

SERVING THE ZIONIST SCHEME, DISSEMINATING DISTORTED INFORMATION ABOUT ISLAMIC JERUSALEM

ABDUL NABI ISSTAIF, D. Phil. Oxon
Professor of Comparative Literature, Critical Theory and
Translation, University of Damascus

Discussing what he calls "The Postmodern Future" of "Orientalism", Ziauddin Sardar (1999) concludes his critical study of this controversial and problematic concept by stressing the fact that "orientalism is very much alive in contemporary cultural practice". Furthermore, he adds (1999: 107):

All of its main tropes have been seamlessly integrated into modernity. While it is not monolithic discourse, Orientalism does demonstrate a consistent character throughout history. It has different stylistic moments, diversity of opinions, changing fashions and emphasis. Nevertheless, it has reworked itself from one historical epoch to another, from the Middle Ages to the 'Age of Discovery' to the Enlightenment to colonialism to modernity, maintain conventional representations of 'the Orient' at the forefront of the European mind.

It has been, therefore, most natural that Orientalism as a cultural tradition to come, particularly since the 1960s of the 20th Century, under sustained and strong condemnation, from both the inside and the outside, for its role in contaminating East-West relationships with the virus of power, and the consequent widely spread colonisation of the Arab, Muslim and Third worlds that have taken place during the last two and a half centuries. Furthermore, since the publication of Edward Said's **Orientalism** in 1978, this powerful tradition has been critiqued, analysed, and

deconstructed on both side of the Atlantic and throughout the rest of the World. Yet Orientalism, in spite of its continued metamorphosis, is still alive and kicking, continuing its alliance with the new imperialist powers of the New Millennium, which is using "the War on International Terror" as an umbrella for its violation of the basic human rights and the international humanitarian law. Rather than attending to its failures and improving the quality of the knowledge it produces on the "Other", it is still imprisoned in its nineteenth century's ideas about the Orient which, in their view, is existed only, to use Said' words (2003: 206):

as a place isolated from the mainstream of European progress in the sciences, arts and commerce. Thus whatever good or bad values were imputed to the Orient appeared to be functions of some highly specialised Western interest in the Orient.

Yet most, if not all, Western scholars continue to speak about the Orient, to represent the Orient, to decide for the Orientals, and even advise their governments on how to determine their destiny, on the ground that "***we know them better than they know themselves, and we can, therefore, choose what is best for them***".

To add insult to the injury, they continue to talk about the qualities and standards of knowledge which modern scholars should produce, pointing to what they claim the failure of their Oriental counterparts to attain these qualities and meet these standards, because of their inherent backwardness. They insist that knowledge should enlighten peoples about each other, and consequently remove enmity from their interrelationships. Yet the knowledge they produce feeds this enmity, and even worsens relationship between East and West. They emphasise that knowledge should help peoples in their endeavour to reach the truth about themselves, about other peoples and the world. Yet they distort the very knowledge they produce and manipulate the same data they have in order to serve the extra-scholarly objectives of some extremist political establishments, and even support some racist, anti-humanist, and criminal agenda of the state terror practiced by certain powers of the New Millennium.

They stipulate that knowledge should be objective, and scholars should be neutral in handling the information available to them. Yet they never hesitate to get involved in the political agenda of some conflicting parties in a volatile area such as the Middle East. They warn scholars against taking anything for granted when they consider any issue, advising them to amass all the data, information and facts possible before they pass any judgment. Yet they ignore deliberately the relevant facts and take the historically distorted and politically motivated actions of an occupying force and their crimes against humanity as ordinary and accepted reality. They proclaim that scholarship should be put at the service of human race. Yet they put the knowledge they produce at the service of Satanic power and consequently helping in destroying the life of innocent people who have to endure the tragic suffering of living under the only occupation in the world for the last sixty years.

This paper is an attempt to show the most regrettable practice of the **National Geographic Society** of the USA in its recent publication ***National Geographic Atlas of the Middle East***, Second Edition, (Washington, DC, nd.), which ignores the most basic facts of the history, geography, and living reality of the area it claims to enlighten the English Speaking public (standing now at two billion people, using English at our world) about it, being, in the Society's own words, the "the pivot point for our global future". In fact, by doing so, ***The National Geographic Society*** put its expertise, unjustly and unwisely too, at the service of the Zionist State by including the Islamicjerusalem in all relevant maps of the Atlas as an integral part of the Israeli Capital. In other words, "the largest non-profit scientific and educational organization in the world", which supposed to enlighten its wide-spread readership, (***The National Geographic Society*** reaches more than 285 million people worldwide each month through its various publications) is actually supporting the annexation of the occupied Arab city, and consequently contravening international law.

Before presenting the subtle way through which ***The National Geographic Society*** (NGS) goes about this unwarranted, unjustifiable and dishonourable task, one should draw the

attention of the readers to two important facts that pertain to the discussion of this malpractice of the (NGS). The first fact is the role of Geography as a field of study in the Western Colonisation of the Third World, particularly the Arab Orient, for (Said, 2003: 216):

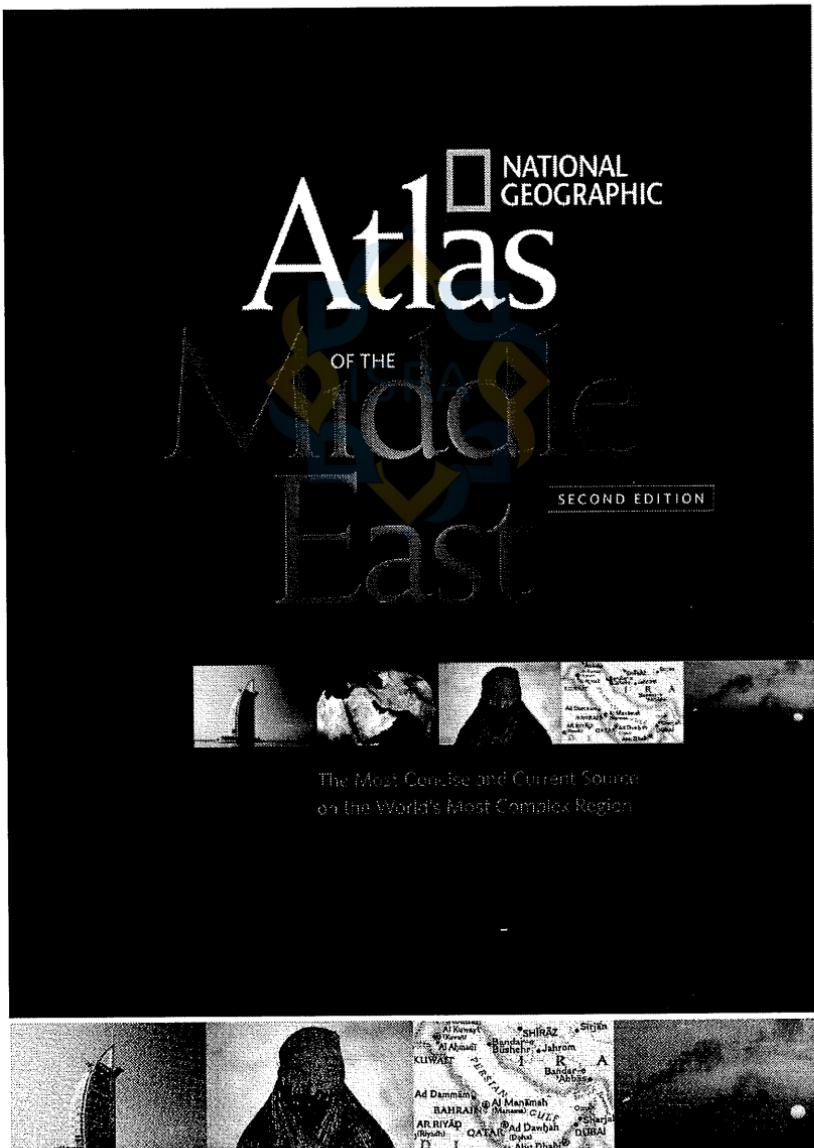
Geography was essentially the material underpinning for knowledge about the Orient. All the latent and unchanging characteristics of the Orient stood upon, were rooted in, its Geography.

The second fact is that the present Middle East is the creation of Western powers. Its borders were drawn in the offices of the British and French Ministries of Foreign Affairs. Thus "as a result of World War I, Asiatic Turkey was being surveyed by Britain and France for its dismemberment" (Said, 2003: 223), which was accomplished by 1918 in accordance with the Anglo-Franco-Russian agreement (Sykes-Pico Agreement, April – May, 1916), placing the historical Palestine, including Jerusalem of course, under the direct British rule in order to facilitate the creation of Jewish national home, as was promised in Balfour Declaration¹. In the words of the great expert on the Middle East, Albert Hourani (1991: 318),

After the war ended, the Treaty of Versailles set down that the Arab countries formerly under Ottoman rule could be provisionally recognised as independent, subject to the rendering of assistance and advice by a state charged with the "mandate" for them, which determined the political fate of the countries. Under the terms of the mandates, formally granted by the League of Nations in 1922, Britain would be responsible for Iraq and Palestine and France for Syria and Lebanon.

Turning now to the way the *Atlas* presents its information on Jerusalem throughout its pages and maps, one can refer to the following points. The *Atlas* prepares the reader for its biased stand in support of the Israeli annexation of the city right from the beginnings of the book and throughout its pages. To begin with the front cover, we can easily notice that the *Atlas* uses the logo of *the National Geographic Society* in order to impose its authority as a trustworthy mark on its readers, highlighting the fact that the *Atlas* is in its **Second Edition**, thus giving the impression that the *Atlas* is doing very well on the market, and is, therefore,

worth buying. Finally, by printing carefully selected photos on its front cover, the *Atlas* projects a particular vision of the area which appeals to, and attracts the attention of its western readers. Adding the Sudan, Pakistan and Afghanistan, on the ground of their recent problems, which are closely connected with the above features of this turbulent area (see the figures below).



- State-of-the-art maps detail the geographical, political, and thematic aspects of every country and of major cities.
- Newly updated and expanded political maps of countries and regions reflect important, recent changes.
- Thematic spreads cover topics fundamental to understanding the region, such as urbanization, religion, ethnic groups, oil, water, food, and climate.
- New comprehensive conflict section explains regional struggles in areas such as Iraq, Sudan, and the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
- Expanded historical maps and time lines provide a more detailed look at the region's history.

CROSSROADS OF FAITH AND CONFLICT, the Middle East has become the pivot point for our global future. What happens here — ethnic violence, geopolitical discord, and clashes over oil, water, and land — sends shock waves throughout the rest of the world. With maps, graphics, illustrations, and thought-provoking essays, this newly updated atlas — now expanded to include Sudan, Pakistan, and Afghanistan — brings this turbulent arena into sharp and understandable focus.

Back cover, left: Promising the reader the necessary information which will help in understanding the problems stated. Right: Setting the tone; highlighting the Questions of Ethnic violence, Geopolitical discord, Clashes over oil, water, and land.

The geographical piece of information is presented in the Atlas in different places and within different context in order to consolidate its presence in the consciousness of the reader (see the figures).

Israel

STATE OF ISRAEL



In 1897 the Zionist Congress (in Basle) authorized a Jewish flag. Its blue stripes recalled the traditional Jewish prayer shawl. The Shield of David for centuries had been associated with Israel. With independence in 1948 the flag was officially recognized.

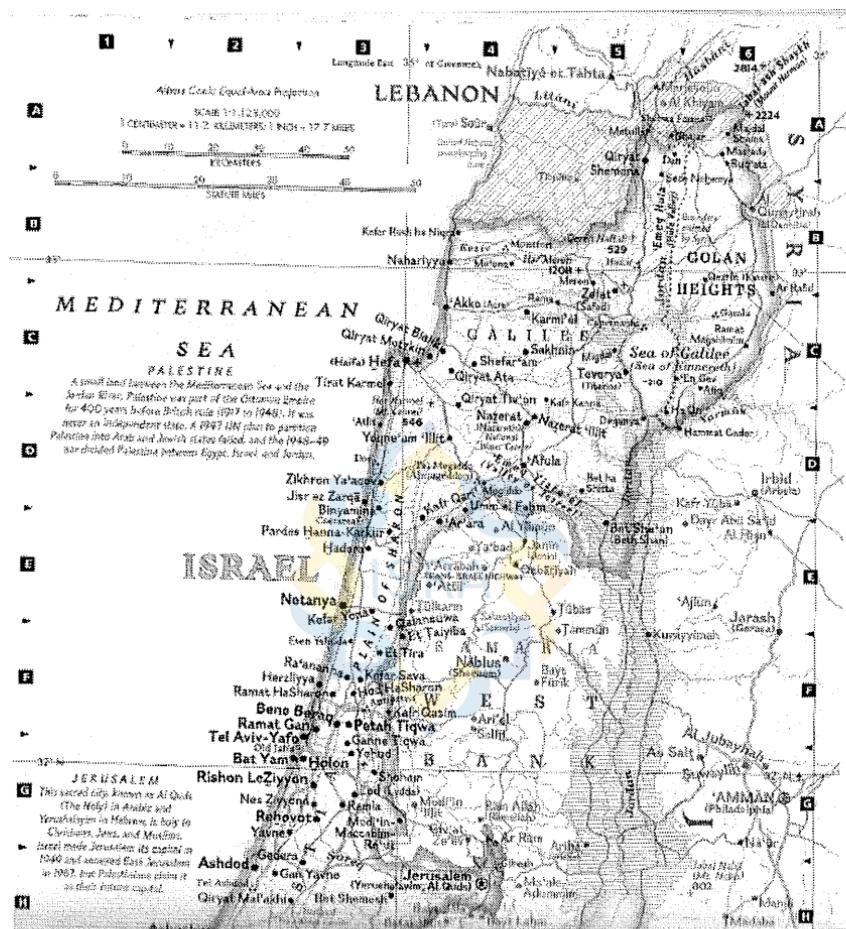
AREA 22,145 sq km (8,550 sq mi)

POPULATION 7,347,000

DEMONYM Israeli(s)

CAPITAL Jerusalem 711,000

Page 36: The Basic facts taken for granted, including the capital of the country- Jerusalem



OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES: WEST BANK AND GAZA STRIP

AREA	West Bank: 5,655 sq km (2,183 sq mi); Gaza Strip: 365 sq km (141 sq mi)
POPULATION	West Bank: 2,697,000; Gaza Strip: 1,444,000
ETHNICITY	West Bank:  Gaza Strip: 
RELIGION	West Bank: Muslim 75% (mostly Sunni), Jewish 17%, Christian and other 8%; Gaza Strip: Muslim 100% (mostly Sunni)
LANGUAGE	Arabic, Hebrew (spoken by Israeli settlers and many Palestinians), English (widely understood)
LITERACY	92.4%
LIFE EXPECTANCY	72 years
GDP PER CAPITA	West Bank: \$1,100; Gaza Strip: \$600
CRUDE OIL RESERVES	None or negligible
ECONOMY	IND: generally small family businesses that produce cement, textiles, soap, olive-wood carvings, and mother-of-pearl souvenirs; the Israelis have established some small-scale, modern industries. AGR: olives, citrus, vegetables; beef, dairy products. EXP: olives, fruit, vegetables, limestone, citrus.
AREA COMPARISON	The Occupied Palestinian Territories together encompass 0.08% of the 48 contiguous United States; an area slightly larger than Delaware.

Page 62: No reference to the occupying neighbouring state: the passive verb should be enough. The Israeli settlers speak Hebrew, a language which they share with many Palestinians.

Jerusalem, Israel

AT A GLANCE

POPULATION 711,000

CITY ELEVATION 800 meters
2,625 feet

LATITUDE 31° 47' N

LONGITUDE 35° 14' E

TEMPERATURE

Average Daily Jan. 55°/41°F

High/Low (13°/5°C)

July 88°/63°F

(31°/17°C)

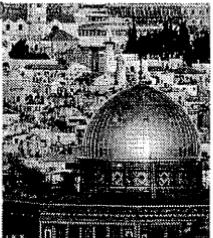
RAINFALL

Average Jan. 5.5

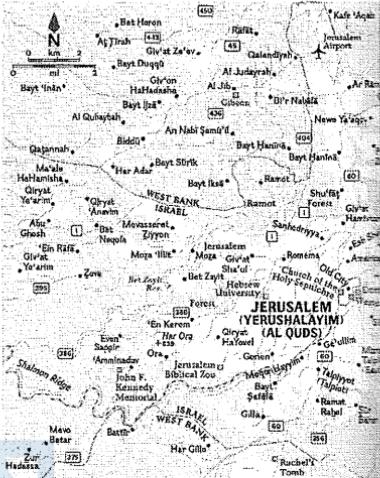
Monthly inches July 0.0

TIME ZONE +2 hours UTC

MAJOR INDUSTRIES: Tourism, diamond-cutting, electronic equipment, wood, furniture, paper and printing, textiles, service-based industries.



Medieval cartographers located Jerusalem at the center of the world, and in the eyes of many of the Old City remains so. For Jews, the Western Wall of the Second Temple is the holiest site. Above it is the Dome of the Rock, third holiest site in Islam, commemorating the place where Muhammad ascended to heaven. A few blocks away the Church of the Holy Sepulchre marks the traditional site where Jesus was crucified, entombed, and resurrected. Israel claims the city as its eternal capital; Palestinians assert that East Jerusalem should be the capital of their independent state.



Page 68: Jerusalem is followed by Israel - a statement with a qualification stated in small print. But there is no reference to the occupying party. "Israel claims the city as its eternal capital". "The Palestinians asserts that East Jerusalem should be the capital of their independent state". However, the reality is quite different- Jerusalem is the actual and "eternal capital" of Israel, and is the gradually vanishing capital of the Palestinians.



United Kingdom, ca 935 B.C.

According to the Bible, Joshua led the Israelites into lands west of the Jordan River, where they routed the Canaanites but failed to win Gaza from the Philistines. King David expanded Israel and moved his capital to the conquered Jebusite city of Jerusalem. There his son Solomon built the first Temple of the Lord.



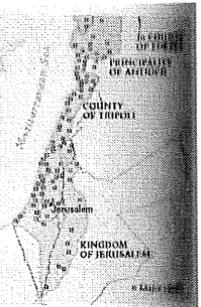
Divided Kingdoms, ca 840 B.C.

Solomon's son Rehoboam was unable to prevent internal issues from dividing the kingdom of his forefathers. As Israel and Judah weakened, their sphere of influence diminished. Israel fell to the Assyrian Empire in 722 B.C. The Kingdom of Judah was finally conquered in 586 B.C. by Nebuchadnezzar of the Babylonian Empire. As each Hebrew kingdom collapsed many Jews were deported from their homeland.



Roman Empire, A.D. 135

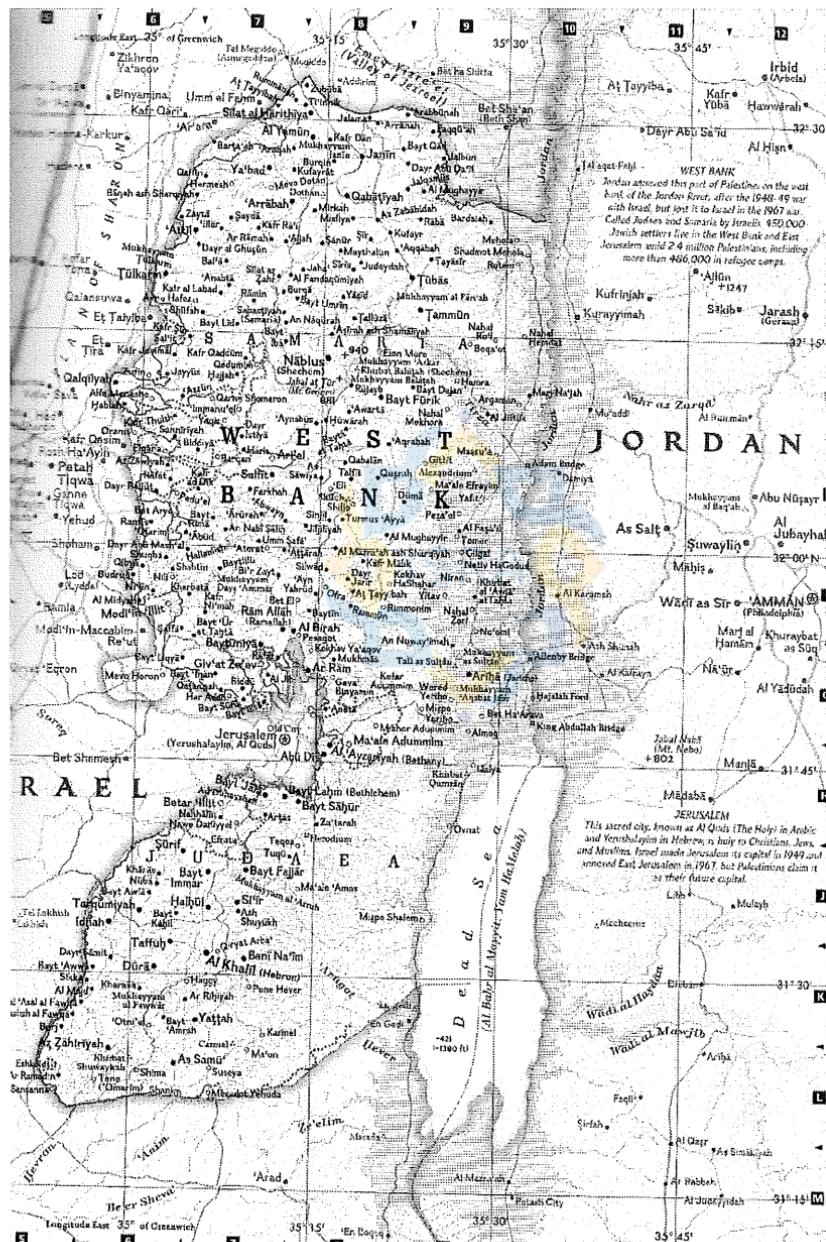
Rome administered this land as a provincial backwater, content to leave Judea to the governance of local puppet monarchs. But when anti-Roman anger exploded in the Jewish Revolt of 66, the empire came down hard. Roman legions crushed the rebels, and some Jews were dispersed. After the Bar Kochba revolt in 132, Rome deported the remaining Jews, renaming the region Palestina, for the Philistine people who predated them.



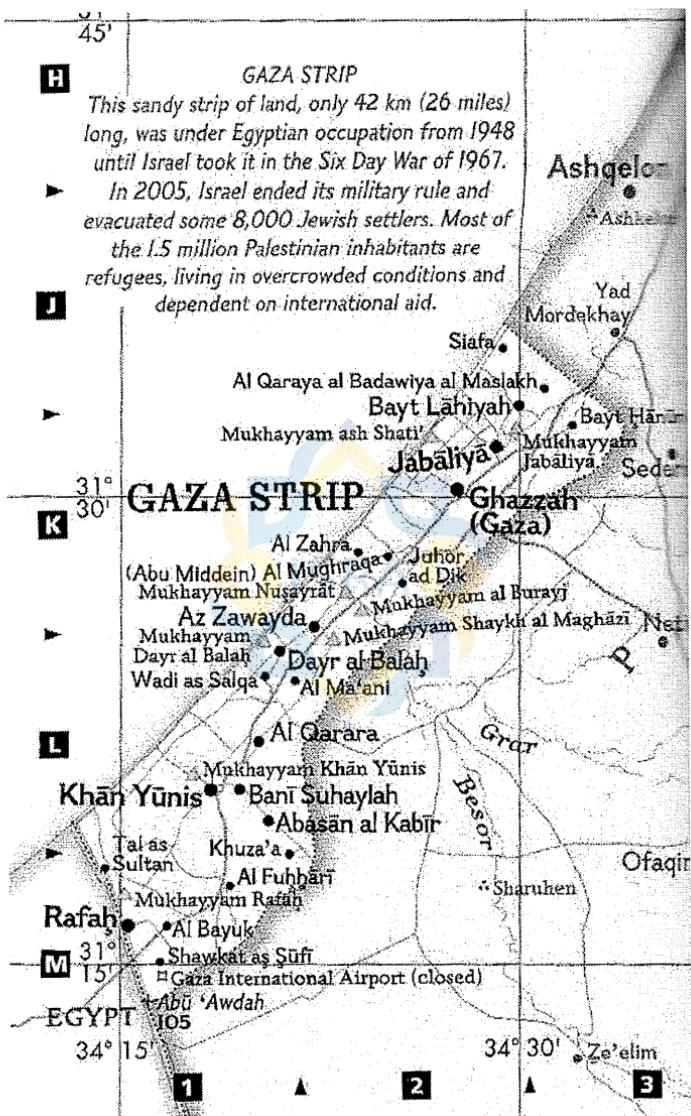
Crusader States, 1140

Launched to regain the Holy Land for Christians, the First Crusade besieged and conquered Jerusalem in 1099. Several Crusader states, which suffered constant attacks, were established in the Eastern Mediterranean. Once the Crusaders defeated their most impending enemy (the Mongols) in 1260, they fought their Muslim army on the Crusader states, the last of which fell in 1291.

Page 98: The Zionist narrative is the dominant narrative in the story or rather the history of Palestine. Jerusalem is always within the boundaries of the Jewish domain. Judea and Samaria, not the West Bank, are on the map.



Page 63: Again and again: Jerusalem always within the Zionist domain.



Page 62: the Gaza Strip was under Egyptian occupation until 1967. Israel ended its military rule in 2005, and evacuated the 8,000 settlers. The one and a half million Palestinians are refugees, but there is no reference to their original home. They are refugees in their home country.



March 1979: Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, left, U.S. President Jimmy Carter, center, and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin clasp hands on the north lawn of the White House as they complete the signing of the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel.



September 1993: Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, left, and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, right, shake hands as U.S. President Bill Clinton presides over the ceremony marking the signing of the peace accord between Israel and the Palestinians on the White House lawn.



November 2007: U.S. President George W. Bush, center, looks on as Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, left, and Palestinian National Authority President Mahmoud Abbas shake hands at the U.S. Naval Academy during the Annapolis Conference in Maryland.

Page 99: Everybody is happy, with the American Presidents bringing peoples together to smile for the photo times.

Israeli-Palestinian Diplomacy and Proposals

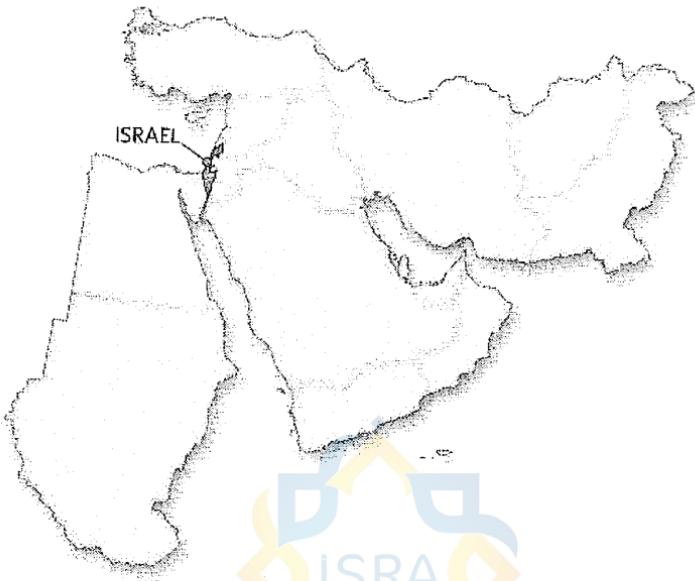
1937	Peel Commission
1947	United Nations Partition Plan
1949	Armistice Agreements
1967	Allon Plan
1970	Rogers Plan
1973	Geneva Conference
1978	Camp David Accords
1979	Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty
1991	Madrid Conference
1993	Oslo Accords
1994	Israel-Jordan Treaty of Peace
2000	Middle East Peace Summit at Camp David
2001	Taba Summit
2002	The Israeli Initiative (Elon Peace Plan)
2003	Road Map for Peace
2003	Geneva Accord
2005	Sharm el Sheikh Summit
2007	Annapolis Conference

Page 99: Promises and dates, but nothing has changed so far in the dreadful conditions of the Palestinians, except the fact that everything has deteriorated.

The *Atlas* solicits the sympathy of its reader for the Israeli position by comparing the size of the Zionist state to those of the UAS and the entire Middle East (see the figures below).

AREA COMPARISON Israel encompasses 0.28% of the 48 contiguous United States; an area approximately the size of Massachusetts.



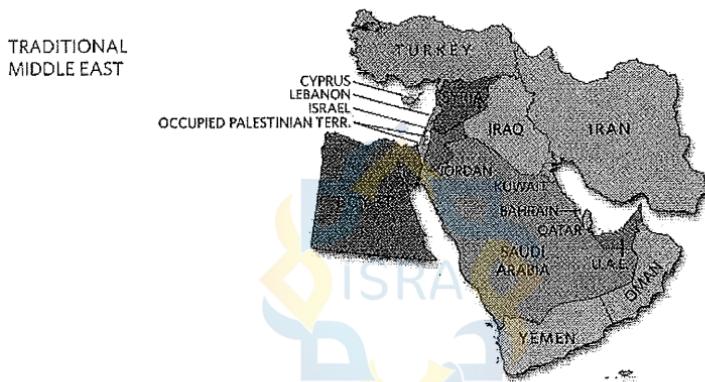


Pages 36 and 37: Israel is too small a country and, therefore, should not be squeezed by its Arab neighbours

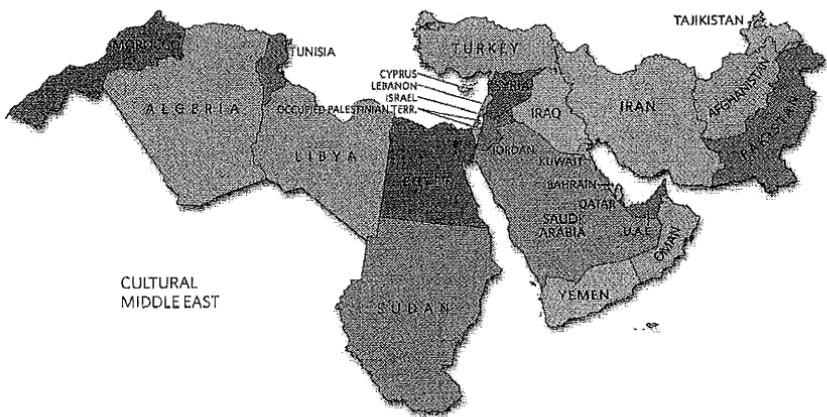
This geographical piece of information is, as a matter of fact, contradicts:

1. The facts of history and geography of the Middle East²;
2. The United Nations resolutions³ which emphasise that East Jerusalem is an integral part of the occupied territories which seized by the Zionist State in 1967;
3. The International Law⁴ which outlawed the annexation of other people's land by force.
4. The American official stand with respect to the status of Jerusalem and its being part of the occupied territories seized by the Zionist State in 1967. In fact the USA continues to oppose the Israeli act of annexing the city and postpone the moving of its Embassy from Tel Aviv;
5. The Israel negotiating position which talks all the time about the fate of East Jerusalem as an item in the agenda of final settlement of conflict between the Palestinians and the Israelis.

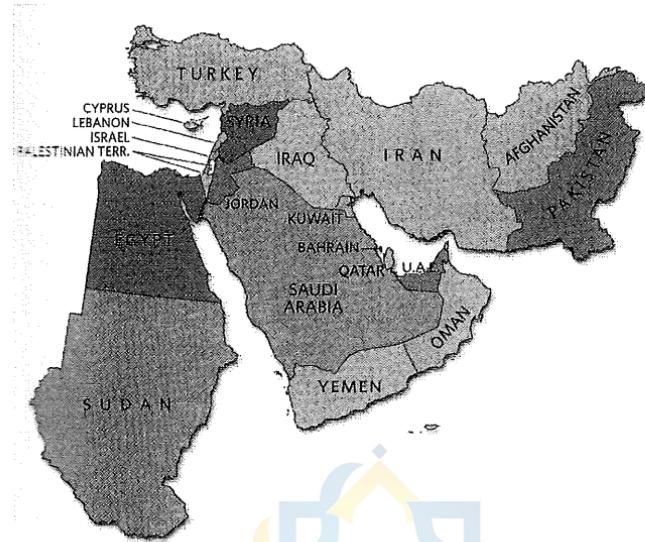
Finally one should draw the attention of the user of this most widely used *Atlas* to two extremely important failures. The *Atlas* fails to identify the criteria according to which it defines the Middle East, although its definition is not compatible with even the definition adopted by the *MESA: the Middle East Studies Association of North America*, or with "*the Greater Middle East*", newly defined by the USA Administration in order to serve its decaled War on International Terror (see the figures below).



Page 10: The Traditional Middle East



Page 10: The Cultural Middle East



Page 11: The National Geographic Middle East

The *Atlas* ignores, or rather excludes, the views of other parties involved in the conflict, namely the Palestinians, the Arabs, the Muslims and Christians (see the figure below).

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

Published by the National Geographic Society
John M. Fahey, Jr.
President and Chief Executive Officer

Gilbert M. Grosvenor
Chairman of the Board

Tim T. Kelly
President, Global Media Group

Nina D. Hoffman
Executive Vice President; President,
Book Publishing Group

PREPARED BY THE BOOK DIVISION
Kevin Mulvey
Senior Vice President and Publisher

Marianne R. Koszorus
Director of Design

Staff for This Atlas:

PROJECT EDITOR AND
DIRECTOR OF MAPS
Carl Mehler

MAP EDITORS
Nicholas P. Rosenbach Supervisor
Laura Exner, Steven D. Gardner,
Thomas L. Gray, David B. Miller

MAP RESEARCH
Matt Chmielewski, Steven D. Gardner,
Gregory Uglansky, and XNR Productions

MAP PRODUCTION MANAGER
Matt Chmielewski

MAP PRODUCTION

John S. Ballay, Steven D. Gardner,
Michael McKey, Tibor G. Tolh,
Gregory Uglansky, and XNR Productions

SENIOR GEOGRAPHER
David B. Miller

BOOK DESIGN
Marty Itiner

TEXT EDITORS
Victoria Garrett Jones, Judith Klein

PHOTO COORDINATOR
Rob Waymouth

MANAGING EDITOR
Jennifer A. Thornton

PRODUCTION DIRECTOR
Gary Colbert

MANUFACTURING AND
QUALITY MANAGEMENT
Christopher A. Lisicki
Chief Financial Officer

Philip L. Schlosser
Vice President

Chris Brown
Director

Reproduction by Quad/Graphics,
Altona, Illinois USA

Printed and Bound by Worrell,
Stamford, Connecticut USA



Founded in 1888, the National Geographic Society is one of the largest nonprofit scientific and educational organizations in the world. It reaches more than 265 million people worldwide each month through its official journal, *National Geographic*, and its four other magazines, the National Geographic Channel; television documentaries; radio programs; films; books; videos and DVDs; maps; and interactive media; National Geographic has funded more than 8,000 scientific research projects and supports an education program combating geographic illiteracy.

For more information, please call 1-800-NGS LINE (647-5436) or write to the following address:
National Geographic Society
1145 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20036-4688 U.S.A.

Visit us online at:
www.nationalgeographic.com/books

For information about special discounts for bulk purchases, please contact
National Geographic Books Special Sales:
ngebooksales@ngs.org

For rights or permissions inquiries, please contact
National Geographic Books Subsidiary Rights:
nghubrights@nra.org

ISBN 978-1-4262-0221-6

Copyright © 2009, 2008 National Geographic Society. All rights reserved. Reproduction of the whole or any part of the contents without written permission from the publisher is prohibited.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available upon request.

This article was presented in the 12th international academic conference on Islamicjerusalem studies (Orientalist approaches to Islamicjerusalem) that was held at SOAS, University of London on 6 November 2010.

Bibliography

Hourani, Albert (1991) *A History of the Arab People* (New York: Warner Books).

Said, Edward W. (2003) *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Books).

Sardar, Ziauddin (1999) *Orientalism* (Buckingham: Open University Press).

The Middle East and North Africa 1987 (London: Europa Publication Limited, 1986).

الشناق، فاروق صبيتان (2010) "القدس في قرارات الشعوبية الدولية"، *عالم الفكر* (الكويت) المجلد 38، العدد 4، أبريل - يونيو، 2010، ص 259-509.

قاسمية، خيرية (2009) "قضية القدس أمام الجمعية العامة و مجلس الأمن" ، في: *قضية القدس* (المطبعة العامة السورية للكتاب، دمشق)، ص 144-169.

¹ Although the declaration states that "His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object", it also stipulates that "it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country". See the full text of Balfour Declaration in: "Documents on Palestine", in *The Middle East and North Africa 1987* (Europa Publication Limited, London, 1986), P. 68.

² See David Gilmour and Paul Harper "The Jerusalem Issue", Based on an original article by Michael Adams, in: *The Middle East and North Africa 1987*, (Europa Publication Limited, London, 1986), Pp. 63-66.

³ See: The UN General Assembly Resolution on the Internationalization of Jerusalem, 9 December 1949, which states that:
"Jerusalem should be placed under a permanent international regime, which should envisage appropriate guarantees for the protection of the Holy Places, both within and outside Jerusalem, and to confirm specifically the following provisions of General Assembly resolution 181 (II): (1) The City of Jerusalem shall be established as a corpus separatum under a special international regime and shall be administrated by the United Nations; (2) The Trusteeship Council shall be designated to discharge the responsibilities of the Administering Authority.; and (3) The City of Jerusalem shall include the present municipality of Jerusalem plus

the surrounding villages and towns, the most eastern of which shall be Abu Dis; the most southern, Bethlehem; the most western, Ein Karim (including also, the built-up area of Motsa); and the most norther, Shu'fat, as indicated on the attached sketch map".

The UN Security Council Resolution on Jerusalem, 25 October 1971, which states that the Council:

(3) "Confirms in the clearest possible terms that all legislative and administrative actions taken by Israel to change the status of the City of Jerusalem, including expropriation of land and properties, transfer of populations and legislation aimed at the incorporation of the occupied section, are totally invalid and cannot change that status.

(4) Urgently calls upon Israel to rescind all previous measures and actions and to take o further steps in the occupied section of the City, or which would prejudice the rights of the inhabitants and the interests of the international community, or a just and lasting peace.

UN Security Council Resolution on Israeli settlements, 1 March 1980, which states that the Council is:

"Deeply concerned over the practices of the Israeli authorities in implementing that settlement policy in the occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem, and its consequences for the local Arab and Palestinian population", and that it

(5) Determines that all measures taken by Israel to change the physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure of status of the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, or any part thereof, have no legal validity and that Israel's policy and practices of settling parts of its population and new immigrants in those territories constitute a flagrant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the protection of civilian persons in time of war and also constitute a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East,

(6) Strongly deplores the continuation and persistence of Israel in pursuing those policies and practices and calls upon the Government and people of Israel to rescind those measures to dismantle the existing settlements and in particular to cease, on an urgent basis, the establishment, construction and planning of settlements in the Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem.

(7) Calls upon all states not to provide Israel with any assistance to be used specifically in connection with settlements in the occupied territories",, in "Documents on Palestine", in *The Middle East and North Africa 1987*, (Europa Publication Limited, London, 1986), pp. 67-86.

⁴ نظر: د. فاروق صيانت الشناق، "القدس في قرارات الشرعية الدولية"، عالم الفكر (الكويت) المجلد 38، العدد 4،

أبريل-يونيو، 2010م، ص ص 259-509. وانظر كذلك: د. خيرية فارسية، "قضية القدس أمام الجمعية العامة

ومجلس الأمن"، في: قضية القدس (المطبعة العامة السورية للكتاب، دمشق 2009م)، ص ص 144-169.