



Is the new movie, "Beavis and Butthead Do America," equal to the television exploits of the dynamic duo? Let us know.



# OPINION

editorials, letters, commentary and perspective

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## Middle East problems require understanding

### BACKGROUND

■ **1948:** Israel officially becomes an independent state. Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Jordan immediately declare war on Israel. During the war, most of the Palestinian territory comes under Israeli control.

■ **1967:** Israel launches a preemptive strike on the neighboring Arab nations. Israel gains complete control of Jerusalem and Hebron.

■ **1982:** Israeli forces mount a large invasion of Lebanon in retaliation for attacks by the PLO.

■ **1987:** Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza rise up in protest of Israeli rule. Clashes between Israeli soldiers and Palestinians lead to casualties on both sides in the riots known as the Intifada.

■ **1993:** Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) sign a historic peace agreement. This paves the way toward the eventual self-rule of the Palestinians in the occupied territories.

■ **1995:** Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin is assassinated by Yigal Amir, an Israeli angered by the peace process.

### OUR OPINION:

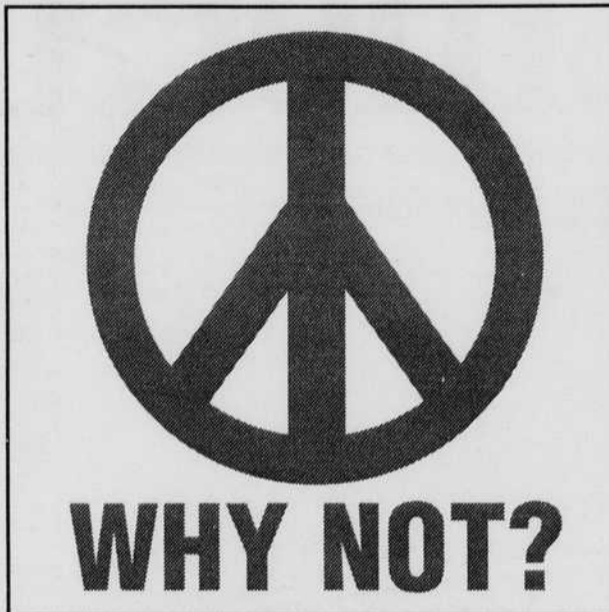
*Solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is harder than it appears*

What happens when half a century of fighting and bad blood are squeezed into a space of land no bigger than the state of New Jersey? The Israeli-Palestinian conflict for one thing. Once again, after it looked like peace was close only a few years ago, these two enemies seem to be heading toward another violent eruption. With mistrust and frustration growing on both sides, many people in the United States and the rest of the world are wondering why peace in the Middle East has become such an elusive goal. After all, many Americans reason, if we can get along with our neighbors, why can't they?

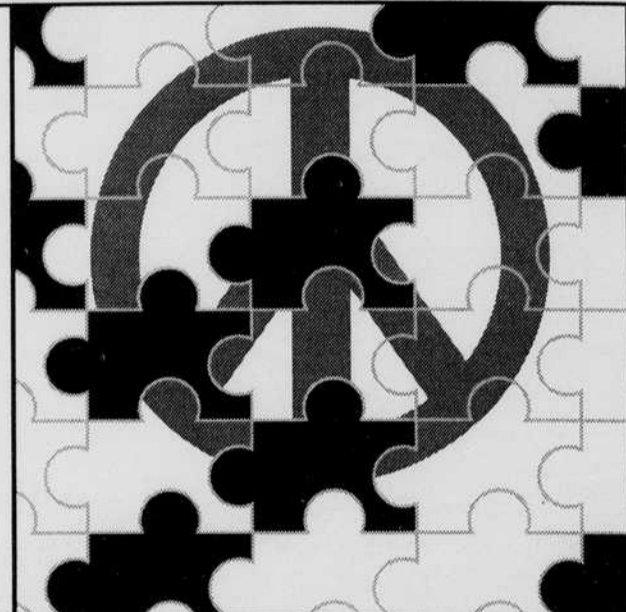
The current conflict in Israel revolves around the city of Hebron—a city of biblical importance both for religious Jews and Muslims. The Palestinians controlled Hebron up until the Six Day War in 1968, at which point the Palestinians lost the city to Israeli forces. Under former Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Israel agreed to give Hebron back over to Palestinian control in an effort to establish peace with the Palestinians.

However, after Rabin was assassinated, conservative Benjamin Netanyahu became prime minister and negotiations with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat came to an almost screeching halt. Netanyahu has engaged in a far more cautious approach to dealing with the Palestinians and has delayed the Israeli pull-out from Hebron. This has led to rising tensions on both sides, most recently from a retired Israeli soldier shooting at a crowd of Palestinians in Hebron. In response, violent Palestinian organizations have threatened violent attacks on Israel, putting yet another snag in the peace process.

Around the world, and in the United States especially, it is easy to pass



America's perception.



The reality.

CHRIS HUTCHINSON/Emerald

judgment on both the Israelis and the Palestinians. Why can't they just sign on the dotted line and get on with the peace process already? The U.S. government has continued to push for a quick solution to the Hebron situation. What people don't seem to understand is how complicated the entire Israeli-Palestinian conflict really is and how impractical a "quick fix" solution would be.

If the U.S. government vows peace with Canada, we can assume there will be peace with Canada. The chances of some militia group organizing an attack on Canadian soil without the government being able to stop them are pretty slim, because in the United States, the government is in complete control of its foreign policy. The same can not be said for many nations in the Middle East.

Take the Palestinians for example. Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) are the recognized leaders of the Palestinian people. Under the PLO leadership, the Palestinians have promised

peace with Israel if the country honors the agreements it made under Rabin's government. Unfortunately, under the PLO is an equally powerful organization—the terrorist group Hamas—which has made it clear that as long as the state of Israel exists they will rain violence on the people. So even if Arafat is serious in his intentions for peace, there is no guarantee it will happen.

On the other side of the coin, recent events clearly show the Israeli government is not in complete control of its people, either. While the Israeli government works for peace, ultra-religious sects have claimed a higher responsibility toward God in violating Israeli foreign policy with attacks on Palestinians. This forces each government to be very hesitant about giving up strategic pieces of land that could sacrifice the security of its people.

While it is admirable to want to see Israelis and Palestinians finally achieve peace, people have to understand that peace isn't as easy as it may

sound. In the United States, we have become spoiled with security. We just expect that our government will be able to protect us from any foreign threat. After all, the last war fought on our own soil was the Civil War, over 100 years ago. It's easy for us to ask the Israelis and the Palestinians to take a chance and trust each other. What do we have to lose? We know we'll be safe no matter what happens. For the people in the Middle East, it's a little bit harder. Rushing into an agreement without first making sure the people of each nation will honor it could be a catastrophic mistake leading to the loss of more innocent lives.

Instead of placing unrealistic expectations on the Palestinians and the Israelis, we should be patient with the peace process and understand how complicated it really is. Only when we understand how difficult peace will be can we truly work towards achieving it.

*This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board.*

## Oregon Daily Emerald

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## The Drawing Board



### CORRECTION

In the Jan. 9 edition of the Emerald, an article stated that the Student Senate's endorsements of two resolutions will now go to the University Senate. The sentence should have specified that the Student Senate endorsed the recommendations, which may or may not go to the University Senate.