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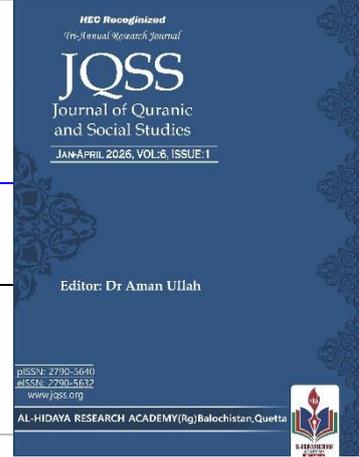
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From the vision to reality: the genesis of a New State

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Abstract

The abstract of "From the Vision to Reality: The Genesis of a New State," focusing on Israel, explores the unique and complex creation of the State of Israel in 1948. It highlights the Zionist movement's origins in Eastern European nationalism and its culmination in the declaration of Israeli independence on May 14, 1948, under David Ben-Gurion. This event followed the United Nations' partition plan and was immediately met with invasion by neighboring Arab states, sparking the first Arab-Israeli war. The study emphasizes the critical role of settling European Jewish refugees in Palestine after World War II and the foundational significance of the Palestinian refugee issue and their right of return in shaping Palestinian political identity throughout the twentieth century. The chapter also examines the composition of the new Israeli society, including the Arab citizens, and the implications for Israel's Jewish and democratic character. The necessity of understanding this genesis lies in Israel's distinctive path compared to other new states. Unlike many, Israel's creation was marked by intense voluntarist forces individual choice, will, and strategic planning which were pivotal in overcoming formidable internal and external obstacles. These included opposition from international and religious communities, reluctance of Western powers to assist during crises, and internal challenges within Jewish and Israeli society. The state's rise was also shaped by revolutionary socialist and semi-capitalist nationalist factors, which contributed to its survival and emergence as a significant regional power. This perspective avoids ideological bias and provides a fresh understanding of Israel's controversial yet resilient statehood. Regarding the most suitable qualitative research methodology for studying this topic, a comparative historical analysis combined with case study methodology would be effective. This approach allows for in-depth examination of Israel's unique formation by comparing it with other revolutionary states and minority groups, analyzing archival materials, leadership strategies, and socio-political dynamics. It facilitates understanding the interplay of voluntarist forces, international relations, and internal societal factors that influenced Israel's genesis and development.

Keywords: Statehood, Visionary Leadership, Political Transformation, Collective Identity.

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Background

The background of the study "From the Vision to Reality: The Genesis of a New State," focusing on Israel, is rooted in the unique and complex historical process leading to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. This process began with the Zionist movement, which originated as an Eastern European nationalist movement aimed at creating a Jewish homeland in Palestine. The study situates Israel's creation within the broader context of nationalist movements and revolutionary states but highlights its distinctive path marked by intense voluntarist forces individual choice, will, and strategic planning that were crucial in overcoming formidable internal and external challenges (The Rise of Israel: A History of the Revolutionary State, 2019).

Key historical milestones include the declaration of Israeli independence by David Ben-Gurion on May 14, 1948, following the United Nations' partition plan. This declaration was immediately met with invasion by neighboring Arab states, triggering the first Arab-Israeli war. The aftermath of World War II was critical, as the Zionist leadership focused on settling European Jewish refugees in Palestine, which significantly shaped the demographic and political realities of the new state. The Palestinian refugee issue and their right of return became foundational in shaping Palestinian political identity throughout the twentieth century (Israel's Declaration of Independence: The History and Political Theory of the Nation's Founding Moment, 2025).

The study also addresses the composition of the new Israeli society, including the integration of Arab citizens and the implications for Israel's dual Jewish and democratic character. Unlike many other new states, Israel's creation involved overcoming opposition from international and religious communities, reluctance of Western powers to assist during crises, and internal Jewish societal challenges. Revolutionary socialist and semi-capitalist nationalist factors played a significant role in Israel's survival and emergence as a regional power (How the Modern State of Israel Was Created in 1948, n.d.). This background is framed by a comparative historical approach that contrasts Israel's formation with other revolutionary states and minority groups, emphasizing the interplay of voluntarist forces, international relations, and internal socio-political dynamics. This approach offers a fresh, non-ideological perspective on Israel's controversial yet resilient statehood (Project on Middle East Political Science - Discussion of Current Events in Political Science in the Middle East., 2024).

Introduction

Palestine: Historical Context and Post-1948 Developments

Palestine, historically a crossroads of religion, culture, and empire, was home to diverse communities and subject to successive conquests, from ancient Canaanites and Israelites through Roman, Byzantine, Islamic, Crusader, and Ottoman rule. In the early 20th century, amid the decline of the Ottoman Empire, the region became the focus of competing nationalist movements: Jewish Zionism (seeking a homeland in Palestine) and Arab nationalism (seeking independence and unity for Arab peoples Following World War I, (The Historian, 2023). Britain received the League of Nations mandate to govern Palestine, with the dual obligation of establishing a "national home for the Jewish people"

(as per the 1917 Balfour Declaration) and safeguarding the rights of existing non-Jewish communities. Tensions escalated between Jewish and Arab populations as Jewish immigration increased, particularly in the wake of the Holocaust and World War II. The United Nations, recognizing the intractability of the conflict, proposed partitioning Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states (UN Resolution 181, 1947). Jewish leaders accepted the plan; Arab leaders rejected it, viewing it as unjust and a violation of the majority Arab population's rights. When Israel declared independence on May 14, 1948, neighboring Arab states invaded, sparking the first Arab-Israeli war. The war's outcome left the new State of Israel controlling more territory than the UN plan had allotted, while the West Bank and Gaza Strip fell under Jordanian and Egyptian control, respectively²³. The war also created a massive Palestinian refugee crisis and led to the disappearance of "Palestine" as a recognized geo-political entity (McIntosh, 2024).

Israel: Emergence and Societal Composition Israel's genesis was shaped by the Zionist movement's vision, the trauma of the Holocaust, and the influx of Jewish refugees from Europe and the Middle East. David Ben-Gurion, leading the Jewish Agency, declared Israeli independence as the British mandate ended. Israel's Declaration of Independence promised equal rights for all citizens, including Arab residents, and called for peace with neighboring states. Internally, Israel's society was rapidly transformed by mass immigration, integrating Holocaust survivors, Jews from Arab countries, and a significant Arab minority who remained within Israel's borders. The new state faced immediate existential threats, international skepticism, and internal debates over its Jewish and democratic character (Thrall, 2018).

The Role of Great Britain:

Britain's role was pivotal and deeply ambivalent:

Mandate Administration (1917-1948): Britain governed Palestine under a League of Nations mandate, balancing conflicting promises to Jews (Balfour Declaration) and Arabs (wartime commitments to Arab independence). Following World War I and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Britain was granted the League of Nations mandate to govern Palestine. This mandate incorporated the 1917 Balfour Declaration, which supported establishing a "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine, while also obligating Britain to protect the rights of the existing non-Jewish (mainly Arab) population. Managing these contradictory promises proved extremely difficult, as Britain had to balance Jewish nationalist aspirations with Arab demands for independence and self-determination. The British administration struggled to maintain order amid rising tensions and violence between Jewish and Arab communities (University of Central Arkansas, n.d.).

Strategic Interests: British policy was influenced by the region's strategic importance, especially as a buffer for the Suez Canal and access to Middle Eastern oil. Britain's policies were heavily influenced by the strategic importance of Palestine, particularly as a buffer zone protecting the Suez Canal, a vital route to British colonial holdings in Asia, and as a gateway to Middle Eastern oil resources. These geopolitical considerations often shaped

British decisions, sometimes leading to inconsistent or contradictory policies toward the local populations and nationalist movements (Routledge, 2019).

Policy Shifts and Withdrawal: Britain, facing escalating violence between Jews and Arabs and attacks from Zionist paramilitaries, ultimately referred the issue to the United Nations and announced its withdrawal. This left a power vacuum and set the stage for the 1948 conflict. As violence escalated in the 1930s and 1940s with Arab revolts, Jewish insurgency, and attacks by Zionist paramilitary groups Britain found itself unable to impose a lasting settlement. By 1947, Britain decided to refer the Palestine issue to the United Nations, signaling its intention to end the mandate. The British withdrawal, completed by May 1948, left a power vacuum that contributed directly to the outbreak of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. During the final months, British forces gradually pulled out, handing over security responsibilities to local Jewish and Arab forces, while maintaining limited control in key areas like Jerusalem and Haifa until their final evacuation (Britannica, 2023).

Legacy: British actions support for Zionism, inconsistent immigration policies, and eventual withdrawal deeply shaped the Israel-Palestine conflict's trajectory and the enduring refuge. Britain's legacy in Palestine is deeply ambivalent. Its early support for Zionism helped lay the groundwork for the establishment of Israel, but its inconsistent immigration policies and failure to resolve Arab-Jewish tensions contributed to enduring conflict. The British withdrawal without a clear resolution left the region in turmoil, with the Palestinian Arab population displaced and stateless, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict unresolved. This legacy continues to influence regional politics and the broader Middle East peace process (United Nations, 2025).

Comparative Analysis and Lasting Impact

The creation of Israel was unique among new states for its reliance on voluntarist forces strategic planning, individual agency, and ideological commitment rather than solely anti-colonial revolution or decolonization. The Palestinian refugee issue and the loss of Palestinian statehood became central to Palestinian identity and political mobilization, eventually leading to the formation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1964 (Bareli & Elmaliach, 2021).

Britain's legacy remains controversial: its early support for a Jewish homeland, subsequent restrictions on Jewish immigration, and abrupt withdrawal contributed to both the birth of Israel and the unresolved Palestinian question (Office of the Historian, n.d.).

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict, rooted in these formative events, continues to shape regional and global politics, with the refugee issue and questions of statehood and identity at its core (Meron Medzini, 2016).

Palestine has a long and complex history as a crossroads of religion, culture, and empire, inhabited by diverse communities and subject to successive conquests from ancient times through the Ottoman era. The region was home to ancient Canaanites, Israelites, and later ruled by empires including Roman, Byzantine, Islamic, Crusader, and Ottoman. In the early 20th century, with the decline of the Ottoman Empire, Palestine

became the focus of competing nationalist movements: Jewish Zionism, which sought a homeland in Palestine, and Arab nationalism, which aimed for independence and unity of Arab peoples (The Historian, 2023).

Following World War I, Britain was granted a League of Nations mandate to govern Palestine, tasked with establishing a "national home for the Jewish people" per the 1917 Balfour Declaration while protecting the rights of non-Jewish communities. Rising Jewish immigration, especially after the Holocaust, intensified tensions between Jewish and Arab populations. The United Nations proposed partitioning Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states in 1947 (UN Resolution 181), which Jewish leaders accepted but Arab leaders rejected, leading to conflict (United Nations, 2025).

When Israel declared independence on May 14, 1948, neighboring Arab states invaded, resulting in the first Arab-Israeli war. Israel gained more territory than allocated by the UN plan, while the West Bank and Gaza Strip came under Jordanian and Egyptian control respectively. This war caused a massive Palestinian refugee crisis and the effective disappearance of Palestine as a recognized geopolitical entity. The Palestinian refugee issue remains central to the conflict today, with over 700,000 Palestinians displaced during the 1948 war and further dispossessions after the 1967 war (Sharaf, 2020).

Israel's emergence was shaped by the Zionist movement, Holocaust trauma, and immigration of Jewish refugees from Europe and Arab countries. Israel's Declaration of Independence promised equal rights for all citizens, including Arabs, and called for peace with neighbors. Internally, Israel rapidly integrated diverse Jewish immigrants alongside a significant Arab minority, while facing existential threats and debates over its Jewish and democratic identity. Britain's role was pivotal yet ambivalent: administering the mandate from 1917 to 1948, balancing promises to Jews and Arabs, influenced by strategic interests such as the Suez Canal and Middle Eastern oil. Britain's inconsistent immigration policies, support for Zionism, and eventual withdrawal amid escalating violence left a power vacuum that precipitated the 1948 conflict. This legacy deeply shaped the trajectory of the Israel-Palestine conflict and the enduring refugee crisis (Palestine - Palestine and the Palestinians (1948–67), n.d.).

The two-state theory, proposed by the UN in 1947, envisions Israel and Palestine as two independent states coexisting peacefully. However, the idea has faced growing skepticism due to ongoing settlement expansion, unresolved refugee issues, and political stagnation. Despite repeated peace efforts, key issues such as the status of Jerusalem, Palestinian statehood, Israeli settlements, and refugees remain unresolved, complicating prospects for a two-state solution (Thrall, 2018).

Palestine's historical context and post-1948 developments are marked by colonial legacies, nationalist struggles, war, displacement, and enduring conflict. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict continues to shape regional and global politics, with the quest for Palestinian self-determination and Israeli security at its core. The two-state solution remains the internationally endorsed framework for peace, though its feasibility is increasingly challenged by political realities on the ground (United Nations, 2025).

Problems Statement:

Weak institutional capacity and ineffective governance structures are fundamental barriers to successful state-building and the delivery of essential public services. When institutions lack the necessary resources, skills, and frameworks, they cannot enforce laws, implement policies, or respond efficiently to citizens' needs. This weakness often leads to corruption, bureaucratic delays, and a lack of accountability, which erodes public trust and undermines social order. Strong, transparent institutions are critical for stability and development because they create the foundation for the rule of law and effective public administration.

The absence of political legitimacy and experienced leadership further complicates the transition from visionary aspirations to stable governance. Without leaders who command respect and possess the necessary expertise, efforts to unify diverse populations and implement reforms often face resistance or apathy. Political legitimacy is essential for fostering civic engagement and compliance with state policies, while experienced leadership ensures that strategies are not only visionary but also actionable. The lack of these qualities can lead to political fragmentation, policy inconsistency, and even conflict, as seen in various post-conflict societies. Addressing these gaps is crucial for building a government that is both representative and effective.

Economic instability and dependence on external aid severely limit a new state's ability to achieve genuine sovereignty and sustainable development. Without a stable economic base, states struggle to fund public services, invest in critical infrastructure, and manage resources efficiently. Poor infrastructure and resource mismanagement further impede growth by disrupting markets, limiting access to basic services, and exacerbating social inequalities. These challenges are deeply interconnected: economic weakness undermines political legitimacy, while poor governance perpetuates economic and infrastructural deficits. Overcoming these barriers is essential not only for development but also for fostering national unity and long-term peace.

Addressing these interconnected challenges is essential for any new or fragile state seeking to build legitimacy, foster development, and ensure long-term stability. Without strong institutions, legitimate leadership, economic stability, and robust infrastructure, states remain vulnerable to cycles of poverty, conflict, and external dependence, ultimately jeopardizing their sovereignty and the well-being of their citizens. The case of Palestine illustrates these complexities, where historical political and economic struggles exacerbated by external interventions such as the British Mandate and demographic changes have made state-building efforts particularly difficult, underscoring the urgent need for comprehensive solutions.

The British sought control over Palestine after World War I due to its strategic, political, and economic importance amid global instability. Following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Britain was granted the Mandate for Palestine by the League of Nations, which included the responsibility to implement the Balfour Declaration supporting a Jewish national home while managing the Arab majority population. Politically, Britain aimed to maintain its influence in the Middle East to protect vital routes to its colonial holdings, especially India, and to stabilize a region marked by competing

nationalist movements. To do so, Britain balanced conflicting Jewish and Arab interests, often suppressing uprisings and enforcing strict regulations to maintain order and colonial control.

Economically, Palestine's location was crucial for British imperial interests, providing access to trade routes, ports, and resources. The British invested in infrastructure development to support administrative and economic goals, while policies encouraging Jewish immigration and land acquisition intensified tensions with the Arab population. This economic dependence limited Palestine's ability to achieve sovereignty and fostered British dominance. Globally, Britain's mandate was part of a broader imperial strategy during a period of shifting power dynamics and international instability. Despite legal controversies and growing conflict, Britain prioritized maintaining control over Palestine to secure its imperial interests until its withdrawal in 1948, which left a lasting legacy of regional tension and unresolved conflict.

Methodology

The qualitative method in historical study focuses on exploring and interpreting complex social, political, and economic phenomena through detailed examination of primary and secondary sources, such as archival documents, official records, personal narratives, and scholarly analyses. This approach prioritizes understanding the context, motivations, and experiences of different actors involved, rather than quantifying data or testing hypotheses statistically. In the case of the British Mandate in Palestine (1920-1948), a qualitative historical study enables a nuanced exploration of British imperial strategies, the competing nationalist aspirations of Jewish and Arab communities, and the socio-political dynamics that led to conflict and shaped the region's future.

Using qualitative methods, the case study examines key events such as the issuance of the Balfour Declaration, the implementation of British administrative policies, waves of Jewish immigration, Arab opposition and revolts, and the eventual termination of the Mandate. It highlights the lived experiences of Palestinians and Jewish settlers, the political maneuvering by British authorities, and the broader geopolitical context of post-World War I imperialism and global instability. This interpretive approach helps reveal how British governance, with its conflicting obligations to Jewish and Arab populations, generated tensions that culminated in violence and enduring conflict, offering insights into the historical roots of the Israeli-Palestinian dispute (Shvangiradze, 2024).

Exploratory research is essential in this context because the British Mandate period involves complex, multifaceted phenomena that require investigation to identify key themes, patterns, and relationships. Given the overlapping political promises, demographic changes, and socio-economic transformations, exploratory research helps uncover how British policies affected different communities and how those communities responded. It allows researchers to frame pertinent questions about governance, legitimacy, migration, and resistance in a setting where multiple narratives and interests intersect.

Explanatory research is equally important to clarify causal relationships and understand why certain outcomes occurred, such as the escalation of Arab-Jewish

tensions, the outbreak of the 1936-1939 Arab Revolt, and the eventual partition and conflict following the Mandate's end. It seeks to explain how British administrative decisions, international diplomacy, and local nationalist movements interacted to produce the historical trajectory observed. By combining exploratory and explanatory research, scholars can both map the complexity of the Mandate period and provide reasoned interpretations of its consequences, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of the enduring challenges in the region. This approach aligns with the qualitative historical study of Mandatory Palestine, as it requires both discovery and explanation to grasp the intricate dynamics of British imperial rule and its lasting impact on Middle Eastern geopolitics (Ginat, 2018).

Country/Region	Community planted or supported by British	Purpose
Palestine	Jewish Zionist settlers	To establish a Jewish national home under British Mandate, as per Balfour Declaration (1917)
Iraq	Hashemite monarchy (King Faisal and family)	Installed as British proxies to legitimize control over the newly formed state under League of Nations mandate
Jordan(Transjordan)	Hashemite Emir Abdullah	Established as a separate state under British guidance to satisfy regional ambitions and stabilize area
Sudan	Local tribal leaders and elites under Anglo-Egyptian condominium	British indirect rule through local elites to manage vast and diverse populations

Palestine

Community planted or supported (Jewish Zionist settlers): The British, under the 1917 Balfour Declaration, supported the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine during their Mandate period (1920–1948). This policy aimed to facilitate Jewish immigration and settlement, thereby creating a loyal population base aligned with British strategic interests in the Middle East. This support was intended to secure British influence in the region and control over key routes, but it also sowed deep divisions with the Arab Palestinian population, leading to long-term conflict (Zaher, 2023).

Iraq

Community planted or supported (Hashemite monarchy: King Faisal and family): Following World War I and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the British installed the Hashemite family, particularly King Faisal I, as monarchs of Iraq under the

League of Nations mandate. This was a strategic move to legitimize British control indirectly by ruling through a local royal family perceived as acceptable to both the British and some segments of the Iraqi population. The Hashemites acted as British proxies to stabilize the new state, maintain order, and secure British geopolitical interests, especially oil resources (Revolution and War in Sudan, 2024).

Jordan (Transjordan)

Community planted or supported (Hashemite Emir Abdullah): The British established Transjordan as a separate entity under the leadership of Emir Abdullah, another Hashemite, to satisfy regional political ambitions and to create a buffer state that would stabilize the area. This arrangement allowed Britain to maintain influence over the territory without direct colonial administration, using the Hashemite leadership to manage local affairs and secure British strategic interests in the Levant (Revolution and War in Sudan, 2024).

Sudan

Community planted or supported (Local tribal leaders and elites under Anglo-Egyptian condominium): In Sudan, the British employed a policy of indirect rule, governing through traditional tribal leaders and local elites rather than direct administration. This system, known as native administration, empowered shaykhs and tribal chiefs especially in northern Sudan to maintain order and collect taxes on behalf of the colonial government. This approach was cost-effective and helped manage Sudan's vast and diverse population. The British deliberately reinforced ethnic and regional divisions, particularly between the Arabized north and the largely non-Arab south, by encouraging Islamization and Arabization in the north while supporting Christian missionary efforts in the south. The "Southern Policy" further segregated southern Sudan into numerous tribal chiefdoms, limiting political unity and development. This divide-and-rule strategy ensured British control but planted the seeds for post-independence ethnic tensions and civil wars (Zaher, 2023).

Critical Analysis

Historical and Ethical Perspective the idea that land inherently belongs to its original inhabitants reflects a principle of indigenous rights and historical continuity. From this viewpoint, the people who have lived on and cultivated a land over generations develop deep cultural, social, and spiritual ties to it. Their claim is rooted not only in physical occupation but also in identity, heritage, and stewardship. This principle challenges the legitimacy of claims made by groups who arrive later whether through migration, colonization, or settlement especially when those arrivals displace or marginalize the original inhabitants. The ethical argument here emphasizes justice, self-determination, and respect for historical occupancy. Political and legal complexities However, in practice, the question of land ownership and sovereignty is rarely straightforward. History is full of examples where populations have migrated, settled, and established new communities, sometimes peacefully and other times forcibly. Borders and ownership have shifted through conquest, treaties, colonization, and legal framework

For example, the British Mandate in Palestine facilitated Jewish immigration based on historical and religious claims, as well as international agreements. This migration led to conflict with the Arab Palestinians who had lived there for centuries. Both groups claim legitimate ties to the land, making the issue deeply complex.

Similarly, many modern states are multi-ethnic and multi-religious, formed through waves of migration and political change. The principle that land “belongs only to original inhabitants” can clash with realities of nation building, state sovereignty, and international law.

Practical Implications and Conflicts

When the principle is applied rigidly, it can lead to exclusionary nationalism or ethnic chauvinism, potentially justifying the displacement or denial of rights to newer residents or minorities. Conversely, ignoring historical ties and the rights of indigenous populations can lead to injustice, loss of culture, and prolonged conflict.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a prime example where competing narratives about “who belongs” to the land fuel ongoing tensions. The same applies in other regions affected by colonialism, forced migration, or demographic shifts

While the statement holds strong moral and historical weight, especially in advocating for indigenous rights and justice, it must be balanced with recognition of complex historical realities and the need for inclusive solutions. Sustainable peace and coexistence often require acknowledging the rights and narratives of both original inhabitants and newer communities, fostering dialogue, compromise, and mutual respect.

Conclusion

The genesis of many modern Muslim states and the tensions surrounding them cannot be fully understood without recognizing the pivotal role played by external powers, particularly colonial and imperial forces. Historically, global powers such as the British Empire have sought to dominate and control Muslim-majority regions, carving up territories and imposing new political boundaries without regard for existing social, ethnic, or religious reality. This external interference disrupted longstanding political and social orders, forcing Muslim societies into survival mode as they struggled to preserve their identity and sovereignty (Robinson, 1998).

The persistent conflicts and toxic wars in many Muslim countries are largely the result of these external interventions rather than internal divisions alone. Colonial powers often employed divide-and-rule tactics, supporting certain communities or elites to maintain control, as seen in British India where the Muslim League was politically empowered to counterbalance Hindu nationalism, or in Palestine where British policies facilitated Jewish immigration to establish a Zionist homeland. Such manipulations sowed seeds of discord that have persisted long after the end of formal colonial rule (Robinson, 1998).

In essence, the tensions and conflicts in many Muslim states today are deeply rooted in the legacy of colonialism, where foreign powers imposed artificial borders, favored particular groups, and prioritized imperial interests over indigenous welfare.

Understanding this historical context is crucial to addressing the ongoing challenges faced by these nations and moving towards genuine stability and self-determination.

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