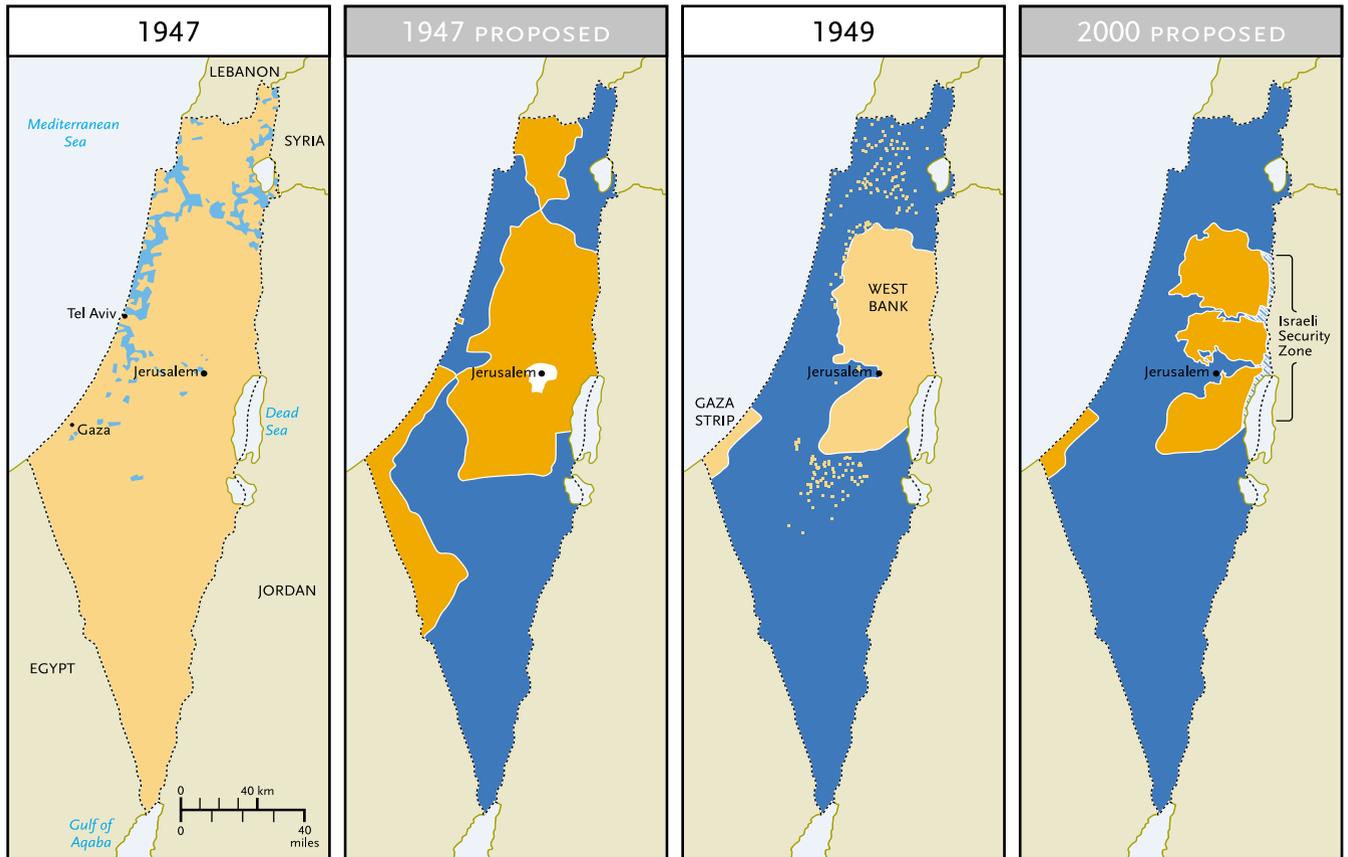


LOSING GROUND

The area between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River—called Palestine since the days of Herodotus—has hosted a mix of peoples for much of its history. The Jews of the Torah had largely dispersed by the time of the Arab conquest in the seventh century; by 1887 all but 5 percent of the population was Arab. Beginning with British rule in 1920, a wave of Zionist immigration helped increase the Jewish population sevenfold by 1947. That year, seeking a geographically unified homeland, the Arabs rejected a U.N. partition plan and launched a war that left the newly created Israel with most of the land. By 1949 more than 700,000 Arabs had been driven from their homes, their holdings declared “absentee property” and confiscated by Israel, which refused to readmit them. The remaining lands—the West Bank and Gaza Strip—eluded Israeli control until they came under occupation during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Despite U.N. peace terms calling for Israeli withdrawal from the territories in exchange for Arab recognition of Israel’s right to exist, Israel built 16,800 Jewish settlement units there over the next two decades, a step the U.N. condemned as a breach of the Geneva Conventions. In 1988 the P.L.O. publicly endorsed the U.N. peace terms and called for an independent Arab state; five years later, under the Oslo Accords, both sides officially agreed to talks. During the next seven years, as Israel carried out negotiated withdrawals from parts of the territories, it continued building settlements there, along with a network of connecting roads. In 2000, Israel made its first detailed proposal for a Palestinian state—a diminished West Bank split into three sections separated by Israeli territory, and the Gaza Strip—a plan the P.L.O. rejected. Two months later, a new Palestinian intifada began. —Seth Ackerman



After Britain takes control in 1920, the Jewish portion of Palestine’s population grows from one tenth to one third by 1947, when Jews own almost 7 percent of the land—mostly in the north and west—with the rest living in cities.

A U.N. plan offers 53 percent of the land for a Jewish state and 47 percent for an independent Arab state, with Jerusalem declared an “international” city. The fate of Arab towns remaining within the Jewish state is not explicitly addressed.

By war’s end, 418 Arab towns have been depopulated, and Israel controls 78 percent of the land (where some Arab towns remain), with the West Bank left to Jordan to prevent a Palestinian state there, and Egypt in control of the Gaza Strip.

Israel’s plan for a Palestinian state includes isolated Arab pockets of Jerusalem and a network of Jewish settlement roads (not shown) dividing the West Bank into 29 pieces, its eastern edge under Israeli control without formal annexation.

POPULATIONS	Palestinian	Jewish	Israeli
Under foreign rule			
Self-rule			