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# Israel's Borders

## Are they "legitimate"?

### Should they be changed?

Many in the Arab world insist that the State of Israel is "illegitimate" and that, in order to be considered for "recognition", it must, at the very least, "adjust" its borders. In order to justify that insistent demand, Arab propaganda has created many myths. By dint of constant repetition, some of these myths have come to be accepted as reality.

### What are some of these myths, and what are the facts?

**Myth:** The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 changed border arrangements that had existed for centuries.

**Fact:** The borders in the Middle East were drawn arbitrarily after World War I, by Britain and France. In the spoils, Britain got Iraq and Palestine. In 1922, contrary to its mandate from the League of Nations, Britain gave the area east of the Jordan River (77% of Palestine) to the Hashemite tribes.

**Myth:** Israel has been expansionist since its establishment.

**Fact:** In 1974, Israel returned to Syria territories captured in the 1967 and 1973 defensive wars. In exchange for a peace treaty, Israel returned the vast Sinai area to Egypt, with all of its settlements, strategic installations, and economic assets. Thus, Israel proved conclusively that peace and security—not extra land—are its top priorities.

**Myth:** Judea and Samaria (also called the "West Bank") are part of Jordan.

**Fact:** The British allocated the area east of the Jordan river to the Hashemite tribes. These tribes founded a kingdom and called it Transjordan. In 1948, after the declaration of Israel's independence, the British-led Transjordanians attacked the newly-founded Jewish state and were able to occupy Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") and the eastern part of Jerusalem. They renamed themselves "Jordan" and stayed in that occupation for 19 years, until they were defeated and driven out by Israel in the 1967 Six Day War.

**Myth:** Israeli settlements in Judea and Samaria ("West Bank") are illegal, an obstacle to peace.

**Fact:** Contrary to what Arab propaganda suggests, Jordan was never sovereign in Judea-Samaria (the "West Bank"). Thus, the constantly-repeated accusation of "Israeli occupa-

tion" is pointless. Numerous international legal authorities, among them Eugene Rostow, have shown conclusively that Israel's rights in Judea-Samaria (the "West Bank") are based on international law and are further affirmed by U.N. Resolutions 242 and 338. President Reagan concluded that Jewish settlements are not illegal and that "... all people—Moslems, Jews, and Christians—are entitled to live in the West Bank."

**Myth:** Israel annexed the Golan Heights illegally and has no right to hold onto them.

**Fact:** The Golan Heights is a desolate area the size of Queens, NY. The arbitrary boundary lines drawn after World War II did place the Golan Heights in Syria. It put Israel at an impossible military disadvantage. From 1948 until Israel captured the Heights in the 1967 Six-Day War, Syria subjected Israeli settlements in the plains below to constant bombardment. Israel has been prepared to negotiate all issues with Syria, including the status of the Golan Heights.

**Myth:** Israel's insistence on defensible borders is unrealistic in this age of missiles and long-range bombers.

**Fact:** Israel, including Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") has an area about half the size of San Bernardino County in California. In contrast, the land area of the Arab nations is twice that of the U.S.! If Israel were to give up Judea and Samaria, it would only be nine miles (!) wide between the Arab military machine and the Mediterranean Sea. That narrow waist contains 75% of Israel's population and most of its industrial installations. Missile and bombers would not be needed. In case of attack, Israel could not mobilize and its principal population centers would be reduced to rubble within a matter of minutes.

Israel is the only victorious country in recorded history that has surrendered vast territories to the vanquished. Still, Israel is not prepared to commit suicide by yielding to propaganda and myth and by adjusting its boundaries to suit the purposes of its implacable enemies. The insistence on "adjustment" of borders is one step in the plan for its destruction. One hundred retired U.S. generals and admirals and the Joint Chiefs of Staff are agreed that Israel must retain the Jordan River as its border in order to be defensible. The solution? Sit down at the negotiating table and work out an agreement on borders, just as Israel did with Egypt. Israel has been ready for such talks for over 20 years. So far, only Egypt has finally agreed to sit down and talk to Israel. All other countries concerned consider themselves in a state of war with Israel, deny its "existence," and will not consider any talks or negotiations.

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