

Let us look briefly at these myths-and the realities:

Myth One:

Zionist acceptance of the United Nations Partition Resolution of November 29, 1947, was a far-reaching compromise by which the Jewish community abandoned the concept of a Jewish state in the whole of Palestine and recognized the right of the Palestinians to their own state. Israel accepted this sacrifice because it anticipated the implementation of the resolution in peace and cooperation with the Palestinians. My research suggests that it was actually only a tactical move in an overall strategy. This strategy aimed first at thwarting the creation of a Palestinian Arab state through a secret agreement with Abdallah of Transjordan, whose annexation of the territory' allocated for a Palestinian state was to be the first step in his dream of a Greater Syria. Second, it sought to increase the territory assigned by the UN to the Jewish state.

Myth Two:

The Palestinian Arabs totalIy rejected partition and responded to the call of the mufti of Jerusalem to launch an all-out war on the ecwish state, forcing the Jews to depend on a military solution. This was not the whole story. While the mufti was, indeed, fanatical in his opposition to partition, the majority of Palestinian Arabs, although also opposed, did not respond to his call for a holy war against Israel. On the contrary, prior to Israe1's Declaration of Independence on May 14, 1948, many Palestinian leaders and groups made efforts to reach a modus vivendi. It was only Ben-Gurion's profound opposition to the creation of a Palestinian state that undermined the Palestinian resistance to the mufti's call.

Myth Three:

The flight of the Palestinians from the country, both before and after the establishment of the state of Israel, came in response to a call by the Arab leadership to leave temporarily, in order to return with the victorious Arab armies. They fled despite the efforts of the Jewish leadership to persuade them to stay. In fact, the flight was prompted by Israel's political and military leaders, who believed that Zionist colonization and statehood necessitated the "transfer" of Palestinian Arabs to Arab countries.

Myth Four

All of the Arab states, unified in their determination to destroy the newborn Jewish state, joined together on May 15, 1948, to invade Palestine and expel its Jewish inhabitants. My research indicates that the Arab states aimed not at liquidating the new state, but rather at preventing the implementation of the agreement between the Jewish provisional government and Abdallah for his Greater Syria scheme.

Myth Five

The Arab invasion of Palestine on May 15, in contravention of the UN Partition Resolution, made the 1948 war inevitable. The documents show that the war was not inevitable. The Arabs had agreed to a last-minute American proposal for a three-month truce on the condition that Israel temporarily postpone its Declaration of Independence. Israel's provisional government rejected the American proposal by a slim majority of 6 to 4.

Myth Six

The tiny, newborn state of Israel faced the onslaught of the Arab armies as David faced Goliath: a numerically inferior, poorly armed people in danger of being overrun by a military giant The facts and figures available point to a different situation altogether. Ben-Gurion himself admits that the war of self-defense lasted on]y four weeks, until the truce of June 11, when huge quantities of arms reached the country. Israel's better trained and more experienced armed forces then attained superiority in weapons on land, sea, and air.

Myth Seven

Israel's hand has always been extended in peace, but since no Arab leaders have ever recognized Israel's right to exist, there has never been anyone to talk to. On the contrary, from the end of World War II to 1952, Israel turned down successive proposals made by Arab states and by neutral mediators that might have brought about an accommodation.

It is the purpose of this book to debunk these myths, not as an academic exercise but as a contribution to a better understanding of the Palestinian problem and to a more constructive approach to its solution.