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Intelligence Memorandum

Proposals for Resolving the Status of Jordan's West Bank

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
1 November 1973

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Proposals for Resolving the
Status of Jordan's West Bank

Introduction

This paper presents background information on the Israeli-occupied West Bank of Jordan and outlines some of the many proposals that have been put forward for the resolution of its problems. Some new proposals are also presented. Implementation of any of these plans, old or new, would pose delicate questions for US policy--none of which is treated in the paper.

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Background

Physical Setting. Jordan's West Bank is a hilly area about 130 kilometers long and 50 kilometers wide (80 by 30 miles). A north-south ridge line about 20 kilometers (12 miles) west of the Jordan River parallels the valley and forms the Mediterranean - Jordan Valley drainage divide. To the east, rough, barren slopes descend to the valley through which the Jordan River meanders in a 100-kilometer (62-mile) course (all below sea level) from Lake Tiberias (Sea of Galilee) to the Dead Sea, the lowest point on earth. West of the divide are the less abrupt, more fertile slopes that overlook the ten-mile-wide Israeli coastal plain.

The scant rainfall on the eastern slope, some 100 to 250 millimeters (4 to 10 inches) per year supports only a semi-desert complex of scattered thorn-bush; there are no non-irrigated crops. The western slope, although not quite a desert, is also dry country despite an annual rainfall of 510 to 760 millimeters (20 to 30 inches). Virtually all the rain falls between October and March and there are no permanent streams; much of the water supply for the long summer thus depends upon wells and springs.

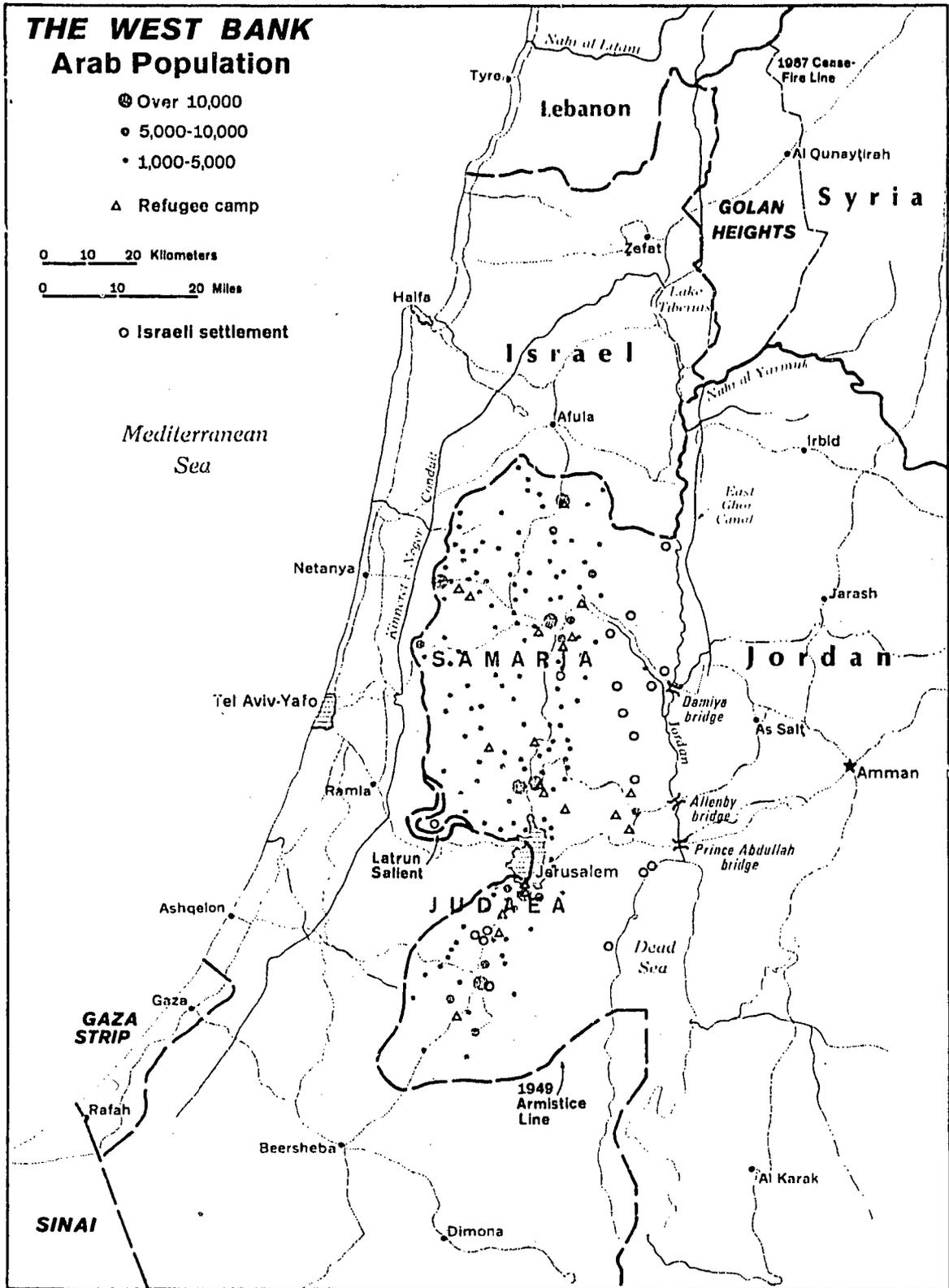
Although the western slope is the "richest" part of Jordan in terms of agriculture, it is a food deficient area. Agricultural experts estimate that the West Bank's 2,100 square kilometers (825 square miles) of cultivable land can support a population of some 370,000. At this time, the total population of natives and refugees is something over 630,000 persons.

Historical Setting. After centuries of Turkish rule, control over the West Bank was passed to the British in 1920 as part of the League of Nations mandate of Palestine.

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[redacted] Beginning with the 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement--a series of exchanges between Great Britain, France, and Russia--many plans for the carving up of the mandate were submitted. (A few of the better known are shown on the map at the end of the text.) Although varied, they had certain elements in common. Nearly all, including the Jewish Agency Proposal of 1946, assign what is now the West Bank to the Palestinians, but all made their assignments without consulting the Palestinians. The 12th of President Wilson's 14 points argued for "unmolested opportunity of autonomous development" for peoples formerly under Turkish rule, but it had little effect.

Although winners in the 1948-49 struggle, the Israelis did not quite have the margin to take Old Jerusalem from Jordan's Arab Legion and they were not interested in taking the rest of the West Bank. In 1967 they were able to take both. They consider certain places, such as Hebron, important for reasons of religion, but their major interest in West Jordan has been in eliminating a tactical threat from a hostile--and conceivably dangerous--neighbor.

Since June 1967, Israel has "created facts" on the West Bank, including at least 18 Israeli settlements, a large building program in East Jerusalem, new road construction, and a program of encouraging thousands of Arab workers to seek employment in Israel. Critics, both Israeli and foreign, accuse Mrs. Meir's government of moving toward "creeping annexation" of the area, citing the actions noted above

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A new and improved communications net, transportation links, and the spreading Israeli electricity network further tie Jerusalem and the entire West Bank to Israel.

Prospects for the Refugees. Should an Arab-Israeli political accommodation be reached tomorrow, the West Bank refugee problem would remain. A portion of the surplus population might be absorbed if

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modern agriculture and industry were developed--a major task that involves the retraining of a tradition-oriented population. The majority of the refugees, however, have little potential for useful employment on the West Bank.

Even if refugees are permitted to migrate freely, the political climate and the congested labor market in neighboring Arab countries do not favor the absorption of the many thousands of refugees. In the absence of regional good will and cooperation, there is little likelihood of a realistic solution to the intricate problems of repatriating, compensating, or resettling an economically depressed and politically sensitive refugee population.

The Various Plans

The Allon Plan. Minister of Labor (now Deputy Prime Minister) Yigal Allon placed his plan for dealing with the occupied territories before the Israeli Government in July 1967, about a month after the end of the war. It has never been officially considered by the Knesset, but many of its elements have been implemented during the past six years.

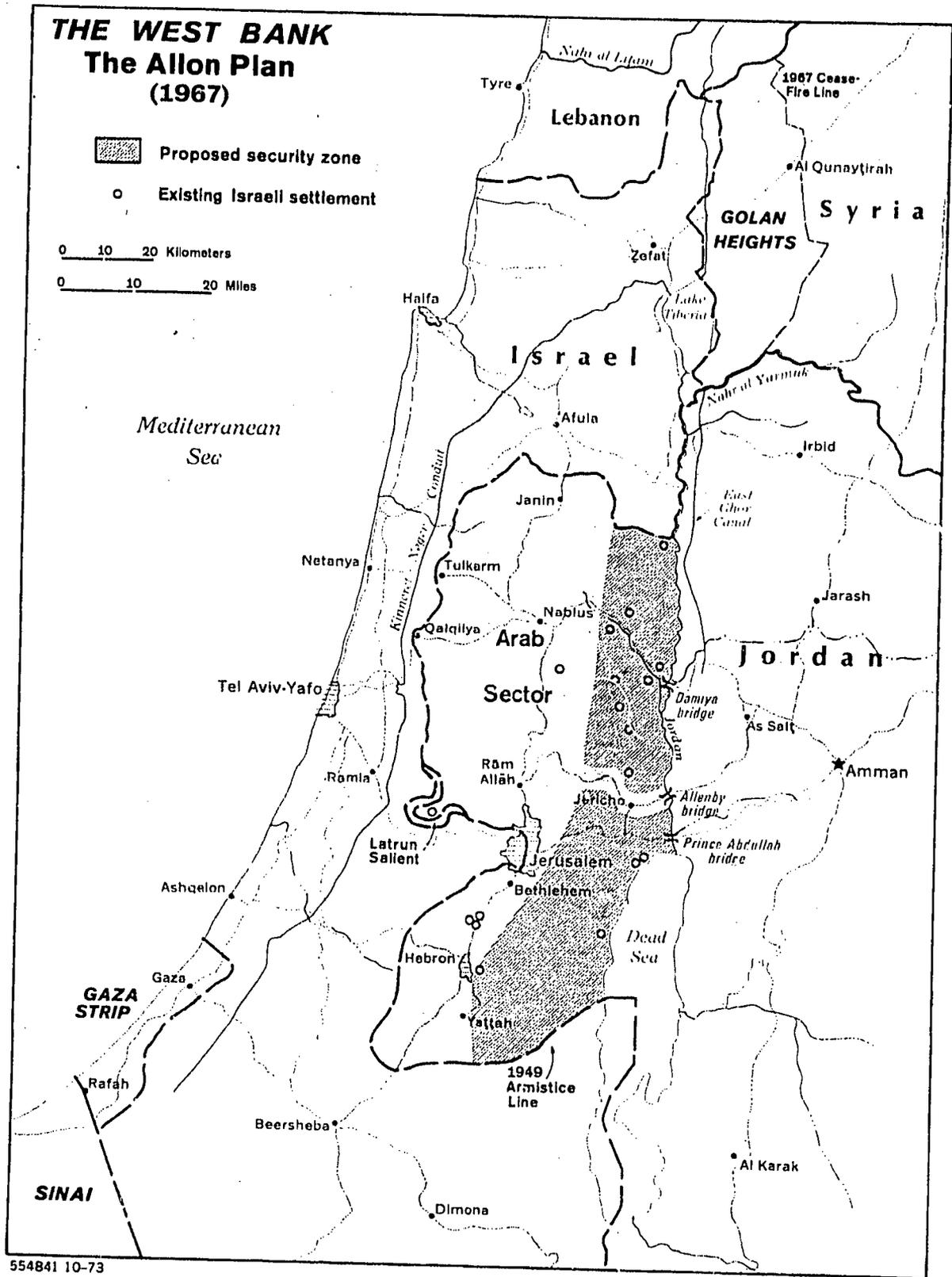
The key element of the plan for the West Bank is the establishment of a security zone immediately west of the Jordan River and around the northwestern portion of the Dead Sea. The proposed zone would be some 96 kilometers long by 16 to 24 kilometers wide (60 miles by 10 to 15 miles) and would occupy about one third of the total area of the West Bank. Interference with the Arab population would be minimal because only an estimated three percent of the West Bank Arabs live in the arid, barren floor of the Jordan Valley.

According to the plan, the Arab-populated hilly areas of the West Bank would revert to Jordan and a corridor from Ramallah to Jericho would link the Arab sectors to the East Bank. The plan calls for 20 to 28 Jewish settlements in the area, 12 of which were

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established shortly after the 1967 war; of these, five have already been converted from Nahal (military) settlements into civilian settlements.

The plan would be a territorial compromise, assuring Israel of defensible borders without including a sizable Arab population and without shutting off political options for peace. Allon has held that if Israel gave equal rights to the West Bank Arabs, it would cease to be a Jewish state, but that if it refused equal rights, it would cease to be a democracy. He saw no choice but to give up territory.

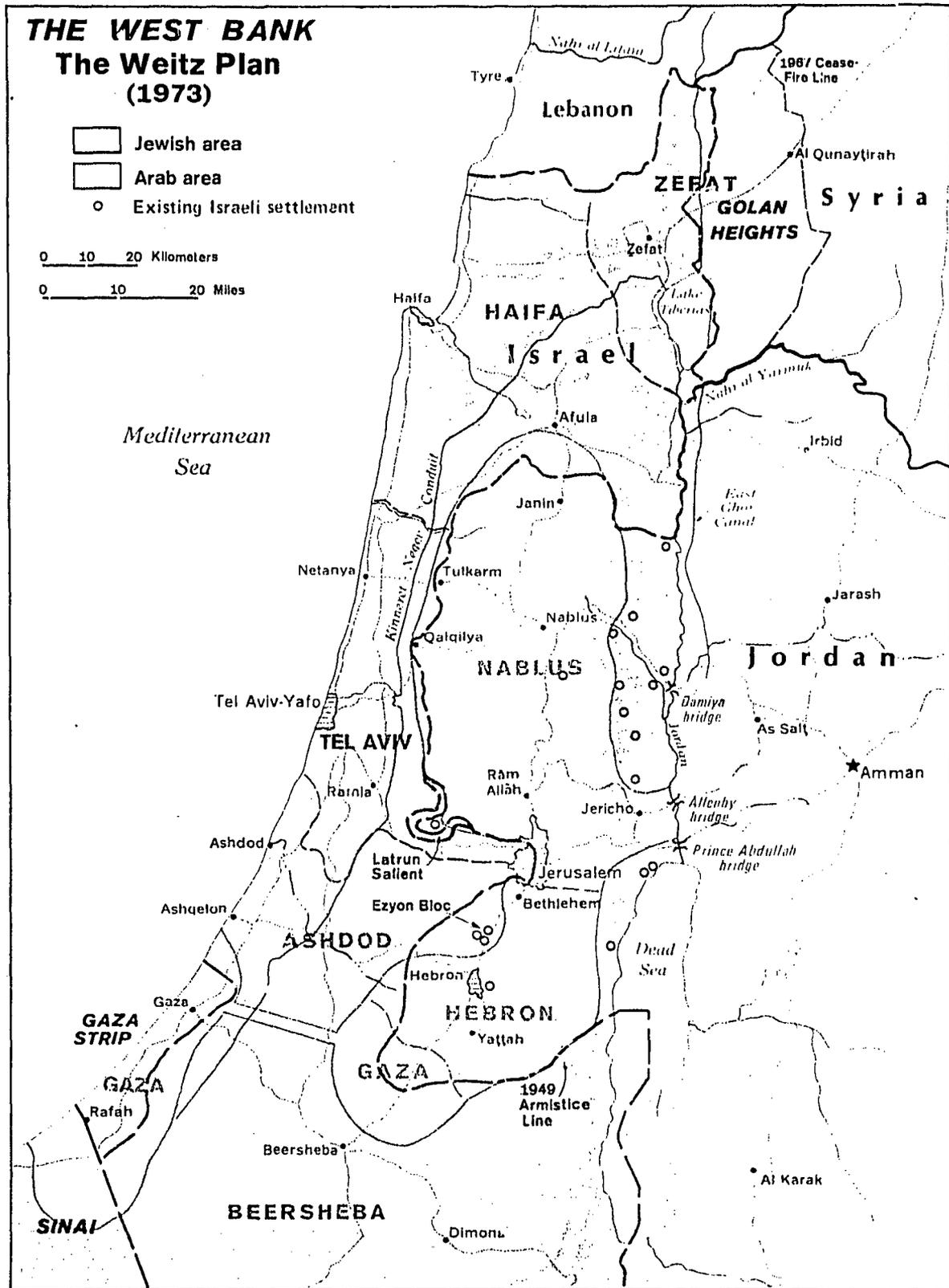
Sapir's Ideas. Finance Minister Pinhas Sapir, concerned over the economic cost of absorbing large numbers of Arabs and the threat to a Jewish majority, has also urged the return of Arab land. He has stated that continued occupation of Arab territories captured in the 1967 war threatens Israel's security and moral image. Sapir, a leading dove in the Israeli cabinet, agrees with Deputy Prime Minister Yigal Allon that Israel should expect a settlement to involve important Israeli territorial concessions but that these should not endanger Israeli security. He has presented statistical projections to show that Israel would be half Arab by 1993 if it annexed all the occupied territories. Sapir's ideas correspond largely with those of Foreign Minister Eban, who has said that Israel wants a maximum of security with a minimum of territory.

The Weitz Plan. The author of this plan is Dr. Raanan Weitz, head of the Jewish Agency's Department for Development and a member of the Labor Party. He also heads the International Settlement Study Center in Rehovot. According to the Weitz Plan, Israel would tie the controlled areas to Israel proper and the whole would be divided into five Jewish and three Arab zones. The Jewish zones would consist of the Zefat, Haifa, Tel Aviv, Ashdod, and Beersheba zones. The Golan Heights would be annexed to the Zefat Zone;

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the northern section of the Jordan Valley to the Haifa Zone; the Latrun region would form part of the Tel Aviv-Yafo Zone; the Ezyon Bloc would form part of the Ashdod Zone; and the Rafah Enclave (down to the approaches of Al Arish in the Sinai Peninsula) would be included in the Beersheba Zone.

The three Arab regions would be the Nablus, Hebron, and Gaza zones. A new settlement region would be developed north of Beersheba and annexed to the Gaza Zone for Gaza refugees. Jerusalem would form a unit in itself and be the capital of the State and the seat of the central government. Its administration would be local and semi-autonomous.

If no peace were reached with Jordan, two other alternatives might be feasible, according to the Weitz Plan: establishment of a Palestinian State or of a federative community. The Palestinian State would include the three Arab zones, which would unite to form a single independent entity. No military force would be permitted in the new state. The federative community would presumably unite the three Arab Zones and join them as a semi-autonomous region to Israel. This would not be significantly different from the proposals of the basic Weitz Plan, but it would dilute the Jewish nature of the state to a greater extent and would thus not, in the Israeli view, serve as a particularly desirable alternative. The present Israeli Government is officially opposed to the establishment of any independent Palestinian State on the West Bank. Prime Minister Golda Meir has repeatedly said that any such state can exist only in east Jordan.

The Dayan Plan. Defense Minister Moshe Dayan favors a peace treaty which would give Jews the right to settle anywhere in the West Bank or the Gaza Strip, "this being our home." He believes that Israeli forces should be stationed on the River Jordan and has claimed that he no longer "remembers" the Green Line (the 1949 armistice line) formerly separating Israel from the Jordanian West Bank.

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Dayan, like many others in the Government of Israel, appears convinced that a negotiated peace settlement with Jordan should not come before a breakthrough in the impasse with Egypt. Dayan advocates that Israel demand more of Jordan than security; peace with Jordan must guarantee freedom of movement for Israelis in the West Bank and their right to live and worship there. The Defense Minister has said, in fact, that Israel cannot get all it wants from Jordan, and he believes that the only guarantee acceptable today, in the absence of a viable peace, is direct Israeli control of the occupied territories. He professes the hope that the situation will improve to the point where this requirement for Israeli control might disappear or diminish, but he sees no chance in the near future for a peace agreement with Jordan. He thus believes Israel should strengthen economic links with the occupied territories and employ Arabs from these zones inside Israel itself.

Many of Dayan's ideas have been incorporated in the Labor Party's plan for the occupied territories (this plan is sometimes called the Gallili Plan for Minister without Portfolio Israel Gallili). The evolution of Labor Party plans from 1969 to 1973 reflects the growing attitude of the Israeli majority that more of the occupied territories should be held.

An Israeli Government Plan for the West Bank.

One Israeli plan for the development of the West Bank was given in the 1971 Ministry of the Interior's publication Judaea and Samaria: Lines for Physical and Regional Planning. Because the publication has been restricted, information on its contents is incomplete. The plan appears, however, to assume permanent Israeli control of the area; if implemented, it would "create facts" toward the complete union of the West Bank and Israel.

The development of Jerusalem, according to the plan, will expand its municipal boundaries to the suburbs of Ramallah in the north and of Bethlehem in the south. Jerusalem's dependence on her western

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hinterland would be increased. This forecast re-enforces the idea of integrating Jerusalem with the State of Israel, and of integrating both areas with the rest of the West Bank.

In the Jordan Valley, a new urban center would be created near the Damiya bridge on the Nablus-Jericho-Amman road for the settlement of nomads and refugees. This would be contrary to the Allon Plan suggestion that the center serve primarily the newly established Israeli settlements in the valley.

The refugee camps should, according to the plan, be eliminated or changed to form independent rural units or, if adjacent to a town, municipal suburbs. (This is already being done in the Gaza Strip.) The idea of transferring refugees from Gaza to the West Bank is put forward as a possibility. The plan considers the West Bank suitable for intensified settlement provided the proper agricultural improvements are made and industrial enterprises are established. Development of tourism would be centered around places connected with Jewish history; national parks and nature preserves are planned for the desert areas.

Transportation would be improved. Some towns in the West Bank would gain local airports. East-west roads crossing the pre-1967 boundary would be improved as integral parts of the Israeli road network. It is assumed that economic necessity will cause the border towns of Janin, Tulkarm, and Qalqilya to remain dependent on close ties with Israel, and the plan encourages this economic relationship.

Special Israeli Requirements on the West Bank

Israeli officials from time to time have detailed Israeli territorial requirements for security on the West Bank. They declare that no Arab army can again cross the Jordan River; that the Allon Plan is the minimum acceptable to the Israeli government; and that, as Mrs. Meir has said, there must

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be major, not minor, territorial changes on the West Bank: the Latrun Salient must be removed, and Israel's narrow coastal waist must be widened.

The vast majority of the Israeli public rejects most plans which permit restored Arab control of the West Bank. The prevailing attitude has been one of yielding as little as possible, and the recent conflict has reinforced this attitude. Most Israelis undoubtedly feel that their country has been the innocent victim of Arab aggression and that the Arab aim is the eventual destruction of Israel. They are in no mood to yield any of what they regard as their rightful territory and as territory necessary for their security.

King Husayn's Plan. In March 1972 Jordan's King Husayn proposed the formation of a new federated state that would include his present kingdom and a semi-autonomous province of Palestine on the West Bank. The new nation, with Husayn at its head, would be known as the United Arab Kingdom. The capital of the country and of the eastern region would be Amman and that of the Palestinian western region would be Jerusalem. This plan was initially condemned almost unanimously, not only by the Israelis, but by other Arab states and by the Palestinian guerrilla leaders as well. It is probable, however, that most West Bankers, given no other alternatives, would choose Husayn over the Israelis, and the altered situation created by the war could heighten interest in the plan as one workable basis from which to begin a negotiating process.

Palestinian Attitudes. Most West Bankers are obsessed with Israel's occupation of their country and seek only to end it, without any clear idea of what their political future should be thereafter. They largely reject King Husayn's plan for a federal state, but many regard it with more favor than their current situation. There has recently been increased advocacy for some form of West Bank entity, and West

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Bankers in general are showing renewed interest in possible solutions to their problems.

Fedayeen guerrilla leaders, in addition, have apparently begun recently to realize that movement toward a negotiated settlement--which they have always categorically rejected--is now inevitable and that, unless they acquiesce and join in, neither the Israelis nor the Arab states will support their interests. Although still not totally ready to give up their ultimate goal, the destruction of Israel, fedayeen leaders are increasingly talking of adopting a position that would give them a reasonable voice in peace negotiations. That position appears to be a call for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on the West Bank, to include the Gaza Strip.

Israel would strongly oppose any such plan. It would not object to losing the Arabs of the Gaza Strip but views the area as a potentially dangerous Arab salient projecting too close to important Israeli population centers. The Israelis intend to keep the Gaza Strip. It is almost inconceivable that they would permit East Jerusalem to revert to Arab control.

Alternative Proposals

The following are presented as possible alternatives to the several proposals outlined above.

Plan A. A possible alternative to the Allon Plan would permit the Israelis to keep their new settlements in the Jordan Valley security zone north of the Allenby bridge, but would provide for the retention of the rest of the valley area and the west coast of the Dead Sea within the West Bank. This would cost the Israelis six or seven settlements and place more territory and two bridge crossings under Arab control. On the other hand, Jerusalem and the Latrun Salient would become part of Israel. Minor modifications of the border would also put Tulkarm and Qalqilya within

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Israeli territory. Special arrangements would be made to allow the Jewish residents to remain as a minority in Hebron. The Arab sector of the West Bank would be demilitarized as in the Allon Plan.

From the Arab standpoint, the primary objection to this plan--and a major one--would be its incorporation of Jerusalem into Israel.

Plan B. This plan would be a variant of the Weitz Plan. It would create a new Arab state considerably larger than that in the Weitz Plan and would include parts of the better Israeli lands surrounding it. Large numbers of Arab farm laborers would commute to work in nearby Israeli territory but would have their homes in the new Arab state. Boundary lines would be drawn to facilitate such movement. No Gaza refugees would be settled in the new state. The advantages of this plan are that it would permit Israel to remain overwhelmingly Jewish while creating an Arab state that might require large but not completely impossible amounts of outside support to stay alive.

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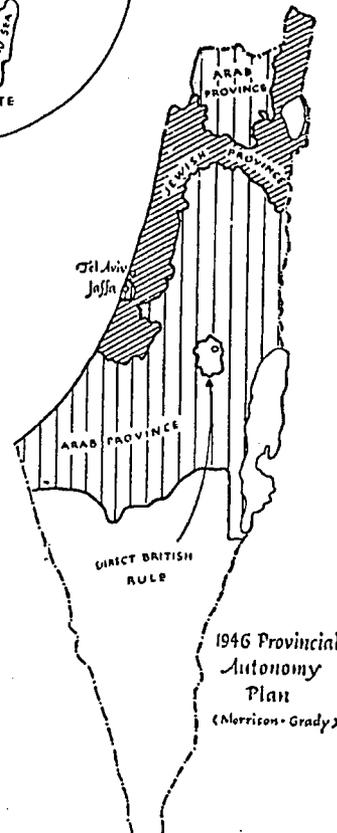
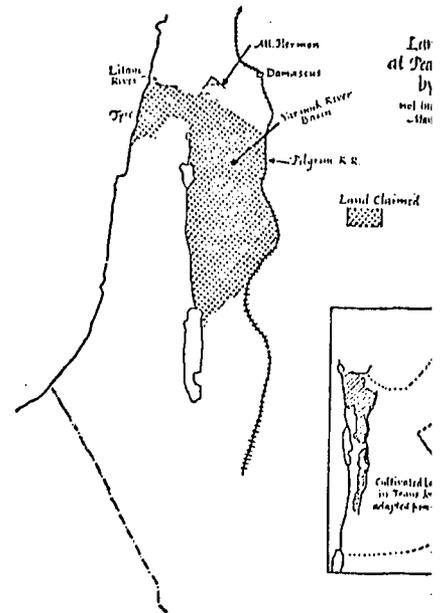
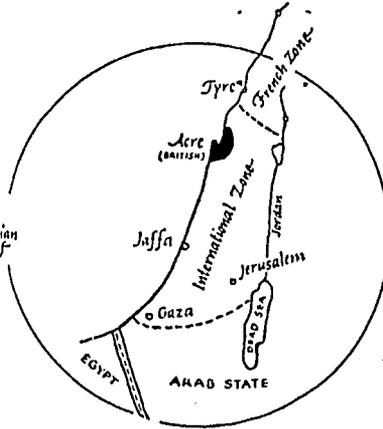
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PARTITION PLANS FOR PALESTINE

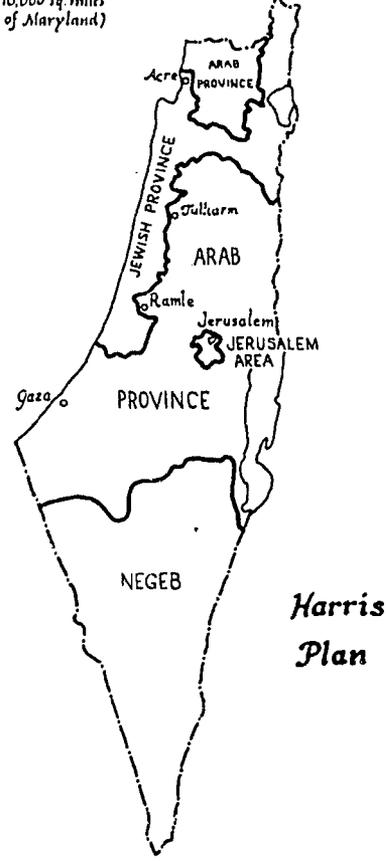
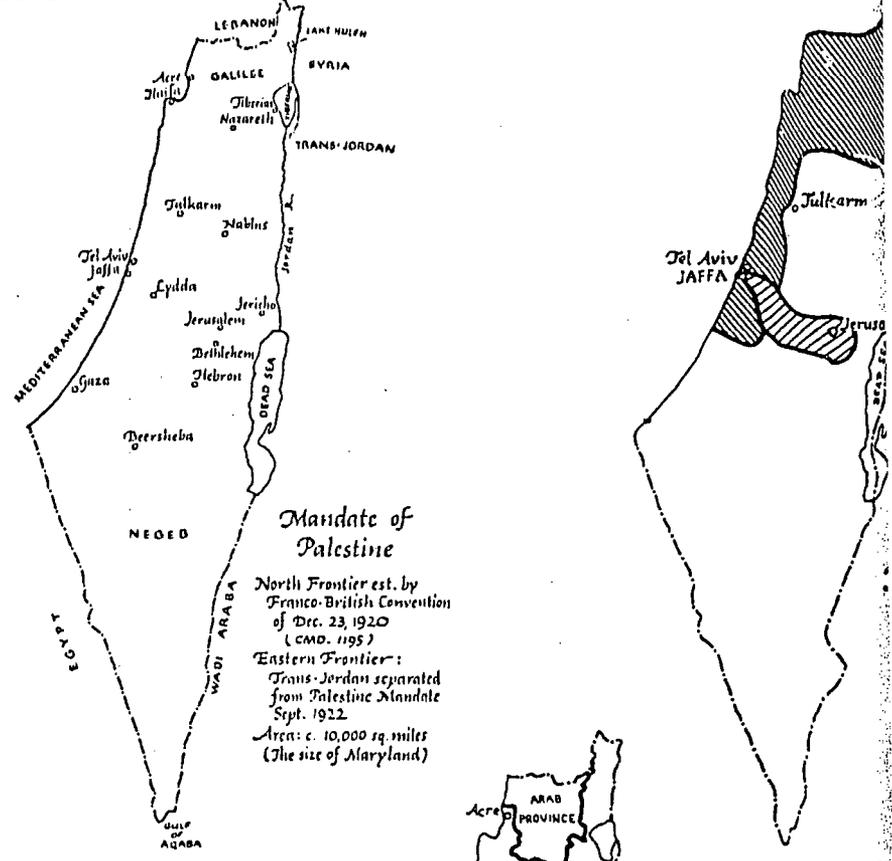
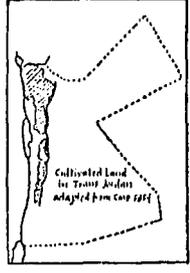
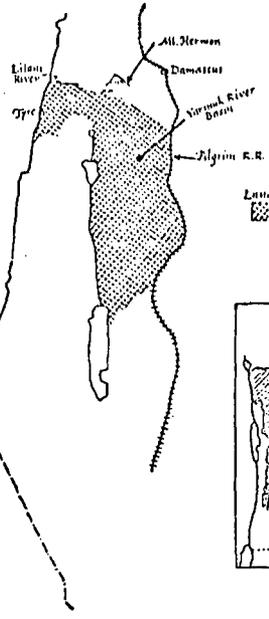
1916-1947

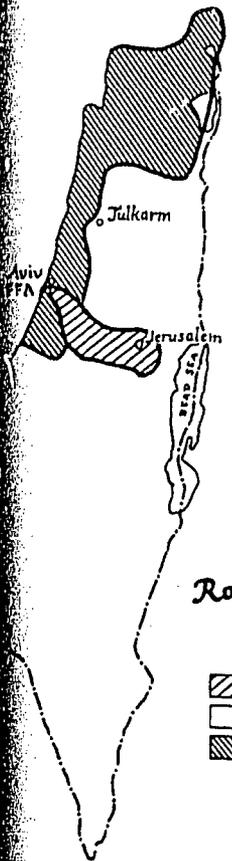


Sykes-Picot Agreement (1916)



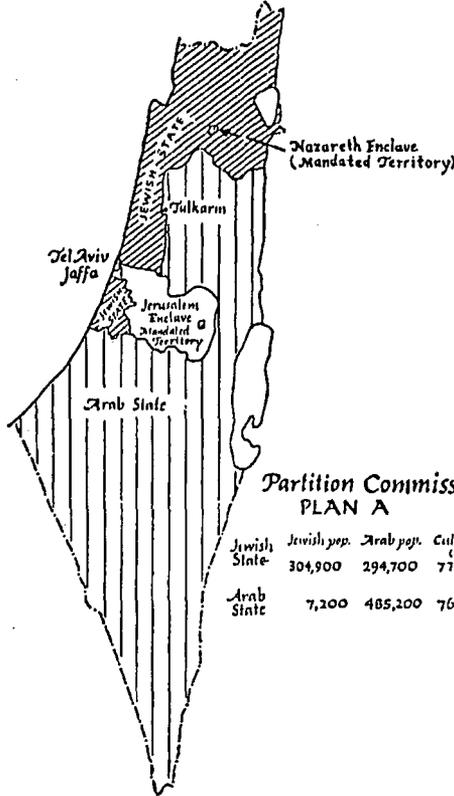
1946 Provincial Autonomy Plan (Morrison-Grady)





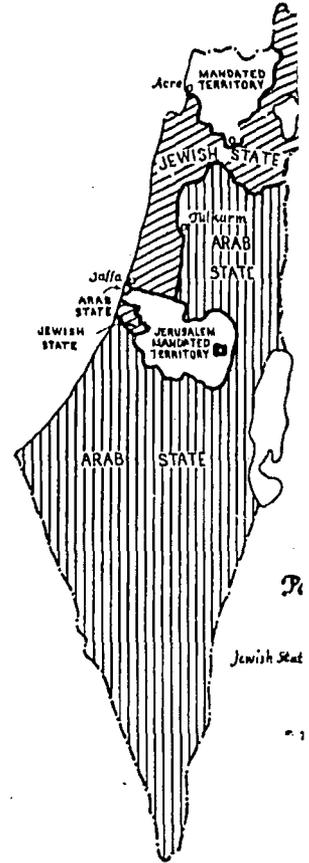
**1936
Royal Commission
Proposal**

 International
 Arab
 Jewish

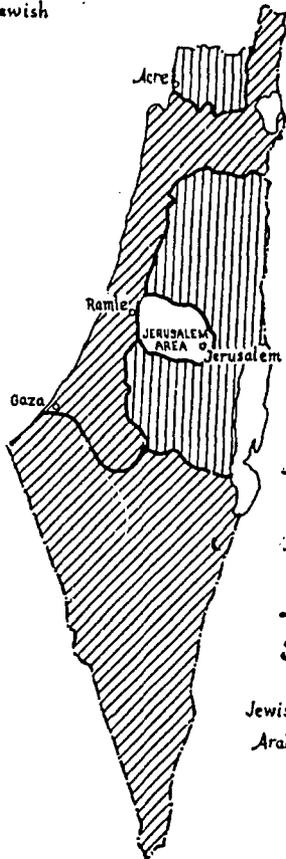


**Partition Commission:
PLAN A**

	Jewish pop.	Arab pop.	Cultivable Areas (ACRES)
Jewish State	304,900	294,700	774,500
Arab State	7,200	485,200	768,500

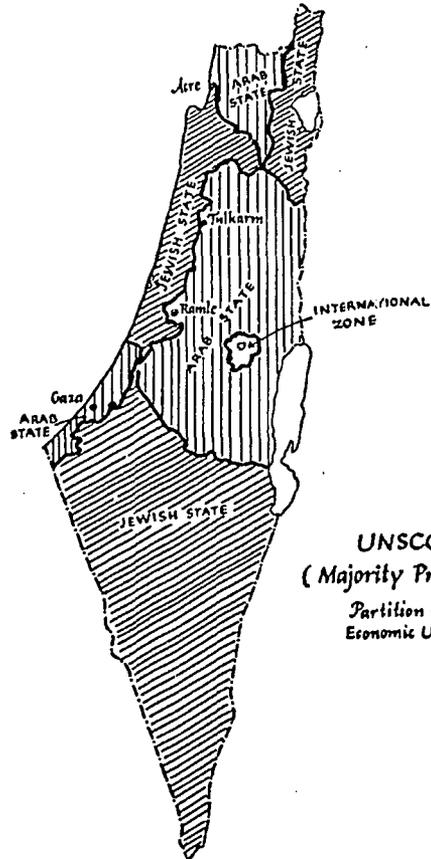


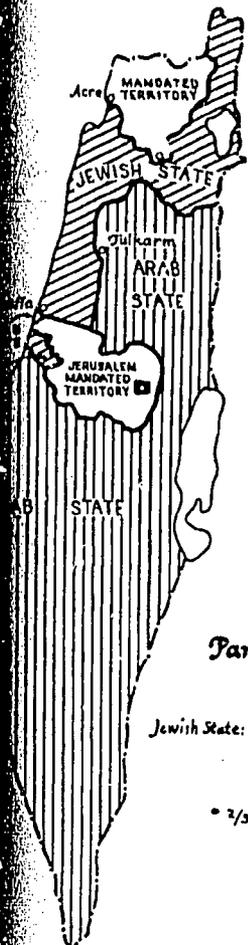
**UNSCOP
(Majority Proposal)
Partition with
Economic Union**



**Amery
Scheme**

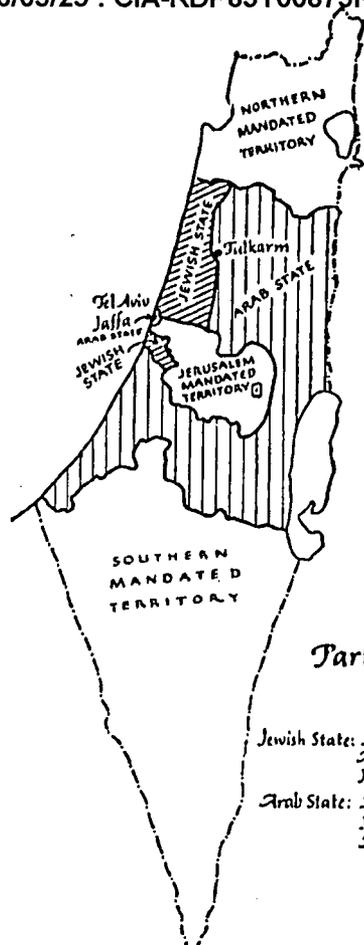
 Jewish State
 Arab State





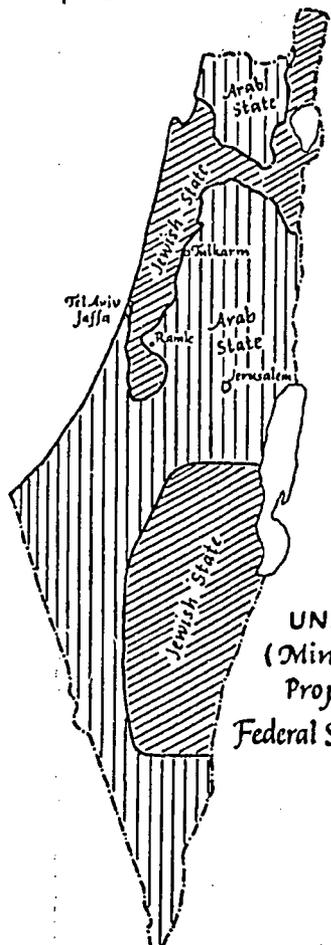
**Partition Commission:
Plan B**

Jewish State: Jewish pop. 300,400
 Arab pop. 188,400
 Cultivable area 519,000
 * 2/3rd owned by Arabs

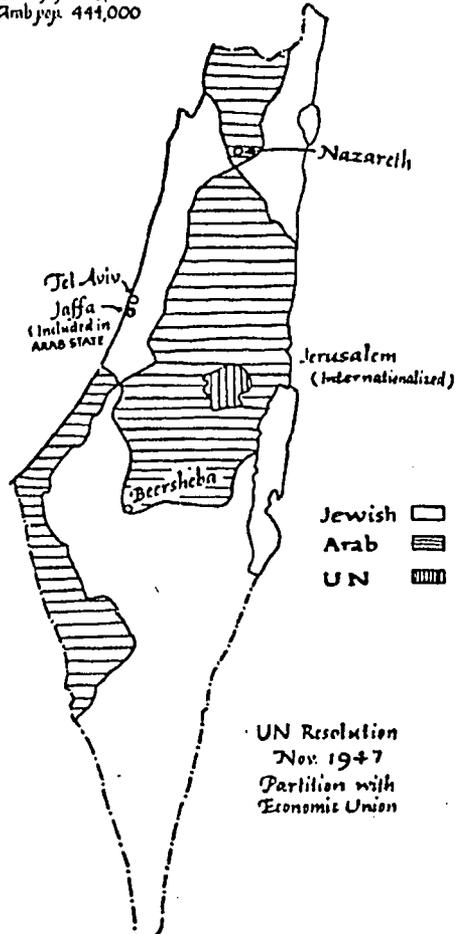


**Partition Commission
Plan C**

Jewish State: Area 314,000 acres
 Arab pop. 54,000
 Jewish pop. 226,000
 Arab State: Area 1,348,000 acres
 Jewish pop. 8,900
 Arab pop. 444,000



**UNSCOP
(Minority
Proposal)
Federal State Plan**



Jewish
 Arab
 UN

UN Resolution
 Nov. 1947
 Partition with
 Economic Union