries of which he is a national.<sup>6</sup>

It is important to note that on 5 October 1967 the geographical and temporal restrictions on the definition were removed allowing it to become universally inclusive preventing States from restricting the definition to only events occurring in Europe. Except that even prior to the removal of the restriction, according to the United Nations own definition of refugee at that time along with their lack of acknowledgement of Palestine, the Palestinians were not refugees. The definition above states in section two that a refugee must be “outside his own country...” which the Palestinians were not. Any acknowledgement stating otherwise would have to confirm that Palestine did exist, and was not a “land without a people” as it had been displayed to be by the media at that time, which would go back to the previous mentioned principle one section two of the 242 Resolution addressing the “respect for and acknowledgement of sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force.” Secondly, by not addressing the Palestinians directly or the violations against them, the Security Council is failing in its duties according to the United Nations Charter. In order to ensure prompt and effective action by the United Nations, its Members confer on the Security Council primary responsibility

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<sup>6</sup> United Nations. 2018. “Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees.” *UNHCR*. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Accessed March 17. <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/3b66c2aa10>.

for the maintenance of international peace and security, and agree that in carrying out its duties under this responsibility the Security Council acts on their behalf.<sup>7</sup> Since the Charter calls “to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained...” not addressing how the “refugee problem” will be solved does not do so. This reduces the Palestinians to a mere refugee problem rather than acknowledging that the Israeli government was effectively removing the Palestinians from their homeland in order to gain control of the area entirely.

This was the beginning of the continuous manipulation of language and media by the United States, as well as most of the Western world within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It’s important to examine this aspect of the history behind the conflict in order to consider not only the obvious stand point of the United States, but as well as to understand the frustration and mistrust which grew out of these actions. This only perpetuated further misunderstand for the media to latch onto. The concept of “people without a land” in reference to Palestinians is still common today as well as the idea of “refugee.” All of this exists despite their existence on their own territory up until the creation of Israeli by the British government. These concepts are the beginning of the continued manipulation that has occurred over the years not only in Eastern Europe but the United States as well.

### **Mass Media: Existence and Implications**

It’s important to examine and define what “media manipulation” is in our globalized

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<sup>7</sup>“Chapter V.” 2018. *United Nations*. United Nations. Accessed March 17. <http://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-v/index.html>.

community, before we can begin to understand it in the context of the Israeli Palestinian crisis. Media is defined by Webster's dictionary as the main means of mass communication such as broadcasting, publishing, and the Internet regarded collectively. It's important to note that mass media is different than media itself, due to the fact mass media is intended to reach a larger and broader audience often under more intensive pressure and time constraints. This means that more often than not, the language which is used is often simplified, limiting the context and backstory that is often needed in order to truly understand a situation such as a conflict that's stretched years and generations. The timeliness also impacts whether or not proper research was done on the conflict itself as well as whether or not experts in that particular subject or field were consulted prior to the issuing airing. One might argue that as long as the coverage is expanded upon later that it's simply the necessary loss in order to receive information in a timely manner, and the negative impacts would be minimal. However, research tells us otherwise.

When experiencing an issue with a conflict we have short-term and long-term positions within the conflict itself. Kepplinger, Brosius, and Stabb found that long-term value systems influence their positions on the issue in two ways. Firstly, value systems have a direct impact on the short-term positions on an issue. Secondly, value systems have an indirect impact on the positions of issues by influencing the recipients' selection of news media and thus the type and amount of news information they are exposed to. The type and amount of news influences how knowledgeable they are of the events related to the conflicts. The familiarity with these events influences their positions on the issues.<sup>8</sup> Over time short-term positions, when supported enough

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<sup>8</sup> Kepplinger, Hans Mathias, Hans-Bernd Brosius, and Joachim Friedrich Staab. "Opinion Formation In Mediated Conflicts And Crises: A Theory Of Cognitive–Affective Media Effects." *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 3, no. 2 (July 1, 1991): 132–56. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ijpor/3.2.132>.

by consumed media, then become long-term positions on the opinion of the conflict itself rather than the initial issue one had with the conflict. It's important to note that when an individual experiences value-based conflict it becomes intrapersonal because the individual feels this conflict goes against their personal beliefs despite their lack of involvement or impact in the conflict itself. Within intrapersonal conflict there are generally four types of conflict, the main focus in this scenario being intergroup conflict. Intergroup conflict is a disagreement or confrontation between two or more groups and their members, such as between work departments, entire companies, political parties, or nations. This may involve interpersonal discord, psychological tension, or physical violence. In many social species, intergroup conflict is a major factor affecting group-level movement patterns and space use and ultimately in shaping the evolution of group living and complex sociality.<sup>9</sup> This means that based on an existing conflict that an individual has an issue with or within the conflict itself, the individual then expands their knowledge to the entirety on the conflict and focuses on the group or groups involved rather than the issue within the conflict or the conflict itself. This is when ideas such as racism, xenophobia, and islamophobia begin to arise surrounding the conflict, which then further displaces the actual facts or context of the conflict from the media which is displaying it; only further perpetuated based on the media consumed which as previously stated is chosen based on the value system of the short-term position. A terrible but perfect example of this can be seen in Sweden shortly after the attacks made against the United States on 9/11. A survey conducted by Goran Larsson and published in 2010 discusses how mass media impacted the general public and how despite the fact that there were efforts after the initial airing to voice the condemnation by

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<sup>9</sup> "APA Dictionary of Psychology." American Psychological Association. American Psychological Association. Accessed March 10, 2020. <https://dictionary.apa.org/intergroup-conflict>.

the Muslim communities, they were collectively and instantaneously ignored.

The fact that all television channels, both national and international, showed the planes flying into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon over and over again may well have created a strong fear of Islam and a lot of hostility and aggression towards it in society generally. In relation to the findings of our survey, it seems that, even though the Muslim community in Sweden was separated in time and space from the events in the United States, it was still held responsible for these attacks by many. And even though they were just as shocking to most Muslims, a fact seldom if ever addressed in the general debate, many Muslims found themselves in the position of being forced either to condemn actions they had nothing to do with (or that they supported, for that matter), or to explain the “true” essence of Islam (namely that Islam is a peaceful and humane religion). In the end, most Muslims appear to have been made guilty by association, a fact that may well have had a strong impact on both the Muslim community and its image in society.<sup>10</sup>

This analysis directly correlates with the concept of individual versus group previously mentioned, as well as the implications of short-term position transitioning to a long-term position due to the fact these opinions of a group, rather than the conflict, still exist nearly twenty years later. This is what’s called collective or social memory which refers to the shared pool of memories, knowledge and information of a social group that is significantly associated with the group's identity. Memory is shaped by the interpersonal context in which it is encoded and retrieved, while it reciprocally shapes that situation.<sup>11</sup> The article goes on to argue the need for

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<sup>10</sup> Larsson, Göran. “The Impact of Global Conflicts on Local Contexts: Muslims in Sweden after 9/11 – the Rise of Islamophobia, or New Possibilities?” *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations* 16, no. 1 (October 10, 2010): 29–42. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0959641052000313228>.

<sup>11</sup> Kihlstrom, John F. “The Human Ecology of Memory: Social Memory.” *Principles of Learning and Memory*, April 7, 2015. <https://www.ocf.berkeley.edu/~jfkhlstrom/MemoryWeb/social/social.htm>.

more empirical data that can be analyzed and used for comparisons with other minority groups in Europe and the United States in order to avoid either positive or negative generalizations about Muslims and Islam in the West.<sup>12</sup> We can see this same pattern of implications clearly within the Israeli Palestinian conflict as well. Alison Weir, President for the Council of National Interest and Executive Director of If Americans Knew reflects on her own experience of this which began a year prior to 9/11. “My personal awakening to these facts and others began in the autumn of 2000 when the Palestinian uprising known as the Second Intifada began and was, for a while at least, in the American news. I grew curious about this conflict, determined to follow the news on it, and noticed quickly how one-sided the news coverage appeared to be. While we heard from and about Israelis frequently, the Palestinian side seemed to be largely glossed over at minimum, and was sometimes completely hidden.”<sup>13</sup> Much like how the repeated broadcasting of the towers being hit created a significant societal memory, the lack of acknowledgement and the negative portrayal of Palestine and Palestinians had a lasting effect.

### **Accountability: A Concept**

It’s also important to note that the timeliness of the conflict in mass media not only impacts the social memory and societies short and long term positions, but also the idea of accountability. Governments are accountable to the extent that the public is informed about their

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<sup>12</sup> Larsson, Göran. “The Impact of Global Conflicts on Local Contexts: Muslims in Sweden after 9/11 – the Rise of Islamophobia, or New Possibilities?” *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations* 16, no. 1 (October 10, 2010): 29–42. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0959641052000313228>.

<sup>13</sup> Weir, Alison. “American Media Distortion on Palestine.” *If Americans Knew*, May 2013. <https://ifamericansknew.org/media/distortion.html>.

policies. In turn, mass media ensure accountability by informing citizens about government conduct.<sup>14</sup> Now this branches into two separate ideas of thought in regards to the Israeli Palestinian conflict. On the one hand, you have the concept of accountability in regards to a globalized world; much like how an individual experiencing interpersonal group conflict holds the group accountable despite their lack of knowledge or involvement, due to our increasingly connected world individuals often do the same for other governments as well. Alongside this is the examination of their own nation's actions whether it is direct such as active military support and involvement, or indirect such as a lack of condemnation or action against such conflict. An individual's acknowledgement of this accountability stems still from their own short or long-term positions on the conflict which can directly impact their own governments response in order to avoid publicity. To minimize negative publicity, policy makers may strategically manipulate the timing of their unpopular actions to coincide with other important events that distract the mass media and the public.<sup>15</sup> This concept is not unknown in the Israeli Palestinian conflict and is an intentional choice made by military and government officials. A statement on June 4, 2002, by Major General Moshe Ya'alon, then the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) chief of staff designate and later defense minister of Israel, strongly suggests this is the case. Ya'alon stated, "This is first and foremost a war of ideology, and as such the media factor, the psychological impact of our actions, is critical. If we understand that a photograph of a tank speaks against us on CNN, we can take this into account in our decision as to whether or not to

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<sup>14</sup> Durante, Ruben, and Ekaterina Zhuravskaya. "Attack When the World Is Not Watching? US News and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict." *Journal of Political Economy* 126, no. 3 (2018): 1085–1133. <https://doi.org/10.1086/697202>.

<sup>15</sup> Durante, Ruben, and Ekaterina Zhuravskaya. "Attack When the World Is Not Watching? US News and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict." *Journal of Political Economy* 126, no. 3 (2018): 1085–1133. <https://doi.org/10.1086/697202>.

send in the tank.”<sup>16</sup> We can take this one step further and consider the implications of eventually choosing to send in the tank but manipulating the media to the point that there was no knowledge another tank was already there in the first place.

We can see this concept come to life when examining the historical and current relationship of the United States government and more specifically it’s mass media, and Israel. Israel’s founding was preceded by more than 50 years of efforts to establish a sovereign state as a homeland for the Jewish people. The 1917 Balfour Declaration asserted the British Government’s support for the creation “in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.”<sup>17</sup> This comes directly from the most recent bilateral fact sheet of the United States Department of State which recognizes the history of Israel’s creation but ignores the role of the United States, as well as its role in the failing of UN Resolution 242 previously addressed and the denial of Palestine’s existence despite it’s mentioning here. Again we see the lack of accountability as a direct result of the manipulation of fact within the media, specifically coming directly from the government itself. More importantly, it clearly states that Israel is the United States most reliable partner in the Middle East,<sup>18</sup> inferring that there is a misguided lack of trust between the United States and Arab nations. This again highlights the history of conflict in the Middle East as a direct result of Western involvement in the 1970’s. Arabs recoiled from a U.S.-brokered peace process that fortified Israel's occupation of Arab land. Americans grew increasingly resentful of

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<sup>16</sup> Durante, Ruben, and Ekaterina Zhuravskaya. “Attack When the World Is Not Watching? US News and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict.” *Journal of Political Economy* 126, no. 3 (2018): 1085–1133. <https://doi.org/10.1086/697202>.

<sup>17</sup> “U.S. Relations With Israel - United States Department of State.” U.S. Department of State. U.S. Department of State, May 14, 2018. <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-israel/>.

<sup>18</sup> “U.S. Relations With Israel - United States Department of State.” U.S. Department of State. U.S. Department of State, May 14, 2018. <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-israel/>.

Arab oil pressures, attitudes dovetailing with broader anti-Muslim sentiments aroused by the Iranian hostage crisis. At the same time, elements of the U.S. intelligentsia became more respectful of Arab perspectives as a newly assertive Arab American community emerged into political life. These patterns left a contradictory legacy of estrangement and accommodation that continued in later decades and remains with us today.<sup>19</sup> It's clear that the systematic denial of Palestine began years ago with the British Mandate, was then perpetuated by the United States, and continues to exist today. When this was then accompanied by a denial and ignorance of the opinions of other Arab nations based in said history, this makes it nearly impossible to change the narrative of the Palestinian Israeli crisis due to the established connotation of individuals long-term positions of the conflict, allowing manipulation to continue and the previously addressed concepts of racism, xenophobia, and Islamophobia to continue. So what exactly does this look like in the United States and Israeli media versus Palestinian media?

### **Google, Preferences and Limitations**

When examining media consumption it's important to note which particular form an individual is choosing due to the impact on their value systems, but each media also has specific limitations. Originally radio was the most consumed and popular form of broadcast before being surpassed by television in the 1950's. Both radios and televisions had similar limitations; they were expensive at the time of their creation not only for consumers but investors as well,

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<sup>19</sup> Yaqub, Salim. *Imperfect Strangers. Americans, Arabs, and U.S.-Middle East Relations in the 1970s*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016.

required electricity, and seen as a move away from traditional media such as newspapers.<sup>20</sup> As technology has continued to evolve and increase over the years, specifically social media, the Internet has come to rival television due to the ease of its accessibility, timeliness, and ability to tailor an individual's interests. However this does have its own limitations specifically due to the ability to tailor the information an individual chooses to consume, which is already often specified to their set value-system. When an individual signs onto Google this is taken one step further, with results being specifically altered in order to be more relevant for the reader and come from sources the reader repeatedly accesses through what's called search activity. Search activity helps give you more relevant results and recommendations by using the things you search for, results you click, and more.<sup>21</sup> This setting can be turned off at any point. However, when creating and signing onto a google account it is automatically on. This is taken one step further if the individual then changes what's called their Regional Settings which is automatically set to their current region and can only be adjusted by choice. These settings and restrictions transition over to Google Scholar as well. Although these may seem minute by changing these settings an individual's search results are greatly changed regardless of the topic being searched, but especially when consuming information on a conflict. Not only does the information on the current conflict change to be tailored to the political ideology of that particular region, including military action or loss of life, it also impacts the options of peace provided.

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<sup>20</sup> Strömberg, David. "Mass Media Competition, Political Competition, and Public Policy." *The Review of Economic Studies* 71, no. 1 (2004): 265-84. Accessed April 1, 2020. [www.jstor.org/stable/3700719](http://www.jstor.org/stable/3700719).

<sup>21</sup>"Manage Your Google Settings." Google Account Help. Google. Accessed April 1, 2020. <https://support.google.com/accounts/answer/3118621?hl=en>.

While conducting this research the Google settings and preferences used were reset and then tailored to the regions of the United States and Israel, before then being reset and tailored to the region of Palestine. At the beginning not only was the idea, option, and possibility of a one-state solution greatly diminished, the language used was increasingly negative in connotation, and records of loss of Palestinian life was nearly ignored, much like Historian Alison Weir had happen to her nearly twenty years ago.<sup>22</sup> Below are the findings and rhetoric used from multiple sources under the restrictions of the United States and Israel as region locations.

### **United States and Israel**

For nearly three decades, the so-called two-state solution has dominated discussions of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. But the idea of two states for two peoples in the territory both occupy was always an illusion, and in recent years, reality has set in. The two-state solution is dead. And good riddance: it never offered a realistic path forward.<sup>23</sup> This article begins with a very blatant denial of the United States role in the conflict's history, the fact that the United States helped create and manipulate the Resolution which solidified the two-state plan. The language of "territory" and "occupy" are vague and intentionally misleading much like the term refugee in reference to Palestinians in 242. Claiming it's a territory both states occupy ignores the fact Palestine existed prior to Israel's creation as a state by the British Mandate, as well as the

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<sup>22</sup> Weir, Alison. "American Media Distortion on Palestine." *If Americans Knew*, May 2013. <https://ifamericansknew.org/media/distortion.html>.

<sup>23</sup> Munayyer, Yousef. "There Will Be a One-State Solution." *Foreign Affairs*. *Foreign Affairs Magazine*, December 10, 2019. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/israel/2019-10-15/there-will-be-one-state-solution>.

resulting Six Day War which led to the seizure and thus “occupation” of Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip, which is still a militarized zone today currently under siege.

The idea of “a two state-solution” is subject to the same cross-cultural miscommunication as Resolution 242 and an example of how a lack of proper definition can impact the way in which an idea or action can grow after it’s mass broadcast, much like Muslim’s renunciation of the actions of 9/11 and the ideology it represented. To American ears, the meaning of “two states” is unambiguously straightforward. The struggle between Israel and the Palestinians, to them, is a struggle between two indigenous peoples fighting over the same space of land in which they share a history. A fair solution, then, would be one in which Israel is the state of the Jewish people, and alongside it will exist a separate Palestinian State.<sup>24</sup> This ignores the fact a two-state solution was already attempted by the Resolution itself, after attempts at coexistence failed. The two-state plan allowed for the manipulation of territory, with specific key locations such as Jerusalem as well as economic strongholds like the Gaza Strip, to be initially largely given to Israel before the Six Day War and the occupation solidified by the initial Resolution. The Palestinians who currently exist under this two-state solution under American views, have no right to return to their homes, despite the violation of human rights and are routinely restricted in their movements within the land. When asked their opinions of a “two-state solution” under this specific search restriction, Palestinians recognize the historical and current issues, and respond negatively. “To Palestinians on both sides of the green line, “two states” is a capitulation that would leave one small state, Palestine, for indigenous people, and one state, Israel, would be given to the oppressive foreign colonialists. From my extensive experience speaking with

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<sup>24</sup> Mandel, Eric R. “What Palestinians Mean When They Talk About A 'Two-State Solution'.” The Forward, September 4, 2018.  
<https://forward.com/subscribe/409555/what-palestinians-mean-when-they-talk-about-a-two-state-solution/>.

Palestinian leaders and laymen alike, I have come to learn that the Palestinian version of the two state solution leaves no room for a Jewish state.”<sup>25</sup> It’s important to note here however that this is not a direct quotation or concept of any particular Palestinian leader, is comes directly from Eric R. Mandel who is the director of MEPIN™. He regularly briefs Congress on issues related to the Middle East and is a columnist for the Jerusalem Post.<sup>26</sup> Even this singular sentence can be an example of cross-cultural media-manipulation because you have the improper representation of an idea, which claims to be a generalization of an entire group’s belief, being articulated by an individual outside of that group with a value system and self-interests for a particular side of the conflict. It’s easy to catch by examining one sentence in a particular article, especially considering the fact the alterations made to the search engine in order to find this article were known and intentional. However this one case of manipulation was known but consider if it hadn’t been and was examined on a larger scale the short-term position of this conflict would undoubtedly become a long-term position which was unknowingly misguided and one sided. These cases are often unrecognized and unknown, altering the opinion of an individual, but this isn’t something simply occurring in the present day. These cases are consistent with longer-term trends. A search of the last five years of the New York Times’ archives using the media aggregator Factiva finds 1,077 articles with the terms “Israel,” “Palestine” (and variants) and “two state solution.” Pairing “Israel,” “Palestine” and variants with “one state solution” yields 93 results. The same queries of the Washington Post produce 283 articles that mention the two-state

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<sup>25</sup> Mandel, Eric R. “What Palestinians Mean When They Talk About A 'Two-State Solution'.” The Forward, September 4, 2018.  
<https://forward.com/scribe/409555/what-palestinians-mean-when-they-talk-about-a-two-state-solution/>.

<sup>26</sup> Mandel, Eric R. “What Palestinians Mean When They Talk About A 'Two-State Solution'.” The Forward, September 4, 2018.  
<https://forward.com/scribe/409555/what-palestinians-mean-when-they-talk-about-a-two-state-solution/>.

solution and 18 with references to the prospect of one state. In the Wall Street Journal, the ratio is 595 to 20 for two states/one state.<sup>27</sup>

What is not mentioned in these articles however, is the fact that Palestine was recognized as a Non-Member Observer State in 2012 by the United Nations.<sup>28</sup> This essentially means that, regardless of the wishes of Israel or the United States which both voted against this action, a one-state solution is not the wish of the international community. It recognizes the distinction between Palestine and Israel as two separate sovereign entities, which calls for an acknowledgement of human rights and accountability. “The moment has arrived for the world to say clearly: enough of aggression, settlements and occupation,” said Mahmoud Abbas, President of the Palestinian Authority, as he called on the 193-member body to “issue a birth certificate of the reality of the State of Palestine”. Indeed, following Israel’s latest aggression against the Gaza Strip, the international community now faced “the last chance” to save the long elusive two-State solution, he said, adding: “the window of opportunity is narrowing and time is quickly running out”.<sup>29</sup> This rhetoric of “time running out” is continuous across each of the articles presented up to this point, despite the fact that Gaza has been occupied by Israel since 1967 militarily before being disengaged from occupation in 2005, however Israel still maintained control over the crossings into the area.<sup>30</sup> In autumn 2007 Israel declared the Gaza Strip under Hamas a hostile entity and approved a series of sanctions that included power cuts, heavily

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<sup>27</sup> Shupak, Gregory. “Burying the One-State Solution in Palestine/Israel.” FAIR, June 1, 2018. <https://fair.org/home/burying-the-one-state-solution-in-palestine-israel/>.

<sup>28</sup> “General Assembly Votes Overwhelmingly to Accord Palestine 'Non-Member Observer State' Status in United Nations | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases.” United Nations. United Nations, November 29, 2012. <https://www.un.org/press/en/2012/ga11317.doc.htm>.

<sup>29</sup> “General Assembly Votes Overwhelmingly to Accord Palestine 'Non-Member Observer State' Status in United Nations | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases.” United Nations. United Nations, November 29, 2012. <https://www.un.org/press/en/2012/ga11317.doc.htm>.

<sup>30</sup> Gradstein, Linda. “Last Israeli Troops Exit Gaza Strip.” NPR. NPR, September 12, 2005. <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4841877>.

restricted imports, and border closures. In January 2008, facing sustained rocket assaults into its southern settlements, Israel broadened its sanctions, completely sealing its border with the Gaza Strip and temporarily preventing fuel imports.<sup>31</sup> It's this violence that the United Nations referred to when voting on Palestine's acknowledgement of a state in 2012. However the blockade continued, in between brief negotiations for peace, despite this distinction between the two separate states which reinforced the fact that this blockade was and still is a form of occupation by Israeli military forces. In 2019 Israel allowed the flow of additional goods into and out of the territory, expanded the permitted fishing zone for Gazans to its largest extent in more than a decade, and began allowing thousands of Gazans to cross the border to work in Israel.<sup>32</sup> Despite these facts, the United States and Israel still believe in and advocate for a one-state solution as a way to end violence which is only perpetuated due to the denial of human rights and occupation of territories since the Six Day War. This is clear based on the overwhelming amount of articles over the last five years which advocate for a new two-state solution, despite Palestine's acknowledged existence as a sovereign state, without an acknowledgement of current conditions or the United State's role in the history behind the two-state solution and it's faults.

## **Palestine**

At this point it's important to remember that the information gathered up to this point was found by restricting searches to the United States as well as Israel. From this point on, data was

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<sup>31</sup> The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. "Blockade." Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., January 28, 2020. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Gaza-Strip/Blockade>.

<sup>32</sup> The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. "Blockade." Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., January 28, 2020. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Gaza-Strip/Blockade>.

cleared and the search was redefined to Palestine with the same option of search activity left on. Rather than show opposition to a one-state or two-state solution a majority of articles considered the reality that the argument at this point is obsolete, and the focus needs to be on the reality of the situation. Under the current occupation of Israel Palestinian's are being denied human rights. Whether the vision of a two-state solution lives or dies is still uncertain, although current trends are unfavourable to its long-term feasibility. What seems more certain at present, though, is that the actions of the United States and Israel are entrenching a one-state reality of unequal rights for Palestinians.<sup>33</sup> These articles go on to name the daily challenges that Palestinians particularly in Gaza face in their everyday lives including military onslaughts, segregated roads, curfews and imprisonment. This information is not prevalent in the articles found under the US or Israeli regions, with an exception to the Israeli controlled crossings into and out of Gaza. It's important to note that the United Nations has already deemed these actions, among others, to be a violation of human rights. An independent UN report into last year's protests along Gaza's border fence involving Israeli security forces, that resulted in the shooting deaths of more than 180 Palestinians, concluded on Thursday that there are "reasonable grounds" to believe Israel violated international humanitarian law.<sup>34</sup> It's also important to note that under the previous search restrictions, the main source that Google offered when searching 'Gaza blockade' was Wikipedia, and the search had to be refined to mention 'Gaza human rights violation' in order for the United Nations article to be found.

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<sup>33</sup> Lovatt, Hugh. "The Future of Palestine: Youth Views on the Two-State Paradigm." ECFR, May 28, 1970. [https://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary\\_the\\_future\\_of\\_palestine\\_youth\\_views\\_on\\_the\\_two\\_state\\_paradigm](https://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_the_future_of_palestine_youth_views_on_the_two_state_paradigm).

<sup>34</sup> "Gaza Probe Finds 'Reasonable Grounds' Israeli Forces Committed International Human Rights Violations | UN News." United Nations. United Nations, February 28, 2019. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/02/1033742>.

Another drastic finding was that when searching under the regional restriction of Palestine, more articles cited or had direct quotations from Palestinians themselves, as well as opinion polls. These opinions do not, of course, represent all Palestinian viewpoints, and there are certainly missing voices, including those of Islamists and refugees in neighbouring countries. The short pieces are nonetheless reflective of how many young Palestinians see the current situation. They provide an indication of the future direction of the Palestinian national movement. As such, they should be taken seriously by policymakers.<sup>35</sup> Despite the fact this information was coming from the European Council of Foreign Affairs, Hugh Lovett made it a point to simply comment on the opinions being presented while making Palestinians with occupations such as a writer, a human rights lawyer, or former adviser to the Prime Minister the focal point of the article itself.

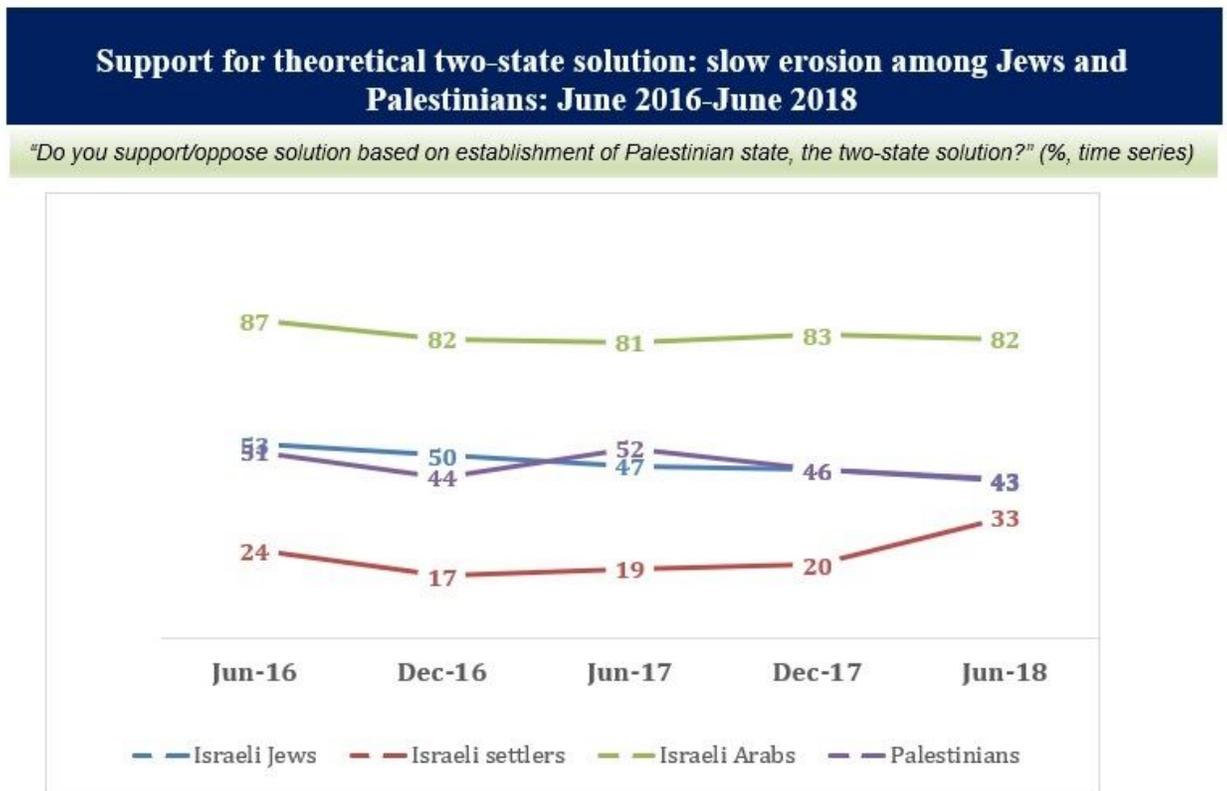
One of the most interesting articles that was presented under the Palestine regional restrictions presented a poll summary for a two-state solution or a one state solution, with three separate alternative options for peace called peace packages. Below are the graphs of responses along with a comparison to the same poll which was previously conducted in 2017 by the same group. The sampling size was a total of 3750 adults meaning that it meets the criteria for a population survey.

Two-state solution: In the current survey, only 43% of Palestinians and Israeli Jews support the concept of the two-state solution; 54% of Palestinians and 48% of Israeli Jews are opposed. Six months ago, 46% on each side supported this solution and a year ago, 52% of Palestinians and 47% of Israeli Jews supported it. In all cases, only the general principle was

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<sup>35</sup> Lovatt, Hugh. "The Future of Palestine: Youth Views on the Two-State Paradigm." ECFR, May 28, 1970. [https://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary\\_the\\_future\\_of\\_palestine\\_youth\\_views\\_on\\_the\\_two\\_state\\_paradigm](https://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_the_future_of_palestine_youth_views_on_the_two_state_paradigm).

provided. Among Israeli Arabs, support remains unchanged at 82%, bringing the total Israeli average to 49%. Support for this solution among Palestinians and Israeli Jews is the lowest during the past two years of the *Pulse*, the lowest in more than a decade, when a steady decline in support began, and the lowest in almost two decades of joint Palestinian-Israeli survey research. As seen in the graph below, among Jews, support for the two-state principle has seen an incremental but steady decline since June 2016, when it stood at 53%. Among Palestinians support has varied: it fell from June to December 2016, when 44% supported the basic two-state solution in principle, rose to 52% last June, then declined once again to 46% and continued to decline in the current poll. <sup>36</sup> The documentation of this shift can be viewed below.



<sup>36</sup> Azza. "Poll Summary: Palestinian-Israeli Pulse." PCPSR, August 12, 2018. <https://pcpsr.org/en/node/731>.

A modified package, similar in every respect to the original one described above, was presented to the other half of the sample. The modified version included three additional components that previous research showed to provide positive incentives to both sides: Israeli and the future state of Palestine will be democratic; the bilateral agreement will be part of a regional agreement along the lines of the Arab Peace Initiative; and the US and major Arab countries will insure full implementation of the agreement by both sides. In comparison with support for the original package, the modified one received greater support from both sides: 45% of Israeli Jews and 42% of Palestinians, a 6-point and a 5-point increase respectively. Among Israeli Arabs, support rose to 91%.<sup>37</sup> The graph for this data can be seen below comparing the original package to the modified version as well as previous years feedback in order to understand the shifts in opinion.

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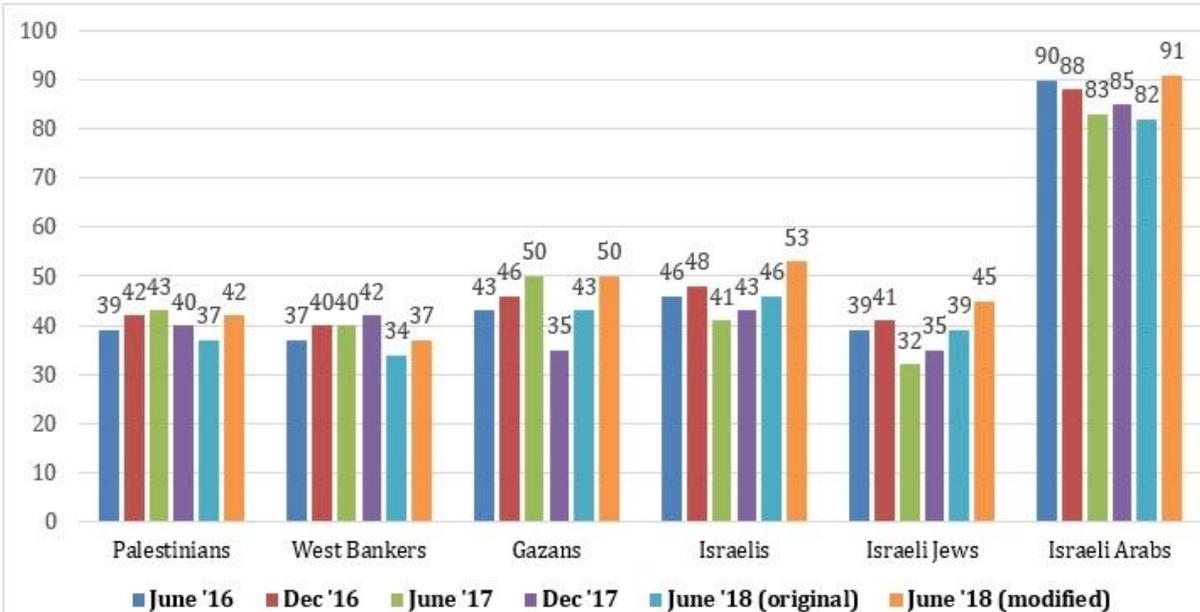
<sup>37</sup> Azza. "Poll Summary: Palestinian-Israeli Pulse." PCPSR, August 12, 2018. <https://pcpsr.org/en/node/731>.

### Israeli and Palestinian support for combined package: 2016-2018

A: original package

B: modified version of the package

*"After we went over main terms of two-state solution ... (demilitarization...equal territorial exchange, family unification/100,000 Palestinian refugees to Israel, E. Jm/Palestine, W. Jm/Israel, end of the conflict...support or oppose permanent settlement in general? (% "support")*



Not only does this data show that a two-state solution is possible in terms of getting the populace to agree, it's important to note that a key point in the modified version is an end to the violence and access to homes that have been occupied for the last thirty years. These two concepts have been prevalent in each of the articles mentioned under the search restrictions. However in order for either of these actions to occur, there has to be an acceptance of accountability and an acknowledgement of the Israeli occupation which has and continues to occur. In all of the articles presented up until this point under the regional distinctions, this was the first time a poll was conducted involving both Israelis and Palestinians, let alone a multi-part poll conducted over the last three years.

## Conclusion

As the world becomes increasingly globalized and technology becomes increasingly complex, the way in which we communicate will change. Much like how the newspaper lost to radio, and radio to television, at some point the Internet could be surpassed by something with just as many manipulative means. Within all of that, the knowledge and truth behind conflicts can be lost as well, which is why globalization needs to be considered. The United States has for the last century had enough hegemonic power to play a participating, if not key role in multiple conflicts around the world. Although an individual can view this as positive or negative, it's important to consider when and how those interests are communicated back to the people. Mass media in the United States is a corporate structure, and although freedom of speech exists, it is reliant on the ability to be heard. Although Google's regional and search activity settings may be intentionally beneficial, to an individual without the knowledge of them or how they work, the possibility for manipulation is endless. Mass media as a corporation is another issue in and of itself, however the manipulation of mass media impacts people's opinions of conflicts and the policies surrounding them. By having the basic knowledge of these obstacles, as well as how opinions are created in relation to our value-systems, an average individual has the ability to collect more well-rounded data and consider a conflict as a whole rather than the issue it presents to their value-system. Although this information cannot change the current state of Israeli or Palestinian, it can help enact a change in the continued policies, U.S. involvement, and dismissal of the conflict and its history.

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