

1. What is your past Model UN experience?

I have been a member of Model UN since sophomore year and I competed in two conferences last year. My first conference was at Franklin High School where I was part of a general assembly. I then competed at Seton Hall where I was on the Nigerian Cabinet crisis committee.

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

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

The unification of Fatah and Hamas negatively affects negotiations between Israel and Palestine because Hamas constantly provokes Israel and is deemed a terrorist organization in many countries around the globe. Israel has refused to do any negotiations with the terrorist organization in the past so now that they are unified with Fatah, it is unlikely that negotiations will proceed.

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.

There are two main potential outcomes of negotiations between Israel and Palestine. One of those outcomes is a two state solution, with the West bank and Gaza as the basis for the Palestinian state. Jerusalem would most likely serve as the capital of both Israel and Palestine and the Jewish settlements in the West Bank would be allowed to remain there. The other solution is for Palestine remain part of Israel but have greater autonomy. This solution would allow Palestinians to enjoy greater freedom and liberties while achieving a considerable sense of independence. Under Israeli control Palestine's economy could be modernized and strengthened. If current trade restrictions on its economy are removed, there would be a great increase in trade especially among other Arab nations. This would help make Palestine more self-sufficient and prosperous while providing Israel with tariff money from trade.

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 balance its stated desire to be formally recognized by the international community as a "Jewish state" with its constitutional commitment to democracy by guaranteeing its citizens religious freedom, allowing Jews and non-Jews to serve in government, and by recognizing Muslim and Christian holidays along with the Jewish holidays already recognized. Jewish nationhood incorporates a sense of shared fate, a common language, a unifying culture, a millennial-old homeland, and religious elements of the Jewish people, who make up the majority of the country. It is legitimate for a democracy to celebrate holidays, just like Israel celebrates Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Hanukkah, etc. Many European democracies, who often criticize Israel, still have crosses in their flags and celebrate Christian holidays so the Jewish presence in Israel is justified. For Israel to uphold its commitment to democracy, other holiday such as Christmas and Ramadan should be recognized and the minority ethnic groups

should be fully accepted in Israeli society. Israel being a “Jewish state” affects peace negotiations because the Palestinians are mainly Muslims. The religious divide creates a strong argument for Palestinian independence.