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- 1) One of the greatest experiences of my life was my weekend spent in Sheraton Boston Hotel, on Harvard MUN. It was my first Model United Nations conference. My partner and I were representing South Africa in SOCHUM committee. I was very nervous at the beginning, even too shy to communicate with other delegates. However, I realized that I need to overcome my fears and be more confident in myself, so I took an action. In two days I knew almost everyone in my committee, which was quite big, and on the other day I made a speech in front of a crowd of almost 200 people. Although it might sound funny that I am proud to make only one speech during the entire conference, it was a big accomplishment for me, as one year ago my language was very limited and my knowledge about international relations was poor. Nevertheless, now I feel confident in my knowledge and I look forward to have a very productive and interesting conference in Princeton.
- 2) Israel - Palestine conflict has very old roots. The issues that cause it have been going on for years. Three of the biggest issues are the fight for Jerusalem, the restricted rights for Palestinians in Gaza and demilitarization of Gaza.

Although Israel claims that the reason for latest fights is the abduction and execution of three Israelis by Palestine, the core root of problem is different. Gaza, for the past years, has been a battlefield for Palestine and Israel. The ruling political power there, Hamas, states that the restrictions that Israel puts on the Palestinian population are intolerable. It also claims that Israel has to stop the blockade of Gaza, on which Israel replies that Hamas has to demilitarize it. Jerusalem is, of course, another issue because both countries claim it to be their land and cannot come to an agreement.

Even though the two countries have agreed to a ceasefire, the issues still remain and in order to avoid future conflicts we need to find a solution to them.

- 3) Fatah, unlike Hamas, stays relatively indifferent to the conflict between Gaza and Israel. However, I think that if the two political parties unify the course of the conflict will change. Gaza is a big issue for Palestine, but it is hard to concentrate on solving one issue, when you have an unofficial Civil War going on in your country. A unified Palestine, I think, will be more willing to run Gaza and increase its political power there, which may or may not be acceptable by Israel, because of the fact that they are against that Palestine had a military power in Gaza.
- 4) If the countries come to a mutual agreement, the outcome is either going to be a unified government under one state or two states existing separately, as many politicians said before. The benefit of a unified state is the ending of the fight over Jerusalem, on the other hand the tension between the Muslims and Jews will still remain. Another problem is whether former states will come to an agreement about which political party will take over the power or will they unify. In the case of the other outcome (two separate states) the religious tension will be relatively smaller, but the solution of the Jerusalem conflict will still be ambiguous.
- 5) "A Jewish and democratic state" is how the state of Israel defines itself. This kind of definition seems to not satisfy the Arab population of the state. In its Declaration of Independence Israel claimed itself just to be Jewish, 37 years after that it started to call itself democratic, too. I think Israel can maintain its name of Jewish and democratic state as long as it remains truly democratic, meaning gives freedom of religion to its minorities, which I think is one of the biggest problems within the country. Another issue that may prevent Israel from being democratic is the discrimination of Palestinians in Gaza, which is completely against the democratic ideas that we have formed so far. That issue also became one of the

reasons of the Gaza conflict. To summarize, I would like to say that Israel can keep its name of Jewish state and adopt democracy at the same time, but it should change some of its rules concerning minorities a Palestinians that suffer the restriction that the Israeli government has put.