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Contemporary Conflicts in Light of the Cold War
Summer Workshop. . UCSB . . August 2-6

The Great Powers' Geopolitical Interest in the State of Israel (90 minute version)

General Goals:

- For students to develop general knowledge about the history of the Cold War and the asymmetrical relationships of power between its main and minor actors.
- For students to acquire skills in identifying and analyzing arguments, rhetorical methods of argumentation, and value of a close reading of documents.
- For students to acquire skills in developing research topics, theses, ways of argumentation, source use, and other research skills.

Objectives:

- For students to understand the history of the creation of Israel and its effects on the Middle East.
- For students to analyze the creation of Israel as an episode in the Cold War and its relationship to American and Soviet geopolitical interests.
- For students to analyze how the current United States support of Israel is rooted in its post-Sept 11 geopolitical interest, with special attention to combating terrorism and the war in Iraq.
- Develop research topics based on material.

College Course Level:

- Upper Division course on the History of the Cold War, 20th World History, United States 20th Century Foreign Policy.

Time Structure:

- 90 Minutes

Materials:

Readings for background and context:

Charles D. Smith, Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 4th Edition, 181-206.

Gabriel Gorodetsky, "The Soviet Union's Role in the Creation of the State of Israel," *The Journal of Israeli History*, 22:1, 4-20.

Readings for in-class discussion:

Speech by Soviet Ambassador to the United Nations Andrei Gromyko, May 14, 1947.

Memorandum by the Presidents Special Counsel (Clifford) to President Truman, March 8, 1948.

Michael Elliott "Facing Reality: George Bush gambled that overthrowing Saddam without the U.N.'s help and boxing out Arafat would pay big dividends." *Time*, Sept 22, 2003.

Pre-class Preparation:

Students and the instruction are to read the materials before class and prepare to discuss the following questions distributed a week in advance.

- What are Gromyko's main arguments for the creation of the State of Israel?
- What are Clifford's main arguments for the creation of the State of Israel? How do these arguments relate to the United States geopolitical interests in the region?
- Turning to current US policy toward Israel and the Middle East: Compare Clifford's reason for supporting the creation of Israel in 1948 to the current administration's goals as stated in Elliott's article?
- Compare and contrast the American and Soviet views. What rhetorical devices do they use to justify their positions? What do they say about how both the US and USSR sees themselves as great powers and their place in the world?
- Where do US geopolitical aspirations in the current policy represent a continuum and a break from those in the past? What challenges does the US face now as compared to the Cold War?

Talking Points:

- Speak to the importance of conducting close readings of documents and stress how attention to words, rhetorical devices of argumentation, tone, and structure can reveal the mentality of the author.
- Speak to the value of comparative analysis of documents from two historical periods to understand their continuity and divergence.

Activities:

- Brief overview of key terms, concepts, and questions to the instructor. (10-15 min.)
 - Balfour Declaration
 - British Mandate

- Zionist Movement
 - United Nation's Special Committee on Palestine (UNCSOP)
 - Morrison-Grady Committee
 - McMahon-Hussein Correspondence
 - Etc. . .
- Group discussion on questions. (50 min)

Students are placed into 3 groups to discuss above questions. The instructor will roam to each group. At the end of discussion, each group is to produce a research topic based on their discussion. These will be presented to the class.

Assessment: (20 min.)

Using the dialogue from the small group discussions, the entire class will discuss each group's research topics with attention to possible sources, subtopics, theses, and methods of argumentation.