U.S & Israel Part II

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What is the issue?

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- The UN resolution condemning settlement activity was passed with the hope that the vote would push towards the two-state solution.
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- Following the resolution the door opens to a full criminal investigation into Israeli excesses.
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What was the initial stand of U.S?

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- In 1967, Israel seized the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip — parts of Palestine that had been outside its control.
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- The UNSC passed a series of resolutions within the next decade, asking Israel to withdraw from this land and to desist from building settlements on the occupied territory.
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- The U.S., which had already become the shield for Israel, abstained from the major resolutions.
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- It was on this occupied territory that it was then assumed that a Palestinian state would be built.
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- The two-state solution is premised on Israeli withdrawal from this land occupied in 1967.

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- That is why the UN has periodically returned to censure Israel for its ongoing occupation and the violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention i.e the construction of settlements on occupied land.
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- The first major UN resolution to define the terms of the Israeli occupation was sponsored by the UK and passed in November 1967 with unanimous approval.
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- Even when the administrations in Washington defended Israel's annexationist policies the U.S. did not veto to defend the settlements.
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Why did the U.S vetoing?

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- The Oslo Accords 1994 put in place the possibility of a Palestinian state.
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- But Israel continues to eat into the potential Palestinian state.
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- This negative approach to the 'peace process' means that Israel is committed to a permanent occupation of the Palestinians i.e Greater Israel (Eretz Israel).
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- Four years after Oslo, the international community passed the Rome Statute for the establishment of the ICC.
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- It was this ICC, rather than the Oslo Accords that increased the vetoes exercised by the U.S. in the UNSC to protect Israel.
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- The Israeli establishment worried that the ICC would legitimately turn its gaze on issues such as population transfer and war crimes.
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- The vetoes from Washington prevented any legal foundation for ICC action against Israel.
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- U.S. justified that the resolution would not further the negotiations but Israel would lash out against the Palestinians.
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How the resolution enables ICC?

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- Palestine is a recognized state in the UN as of 2012.
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- It is a member of the ICC since 2014.
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- In January 2015, the ICC opened a preliminary investigation into Israel's actions during the 2014 bombing of Gaza and into the illegal settlements.
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- It has since made it clear that it would not move forward to a full criminal investigation without substantial clarity from the UNSC.
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- The current resolution (2334) produces the political will for such a move by the ICC.
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- With this resolution now in force, the ICC could move in the next few months to a rigorous investigation of Israeli criminality.
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- This would threaten the settlers in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.
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- It would also pressure Israeli soldiers to refuse to serve in any future criminal bombardment of Gaza.
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Source: The Hindu

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