

What does Palestine tell us about the humanitarian agenda?

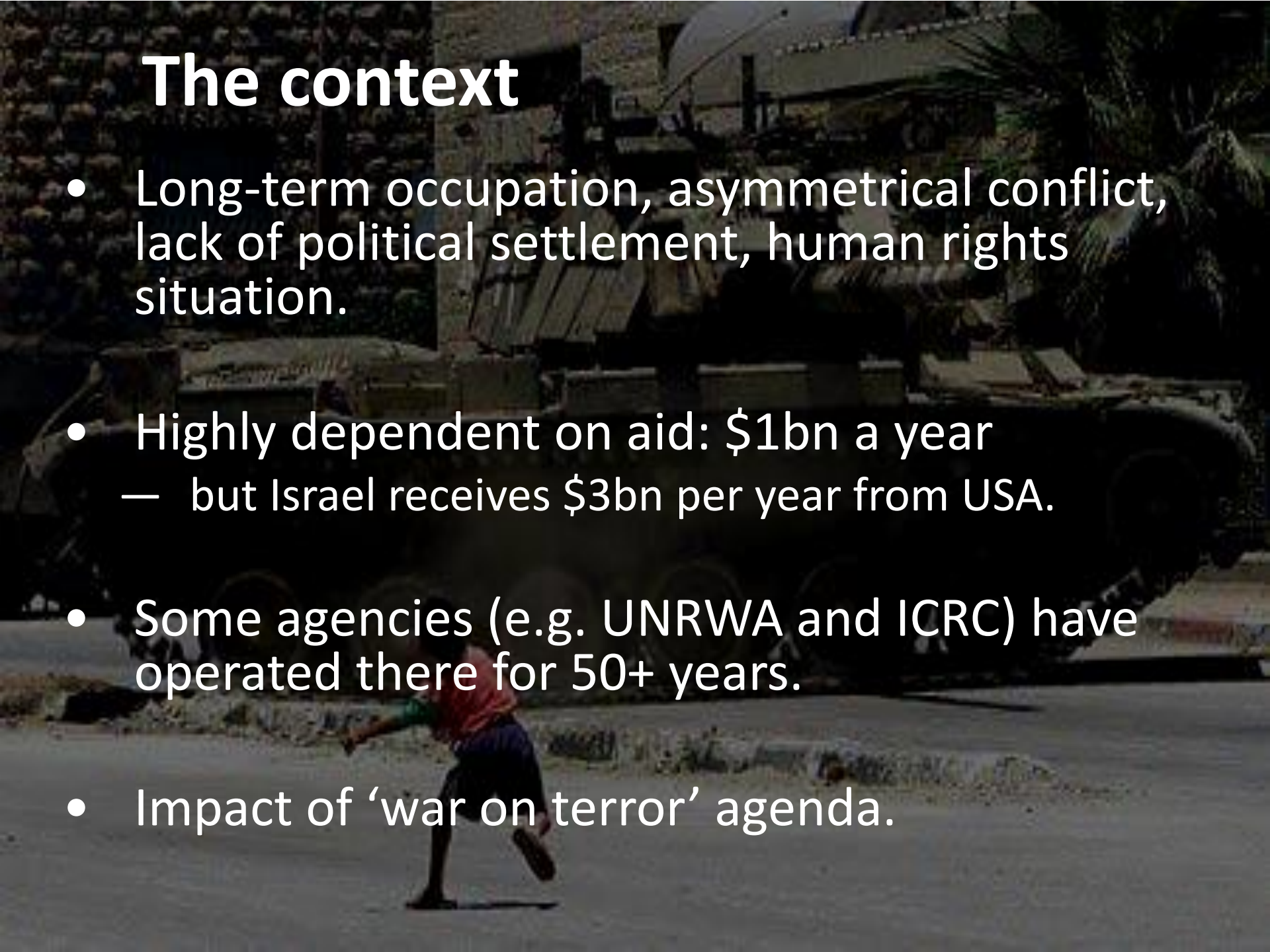
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What does Palestine tell us about the humanitarian agenda?

- The role of state interests and great powers has ALWAYS been dominant. Aid deeply political. 'Chequebook diplomacy'.
- Different international peacebuilding strategies since Oslo, but one CONSTANT underlying policy: to create acceptable 'partners for peace' for Israel. Negative humanitarian *and socio*-political impacts.
- Increasingly legitimate to use violence in the name of furthering peace. 'Sanctions' 2006. Critique of this by Dugard and De Soto.

The context

- Long-term occupation, asymmetrical conflict, lack of political settlement, human rights situation.
- Highly dependent on aid: \$1bn a year
— but Israel receives \$3bn per year from USA.
- Some agencies (e.g. UNRWA and ICRC) have operated there for 50+ years.
- Impact of 'war on terror' agenda.



The context

- Increasing disconnect between political, military & humanitarian strategies. Aid as 'smokescreen/sticking plaster' for colonisation and occupation.
- "The US decides, the World Bank leads, the EU pays, the UN Feeds" (Ann Le More).
- 'High' (diplomatic) politics of US and Israel not challenged by 'low' (development) politics of other actors i.e. EU could do more.
- Larissa Fast: 'aid in a pressure cooker'.

Peacebuilding strategies since Oslo

- Oslo period: 1994-2000 – ‘peacebuilding via statebuilding’
 - ‘Security first’ for Israel. Assumption that Arafat could keep lid on internal dissent.
 - ‘chequebook diplomacy’ i.e. economic development would ensure development, thus creating ‘moderate’ leaders.
 - Outcome: corrupt and neopatrimonial PA, collapse of Camp David, second intifada Sept 2000.



Peacebuilding strategies since Oslo

The background image shows a group of men, likely Hamas fighters, wearing black balaclavas and green headbands with Arabic text. They are holding assault rifles and looking towards the camera. The image is dark and has a grainy texture.

- ‘Roadmap’ period 2002-2006: ‘peacebuilding via democratic reform’:
 - Good governance and democratisation. Arafat to be replaced by ‘new partners for peace’.
 - Chequebook diplomacy intact.
 - Outcome – election of Hamas.

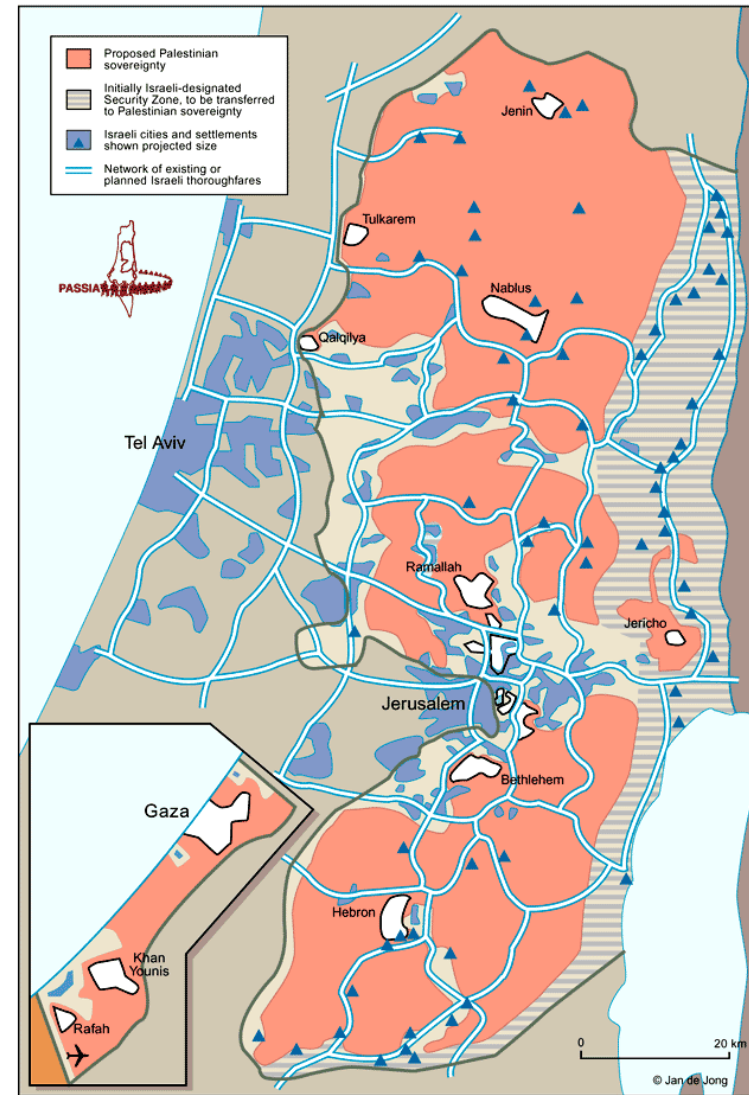
15 years of peace process...

Oslo II, 1995



- Oslo Accords: 1993
- Oslo II: 1995.
- The myth of Camp David
- The 'Roadmap': 2002
- Arab Peace Initiative: 2002, 2007

Projection of the West Bank Final Status Map presented by Israel, Camp David, July 2000



Peacebuilding strategies since Oslo

- Now: no coherent strategy. 'Crisis-related relief'. Three current dominant discourses (2 official, 1 unofficial) of externals:
 - 'creating (acceptable) partners for peace' – official position Quartet. 'West Bank first' strategy. Isolate Hamas.
 - 'Preparing the groundwork for Palestinian statehood after final status negotiations' – official position. 'Keeping the patient [PA] alive'.
 - 'working around the occupation' – development and aid workers, and unofficial position of Quartet.

Peacebuilding as exclusion & fragmentation

- *Exclusion*: with implications for Palestinian citizenship and regional stability.
 - Oslo left out East Jerusalemites & refugees. (Initial PLO move to 2-state solution excluded Arabs in Israel.)
 - June 2007 coup: Gazans left out of statebuilding project;
 - ‘Separation Barrier’ affects over 250,000 Palestinians (on ‘Israeli’ side of barrier and in ‘seam zones’).

Peacebuilding as exclusion & fragmentation

- *Fragmentation*: PA = interim administration. Restrictions on sovereignty.
 - West Bank divided into Areas A (PA control), B (civil: PA, military: Israel) and C (Israeli control); Israel controls 70% of land in WB; development affected.
 - Budget – dependent on revenues collected by Israel (75%) + foreign aid.
 - No control over borders, movement of peoples etc.
 - Borders, refugees, East Jerusalem, etc, left to final status negotiations.

'Disappearing' Palestine



Impact of 'war on terror'

- Palestine a key issue for groups such as Al-Qaida.
- Demonization of Hamas: sanctions since Jan 2006.
- Humanitarian agencies subject to funding and partnership restrictions. NGOs become implementers of foreign policy agendas.
- Justification for Israel's extreme 'security measures':
 - 'Separation Barrier'
 - 500-600 barriers in West Bank (checkpoints, roadblocks, earthmounds etc).
 - Night-time raids on Palestinian villages/towns in West Bank; sonic booms and airstrikes in Gaza.

Aid as seen from 'below'

- Palestinians favourable. Aid for political guilt. Israelis: unfavourable. Aid agencies seen as 'pro-Palestinian' and biased; UN viewed with suspicion and hatred.
- Difficulty of sticking to 'impartiality' and 'neutrality'. Some aid workers expressing feelings of 'solidarity' with Palestinians.
- Dilemmas of aid under occupation: should humanitarian agencies support the building of a clinic to service Palestinians affected by 'wall, or does this help solidify Israel's occupation policies?
- Aid very political: used to control Palestinians. 2006 elections.

Creating 'partners for peace' through violence

- Withholding of aid and prohibition of money transfer to PA from 2006 was, in effect, economic sanctions.
- First time an occupied people, supposed to be protected by the Geneva Conventions, subjected to economic sanctions (Dugard). TIM: very political.
- “Unattainable preconditions for dialogue”; UN reputation will be damaged (De Soto).
- Greater *internal* violence: civil war and Hamas coup June 2007. Justified greater force from Israel: ‘Operation Cast Lead’ – attacks on civilians and UNRWA compounds. Deserving and undeserving victims?: BBC DEC appeal.