PARK EAST HIGH SCHOOL
Purpose, Preparation, Pride

Name: _____ Date: _____

ISRAEL'S INVOLVEMENT IN WARS

A Homeland for Jews

Israel is another name for Palestine. Remember, Jews lived in Palestine for thousands of years. When Palestine was taken by the Romans, the Jews moved to other parts of the world. During World War II, Hitler killed six million Jews. The killing of the Jews by Hitler is called the Holocaust. After the war, many Jews needed a homeland. They wanted Palestine.

In 1947, the United Nations said that one part of Palestine should be a homeland for Jews. In 1948, the nation of Israel became that homeland. The United States supported Israel as a protected homeland for Jews who had been persecuted in other countries.

Jews and Arabs Fight over Palestine

In 1948, however, the Arabs and Jews in Israel began to fight. Many Arabs left Israel. These refugees went to Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and other countries. After the war, these refugees wanted to return to Israel. But Israel refused. Some of these refugees made a group called the Palestine Liberation Organization (the PLO). The PLO is called a terrorist group because it makes small attacks on Israeli towns and settlements. The PLO wants to get Israel back for the Arabs.

Enemies of Israel

In addition to the PLO, other Arab countries are enemies of Israel. Between 1948 and 1973, Israel fought four wars with Arab neighbors. Israel defeated its enemies all four times. Israel also took more land. It also took over the city of Jerusalem, which is a sacred city for three religious groups - Jews, Moslems and Christians.

To fight the Israelis, the Arab countries used oil as a weapon. They stopped selling oil to Israel's friends. But in 1979, Anwar Sadat, President of Egypt, made peace with Israel. Some Arabs thought Sadat was a traitor to the Arab countries.

Trouble in Lebanon

Lebanon, to the north of Israel, also has a lot of fighting. One reason is that the Christian and Moslem people in Lebanon do not get along. There is a civil war in Lebanon today. Another reason is the refugees from Palestine. For more than 30 years, PLO guerrillas have come to Lebanon. From Lebanon they attacked Israel. When Israel retaliated against the PLO guerrillas in Lebanon, it hurt the Lebanese people too. So Syria sent soldiers to Lebanon to try for peace. The United Nations sent soldiers too. But Lebanon is still in turmoil today.

Questions:

1. When and why was the state of Israel created? _____
2. Why did the creation of Israel lead to conflict/war with the Arabs? _____
3. What was the aim of the PLO? _____
4. Why is the PLO considered a terrorist organization? _____
5. Describe the purpose and weapons of terrorists? _____
6. What issues and events have increased the turmoil and unrest in the Middle East? _____
7. What could be done by either side to ease tensions and reduce terrorism? _____