

**Analysis & Commentary**

# Why does Netanyahu refuse a ceasefire?

—Israeli Jewish’s consciousness as seen from the polls—

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In the Middle East, Ramadan, the Islamic month of fasting, began on March 11. Five months have passed since the Israeli–Gaza war began on October 7 last year, and negotiations for a temporary ceasefire by Ramadan, mediated by Qatar and Egypt, have not yet been concluded. In the middle of this month, Hamas proposed a new ceasefire that would include an exchange of detained hostages with Palestinians imprisoned in Israel, but Netanyahu rejected it as “unrealistic”. Netanyahu also said on March 17 that he would invade the southernmost city of Rafah to continue military operations against Hamas in Gaza.

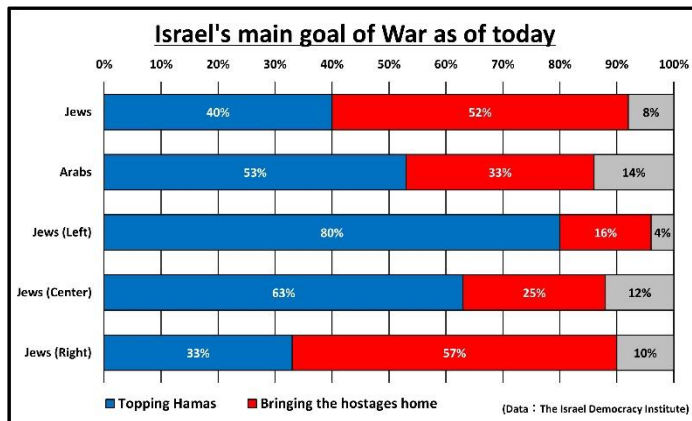
## 1. What’s Behind Netanyahu’s Bulls: Public Opinion Among Jewish Israelis

US President Joe Biden said in a television interview earlier this month that “more attention must be paid to the lives of innocent people” over the fighting in Gaza and that an Israeli military invasion of Rafah, the southernmost region of the country, was a “red line”. The US has acted in contradictory ways, including dropping humanitarian supplies into the Gaza Strip from the air but continuing to provide arms aid to Israel, saying “Israel has the right to attack Hamas.”

In response to the Biden administration, Netanyahu has said that the



war will not stop until it achieves its goal of complete victory. In response to the ceasefire negotiations with Hamas, Netanyahu reiterated in a press conference that he would destroy the Islamist movement in Palestine, saying that Israel has no choice but to destroy Hamas and that a complete victory over Hamas would be the only solution to the Gaza conflict. Continued military pressure is also needed to release the hostages, he said.

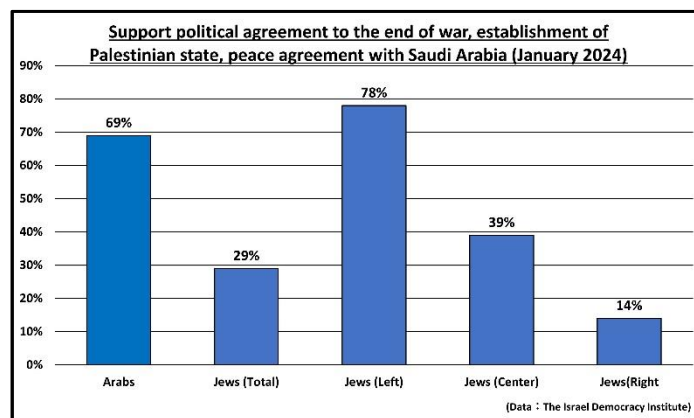


Behind Prime Minister Netanyahu's stance of continuing the war to annihilate Hamas, there is a personal reason that "He would be forced to resign as prime minister for failing to prevent Hamas attacks if there was a ceasefire, and after leaving office he would be a defendant in a corruption trial."

but other than that, there is a situation in which public opinion in the Israeli Jewish is divided between the objective of the war: the release of hostages or the annihilation of Hamas. The Israeli Democracy Institute has continuously conducted public opinion polls and published results since the beginning of the Israeli-Hamas war. Based on this, among Jewish, which accounts for about 75% of the Israeli population, half of the Israeli population supports Netanyahu's statement that the war will not stop until the annihilation of Hamas, and in particular, just under 60% of the right wing of Jewish supports it. Public opinion is divided, with 60% of the center Jewish and 80% of the left supporting the release of the hostages. (However, the attack on Hamas after the release of the hostages is not being denied.)

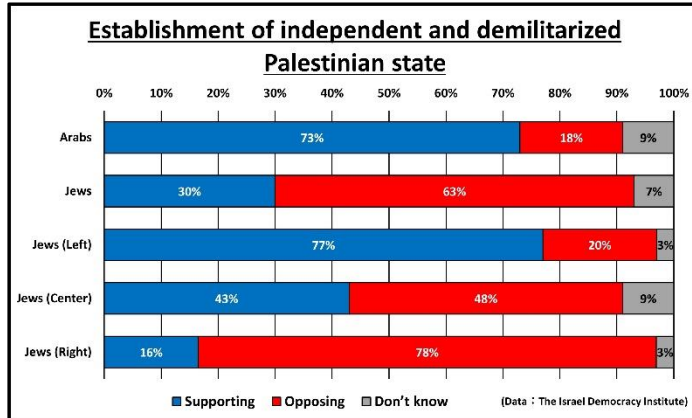
## 2. Israeli Jewish Opposes Palestinian State

Public opinion among the Jewish people of Israel is low in support of Saudi Arabia's claim that "In order to normalize diplomatic relations with Israel, we must first allow the establishment of a Palestinian state." Fewer than 30% of Jewish support the idea of package for recognizing a Palestinian state and establishing diplomatic relations



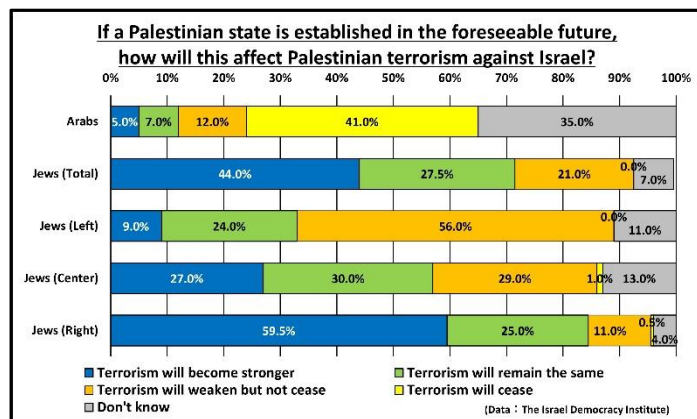
with an Arab state. 70% of Jewish opposes the establishment of a Palestinian state. Among the Israeli Jewish, only the leftists, now a political minority, want a Palestinian state and a peace treaty with a future Arab state. In the U.S.-brokered normalization talks with Saudi Arabia, the Israeli parliament

overwhelmingly rejected the idea of an independent Palestinian state in response to Saudi Arabia's demand for recognition of a Palestinian state.



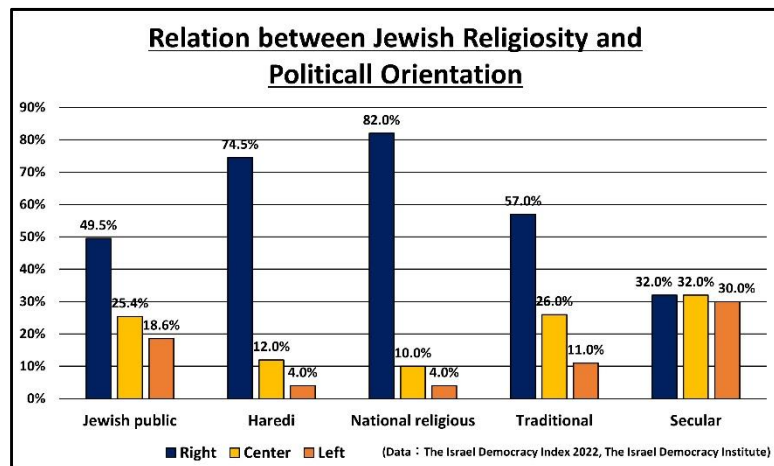
Why is Jewish so rejecting a Palestinian state? Opinion polls show that Jewish believes that the establishment of a Palestinian state will increase terrorism. 60% of Israelis on the right say that the establishment of a Palestinian state will increase terrorism against Jewish, and 25% says no change. Totally 85% of those who

are negative. Again, the views of the right and the left are opposite, with 56% of those on the left believing that a Palestinian state would reduce terrorism. The centrists are divided equally that terrorism will increase, stay the same, and decrease. As result, 44% of those on Jewish as a whole believe that terrorism will increase. Based on this negative view, no wonder they oppose the establishment of a Palestinian state.



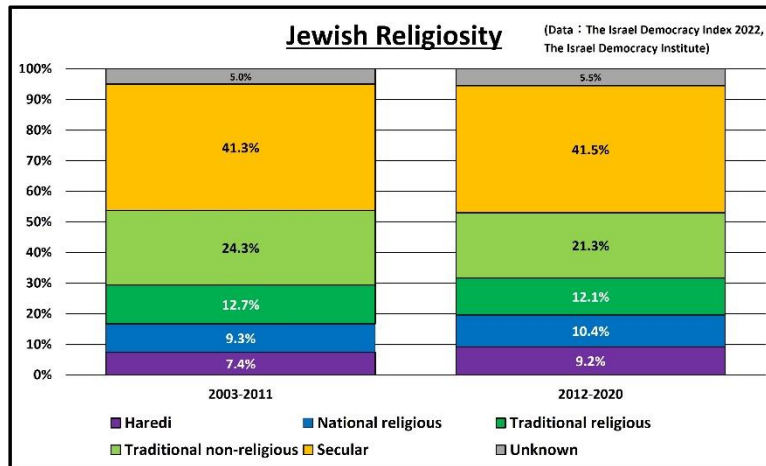
### 3. Jewish's Religiosity And Political Orientation

The 2022 edition of the Israeli Democracy Institute's annual report (The Jewish Democracy Index 2022) reports the relationship between political orientation and Jewish religiosity. Although self-reported, half of all respondents in Jewish consider themselves



"right-wing," 1/4 consider themselves "centrist," and less than 20% identify themselves as "left-

wing.” There is a relationship between this political orientation and Jewish religiosity, and the overwhelming majority of “National religious, so-called religious Zionism” and “Haredi (ultra-Orthodox)” Jews identify themselves as right-wing. More than half of “Traditional (religious and non-religious)”, which are around 35% of Jewish, identify themselves as right-wing. Majority, more than

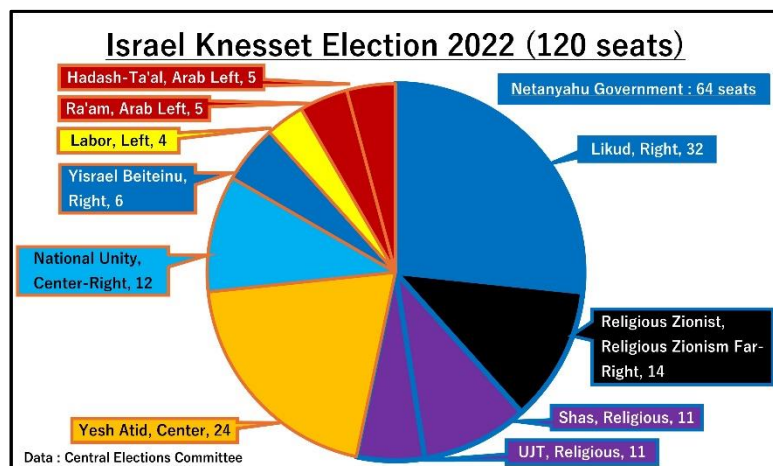


40%, of Jewish are “Secular” and they are equally divided to three political orientations. In the past 10 years or so, the percentage of “Secular” has not changed, but the number of “Traditional” has gradually decreased, and the number of “Haredi (ultra-Orthodox)” and

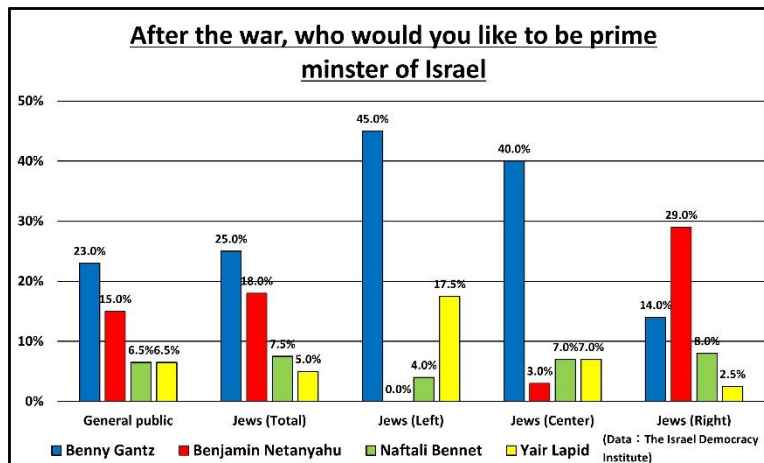
“religious Zionists” has increased.

#### 4. Whether The Next Prime Minister Is Netanyahu Or Not Netanyahu, Will Israel Remain The Same?

The current Netanyahu government is still in power through a coalition of religious Zionist and ultra-Orthodox parties, as the right-wing Likud party, headed by Netanyahu, cannot win a majority. It is widely regarded as a right-wing and far-right government, and the words and actions of ministers of the far-right parties are said to have led to growing friction between Palestinians in the Occupied Territories and division between Jewish and Arab Israelis. However, Prime Minister Netanya, who has been rejected by right-wing parties as well as center and left parties because of his repeated politically dishonest actions, cannot maintain his government without partnering with far-right parties.



Amid this situation, opinion polls show Gantz, not Netanyahu, as the “next prime minister.” Gantz has 40~45% support, especially among the center and left, while Netanyahu’s support has gone from zero to single digits. Only the right supports Netanyahu, but that still falls short of 30%. Given this,



Netanyahu is not surprised to think that "We must avoid a general election now."

However, even if other than Netanyahu is the next prime minister, Israel's line will not change unless the Jewish public opinion shows a significant change. This unexpected huge success

"October 7" Hamas raid may have reinforced the Israeli Jewish's rejection of a Palestinian state. Since its founding in 1948, Israel has been at battle with Arab for a long time with the Four Middle East Wars with Arab states until 1973 and the ongoing struggle against the PLO and other non-state Arab armed groups. Israel has been at war with Egypt and other Arab countries between regular armed forces, which resulted in thousands of deaths, but in the struggle against non-state armed groups since the 2000s, only a few people on the Israeli side have died and only a few civilians have

died. But, in the "October 7" attack, there were more than 1300 civilian casualties on the Israeli side, which is unparalleled. The shock of the massive number of victims reminded Jewish of the Russian "pogrom" (collective persecution against Jewish) in the early

Middle East War	Deaths on the Israeli	Deaths on the Arab states/Palestine
1948 Palestine war 14 May 1948~20 July 1949	6,080	4,000 (Egypt, Jordan, Syria)
Suez Crisis 29 Oct. 1956~7 Nov. 1956	172 (+ UK/France 32)	1,650~3,000 (Egypt)
Six-Days War 5 June 1967~10 June 1967	776~983	11,496~18,200 (Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq)
War of Attrition 1 July 1967~7 Aug. 1970	694~1,424	5,748~12,866 (Egypt, PLO, Jordan, USSR, Cuba, Syria)
Yom Kippur War 6 Oct. 1973~25 Oct. 1973	2,521~2,800	8,487~18,987 (Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Morocco, Cuba)
Lebanese Civil War 13 Apr. 1975~13 Oct. 1990		
2006 Lebanon War 12 July 2006~14 Aug. 2006	121	279~629 (Hizbollah, Others) (+Lebanese citizens 1,191)
2006 Gaza-Israel Conflict 28 June 2006~26 Nov. 2006	11 (inc. 6 civilians)	402(inc. 117 civilians) (Fatah, Hamas, Others)
Gaza War (2008-2009) 27 Dec. 2008~18 Jan. 2009	13 (inc.3 civilians)	1,166~1,417(inc. many civilians) (Hamas, Others)
2014 Gaza War 8 July 2014~26 Aug. 2014	73 (inc. 6 civilians)	2,125~2,130(44~70% civilians) (Hamas, Others)
Israel-Hamas War 7 Oct. 2023~	1,410 (inc. 764 civilians)	over 30,228 (majority were civilians) (Hamas, Others) (plus 382 in West Bank)

(Data : Wikipedia, other public source)

19~20 century and the Nazi "Holocaust" in the 20 century, resulting in excessive counterattacks. On the other hand, today's Israeli invasion of Gaza resulted in more than 30,000 victims and large numbers of refugees. This tragedy reminded Palestinians of the "Nakba" of 1948. The grudge between Jewish and the Palestinians only grew.

## 5. Is There A Physical Basis For A "Two-State Solution" On The Palestinian Issue?

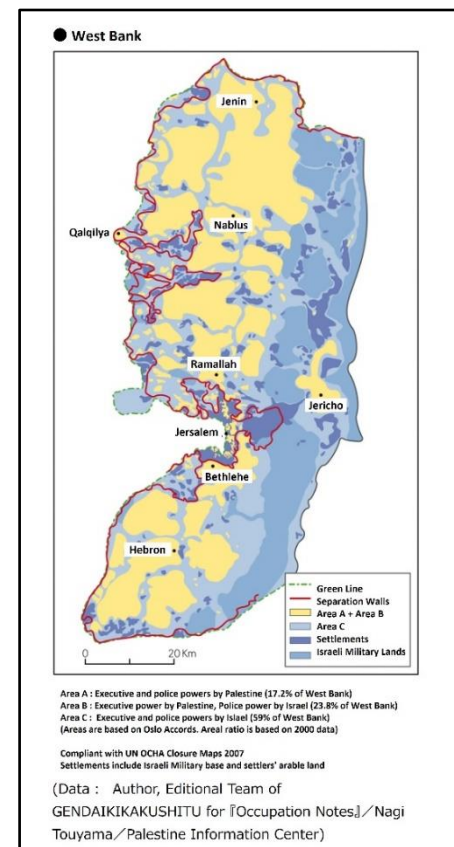
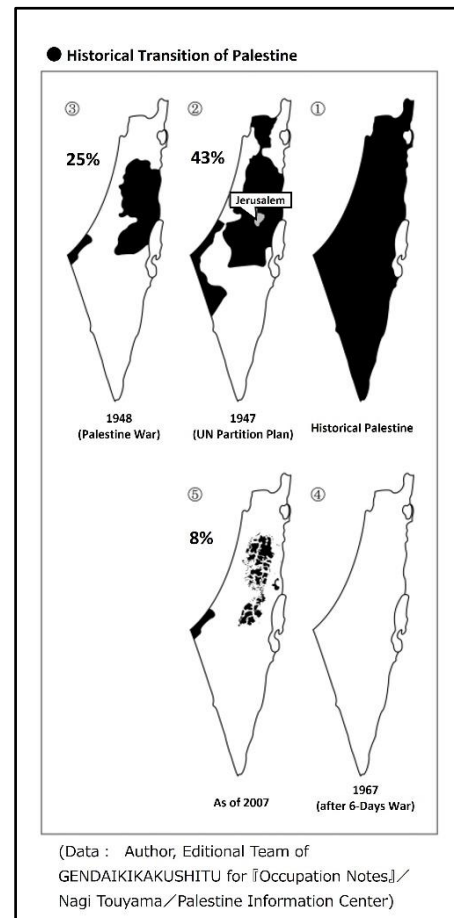
Although the Oslo Accords were agreed upon between Israel and the PLO in 1993 as a way to solve the Palestinian problem, the establishment of a Palestinian state, which was aimed beyond that, has not been achieved yet. The "two-state solution," which aims at "the peaceful and secure



coexistence of Israel and a future independent Palestinian state," was proposed by the United Nations in 1974 based on UN General Assembly Resolution 194 of 1948. The territory of a Palestinian state assumed by many parties is the "green line" West Bank and Gaza Strip under the 1949 Ceasefire Agreement. However, the current Israeli-occupied West Bank is divided into Area A where the Palestinian Authority has executive and police powers, and Area B where the Palestinian Authority has executive and Israeli forces have police powers, and Area C where the Israeli army has both executive and military powers. In addition, there is the settlement of Jewish, which continues to expand and is said to house 710,000 Jewish settlers. As a result, Area C and settlements exceed 60% of the West Bank, and the effective land ratio between Israel and Palestine is 92:8 as of today.

Looking at the transition from the time when all of Palestine was under the British Mandate and Trust Territory prior to the establishment of Israel, since the "Peel Partition Plan" of 1937, the ratio of the area of the Jewish State to the Arab State was 57:43 according to the UN General Assembly Resolution 181 (Resolution on the Partition of Palestine) of 1947, and the ratio of the area of the "Green Line" according to the Ceasefire Agreement of 1949 was 75:25. This is now 92:8 as of today. Given that the population of both sides is roughly the same as 9.5 million in Israel (including Arabs) and 9.62 million in Palestine (including 6.37 million refugees to be returned), there is no physical basis for a Palestinian state unless the territory is at least "Green Line" land. However, Israel will never make concessions to return the entire occupied territory, including settlements.

If the international community wants a "two-state solution" and a Palestinian state as a "two-state solution" is to be realized as acceptable, the international community must force Israel to return the occupied territories. Without this, a "two-state solution"



would only force the Palestinian people to ratify the status quo, and would the Palestinian people be satisfied with that?

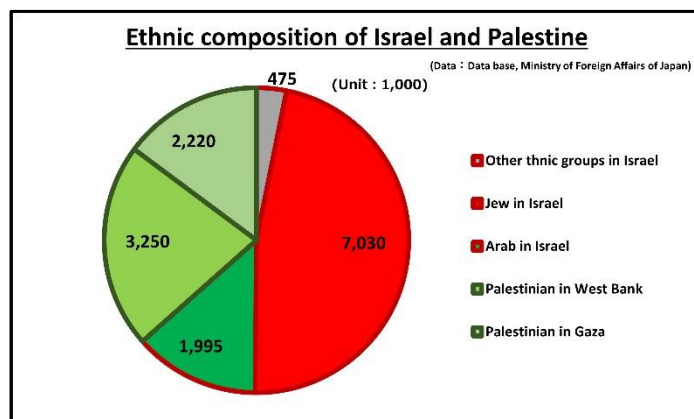
## 6. Is It Possible To Achieve A "One-state, Two-Ethnic Solution"?

Considering the reality of the situation, the land of Palestine and Israel are moving toward a "one state, two ethnics solution". It means that all of the Palestinian land currently controlled by Israel is annexed by the Israelis, and Jewish and Arabs (Palestinians) shall live in a country called Israel. (Even if only a little land is given to Palestinian state.)

In Israel, which does not have a written constitution, the Israeli Declaration of Independence in 1948 replaced the constitution, and basic laws are set for each field. The Declaration of Independence states that Israel "it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex" and that "to the Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel to preserve peace and participate in the upbuilding of the State on the basis of full and equal citizenship and due representation in all its provisional and permanent institutions". In the Declaration of Independence, Israel describes itself as a "Democracies" where full equality and representation are guaranteed to all its inhabitants. On the other hand, Netanyahu's government enacted the Basic Law: Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish People, in 2018. It stated that "The State of Israel is the national home of the Jewish people" and "The right to exercise national self-determination in the State of Israel is unique to the Jewish people." making Hebrew the only official language, and removing Arabic, which had been an official language along with Hebrew, from the list of official languages. When the Nation-State Law was enacted, Arab residents of Israel objected, saying, "a law stating that Jewish's dominance is the foundation of the system, and that Arabs will always be "second-class citizens"".

The Jewish current Israeli population is about 9.5 million, of which about 25% are non-Jewish, including Arabs. Even at this point, Israel is not a single-nation state. There are Arab political parties in Israel, and they seat in parliament. Nevertheless, the majority of Israelis are Jewish, and Jewish is controlling the

state. But as religious Zionists want, when Israel annexed the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, Palestinians living here will become citizens of Israel. The "Greater Israel" of "one state, two ethnics" have emerged, and at that time the ratio of Jewish and Palestinians living in the "Greater Israel" is about 7 million each, roughly 50/50.



If Israel were a democracy, it would not be able to treat Palestinians differently, and it would give all its citizens equal rights, such as suffrage as it does now. At that time, the composition of the members of the National Assembly could change drastically. On the other hand, if the state of Jewish insists on adhering to the Nation-State Law, it will deprive the rights of ethnic groups other than Jewish and implement an "apartheid" policy based on racist ideology. In either case, there is a great contradiction in terms of "one state, two ethnics."

The first Israeli prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, is said to have pointed out that there are three elements to the Israeli state identity: a "Jewish state," a "Democracies," and "possession of all occupied territory (including the West Bank and the Gaza Strip)". Based on these identities, he is said to have pointed out that the Israel can choose two of these, but not all three. Whether to return the occupied territories to Palestine according to "two states solution", to make "one state, two ethnics" democracies without Jewish domination, or establish "one state, two ethnics" Jewish state without democracy. (Ben-Gurion, who had left office as prime minister, was in favor of the return of all occupied territory after the Third Middle East War, except Jerusalem, the Golan Heights and Mount Hebron.)



If there is a way to get all of three, isn't there only a way to carry out ethnic cleansing, excluding all Palestinians from "Greater Israel"?

## **7. The Separation Wall, The Fait Accompli And Entrenchment Of Division, And The Retreat Of Peace**

The West Bank and Gaza Strip are now surrounded by a separation wall built by Israel, which did not exist at the outset. Old Palestinians say they had relative freedom of movement for some time after Israel captured both areas in the Yom Kippur War. According to the analysts, the freedom of movement of Palestinians in the occupied territories was gradually restricted, which is divided into the following categories:.

1. Open Bridge Policy (1967~1973?)
  - Relatively free movement was possible.
2. Iron Fist Policy (1977~1993?)
  - The Camp David Accords effectively ended the Palestinian issue as a war between nations.



- Terrorism by non-state armed groups such as the PLO and collective punishment against them by Israel.
  - From the First Intifada to the Oslo Accords.
3. Separation Policy (Hafrada) (2000~)
- 2nd Intifada.
  - Construction of the West Bank separation wall (2002~)
  - Rise of Hamas. Israel withdrawal from Gaza, blockade of Gaza, and repeated Gaza conflict.

Since 2002, the separation wall has been built around the West Bank and the settlement of Jewish in the West Bank, with the Israeli aim of "preventing suicide bombings" by Palestinian militant groups. The Israeli government says that the construction of the separation wall has significantly reduced the number of Palestinian suicide bombings of Israeli citizens (from 47 cases 238 deaths in 2002, to 2 cases 1 death in 2008).

In addition to ensuring the safety of Israeli citizens, there are indications

that the separation wall has entered the Green Line and surrounded the settlement of Jewish, thereby "making the settlement of Jewish a fait accompli". Furthermore, the existence of the separation wall has divided the lives of Palestinians, and a resolution was passed by the UN General Assembly in 2003 to condemn the construction of the wall as unfair discrimination. The International Court of Justice also stated in 2004 that the construction of the separation wall violated international law. Despite these concerns and condemnations from the international community, Israel proceeded with the construction of the separation wall.

Although the separation wall has been criticized for violations of Palestinian human rights and the establishment of a fait accompli in the settlement of Jewish, the separation wall also may have served to completely cut off little exchanges and spiritual ties between Jewish and Palestinians that overcome ethnic and religious differences. This separation wall may have made Palestine more invisible in Israel. It can be assumed that invisible of Palestine accelerated the retreat of efforts toward peace by promoting a rightward shift in the country represented by religious Zionists, who claim that the Palestinians do not exist in Israel and insisting on Jewish priority.



Photo : Wikipedia, Author Dirk D.

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**Referenced Poll**

The Israel Democracy Institute : <https://en.idi.org.il/>

(End)

Keyword:

#Israel-Gaza War, #Palestinian Issue, #Palestine, #Gaza, #Hammas, #Israel, #Netanyahu, #Jews,  
#Jewish, #Palestinians, #Ceasefire, #Ultra-Orthodoxy, #Religious Zionism, #Two-State Solution, #One  
Nation, Two Ethnic, #West Bank, #Separation Wall, #Jewish Settlement

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