

Darwin Leuba - Fox Chapel Area High School

1. What is your past Model UN experience?

I have attended 5 conferences and am currently a high school sophomore.

2. What do you believe are the three most important issues related to developing a final framework agreement between Israel and Palestine?

Israel-Palestine Borders: If the regions remain separate, where should the lines be drawn between Gaza, The West Bank, and Israel? Should they be reverted based on historical precedent (e.g. 1967, UN Partition plan of 1947)

Palestinian Refugees: Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have fled or been expelled from areas that were gained by Israel in 1948. Will they be allowed to return, and how will land disputes be settled between current residents and the refugees.

Israeli Settlements: Less than a week after a cease-fire was established between Israel and Hamas, Israel announced it would appropriate 990-acres of land beyond the Green Line of the West Bank. With a purpose for Israeli settlements, the plans have been condemned by the United Nations because some view them as violating international law.

3. How does the unification of Fatah and Hamas affect negotiations between Israel and Palestine?

The unification of the Fatah and Hamas factions will pave the way for more balanced negotiations between Israel and Palestine. As Hamas's popularity declines due to its extremist views, the more moderate Fatah will be beneficial in establishing agreements between Israel and Palestine. Although Israel is against the unification, most of the world recognizes the unification as progress to a two-state negotiation.

4. Please discuss some of the potential outcomes of negotiations between Israel and Palestine (i.e. joint government in one state, two separate states, etc.), and the costs/benefits of each scenario.

Joint Government in One State

A joint government between the parties seems very impractical. Given recently military and diplomatic efforts between representatives of the region, very little common ground is found on many political issues, let alone governmental. The proposed solution would require large amounts of outside intervention to resolve the prospective intrastate conflicts. While a joint government may promote unity within the two regions, it would be bias toward either Israelis or

Palestinians, and a separate government would facilitate each region's drastically varying positions better.

Two Separate States with Separate Governments

Favored by most citizens in and around the conflicting areas, two separate states would allow both government to have independent rule over their respective regions. However, some citizens are concerned about Hamas's recent restrictions in Gaza (e.g. the banning of the Gazan hip-hop group "Palestinian Unit"). Additionally, establishing boundaries between the two governments would be a point of major contention.

Borders

Using historical precedent, many representatives have suggested the demarcation line of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip serve as the political division between the regions, while others have proposed reverting the region's political control to the UN plan of 1947, which would grant Palestine more land, including the entirety of Jerusalem.

5. How can Israel balance its stated desire to be formally recognized by the international community as a "Jewish state" with its constitutional commitment to democracy? How does this impact the negotiations process?

Israel can be formally recognized as a "Jewish state" without having to sacrifice its constitutional commitment to democracy. However, it must have a legal system impartial to Palestinians and (Jewish) Israelis. In the negotiations process, it must commit to making an effort to be democratic, unprejudiced, and fair, while still making an effort to be formally recognized as an *anti-discriminatory* "Jewish State".