

VOL. 11 ISSUE 2 | SPRING 2017

*in*FOCUS

QUARTERLY

SIX DAYS AND FIFTY YEARS



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Featuring an Interview with **Michael Oren**, Deputy Minister for Public Diplomacy

LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

In 1945, the dazed remnants of European Jewry crawled out of charnel houses, basements and forests. Six million Jews had been killed in the Holocaust; one-third of all Jews. Less than two decades later, the three million Jews of Israel faced a declared determination by Egypt to marshal its allies and finish the job. Israelis believed it could happen – rabbis debated the religious implications of mass graves. But in six days of war, Israel's military muscle and equal determination to control the fate of its people decimated Arab armies on three sides, acquired vast stretches of territory it did not seek and large numbers of people it had not planned to rule. It also unified Jerusalem, the capital of the Jewish people and the well-spring of Jewish history and religion. Israel was a different country on June 11th than it had been on June 5th – how different was not yet clear.

Machiavelli said a country should make maximum changes in its favor at the moment of its maximum power. Most countries don't know their moment of maximum power until they look back at it. After six days plus 50 years, the earthquake of the Six Day War continues to throw off aftershocks.



The Spring 2017 issue of *inFOCUS* looks back at the war and the evolutionary trends it produced with original source material from Abba Eban, Gamal Abdel Nasser, Eugene V. Rostow, and the U.S. Department of State. Michael Bar Zohar limns Israeli politics. Herbert London offers a personal recollection with his analysis, as does Eric Rozenman. Joshua Muravchik traces the movement of the United Nations from friend and protector of Israel to increasingly hostile bane. Ehud Eilam follows Israeli and military capabilities from then until now. Guest reviewer Juliana Geran Pilon surveys *Nasser's Peace: Egypt's Response to the 1967 War with Israel*, by Michael Sharnoff.

And don't miss our interview with Israeli Member of Knesset and Deputy Minister for Diplomacy Michael Oren.

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Sincerely,

Matthew Brooks,
Executive Director

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Reflections on the Six Day War

by **HERBERT I. LONDON**

I was listening to a radio broadcast in my dormitory room at the Australian National University in Canberra. The on-air analyst said Arab troops were mobilizing for a full-scale attack. Approximately 465,000 troops, more than 2800 tanks, and 800 aircraft ringed Israel. This was half a century ago, on June 3, 1967 – two days before the war finally broke out, but it seems like yesterday to me. It was the beginning of the Six Day War. At the outset, it appeared as if the very existence of Israel was imperiled.

I recall = my dad listening intently on his old Philco radio to a vote at the United Nations 19 years earlier on the establishment of the State of Israel. When the final tally was in, my father cried. As a very young man I tried to console him, but he said these were tears of joy. “At last we are recognized.”

War broke out almost immediately, since Arab leaders refused to accept the UN decision. My dad began collecting weapons from Jews who served in World War II and had retained rifles and pistols. He wrapped the weapons in towels and sheets and deposited them in cartons ultimately delivered to ships bound for Palestine.

Now it was my turn to do something for this beloved, fledgling state of Israel. I called the Israeli Embassy in Australia and asked what I could do. An elderly gentleman said, “We will put your name on a list as a volunteer for the Israeli Defense Force.” It wasn’t much of a gesture, but it made me feel as if I had done something. By the time a ship was found and organized to deliver all volunteers like me, the war was over.

Prior to the start of war, attacks conducted against Israel by Palestinian militant groups based in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan had increased, leading to costly

Israeli reprisals. My apprehensions grew as the attacks became more organized and bloody than they had been earlier. By May 1967, President Gamal Abdel Nasser had mobilized Egyptian forces in the Sinai and closed the Gulf of Aqaba to Israeli shipping, thus effectively cutting all trade to the port city of Eilat. On May 30th, King Hussein of Jordan arrived in Cairo to sign a mutual defense pact with Egypt.

In response to the mobilization and the fear of being overrun, Israel staged a sudden preemptive air assault on June 5th that destroyed more than 90 percent of Egypt’s air force on the tarmac. A similar air assault incapacitated the Syrian air force. Without air cover, the Egyptian army was vulnerable to attack and defeat. Within three days, victory was at hand with the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) capturing the Gaza Strip, all of the Sinai Peninsula up to the east bank of the Suez

thousands of refugees and brought more than one million Palestinians in the conquered territories under Israeli rule. In 1967 the full effect of victory could not be appreciated. Israel’s military was the dominant force in the region. The Jewish people, known throughout history for their passivity, had transformed themselves into the lions of the Middle East. Borsht Belt comedians would soon contend that we should trade General Motors for General Dayan.

At the United Arab Republic National Assembly [March 26, 1964] Nasser said, “The danger of Israel lies in the very existence of Israel as it is in the present and in what she represents.” After ’67 the comment seemed hollow. Yet cries for the destruction of Israel, its eradication, still could be heard. In fact, these cries became even more shrill over time. The creation of a new

Israel, a geographic splinter in the Middle East and an obvious long-shot to survive with its rag-tag population mercilessly oppressed by the Holocaust, had been transformed from underdog to top dog.

Canal and driving Jordanian forces out of East Jerusalem and most of the West Bank. The lopsidedness of the defeat demoralized the Arab public and political elites. In Israel, there was euphoria as films of Israeli troops taking control of the Old City of Jerusalem and soldiers praying at the Wall proved to be the war’s iconic images.

■ *A New Phase of Conflict*

But the Six-Day War also marked the beginning of a new phase in the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. The conflict created hundreds of

refugee population and an enlargement of the old refugee problem exaggerated the public posture of the conquering Israeli state. Israel now ruled more than a million Palestinians, most of who were hostile to the government. Israel had secured enough territory to more than triple the size of the area it controlled, from 8,000 to 26,000 square miles.

In November 1967, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 242, which established a formula for Arab-Israeli peace. It was presumed Israel would withdraw from territories occupied in the war in exchange for



IDF soldiers arrive at the Temple Mount in the Old City of Jerusalem on June 7, 1967. (Photo: Israel Government Press Office)

recognition and peace with its neighbors. Israel was prepared for some territorial compromise, but the Arab side would not formally recognize the state of Israel and promoted war as an extension of policy. To bridge the ideological divide, Israel created a military administration in the West Bank. Authorities avoided interference with inhabitants, albeit economic assistance was given and new homes built. Arabs were given freedom of movement; they were allowed to travel to and from Jordan. In 1972, elections were held in the West Bank. Women and non-landowners, unable to participate under Jordanian rule, were now permitted to vote. East Jerusalem Arabs were given the option of retaining Jordanian citizenship or acquiring Israeli citizenship. Palestinians were recognized as residents of united Jerusalem and given the right to vote and run for the city council. Islamic holy places were retained under the care of a Muslim council. And despite the Temple Mount's significance in Jewish history, e.g. the site where Abraham offered his son Isaac to God, Jews were barred from conducting prayers there. These steps were designed to offset hostility and stabilize Israeli control. However, by the 1980s this plan was in disarray.

■ **Underdog to Top Dog**

For one thing, Israel, a geographic splinter in the Middle East and an obvious long-shot to survive with its rag-tag population mercilessly oppressed by the Holocaust, had been transformed from underdog to top dog. This psychological overhaul is not easy to understand or appreciate. Jews, escaping from the horror of Dreyfusards, did not display boastful gestures. They went about their business surviving in the shadow of public life. To be thrust into the limelight, as a military power no less, was exhilarating and difficult. Secular Jews in the U.S. prior to the '67 War were uniformly, if sometimes quietly, in favor of the Israeli state. By the 1990s this support was unraveling. In fact, in surveys conducted by the Israeli Consul General's office in New York less than half of those who responded positively to a devotion to Israel before 1967 felt the same way a decade later.

A Jewish commitment to left-wing politics placed the Palestinian question in a unique "box." The liberal Jew could be the outlier defying his political orientation or he could embrace the newly emerging view that Israel, as an occupying entity, had exploited the Palestinians through denial of their rights and territory. This latter position was reinforced

at international meetings and even in the mainstream press. Israeli overtures at compromise, even Prime Minister Ehud Barak's willingness to cede 95 percent of the West Bank to the Palestinians, never gained the same degree of political traction as the *nakba* or colonial narrative promoted by the Palestinians.

In my own vigorous challenge of the BDS movement (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) I have found that many Jewish supporters of J Street and the New Israel Fund have a well-developed sense of indignation about occupation. But the antecedents to the present territorial arrangement are often overlooked. Young Jewish battalions marching for the Palestinians are convinced that if only Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu would be more flexible, peace would be at hand.

■ **Resolution 2334 and the "Palestinian State"**

It is alarming that Fatah aims and Hamas goals are mutually compatible even if their tactics are slightly different. The Palestinian position is a nation from river to sea, from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea, in other words, a land that excludes a Jewish state. All of the verbal conjuring does not change

that proposition. In a sense, often ignored by contemporary critics of Israel, the '67 War is being fought yet again.

When the United States abstained in December on Security Council Resolution 2334, a vote that ruled Israeli control of any territory acquired in 1967 to be illegal, the stage was set for a Palestinian state without peace; 50 years of history were ignored and back room preparations by the U.S. delegation on behalf of this position indicated a dramatic shift in America's diplomatic position. The Israeli settlements, representing only a few percent of West Bank territory, had become the issue; not the last three wars launched against Israel, not the terror provoked murders of innocent children, not the instability created by Hamas and Hezbollah.

The Obama-Kerry position was designed to legalize the Green Line – the 1949 Armistice Line – as the Israeli boundary and to do so without negotiation between Palestinians and Israelis. The ghosts of '67 live in the minds of American diplomats who still view the Israeli victory in that war with the jaundiced eye of Arabists angry at Jewish success.

It is instructive that historians contend the narrative of the past is written by the victors. That was true until the Six Day War. From that June day to this one, 50 years later, a relentless undressing of events has occurred. Yes, Israel attacked first because troops were being mobilized against it. Yes, Israel needs strategic depth to withstand attacks. And yes, it is an unapologetic occupier of territory won in war.

■ *Chicken Little Wasn't Wrong*

What Palestinians cannot gain in negotiation, they hope to gain with the support of the United Nations. In 1967 there were condemnations of Israel from the General Assembly, but the U.S. remained firmly in the Israeli camp. Clearly that is not true today. The Obama administration seized on the Palestinian position, even though President Mahmoud Abbas is in his 12th year as president on a four-year term; there

isn't a viable economy; the parliament is intimidated by Hamas and the infrastructure for a state doesn't exist.

For a poor kid from a Zionist family this is very discouraging. The sky may not be falling but Chicken Little wasn't completely wrong in his predication. A United States as the bulwark in Israel's past has become an equivocal supporter. The Democratic Party of Harry Truman that promoted statehood has become a party hesitant to support Israel. Middle East studies programs are in thrall to the Palestinian position and teach the '67 War as an act of imperialism.

To make matters more confusing, Israel's putative allies may be found in Sunni Arab states far more concerned about Iranian ambitions than the occupation of the West Bank. These states do not support Israel in the UN – not yet anyway – but they have been more reliable as allies than former President Barack Obama.

Departing from 50 years of bipartisan precedent, Obama and company attempted to carve into stone the armistice lines of 1949. It is as if the '67 War never occurred and the territories weren't disputed. Secretary of State John Kerry repackaged Palestinian propaganda into UN policy. Forget negotiations, UN Resolution 2334 is questionable law from a questionable institution. It arrived as a pretext for peace as Kerry suggested, but its obvious result is a policy of war. Now, for the first time, Hamas can say it is engaged in terror to retrieve land that according to international law Israel has no claim to.

While my discouragement was palpable, the gears of history keep turning. Obama's betrayal has become an opportunity for President Donald Trump. Ambassador Nikki Haley addressed the United Nations with a stirring defense of the Israeli position, one I would describe as Moynihanesque. And on March 1, President Trump stated in unequivocal language the U.S. commitment to the state of Israel. Admittedly, it is too early to assess the level of commitment, but

after eight years of dark clouds surrounding the relationship, it is heartening to see signs the sun is peeking through.

The bearers of anti-Zionism present their bigotry as social justice. But the question remains: whose justice? If Zionist thought is the original sin, only dismantling the Jewish state can redress it. Many anti-Zionists claim that they do not oppose Judaism, only the State of Israel. Yet the main guarantor of Jewish security since the end of World War II has been the sovereign State of Israel. It wasn't born on the ashes of the Holocaust as President Obama suggested, but it is the last fortress against reenactment.

■ *Berala*

Two years ago, at Israel's 65th anniversary, I attended a ceremony for the Palmach Brigade, the legendary fighting force of Yitzhak Rabin, at a site where 144 young men are buried who died in the War for Independence. Sitting at a gravesite, I noticed that the headstone had only one name, Berala. After some research, I discovered that Berala was a teenager broken mentally and physically at Auschwitz. His family was incinerated and he had no remembrance of his own name. After being liberated from the camp, he wandered. One day a companion told him about life in a far away place called Palestine. Berala made it to this promised land. As soon as he arrived, he was recruited into a war he did not understand. He had never fired a rifle, but found himself fighting on the Jerusalem Corridor. In just two days he was killed.

One can lament a life taken too soon; one can honor a life that sacrificed so Israel could be born. Berala's blood soaks Israeli soil. As the flag was raised and Hatikvah sung, I thought about this boy. He gave his life but he received something in return: a young man without an identity got one in the newly created state of Israel. He was Berala, warrior for the Jewish people.

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The 1967 Arab-Israeli War

The Office of the Historian of the State Department

Editor's note: Written in the dry language of government, this short, official document contains several revelations, including the double-dealing of King Hussein of Jordan.

The 1967 Arab-Israeli War marked the failure of the Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson administrations' efforts to prevent renewed Arab-Israeli conflict following the 1956 Suez War. Unwilling to return to what National Security Advisor Walter Rostow called the "tenuous chewing gum and string arrangements" established after Suez, the Johnson administration sought Israel's withdrawal from the territories it had occupied in exchange for peace settlements with its Arab neighbors. This formula has remained the basis of all U.S. Middle East peacemaking efforts into the present.

■ ***The Johnson Administration and the Arab-Israeli Conflict***

Lyndon Johnson's presidency witnessed the transformation of the American role in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Until the early 1960s, the United States had adhered to the terms of the Tripartite Declaration of 1950, wherein the United States, United Kingdom, and France had pledged to prevent aggression by Middle Eastern states and oppose a regional arms race. The United States had pressed Israel to withdraw from the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip after Suez, and rejected Israeli requests for all but limited quantities of defensive weapons. By the time Johnson took office, however, U.S. policymakers concluded that this policy was no longer sustainable. Soviet arms sales to left-leaning Arab states, especially Egypt, threatened to erode Israel's military

superiority. Johnson's advisors worried that if the United States did not offset this shift in the balance of power, Israel's leaders might launch a preventive war or develop nuclear weapons.

Initially, the Johnson administration sought to convince Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser and the Soviet leadership to work toward a regional arms control regime, but neither party proved receptive. Thus, in 1965, Johnson agreed to sell Israel M48A3 tanks, followed by A-4 Skyhawk aircraft in 1966. The rationale behind these sales, as National Security Council staffer Robert Komer put it, was that "Arab knowledge that they could not win an arms race against Israel should contribute long-term to the damping down of the Arab-Israeli dispute."

However, U.S. efforts to preserve the regional balance of power were soon undermined by Fatah and other Palestinian guerilla organizations, which began attacking targets inside Israel. The Johnson administration tried to intercede with Fatah's Syrian patrons and to pre-

vent Israeli retaliation against Jordan, from which most Palestinian raids were launched. U.S. officials worried that Israeli reprisals could undermine Jordan's King Hussein, who had secretly agreed to keep Jordan's strategically crucial West Bank a buffer zone. In November 1966, when the Israelis attacked the

West Bank town of Samu', the Johnson administration voted for a United Nations Resolution condemning Israel, admonished Israeli officials, and authorized an emergency airlift of military equipment to Jordan.

While the administration's response to Samu' helped prevent further Israeli reprisals against Jordan, it failed to address the underlying problem of Palestinian cross-border attacks. By the spring of 1967, the Israelis were retaliating forcefully against Syria, whose leaders demanded that Egypt intervene on their behalf.

■ ***The Prewar Crisis***

On May 13, 1967, Soviet officials informed the Syrian and Egyptian Governments that Israel had massed troops on Syria's border. Though the report was false, Nasser sent large numbers of Egyptian soldiers into the Sinai anyway. On May 16, Egypt demanded that the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF), which had been deployed in the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip since 1957,

U.S. officials worried that Israeli reprisals could undermine Jordan's King Hussein, who had secretly agreed to keep Jordan's strategically crucial West Bank a buffer zone.

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withdraw from Israel's border. Secretary-General U Thant replied that he would have to withdraw UNEF from all its positions, including Sharm al-Shaykh, which would put political pressure on Nasser to close the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping. Nasser remained adamant, and on May 22, after UNEF withdrew,



President Lyndon Johnson and his advisors meet with Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban to discuss the crisis in the Middle East, May 26, 1967. (Photo: Yoichi Okamoto)

he announced that he would close the Straits. In 1957, President Dwight D. Eisenhower had promised that the United States would treat the closure of the Straits as an act of war. Johnson now had three unwelcome options: to renege on Eisenhower's promise, acquiesce in an Israeli attack on Egypt, or order U.S. forces to reopen the waterway.

Instead, the president played for time. He sought international and congressional support for Operation Red Sea Regatta, which called for a coalition of maritime nations to send a "probing force" through the Straits if Egypt refused to grant all nations free passage through them. Simultaneously, Johnson implored the Soviets to intercede with Nasser and urged Israeli restraint. "Israel," Johnson told Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban on May 26, "will not be alone unless it decides to go it alone." Yet over the following week, the administration failed to gain domestic or foreign backing for "Regatta." Meanwhile, Jordan joined the Arab coalition, heightening the pressure for an Israeli strike. Though Johnson continued to caution Israel against preemption, a number of the president's advisors had concluded that U.S. interests would be best served by Israel "going it alone" by the time the Israelis actually did so.

■ **The War and its Aftermath**

Between June 5 and June 10, Israel defeated Egypt, Jordan, and Syria and occupied the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights. From the beginning, the United States sought a ceasefire in order to prevent an Arab defeat bad enough to force the Soviet Union to intervene. U.S. officials were also concerned about alienating pro-Western Arab regimes, especially after Egypt and several other Arab states accused the United States of helping Israel and broke diplomatic relations. Yet after June 5, the administration did not also demand an immediate Israeli pull-back from the territories it had occupied. U.S. officials believed that in light of the tenuous nature of the prewar armistice

"troops must be withdrawn; but there must also be recognized rights of national life, progress in solving the refugee problem, freedom of innocent maritime passage, limitation of the arms race, and respect for political independence and territorial integrity." Yet after the Arab states rejected a Latin American UN resolution calling for full withdrawal in exchange for recognition of "the right of all states in the area to live in peace and security" and a similar U.S.-Soviet draft, the Johnson administration scaled back its efforts to promote a settlement. Though alarmed by Israeli decisions to absorb East Jerusalem and establish Jewish settlements in the occupied territories, U.S. officials believed that the Arabs remained too inflexible to justify pressing Israel to withdraw.

The Johnson administration did not re-enter the diplomatic fray until October, when the Soviets began to circulate a new version of the resolution that they had promoted that summer. Knowing that Israel would reject the Soviet draft, the administration encouraged the United Kingdom to introduce an alternative resolution devised by UN Ambassador Arthur Goldberg. Security Council Resolution 242, adopted on November 22, called for Israel's withdrawal from "territories occupied in the recent conflict" in exchange for "termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgment of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and

U.S. officials believed that in light of the tenuous nature of the prewar armistice regime, they should not force Israel to withdraw unless peace settlements were put into place.

regime, they should not force Israel to withdraw unless peace settlements were put into place.

The administration's concept of "land-for-peace" solidified following the war. "Certainly," Johnson proclaimed,

recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force." Interpreted differently by Israelis and Arabs, this resolution would nonetheless remain the bedrock of all subsequent U.S. efforts to resolve the Arab-Israeli dispute.

“The Battle Will Be a General One”

GAMAL ABDEL NASSER

Editor's Note: The absence of any significant international reaction to the reimposition of the blockade on the Gulf of Aqaba only emboldened Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel Nasser. In a speech to Arab Trade Unionists on May 26th, he declared his real objective: "The battle will be a general one and our basic objective will be to destroy Israel."

Thank you for this initiative. You have provided me with an opportunity to see you. I have actually heard your speeches and resolutions; there is nothing to add during this meeting to what you have already said. You, the Arab workers' federations, represent the biggest force in the Arab world.

We can achieve much by Arab action, which is a main part of our battle. We must develop and build our countries to face the challenge of our enemies. The Arab world now is very different from what it was ten days ago. Israel is also different from what it was ten days ago. Despair has never found its way into Arab hearts and never will. The Arabs insist on their rights and are determined to regain the rights of the Palestinian people. The Arabs must accomplish this set intention and this aim. The first elements of this aim appeared in the test of Syria and Egypt in facing the Israeli threat. I believe that this test was a major starting point and basis from which to achieve complete cohesion in the Arab world. What we see today in the masses of the Arab people everywhere is their desire to fight. The Arab people want to regain the rights of the people of Palestine.

For several years, many people have raised doubts about our intentions

towards Palestine. But talk is easy and action is difficult, very difficult. We emerged wounded from the 1956 battle. Britain, Israel and France attacked us then. We sustained heavy losses in 1956. Later, union was achieved. The 1961 secession occurred when we had only just got completely together and had barely begun to stand firmly on our feet.

Later the Yemeni revolution broke out. We considered it our duty to rescue our brothers, simply because of the principles and ideals which we advocated and still advocate.

Many people blamed us for UNEF's presence. We were not strong enough. Should we have listened to them, or rather built and trained our army while UNEF still existed? I said once that we could tell UNEF to leave within half an hour. Once we were fully prepared we could ask UNEF to leave. And this is what actually happened.

The same thing happened with regard to Sharm el-Sheikh. We were attacked on this score by some Arabs. Taking Sharm el-Sheikh meant confrontation with Israel. Taking such action also meant that we were ready to enter a

I have recently been with the armed forces. All the armed forces are ready for a battle face to face between the Arabs and Israel.

■ **Liberating Palestine**

We were waiting for the day when we would be fully prepared and confident of being able to adopt strong measures if we were to enter the battle with Israel. I say nothing aimlessly. One day two years ago, I stood up to say that we had no plan to liberate Palestine and that revolutionary action was our only course to liberate Palestine. I spoke at the summit conferences. The summit conferences were meant to prepare the Arab states to defend themselves.

Recently we felt we are strong enough, that if we were to enter a battle with Israel, with God's help, we could triumph. On this basis, we decided to take actual steps.

A great deal has been said in the past about the UN Emergency Force (UNEF).

general war with Israel. It was not a separate operation. Therefore, we had to take this fact into consideration when moving to Sharm el-Sheikh. The present operation was mounted on this basis.

Actually I was authorized by the [Arab Socialist Union's] Supreme Executive Committee to implement this plan at the right time. The right time came when Syria was threatened with aggression. We sent reconnaissance aircraft over Israel. Not a single brigade was stationed opposite us on the Israeli side of the border. All Israeli brigades were confronting Syria. All but four brigades have now moved south to confront Egypt. Those four are still on the border with Syria. We are confident that once we have entered the battle we will triumph, God willing.



Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser in Mansoura, Egypt.

■ **The Objective of Arab Nations**

With regard to military plans, there is complete coordination of military action between us and Syria. We will operate as one army fighting a single battle for the sake of a common objective – the objective of the Arab nation.

The problem today is not just Israel, but also those behind it. If Israel embarks on an aggression against Syria or Egypt, the battle against Israel will be a general one and not confined to one spot on the Syrian or Egyptian borders. The battle will be a general one and our basic objective will be to destroy Israel. I probably could not have said such things five or even three years ago. If I had said such things and had been unable to carry them out my words would have been empty and worthless.

Today, some 11 years after 1956, I say such things because I am confident. I know what we have here in Egypt and what Syria has. I also know that other states, Iraq for instance, has sent its troops to Syria; Algeria will send troops; Kuwait also will send troops. They will

send armoured and infantry units. This is Arab power. This is the true resurrection of the Arab nation, which at one time was probably in despair.

Today people must know the reality of the Arab world. What is Israel? Israel today is the United States. The United States is the chief defender of Israel. As for Britain, I consider it America's lackey. Britain does not have an independent policy. [British Prime Minister Harold] Wilson always follows [President Lyndon] Johnson's steps and says what he wants him to say. All Western countries take Israel's view.

The Gulf of Aqaba was a closed waterway prior to 1956. We used to search British, U.S., French and all other ships. After the tripartite aggression – and we all know the tripartite plot – we left the area to UNEF which came here under a UN resolution to make possible the withdrawal of Britain, France and Israel. The Israelis say they opened the maritime route. I say they told lies and believed their own lies. We withdrew because the British and the French attacked us. This battle was

never between us and Israel alone.

I have recently been with the armed forces. All the armed forces are ready for a battle face-to-face between the Arabs and Israel. Those behind Israel are also welcome.

■ **Friends and Foes**

We must know and learn a big lesson today. We must actually see that, in its hypocrisy and in its talks with the Arabs, the United States sides with Israel 100 per cent and is partial in favor of Israel. Why is Britain biased towards Israel? The West is on Israel's side. General [Charles] de Gaulle's personality caused him to remain impartial on this question and not to toe the U.S. or the British line; France therefore did not take sides with Israel.

The Soviet Union's attitude was great and splendid. It supported the Arabs and the Arab nation. It went to the extent of stating that, together with the Arabs and the Arab nation, it would resist any interference or aggression.

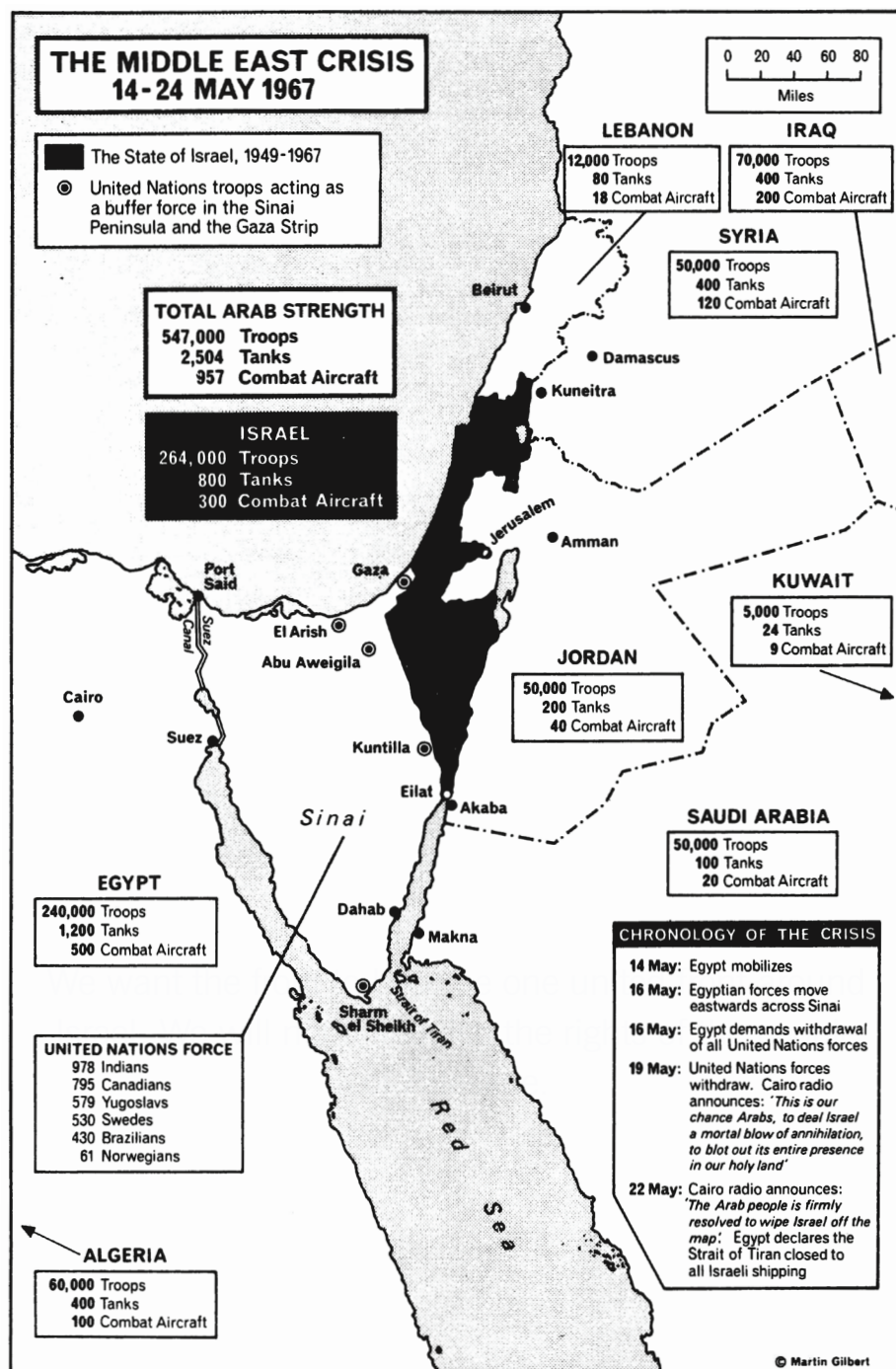
Today every Arab knows foes and friends. If we do not learn who our

enemies and our friends are, Israel will always be able to benefit from this behavior. It is clear that the United States is an enemy of the Arabs because it is completely biased in favor of Israel. It is also clear that Britain is an enemy of the Arabs because she, too, is completely biased in favor of Israel. On this basis we must treat our enemies and those who side with our enemies as actual enemies. We can accord them such treatment. In fact we are not states without status. We are states of status occupying an important place in the world. Our States have thousands of years of civilization behind them – 7,000 years of civilization. Indeed, we can do much; we can expose the hypocrisy – the hypocrisy of our enemies if they try to persuade us that they wish to serve our interest. The United States seeks to serve only Israel's interests. Britain also seeks to serve only Israel's interests.

■ *In the Gulf of Aqaba and Beyond*

The question is not one of international law. Why all this uproar because of the closure of the Gulf of Aqaba? When [Levi] Eshkol and [Yitzhak] Rabin threatened Syria, nobody spoke about peace or threats to peace. They actually hate the progressive regime in Syria. The United States, Britain and reaction which is the friend of the United States and Britain – do not favor the national progressive regime in Syria. Israel, of course, shares their feelings. Israel is an ally of the United States and Britain. When Israel threatened Syria, they kept quiet and accepted what it said. But when we exercise one of our legitimate rights, as we always do, they turn the world upside down and speak about threats to peace and about a crisis in the Middle East. They fabricate these matters and threaten us with war.

We shall not relinquish our rights. We shall not concede our right in the Gulf of Aqaba. Today, the people of Egypt, the Syrian army, and the Egyptian army comprise one front. We want the entire front surrounding Israel to become one front... We want the front to



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become one united front around Israel. We will not relinquish the rights of the people of Palestine, as I have said before. I was told at the time that I might have to wait 70 years. During the Crusaders' occupation, the Arabs waited 70 years before a suitable opportunity arose and they drove away the Crusaders. Some people commented that Abdel Nasser said we should shelve the Palestinian question for 70 years, but I say that as a

people with an ancient civilization, as an Arab people, we are determined that the Palestine question will not be liquidated or forgotten. The whole question, then, is the proper time to achieve our aims. We are preparing ourselves constantly.

You are the hope of the Arab nation and its vanguard. As workers, you are actually building the Arab nation. The quicker we build, the quicker we will be able to achieve our aim.

The War Nobody Wanted

by **MICHAEL BAR-ZOHAR**

The Six Day War was the product of misconception, misunderstanding, mismanagement and mistakes by almost all the parties involved. The first major misstep was the Soviet warning to Egypt in early May 1967 that Israel had massed several brigades on its northern border and was prepared to attack Syria. The information was false, and the assumption of the Soviet leaders that they could win points with their Arab clients without unleashing the highly explosive emotions in the Middle East proved their total misunderstanding of the Arabs.

Following the Russian warning, Egypt's president Gamal Abdel Nasser sent his armored divisions into the Sinai on May 15th. He repeated his actions of 1960 when, following an Israeli reprisal raid on Syria he had also dispatched his army into Sinai; he had then demanded that the United Nations remove their peacekeepers from their positions on the Egypt-Israel border and the Straits of Tiran on the Red Sea. But the secretary-general of the UN in 1960 had been Dag Hammarskjöld, a smart diplomat who sent the peacekeepers to the UN camps in Gaza, where they played volleyball, basketball and got bored to death. Israel also reacted with restraint and only one armored brigade was dispatched to the southern border; while Prime Minister Ben-Gurion left for an extended trip abroad, stressing the fact that Israel was not taking the crisis seriously. A month later, the tension faded away, Nasser pulled back his army, and the peacekeepers resumed their positions and their duties.

But in 1967 the UN secretary-general was U Thant, a mediocre, dour, inflexible diplomat, totally misunderstanding the Middle East. It was his turn to make a major mistake. He told Nasser:

either the peacekeepers stay where they are – or I shall remove all of them from Egypt. Nasser stuck to his position, and U Thant immediately ordered his peacekeepers out of the Sinai and Gaza.

Nasser's mistake was next. Having acquired control of the Tiran Straits, he couldn't help but close them to Israeli shipping. Israel had declared many times in the past that it regarded a closure of the Straits as *casus belli*, yet at that time Nasser still didn't believe he was going to war.

Next in line – Israel. Prime Minister Levi Eshkol, a good man, a wise prime minister – but not a war leader – did not know what to do. He actually transferred all the defense and military decisions to Yitzhak Rabin, the IDF chief of staff,

in a first stage, but later the Arab armies would counter-attack, penetrate into Israel's territory, America would have to intervene, and the world would have to face “a new Vietnam war.”

And in Washington, senior officials told Eban stories about “the Red Sea Regatta,” an international flotilla that would open the blockade on the Straits of Tiran.

These were stories and nothing else, and any astute observer should have understood from the first moment that America was going to do nothing. President Lyndon Johnson could make no move without the support of Congress, and it was clear that would not happen. Besides, very few nations liked the Regatta concept and were inclined to send their ships to the Straits.

..the assumption of the Soviet leaders that they could win points with their Arab clients without unleashing the highly explosive emotions in the Middle East proved their total misunderstanding of the Arabs.

who could hardly cope with this burden, and collapsed for a short period. Eshkol also sent foreign minister Abba Eban to Paris, London, and Washington to ask for the help of the Western powers. That was a misconception at the cabinet level.

While the military assumed the Israeli army would be victorious in a war with Egypt, Israel's civilian leaders desperately looked for help abroad. So Eban went on his tour. The British were sympathetic, but France's president Charles de Gaulle openly moved to the side of the Arabs, decreeing a total embargo on weapons for Israel, whose military equipment was mainly French. De Gaulle also misread the situation; he told his aides that if a war erupted in the Middle East, Israel might be victorious

And yet, President Johnson asked Israel to delay any action for another two or three weeks, while the United States tried to find a solution to the crisis. The Israeli cabinet met over and over again and agreed to wait. In the meantime Jordan, Syria and Iraq signed military agreements with Egypt, creating a united front against Israel. The writing was on the wall, and yet only two men in the Middle East apparently understood the situation.

One was Moshe Dayan, who told Rabin in a night meeting at his home that the only solution would be to go to war and destroy the Egyptian army.

The second man was an Egyptian: Mohammad Hassanein Heikal, the editor of the pro-government *Al-Ahram* newspaper and Nasser's friend and

confidante. Heikal's analysis was clear and concise, and read like a mathematical formula. In an article headed: "Why war with Israel is inevitable," he wrote:

Israel exists in the Middle East thanks to its power that deters the Arab states from attacking and destroying it. The massing of the Egyptian troops in the Sinai, the ouster of the UN peacekeepers, the closure of the Straits, the united front of Arab nations against Israel – all those have destroyed Israel's deterrent force. If Israel wants to survive, she must restore her deterrent. To do so, she has to go to war. Therefore – war with Israel is inevitable.

The serial misconceptions did not spare the father of Israel, David Ben-Gurion. The "Old Man" believed that Israel shouldn't go to war, and try to open the straits of Tiran, without obtaining the support of a Western power and making sure that the supply of weapons to Israel would continue. In a recorded interview with the author of this article, he spoke against any military action at the present time, assuming that the casualties of the Israeli army will be enormous – around 5,000 dead. He also bitterly criticized Rabin for mobilizing a small portion of army reservists. "You endangered the people of Israel!" he told Rabin, who held him in high esteem.

Yet, that was not the image Ben-Gurion projected. The people of Israel didn't know that Ben-Gurion was against the war. In the eyes of many, he was still the tough, fearless leader who could stand up to the Arabs and lead Israel in the forthcoming war of survival. Editorials in major newspapers and citizens' spontaneous petitions called for the replacement of the hesitant Eshkol with the resolute Ben-Gurion. Even Menachem Begin, the leader of the Likud and Ben-Gurion's sworn political adversary, believed that the Old Man should return to the helm, and replace Eshkol

as prime minister. In a dramatic move, he secretly came to Ben-Gurion's house, willing to offer the Old Man the support of his party if he agreed to become prime minister again; but he was bitterly disappointed on hearing Ben-Gurion's views. When the meeting was over, he

the Pentagon, the CIA and the White House. He came back with the news that the "flotilla" project was stillborn; his talks in Washington, though, made him conclude that the United States would not object to an Israeli offensive.

The political pressure on Eshkol to

The people of Israel didn't know that Ben-Gurion was against the war. In the eyes of many, he was still the tough, fearless leader...

told Shimon Peres, the secretary general of Ben-Gurion's party, Rafi: "We remove our support from Ben-Gurion as prime minister, and transfer it to Moshe Dayan as minister of defense."

In the meantime, winds of panic were blowing over Israel; journalists described future scenes of terrible destruction if the united Arab armies attacked, rabbis were consecrating city parks as emergency cemeteries, while high-school students were digging defensive trenches in the cities' avenues. Newsreels and press photographs showed huge crowds dancing in the squares of the Arab capitals, waving flags and

appoint Dayan as defense minister kept mounting. Eshkol tried to resist, but under the pressure of his own party, he had to cede the defense portfolio to Dayan. And on June 5th, Israel attacked.

The war started with a stunning raid by practically the entire Israeli air force on Egypt's air bases. That raid, meant to destroy the Egyptian air force on the ground, was the condition of a swift and total victory. The day before the raid, Rabin visited several air bases and told the young pilots: "Remember: your mission is one of life or death. If you succeed – we win the war; if you fail – God help us."

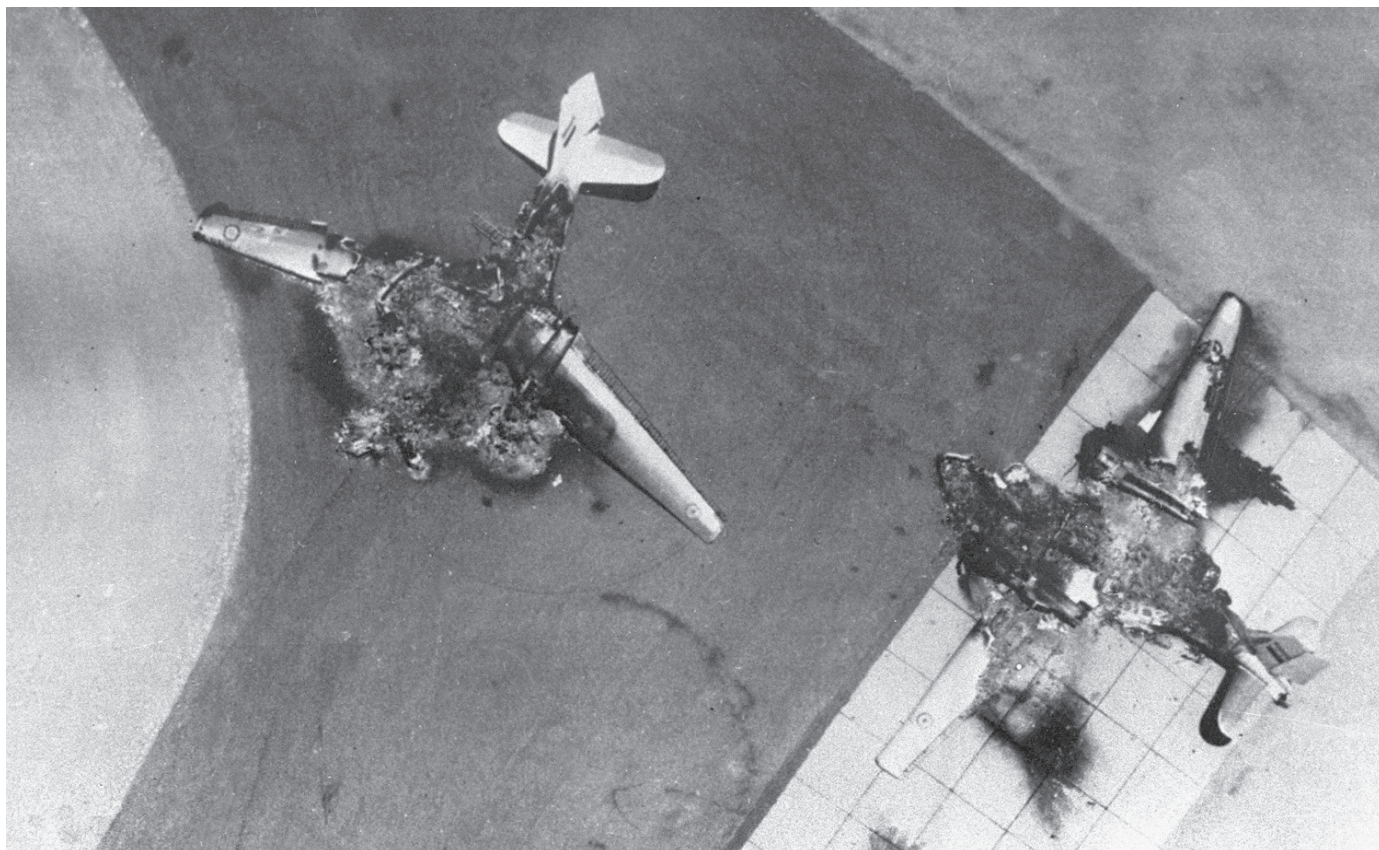
The postwar tragedy was that nobody in the Arab world was ready to negotiate for the return of the conquered lands.

chanting slogans, hailing the imminent destruction of Israel by the victorious Arab armies. The people of Israel feared that the existence of their state, and their very survival, were in danger.

Eshkol slowly realized that war was inevitable. After a stormy meeting with the chiefs of staff, and an inconclusive vote in the cabinet, he sent the Mossad chief, Meir Amit, on a secret mission to Washington to probe the American views on a possible Israeli offensive. Amit met with several officials in

The raid was utterly successful – in three hours the Egyptian air force had ceased to exist. A few hours later, both the Syrian and Jordanian air forces, that had tried to join in the battle, had been annihilated, as well as a part of the Iraqi air force.

Israel's army, controlling the skies, made its way fighting through the Sinai and after a couple of days reached the Suez Canal. The "Shest," the Soviet Sixth Fleet, suddenly appeared in the Mediterranean Sea, in dangerous proximity to the U.S. Sixth. The hotline between Washington



Egyptian warplanes destroyed in the 1967 war. (Photo: Israeli Government Press Office)

and Moscow was activated several times, and some observers feared that World War Three might start at any moment; but as the top experts on Soviet policy predicted, the Russians refrained from taking military action, and limited their angry reactions to verbal attacks on Israel.

In the meantime, following Jordan's attacks and bombardments, other Israeli units occupied the West Bank and took eastern Jerusalem. For the Israelis and Jews abroad, that was an impossible dream suddenly come true. In a last stage of the war, Israel conquered the Golan Heights.

On June 10th, the war was over, and Israel was stunned to discover it had an empire in its hands.

The postwar tragedy was that nobody in the Arab world was ready to negotiate for the return of the conquered lands. When the author of this article was appointed adviser to Moshe Dayan, the defense minister told him: "Michael, take your car and go see the West Bank before we return it." (He was to become more hawkish later.)

Dayan also announced that he expected "a phone call from King Hussein." But instead of calling Israel, the all-Arab conference in Khartoum, in August, decided there would be "no negotiations with Israel, no recognition of Israel, and no peace with Israel."

An unexpected casualty of the war was David Ben-Gurion. When the war started, he wrote angry entries in his diary, harshly criticizing the leadership of the country, and predicting severe condemnations by the outside world. But as the fighting ended he realized that he had been mistaken, Israel had won, and there was a new team at the helm that had achieved a great victory. It seemed that history itself had confronted him and decreed: "Ben-Gurion, your time is over!" Six days earlier he was still Israel's greatest statesman, a candidate for the premiership of his nation. Now, he was a figure of the past, still admired and loved by many, but no more as an active leader. His contribution, though, was his lucid analysis of the new political situation. While most

of Israel's leaders were still drunk with victory and the return of Israel to its "biblical" borders, Ben-Gurion declared, over and over again, that in exchange for real peace Israel should relinquish all of the new territories, except for Jerusalem and the Golan Heights.

It would take 10 more years and another bloody war for Egypt to realize that it would have to pay the price of peace to get back its territories, and 27 more years for Jordan to make peace with the Jewish State. (Not before Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, in 1987, sabotaged a historic agreement between foreign minister Shimon Peres and King Hussein that could have brought peace to the Middle East).

And yet, the Arab Spring, the turmoil in Egypt and the civil war in Syria remind us how fragile and ephemeral peace in our neighborhood can be.

MICHAEL BAR-ZOHAR, Ph.D. is an Israeli historian who served as a Member of the Knesset from 1981 to 1992.

Arabs' Responsibility for War, Reluctance to Make Peace

ABBA EBAN

Editor's Note: Three days into the Six Day War, Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban – speaking to the world from the United Nations – detailed how the surrounded, isolated Jewish state had gone from “serious danger to successful resistance.” He then proposed how the Middle East might go from war to peace. His description of the events of May-June 1967, and his prescription for Israel and the region, possess extraordinary relevance today.

I have just come from Jerusalem to tell the Security Council that Israel, by her independent effort and sacrifice, has passed from serious danger to successful resistance.

Two days ago her condition caused much concern across the humane and friendly world. Israel had reached a somber hour. Let me try to evoke the point at which our fortunes stood.

An army, greater than any force ever assembled in history in Sinai, had massed against Israel's southern frontier. Egypt had dismissed the United Nations forces which symbolized the international interest in the maintenance of peace in our region. [Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel] Nasser had provocatively brought five infantry divisions and two armored divisions up to our very gates; 80,000 men and 900 tanks were poised to move.

A special striking force, comprising an armored division with at least 200 tanks, was concentrated against Eilat at the Negev's southern tip. Here was a clear design to cut the southern Negev off from the main body of our state. For Egypt had openly proclaimed that Eilat did not form part of Israel and had predicted that Israel itself would soon

expire. The proclamation was empty; the prediction now lies in ruin.

While the main brunt of the hostile threat was focused on the southern front, an alarming plan of encirclement was under way. With Egypt's initiative and guidance, Israel was already being strangled in her maritime approaches to the whole eastern half of the world. For 16 years, she had been illicitly denied passage in the Suez Canal, despite this Security Council's decision of 1 September 1951. And now the creative enterprise of 10 patient years, which had opened an international route across the Tiran Straits and the Gulf of Aqaba, had been suddenly and arbitrarily choked; Israel was and is breathing with only a single lung.

Jordan had been intimidated, against her better interest, into joining a defense pact. It is not a defense pact at all: it is an aggressive pact, of which I saw the consequences with my own eyes yesterday

of the Yemen had been transferred to the coming assault upon Israel. Syrian units, including artillery, overlooked the Israeli villages in the Jordan Valley. Terrorist groups came regularly into our territory to kill, plunder and explode; the most recent of them was five days ago.

■ 'Apocalyptic' Atmosphere

There was peril for Israel wherever it looked. Her manpower had been hastily mobilized. Her economy and commerce were beating with feeble pulses. Her streets were dark and empty. There was an apocalyptic air of approaching peril. And Israel faced this danger alone.

We were buoyed up by an unforgettable surge of public sympathy across the world. The friendly governments expressed the rather ominous hope that Israel would manage to live, but the dominant theme of our condition was danger and solitude.

We were buoyed up by an unforgettable surge of public sympathy across the world.

in the shells falling upon ... Jerusalem. Every house and street in Jerusalem now came into the range of fire as a result of Jordan's adherence to this pact; so also was the crowded and pathetically narrow coastal strip in which so much of Israel's life and population is concentrated.

Iraqi troops reinforced Jordanian units in areas immediately facing vital and vulnerable Israeli communication centres. Expeditionary forces from Algeria and Kuwait had reached Egyptian territory. Nearly all the Egyptian forces which had been attempting the conquest

Now there could be no doubt about what was intended for us. With my very ears, I heard President Nasser's speech on May 26. He said: "We intend to open a general assault against Israel. This will be total war. Our basic aim is the destruction of Israel."

On June 2, the Egyptian Commander in Sinai, General Mortagi, published his order of the day, calling on his troops to wage a war of destruction against Israel. Here, then, was a systematic order, a proclaimed design at politicide, the murder of a state.

But as time went on, there was no doubt that our margin of general security was becoming smaller and smaller. Thus, on the morning of June 5, when Egyptian forces engaged us by air and land, bombarding the villages of Kissufim, Nahal-Oz and Tsur Ma'on, we knew that our limit of safety had been reached, and perhaps passed. In accordance with her inherent right of self-defense as formulated in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, Israel responded defensively in full strength. Never in the history of nations has armed force been used in a more righteous or compelling cause.

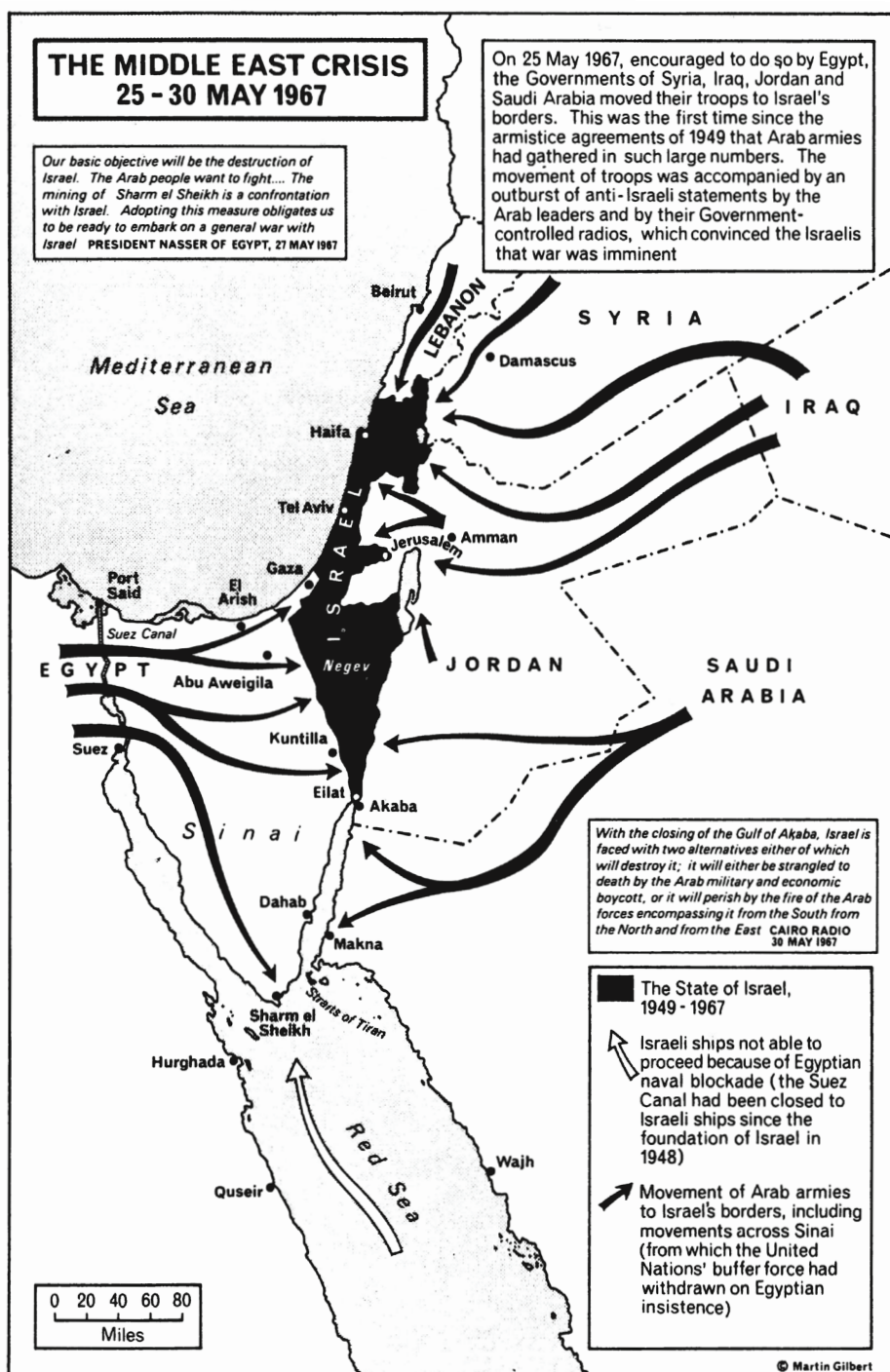
Even when engaged with Egyptian forces, we still hoped to contain the conflict. Egypt was overtly bent on our destruction, but we still hoped that others would not join the aggression. Prime Minister [Levi] Eshkol, who for weeks had carried the heavy burden of calculation and decision, published and conveyed a message to other neighboring states proclaiming:

"We shall not attack any country unless it opens war on us. Even now, when the mortars speak, we have not given up our quest for peace. We strive to repel all menace of terrorism and any danger of aggression to ensure our security and our legitimate rights."

■ Jordan Spurns Peace

In accordance with this same policy of attempting to contain the conflict, I yesterday invited General [Odd] Bull, the Chairman of the Truce Supervision Organization, to inform the heads of the Jordanian state that Israel had no desire to expand the conflict beyond the unfortunate dimensions that it had already assumed and that if Israel were not attacked on the Jordan side, we would not attack and would act only in self-defense. It reached my ears that this message had been duly and faithfully conveyed and received...

To the appeal of Prime Minister Eshkol to avoid any further extension of the conflict, Syria answered ... by bombing Megiddo from the air and bombing



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Deganya ... with artillery fire and Kibbutz Ein Hammifrats and Koordani with long-range guns. But Jordan embarked on a much more total assault by artillery and aircraft along the entire front, with special emphasis on Jerusalem, to whose dangerous and noble ordeal yesterday I came to bear personal witness...

I should, however, be less than frank if I were to conceal the fact that

the government and people of Israel have been disconcerted by some aspects of the United Nations' role in this conflict. The sudden withdrawal of the United Nations Emergency Force was not accompanied, as it should have been, by due international consultations on the consequences of that withdrawal. Moreover, Israeli interests were affected; they were not adequately explored.

No attempt was made, little time given, to help Israel surmount grave prejudice to her vital interests consequent on that withdrawal. ... The peace of the world trembled, and thus the United Nations had somehow been put into a position of leaving Sinai safe for belligerency. ...

We have lived through three dramatic weeks. Those weeks, I think, have brought into clear view the main elements of tension and also the chief promise of relaxed tension in the future. The first link in the chain was the series of sabotage acts emanating from Syria. But then there came a graver source of tension in mid-May, when abnormal troop concentrations were observed in the Sinai Peninsula.

We were puzzled in Israel by the relative lack of preoccupation on the part of friendly governments and international agencies with this intense concentration which found its reflection in precautionary concentrations on our side. My government proposed, I think at least two weeks ago, the concept of a parallel and reciprocal reduction of forces on both sides of the frontier. We elicited no response, and certainly no action.

■ ***'Electric shock' – closing Strait of Tiran***

To these grave sources of tension – the sabotage and terrorist movement, emanating mostly from Syria, and the heavy troop concentrations accompanied by dire, apocalyptic threats in Sinai – there was added in the third week of May the most electric shock of all, namely the closure of the international waterway consisting of the Strait of Tiran and the Gulf of Aqaba. There was in this wanton act a quality of malice. For surely the closing of the Strait of Tiran gave no benefit whatever to Egypt except the perverse joy of inflicting injury on others. It was an anarchic act, because it showed a total disregard for the law of nations, the application of which in this specific case had not been challenged for 10 years. And it was, in the literal sense, an act of arrogance, because there are other nations in Asia and East Africa

that trade with the port of Eilat, as they have every right to do, through the Strait of Tiran and across the Gulf of Aqaba...

Blockades have traditionally been regarded, in the pre-Charter parlance, as acts of war. To blockade, after all, is to attempt strangulation; and sovereign states are entitled not to have their trade strangled. To understand how the state of Israel felt, one has merely to look around this table and imagine, for example, a foreign power forcibly closing New York or Montreal, Boston or Marseille, Toulon or Copenhagen.... What would you do? How long would you wait? ...

... Jordan embarked on a much more total assault by artillery and aircraft along the entire front, with special emphasis on Jerusalem...

These acts taken together – the blockade, the dismissal of the United Nations Emergency Force, and the heavy concentration in Sinai – effectively disrupted the status quo that had ensured a relative stability on the Egyptian-Israeli frontier for 10 years. ...

It is now the task of the governments concerned to elaborate the new conditions of their co-existence. I think that much of this work should be done directly by these governments themselves. Surely, after what has happened we must have better assurance than before, for Israel and for the Middle East, of peaceful co-existence. The question is whether there is any reason to believe that such a new era may yet come to pass.

If I am a little sanguine on this point, it is because of a conviction that men and nations do behave wisely once they have exhausted all other alternatives. Surely the other alternatives of war and belligerency have now been exhausted. And what has anybody gained from that? But in order that the new system of inter-State relationships may flourish in the Middle East, it is important that certain principles be applied above and beyond the

cease-fire to which the Security Council has given its unanimous support.

■ ***'Accept Israel'***

Let me then say here that Israel welcomes the appeal for the cease-fire as formulated in this resolution. But I must point out that the implementation depends on the absolute and sincere acceptance and co-operation of the other parties, which, in our view, are responsible for the present situation.

I have said that the situation to be constructed after the cease-fire must depend on certain principles. The first of

these principles surely must be the acceptance of Israel's statehood and the total elimination of the fiction of its non-existence. It would seem to me that after 3,000 years the time has arrived to accept Israel's nationhood as a fact, for here is the only state in the international community which has the same territory, speaks the same language and upholds the same faith as it did 3,000 years ago.

And if, as everybody knows to be the fact, the universal conscience was in the last week or two most violently shaken at the prospect of danger to Israel, it was not only because there seemed to be a danger to a state, but also, I think, because the state was Israel, with all that this ancient name evokes, teaches, symbolizes and inspires. How grotesque would be an international community which found room for 122 sovereign units and which did not acknowledge the sovereignty of that people which had given nationhood its deepest significance and its most enduring grace.

No wonder, then, that when danger threatened we could hear a roar of indignation sweep across the world, that men in progressive movements and members of the scientific and humanistic cultures

joined together in sounding an alarm bell about an issue that vitally affected the human conscience. And no wonder, correspondingly, that a deep and universal sense of satisfaction and relief has accompanied the news of Israel's gallant and successful resistance.

But the central point remains the need to secure an authentic intellectual recognition by our neighbors of Israel's deep roots in the Middle Eastern reality. There is an intellectual tragedy in the failure of Arab leaders to come to grips, however reluctantly, with the depth and authenticity of Israel's roots in the life, the history, the spiritual experience and the culture of the Middle East.

This, then, is the first axiom. A much more conscious and uninhibited acceptance of Israel's statehood is an axiom requiring no demonstration, for there will never be a Middle East without an independent and sovereign state of Israel in its midst.

■ *Forward to Peace*

When the Council discusses what is to happen after the cease-fire, we hear many formulas: back to 1956, back to 1948 – I understand our neighbors would wish to turn the clock back to 1947. The fact is, however, that most clocks move forward and not backward, and this, I think, should be the case with the clock of Middle Eastern peace – not backward to belligerency, but forward to peace. ...

There are not two categories of states. The United Arab Republic [Egypt], Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon – not one of these has a single ounce or milligram of statehood which does not adhere in equal measures to Israel itself.

It is important that states outside our region apply a balanced attitude, that they do not exploit temporary tensions and divergences in the issues of global conflict, that they do not seek to win gains by inflaming fleeting passions, and that they strive to make a balanced distribution of their friendship amongst the states of the Middle East. Now whether all the speeches of all the



Abba Eban circa 1970.

Great Powers this evening meet this criterion, everybody, of course, can judge for himself. [Eban here rebukes the Soviet Union for its "most vehement and one-sided denunciation of Israel."]

But surely world opinion, before whose tribunal this debate unrolls, can solve this question by posing certain problems to itself. Who was it that attempted to destroy a neighboring state in 1948, Israel or its neighbors? Who now closes an international waterway to the port of a neighboring State, Israel or the United Arab Republic? Does Israel refuse to negotiate a peace settlement with the Arab States, or do they refuse to do so with it? Who disrupted the 1957 pattern of stability, Israel or Egypt? Did troops of Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, Kuwait and Algeria surround Israel in this menacing confrontation, or has any distinguished representative seen some vast Israel colossus surrounding the area between Morocco and Kuwait? ...

I would say in conclusion that these are, of course, still grave times. And yet

they may perhaps have a fortunate issue. This could be the case if those who for some reason decided so violently, three weeks ago, to disrupt the status quo would ask themselves what the results and benefits have been. As he looks around him at the arena of battle, at the wreckage of planes and tanks, at the collapse of intoxicated hopes, might not an Egyptian ruler ponder whether anything was achieved by that disruption? What has it brought but strife, conflict with other powerful interests, and the stern criticism of progressive men throughout the world?

I think that Israel has in recent days proved its steadfastness and vigor. It is now willing to demonstrate its instinct for peace. Let us build a new system of relationships from the wreckage of the old. Let us discern across the darkness the vision of a better and a brighter dawn.

ABBA EBAN (1915-2002) served as Israel's Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1966 to 1974.

“Close Settlement on the Land”

by EUGENE V. ROSTOW (1913-2002)

Editor's Note: Understanding the role of the United Nations in the restoration of Jewish sovereignty in the Middle East in 1948 is essential to understanding the legality of Israel's post-1967 control of the land it acquired in a war of self-defense. The following is excerpted from “Palestinian Self-Determination: Possible Futures for the Unallocated Parts of the British Mandate,” a 1980 work by the late Professor Eugene V. Rostow, published in the Yale International Law Journal. Make the mental switch between Soviet Union/Russia and PLO/Palestinian Authority and it remains remarkably contemporary.

Throughout Europe and the United States, in the General Assembly and the Security Council of the United Nations, and in many other resonant forums, there is an increasingly shrill chorus of demands that Israel be more “flexible” and that the United States “force” Israel to acquiesce in the establishment of a third Palestinian state – an Arab state in the territories of Palestine generally known as the West Bank (including Jerusalem) and the Gaza Strip. It is expected that such a state would be under the control of the PLO. This view is now supported – nominally, at least – by most governments in Western Europe.

In the early months of 1980, it was widely rumored that France had persuaded Great Britain and West Germany to back an effort in the Security Council to modify Resolution 242, adopted after the Six Day War in 1967, and the only feasible basis for efforts to make peace between Israel and its

neighbors. The amendment the French are urging would favor “self-determination for the Palestinian people” – a formula intended to pave the way for a third Palestinian state.

As the Middle Eastern troubles of Western policy have become more ominous, with Iran in anarchy and the

■ **They’re Not “Arab” Territories**

The legal assumption behind this frantic impulse is that the territories in dispute are in some sense “Arab” territories held by Israel only as military occupant. Once that premise is accepted, it seems to follow that the natural path to

...the West has been drawn more and more feverishly to the idea of doing something “positive” for the Arabs by getting Israel to accept a second Arab Palestinian state...

Soviet Union in control of Afghanistan, the West has been drawn more and more feverishly to the idea of doing something “positive” for the Arabs by getting Israel to accept a second Arab Palestinian state on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Such a concession on the part of Israel is necessary, the advocates of this course contend, in order to make it possible for the Arab states of the region to join the United States in resisting the further expansion of Soviet power...

The campaign for a state that is more and more explicitly a PLO state including the West Bank and the Gaza Strip is irrational from the point of view of Western security interests. The emergence of such a state would weaken Israel, the strongest military power in the Middle East, and the most reliable ally of the West in the area, by necessity and conviction. But the irrationality of the idea has not yet affected the momentum of European, American, and Egyptian policy.

peace would be for Israel to evacuate the area, and to allow the population to decide whether to establish a new state or to federate with Jordan.

But the premise from which the familiar prescription derives is erroneous as a matter of history and international law. The only possible geographic, demographic, and political definition of Palestine is that of the Mandate, which included what are now Israel and Jordan as well as the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The term “Palestinian” applies to all the peoples who live or have a right to live in the territory – Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike. Thus, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are not “Arab” territories in the legal sense, but territories of the Mandate that have never been recognized as belonging to Israel or to Jordan... For reasons that remain compelling, Security Council Resolution 242 prescribes that Israel is under no obligation to withdraw from the West Bank or the Gaza Strip until Jordan makes peace.

■ **Self Determination**

Despite its great political appeal, the idea of “self-determination” for all “peoples” is a puzzling and complex factor in the political life of an international system based on the existence and sanctity of states. Most states include more than one people: Spain has Basques and Catalans; France, Bretons; Belgium, Walloons and Flemish; Canada a considerable French-speaking population. The Soviet Union [was] of course a combination of many peoples, widely different in language, religion, and culture. Almost all the African states include a number of tribes.

The United Nations Charter lists self-determination as one of the aspirations of the organization, to be sought by political means, but not by the international use of force. The Charter has been generally interpreted to forbid international help for movements of secession based on the slogan of self-deter-

the Mandate in the area of Palestine east of the Jordan River. This was done when Britain established Transjordan as an autonomous province of the Mandate in 1922. But Jewish rights of immigration and close settlement in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, established by the Mandate, have never been qualified.

In Palestine, Israel and Jordan already exist as states, and only the Gaza Strip and the West Bank remain as unallocated parts of the Mandate. The reasoning of [prior UN] decisions requires that the future of these two territories be arranged by peaceful international agreement in ways that fulfill the policies of the Mandate.

Jewish rights of “close settlement” in the West Bank are derived from the Mandate. Therefore, they exist; it is impossible seriously to contend, as the United States government does... that Israeli settlements in the West Bank are illegal.

...it is impossible seriously to contend, as the United States government does... that Israeli settlements in the West Bank are illegal.

mination. The United States fought the bloodiest war of the nineteenth century to resist the plausible idea of self-determination for the South.

■ **The Mandate**

The purpose of the Palestine Mandate was “the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, it being clearly understood that nothing should be done which might prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.” The Mandatory government was required to facilitate Jewish immigration and “close settlement” in Palestine, subject to the proviso that the Mandatory government could “postpone or withhold” the application of these (and related) articles of

■ **West Bank & Gaza Differ from Sinai and the Golan**

Since the Six Day War in 1967 the United States government has taken the nominal position that Israel held the Sinai, the Golan Heights, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip only as the military occupant under international law. The State Department has maintained that under Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, a state administering the territory of another state as military occupant cannot in the absence of military necessity or governmental need displace the inhabitants of the territory and establish its own citizens in their place.

The Department’s position is in error; the provision was drafted to deal with “individual or mass forcible transfers of population,” like those in Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary before

[, during] and after the Second World War. Israeli administration of the areas has involved no forced transfers of population or deportations.

The Israeli view is that while the 1907 Hague Convention and the 1949 Geneva Convention apply to the Israeli occupation of the Golan Heights and the Sinai, which are Syrian or Egyptian territory in the contemplation of international law, they do not apply to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, which have not been recognized as parts of any state, but are still unallocated territories of the Palestine Mandate.

The 1949 Geneva Convention simply does not deal with the situation in Palestine, in which neither Jordan in the West Bank nor Egypt in the Gaza Strip could claim after 1967 that its prior administration was that of the legitimate sovereign whose rights were temporarily displaced by the fortunes of war. In the telling phrase of Professor Yehuda Blum, the “reversioner” was missing. Israel’s claim to the area is at least as good as Jordan’s.

Since the Conventions deal only with military occupation by one state of territory belonging to another, Israel said, it is not obliged to apply the Conventions in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. But it vowed to do so in general terms as a matter of its own policy.

For present purposes, it suffices simply to conclude that Israel’s legal position with regard to its right of settlement in the West Bank is impregnable.

The case for treating the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as “Arab” territory is not helped by contending that the existing population of the area is largely Arab. That was true for all of Palestine, except for Jerusalem, when the Mandate was established. Jewish settlement in a land then populated mainly by Arabs is what the Mandate specifically authorizes.

The government of the United States often complains that Israeli settlements in the West Bank are a political obstacle to peace even if they are not “illegal,” because they deter Jordan from making peace. But Jordan would not make peace

between 1949 and 1967 when it occupied the West Bank and administered it as national territory. At that time, there were no Israeli settlements in the West Bank...

Perhaps Israeli settlement in the West Bank would stimulate Jordan to make peace, by making it clear that its continued refusal to make peace is not costless, and that it cannot expect conditions to remain unchanged indefinitely.

Whether Israeli settlement in the West Bank is a wise political tactic at any given time is not, however, the subject of this paper. To explore that issue under the circumstances of any particular period in the history of the Mandate would be an exercise in speculation.

■ **The Security Council's Role**

In 1947, finding that the twin purposes of the Mandate were irreconcilable, Great Britain announced that it would give up the Mandate in 1948, and turn the problem over to the United Nations as successor to the League of Nations. The Security Council had received a Report from the General Assembly, recommending that it adopt a plan for partitioning what was left of the Mandate (after the establishment of Transjordan) into an Arab state and a Jewish state, with a special regime for Jerusalem, and arrangements for cooperation among the peoples and governments of the territory.

The Security Council did not accept the General Assembly's recommendations. It did nothing. Israel declared its independence as the Jewish state contemplated by the Partition Plan. But the Arab states in the area made war on Israel on the grounds that (1) the Mandate was and always had been illegal; (2) the General Assembly's Partition plan was a nullity; (3) upon the withdrawal of Great Britain from Palestine the inchoate sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the territory had to be acknowledged; and (4) the establishment of Israel was "an armed attack on the territorial integrity and political independence of the emerging state of Palestine," which the people of Palestine and their neighbors had a right to resist



An Israeli warplane flies over IDF ground forces during the 1967 war.

in the name of self-defense, according to Article 51 of the Charter.

The first Arab-Israeli war of 1948-49 came to an end under the twin pressures of Israeli military success and international political urging. The Security Council issued several binding "decisions," ordering the parties to sign armistice agreements, and then to make peace. The Armistice Agreements were duly signed, but peace did not follow. The conflict over Israel's right to exist was caught up in the Cold War, which was rapidly spreading to areas near the boundaries of the Soviet Union in Asia and Europe.

Thus, four major wars against Israel took place after 1949 – those of 1956, 1967, 1973, and the war of attrition of 1969-70. In each of these episodes, and throughout the continuing cycle of guerrilla attacks against Israel, Soviet involvement on the Arab side was heavy, and often decisive. Each of the wars ended in a political settlement of sorts. The 1956 war was followed by an informal and largely invisible agreement between Israel and Egypt...

■ **Resolution 242**

The unhappy fate of the 1957 peace agreement [following the Suez crisis] was a decisive factor shaping Security Council Resolution 242, which

followed the Six Day War in 1967 after five months of strenuous diplomatic effort and military testing. Resolution 242 returned to the principles of Resolution 62, adopted in 1948. It called for peace, and for an end to all claims on the part of the Arabs that a state of belligerence existed between Israel and its neighbors. In view of the refusal of the Arabs to carry out their earlier commitments to make peace with Israel, Resolution 242 was based on the principle that Israel had no obligation to withdraw from any territories occupied in the course of the war until the Arab states concerned actually made peace. Israeli occupation of the territories it took in 1967, that is, was "the gage of peace," in the phrase used by a French scholar.

Resolution 242 also provided that when peace was made, the Israelis should withdraw to "secure and recognized" boundaries, which need not be the same as the Armistice Demarcation Lines of 1949, as the Armistice Agreements themselves had contemplated. The "secure and recognized" boundaries were to be reached by agreement. In negotiating those agreements, the parties could take into account considerations of security; guarantees of maritime rights through all the international waterways of the region; factors of equity in rectifying the armistice lines (which

after all reflected no more than the position of the armies when the fighting stopped in 1949); and the respective legal claims of the parties to the territory in question.

Between 1967 and 1973, all efforts to carry out the terms of Resolution 242 failed. The Arab states stood on their Khartoum Declaration of 1967 – “no peace, no recognition, no negotiations.”

...the object of the campaign for a third Palestinian state is not a peaceful solution of the Palestine problem, but the destruction of Israel.

What the Arab states wanted was the pattern of 1957, i.e., Israeli withdrawal at least to the 1967 boundaries without peace. This, of course, was exactly what Resolution 242 prohibited.

Legally, politically, and strategically, the obvious solution for the Palestinian problem is peace between Israel and Jordan in accordance with Resolutions 242 and 338. Such a settlement could take many forms, but peaceful settlement is the only way to end the problem of Palestine in ways that satisfy the terms of the Mandate and of the Security Council Resolutions that have sought to carry out its principles.

Thus far, the most promising idea for peace between Jordan and Israel is the proposal put forward by the Israeli Foreign Minister at Strasbourg more than a decade ago. That proposal would establish definitive boundaries between Jordan and Israel, dividing the West Bank and perhaps making the Gaza Strip part of Jordan; unite the two countries in a common market (or confederation) open also to other states in the area; give Jordan a free port on the Mediterranean, probably at Haifa; make special arrangements for Jerusalem which would take fully into account all the religious interests in that city; and establish appropriate security dispositions.

■ *The Foundation of Israel in Law*

There is no foundation in international law for the idea of a second Arab Palestinian state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. And it would be political and military folly for the West to force Israel to acquiesce in such a scheme. Establishing a new Arab state there would injure Western interests, and advance

those of the Soviet Union by strengthening the Soviet position in the region and by increasing Arab dependence on Soviet protection. It would weaken Israel, which, since the fall of Iran, is the most important Western ally in the area.

Above all, such a policy would abandon the moral and political obligations towards Israel, which the victorious Allies assumed in 1919, and reiterated through the United Nations Charter in 1945.

Israel's legitimacy as a state rests on much more than the usual criteria of international law—de facto statehood; membership in the United Nations; recognition; the success of its armed forces; the weight of history; and so on. In 1922, the organized international community of the day, the League of Nations, with the special concurrence of the United States, which was not a member, established the Palestine Mandate. Through that Mandate, it invited Jews to come to live in Palestine as their national home. In reliance on that promise, the Jewish community in Palestine developed, and, with the approval of the Security Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations (the successor to the League), became the state of Israel.

The solemn obligations of the international community to Israel implicit in these events survive not only as a special moral and historic element in Israel's

status within the family of nations, but as a trust still applicable, with other norms and interests, to the task of fashioning a just and durable future for the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. For the West to betray those commitments would be to take another long step towards dissolving the world community organized as the United Nations into a condition of universal war.

■ *Failure of the United Nations*

The long, bitter, and thus far unresolved conflict over the place of Israel in the state system raises this stark issue. For more than 30 years the Security Council, speaking for the organized international community, has insisted that Israel is a legitimate state, born of the Mandate, and that members of the United Nations are therefore legally and morally bound to make peace with it in accordance with the terms of the Mandate and of the Security Resolutions which seek to apply them. Throughout this period, a shifting but important group of states, strongly backed by the Soviet Union, has asserted that the Mandate and all that flowed from it was illegal, and that the existence of Israel is in itself an aggression against the sovereignty of the Palestinian people, defined as the descendants of those who lived in the territory of the Mandate in 1922.

The vehement effort to force Israel to accept a PLO state including the West Bank, Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip rests on a misapprehension. The proponents of “Palestinian self-determination” in this sense believe that such a step would eliminate the only point of dissension between the majority of the Arabs and the West: Palestine. They cannot bring themselves to believe that the object of the campaign for a third Palestinian state is not a peaceful solution of the Palestine problem, but the destruction of Israel.

EUGENE ROSTOW (1913-2002) served in the U.S. government as Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs and Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency.

"Without War We Would Not Have Peace"

An *in*FOCUS Interview with Ambassador Michael Oren

The Honorable Michael Oren is a Member of Knesset (MK) from Israel's Kulanu party and Deputy Minister for Diplomacy in the Prime Minister's Office. He served as Israel's ambassador to the United States from 2009 to 2013. With a Ph.D. in Near Eastern Studies from Princeton, his academic career includes visiting professorships at Harvard, Yale, and Georgetown universities as well as Tel Aviv and Hebrew universities. MK Oren is author of *Power, Faith and Fantasy: America in the Middle East, 1776 to the Present*; and *Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East*. *in*FOCUS Senior Editor Shoshana Bryen spoke with him recently.

***in*FOCUS:** DEPUTY MINISTER OREN, THANK YOU FOR SPEAKING WITH US TODAY. TO BEGIN AT THE TIME OF THE 1967 WAR, DID ARAB LEADERS HAVE DIVERGENT INTERESTS OR MOTIVATIONS AT THE START OF THE WAR? IF SO, HOW DID THAT AFFECT THE OUTCOME?

Michael Oren: Yes, there were very different interests and goals. [Egyptian] President [Gamal Abdel] Nasser wanted to demonstrate his strength and his leadership in the Arab world. It wasn't at all clear to me that he wanted to go to war. King Hussein of Jordan wanted to survive; Nasser had tried to assassinate him 11 times. When Nasser kicked the United Nations peacekeeping forces – UNEF out of Sinai, then closed the Straits of Tiran, the entire Arab world began demanding the destruction of Israel. King Hussein had no choice but to fly to Cairo and place his army under Egyptian command. He just wanted to survive.

The Syrian Arab regime wanted to go to war. They had plans for war. They were – the army, the people – the most radically against Israel. They were clamoring for what was a very radical Ba'athist regime, the forefather of the current Ba'athist regime. Hafez Assad, the father of Bashar Assad, today's dictator, was then the ruler.

Did that affect the outcome? I think the outcome was that the Jordanian Army was placed under Egyptian command. Israel opened hostilities against Egypt on the morning of June 5th; all of Israel's attempts to keep Jordan out of the war were a bust. Egyptian generals in Jordan gave the Jordanian army orders to open fire on Jerusalem, to attack Jerusalem, on land, to open fire on greater Tel Aviv with long range guns.

That brought Israel into war against the Jordanians. The Syrians opened fire immediately from the Golan Heights with 10,000 shells falling on Northern Israeli farms and settlements. That was more ideologically motivated than King Hussein's offensive. That was the impact [of divergent Arab views], the outcome.

THEIR POSITION FROM 1948, THAT THE CREATION OF ISRAEL WAS ILLEGITIMATE. DOES ISRAEL STILL NEED THE ARABS TO ACCEPT THE PARAMETERS OF 242 IN SOME FORMAL WAY? CAN YOU MAKE PEACE WITH THE PALESTINIAN ARABS EVEN IF THE ARAB STATES DON'T TAKE THEIR OBLIGATIONS SERIOUSLY FIRST?

Oren: Resolution 242 comes up because of the Khartoum Resolution. UN Security Council Resolution 242 was passed in November 1967, the Khartoum Resolution of the Arab League, was passed in August of that year. The Khartoum Resolution was known as the "Three No's" – there would be no peace, no negotiations, and no recognition of Israel.

The regime [in Tehran] had a dry run of the Arab Spring – it's called the Green Revolution and they learned to suppress it in June 2009.

if: HERE IS A QUESTION THAT STARTS AT 1967 AND ENDS NOW. AS A RESULT OF 1967, YOU HAVE UN RESOLUTION 242, AND LATER YOU GET 338. THE POINT OF THOSE WAS TO GET THE ARABS TO REVERSE

Resolution 242, which doesn't actually call on the Arab states to make peace with Israel, just says that "every state in the region" has the right to peace and secure, recognized boundaries. The Arabs could easily say, "They include Israel and

we don't recognize Israel as a 'state in the region.'" Security Council Resolution 242 was a massive work of ambiguity. The principal of "land for peace" was established, and framers of 242, particularly Justice [Arthur] Goldberg, the American ambassador to the United Nations, were very explicit about leaving the word "the" out of the document before the word "territories" – meaning that Israel would not be required to return to the 1949 Armistice Line.

Israel was to return territories captured in the 1967 war in return for peace; not all the territories. The understanding was that the borders that defined Israel on June 4, 1967, the day before the war, are not defensible. They were eight miles wide in some places. Now, the Arab armies had already tried to cut the country in half twice before across that narrow bottleneck.

It was a very important concept then, understanding that Israel would not withdraw from the entire West Bank. Today, the concept is still important. Israel would make some type of territorial concession in return for peace but wouldn't have to withdraw from all the territory. The most damaging event recently regarding Resolution 242, to this principle, which is now nearly 50 years old, was UN Security Council Resolution 2334 [of December 2016]. It designated all the territory Israel captured in 1967 as illegally occupied "Palestinian land."

The question must be asked, why would the Palestinians want to make peace with Israel if the United Nations had already given them all the land? Resolution 2334 was a tremendous blow to 242. I wonder if it can be repaired.

iF: DOES THAT COME INTO PLAY WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT PRIME MINISTER BENJAMIN NETANYAHU AND PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP TALKING ABOUT A WIDER ARAB-ISRAELI PEACE PROCESS? WOULD IT BE HELPFUL FOR THE ARABS AT LEAST TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT RESOLUTION 242 REMAINS RELEVANT?



Ambassador Michael Oren in 2010. (Photo: Anne Mandlebaum)

Oren: I don't know that Resolution 242 is actually in the Arab Peace Plan. [Editor's Note: Also known as the "Saudi Peace Plan." It is a 2002 proposal for an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict endorsed by the Arab League and re-endorsed in 2007.]

The Arab Peace Plan does talk about normalization, which includes peace, in return for withdrawal to the 1967 lines. In one way, it goes beyond Resolution 242, calling for normalization, not just peace. But it falls far left of it. Unlike 242, it calls for withdrawal from all of the territories.

iF: THE SAUDIS HAVE MADE CERTAIN OVERTURES TO ISRAEL; OTHER COUNTRIES HAVE MADE OVERTURES TO ISRAEL. IS THAT THE RESULT OF CHANGED ATTITUDES, OR IS THAT THE RESULT OF MILITARY DETERRENCE PLUS A FEAR OF IRAN?

Oren: It's all three. I think that Israel, Saudi Arabia, and other Gulf States have

a closer confluence of interest than any time in our history. We agree, of course, on Iran. But we also agree on Assad, we agree on Hamas, we agree on the Muslim Brotherhood. We agree on ISIS. Increasingly, some of the Arabs states are viewing Israel not as an enemy, but as an ally – as a crucial ally – in their national defense. It's a change of attitude, but also a change of circumstances.

iF: YOU HAVE SAID THAT ISRAEL'S VICTORY IN 1967 DRAMATICALLY CHANGED THE MIDDLE EAST BALANCE OF POWER TO ISRAEL'S ADVANTAGE FOR A GENERATION. WHAT HAS BEEN THE EFFECT IN THE LAST FIVE OR SIX YEARS OF THE ARAB REVOLUTIONS ON THAT BALANCE? ON ISRAEL'S RELATIVE POSITION?

Oren: The Arab Spring was a shaking up of the Middle East – in some ways to our advantage and some ways not.

There are longstanding state enemies of Israel, like Syria and Iraq, that have been destabilized, unraveled. They really don't exist as states anymore. At the same time, some dark, Islamic forces have been released – like ISIS – which doesn't redound to our benefit. On the other hand, the Arab Spring has caused the Sunni Arab states to band closer together, those who have survived, and to contemplate the possibility of joining us in a common regional defense.

For example, Egypt, where the Arab Spring initially brought a Muslim Brotherhood government to power. Now there's a far friendlier government in power in Cairo than there has been at any time since the peace accord of 1979. So it's a mixed bag.

iF: PAN-ARABISM WAS AT THE HEART OF THE ARAB COALITION IN 1967. IS PAN-ISLAMISM THE NEW PAN-ARABISM; IS IT SOMETHING COUNTRIES CAN RALLY AROUND TO ISRAEL'S DETRIMENT?

Oren: Of course. Pan-Arabism was an important ideology of the past, but Pan-Islamism is a much more potent force than Pan-Arabism ever was. Pan-Islamism is in principle a global force, not a regional force. Pan-Arabism was to some extent an imported ideology from the West. Pan-Islamism is indigenous to these areas and it's far more radical than Pan-Arabism ever was. Western captives weren't decapitated by Arab nationalist forces in the 1950's and 1960's. So yes, it is a much more potent force and it comes in two varieties. You have Sunni Islamism and then you have Shiite Islamism and frankly, Israel faces a much greater threat from the Shiite variety.

iF: IS THAT HISTORICALLY THE CASE OR IS THAT BECAUSE OF THE IRANIANS BEING WHO THEY ARE?

Oren: It's because of Iran's 1979 revolution.

iF: I'VE HEARD PEOPLE TALK ABOUT A DISTINCT PREFERENCE TO WORK WITH SHIITE MUSLIMS OVER TIME, NOT THE IRANIANS [IN POWER NOW] BUT SHIA MUSLIMS OVER TIME RATHER THAN SUNNI MUSLIMS.

Oren: That's fine, but the problem right now would be Shiite Muslims dominated by the Islamic Republic [of Iran]. That doesn't mean all of them are, but the fact is that the Shiite Muslim mainstream is influenced by the Iranian revolution that caused wide destruction, larger state-sponsored terror.

iF: HOW STRONG DO YOU THINK THE IRANIAN REGIME IS?

Oren: I think it's very strong. I think the regime had a dry run of the Arab Spring – it's called Green Revolution and they learned to suppress it in June 2009. They put together a million-man destruction army and since that period there has not been a single demonstration in Tehran. If anybody demonstrates against the regime the protest will be decapitated very, very quickly.

iF: WOULD YOU SAY PRESIDENT OBAMA'S BIGGEST FAILURE WAS NOT TO TAKE THE 2009 GREEN REVOLUTION SERIOUSLY?

Oren: I think it was part of a broader plan to engage with Iran, to engage that regime, and I think if you ask 99 percent of the Sunni Arabs in this region, they believe it was part of a broader plan – the American-Iranian détente, which included not getting involved against Assad militarily in Syria and which included the Iran nuclear deal. Iran has done very, very well. It is basically the major military presence in Iraq and, of course, in Yemen.

iF: HOW DOES ISRAEL ASSESS IRAN'S MILITARY BUILD UP, DO YOU THINK IT HAS NUCLEAR WEAPONS? DO YOU THINK IT'S CLOSE?

Oren: They want them. I do not know if they have them, but we start with the assumption that the nuclear deal not only did not prevent Iran's path to the bomb, it paved Iran's path to the bomb. *[Editors Note: The 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) between the P5+1 countries and Iran.]* It created two paths to the bomb: Iran could cheat and get the bomb or it can comply with the deal and wait another 10 years and get not just one bomb but many bombs quite legally, with legitimacy. That's a very good option for this regime because I see no alternatives to the regime anywhere over the horizon.

iF: WHY IS IT THAT ISRAEL CONTINUES TO DEAL WITH THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY GIVEN THE BREACHES IN ITS AGREEMENTS, SUPPORT FOR TERROR, AND THAT IT PAYS TERRORIST FAMILIES?

Oren: Right now, the Palestinian Authority is the authority which we can interact with on a number of levels including security cooperation – although I wouldn't over-estimate the value of that, but it is a value. We interact with them on many different levels, on economic projects, I'm interacting with them in my daily job. And so, while we can protest and take measures against the way they use foreign aid to promote terrorism, I don't think it is in Israel's interest to replace the Palestinian Authority at this time.

iF: DO YOU THINK YOU COULD REPLACE ABBAS IF YOU WANTED TO?

Oren: I don't know. Already, the race for his successor is on and it only resulted in shooting in the streets, Palestinian streets. We have interceded to stop the shooting.

iF: ISRAEL IS INCREASINGLY INTEGRATED ECONOMICALLY AND TECHNOLOGICALLY WITH MOST OF THE WORLD, INCLUDING WITH EUROPE. AT THE SAME TIME, THOSE SAME EUROPEANS USE PUBLIC PLATFORMS

AND INTERNATIONAL PLATFORMS TO DENIGRATE ISRAEL. DO YOU JUST HAVE TO SHUT YOUR EYES AND SAY, "OKAY, LET'S KEEP ROLLING"?

Oren: Pretty much. Fighting it the way we fight it, still 33 percent of our trade is with Western Europe, and they are our major trading partners. I would like to see us reduce that dependency as long as Western Europe remains our primary critic in the world – and they are our primary critics in the world.

iF: WORSE THAN THE RUSSIANS?

Oren: Oh, much, much. We have better working relations with Europe, perhaps. We have very complicated relations with Russians because they are operating militarily in the region. That's an issue, but Europeans are labeling products from Judea and Samaria and the Golan Heights. Take Sweden. The old relations are pretty much outdated; Sweden is considered a hostile country.

iF: IN 1967, ISRAEL WAS A SECOND WORLD COUNTRY – IT HAD FEWER THAN 3 MILLION JEWS. TODAY ITS A FIRST WORLD COUNTRY WITH ABOUT 6.5 MILLION JEWS. POLITICALLY, AND IN SOME RESPECTS SOCIO-RELIGIOUSLY, THE POPULATION APPEARS DIVIDED. DO YOU BELIEVE THAT ISRAEL HAS THE RESILIENCE TO UPHOLD THE ZIONIST ENTERPRISE INDEFINITELY?

Oren: Indefinitely includes infinity; that's kind of a big chunk of time. But as far as we can see for the future, the answer is definitely, unequivocally, yes. As a matter of fact, by all indicators, Israel is an overwhelmingly successful society, whether it is economic advancement, or one of the lowest unemployment rates in the world, or one of the lowest inflation rates in the world. It is pretty extraordinary stuff.

Its also one of the happiest countries in the world. We're the fifth happiest country in the world. We have very good

longevity rates. Citizen satisfaction, the highest in the world. It's pretty amazing.

iF: AND THAT GOES BEYOND THE INTERNAL DIVISIONS IN THE COUNTRY: RELIGIOUS, NON-RELIGIOUS, ARAB AND ISRAELI CITIZENS OF ISRAEL.

Oren: Just one of the recent statistics shows that the Arabs in Israel are overwhelmingly happy too.

iF: I SEE THEY'RE ENLISTING IN THE MILITARY IN GREATER NUMBERS. NOT BIG NUMBERS BUT GREATER NUMBERS.

Oren: Yes, I don't think anybody can stop the path of Israeli modernity, and it will make inroads. Now over 50 percent of the ultra-Orthodox men are working, are in the work force in one way or the other. That's an impressive statistic.

iF: YES, IT IS. A WRAP UP THOUGHT: IF YOU WERE ISRAEL IN 1967 AND YOU WERE ISRAEL IN 2017 WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST CHANGES THAT HAVE OCCURED IN THE COUNTRY?

Israel today is far more diverse, far more democratic, and in many ways more progressive then it was in 1967.

Oren: Israel today is far more diverse, far more democratic, and in many ways more progressive then it was in 1967. We're certainly economically far more developed, and technologically far more developed. We are militarily far stronger and we are diplomatically more connected with the world. We didn't even have a strategic alliance with the United States in 1967. We are scientifically more proficient. Using any indicator you can find, Israel has excelled. An interesting statistic: Israel has the highest natural growth rate of any modernized society in the world. Most

Western democracies have a rapidly falling birth rate, but our birth rate keeps going up. It's a sign of optimism. You know you don't have three to five babies if you don't have confidence in the future.

iF: IT'S PROBABLY ALSO WHY YOU'RE A HAPPY COUNTRY. EVERYBODY'S OUT THERE MAKING BABIES.

Oren: I think it's also the reason why we have longevity; our family structure keeps us alive. Mine, occasionally, wants to kill me, but they keep us alive.

iF: IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WOULD LIKE TO SAY TO THE READERS OF inFOCUS?

Oren: I think they have to know that the 50th anniversary of the Six Day War is going to be the continuation of that war. Some people will try to mark 50 years of occupation, 50 years of Israeli oppression. They will try to cast the war as an act of planned aggression. It is very important to know the facts. Without war, we would not have peace with Egypt and Jordan; we would not have a reunited Jerusalem

with freedom of worship; we would not have security; and we would not have international recognition to the degree we have today. Yes, there are controversial aspects that remain to be resolved and can be resolved if the Palestinians ever come back to the negotiating table, but the Six Day War was and remains an historic and miraculous victory for Israel and the Jewish people.

iF: THANK YOU ON BEHALF OF THE JEWISH POLICY CENTER, inFOCUS, AND ITS READERS.

The UN and Israel: A History of Discrimination

by JOSHUA MURAVCHIK

In late December 2016, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 2334, lambasting Israel for creating “settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem.” The resolution also asserted that these settlements have “no legal validity and constitute . . . a flagrant violation under international law.” The United States abstained on the resolution, allowing it to pass by a vote of 14 – 0.

This came as a blow to Israel. Ordinarily, the United States has exercised its veto to shield the Jewish state from such motions, but just weeks from leaving office and free of political constraint, President Obama opted to allow this Security Council condemnation (and, according to Israel sources, encouraged it), as a final gesture of his disapproval of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s policies.

Israel’s bitterness over this action stemmed from two causes. One is that such actions can rarely be undone. A future U.S. administration might wish to correct the imbalance in Resolution 2334, but any of the other four states wielding vetoes – Security Council permanent members France, the United Kingdom, Russia and China – all with policies tilted against Israel in varying degrees, could veto any counterbalancing measure. The second is that the United Nations – in which a lone Jewish state weighs in the balance against 22 members of the Arab League and 57 members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation – has proved itself to be irredeemably biased against Israel.

Speaking in Jerusalem in 2013, this shameful reality was confessed by none other than the UN’s highest official,

Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. “Unfortunately... Israel [has] suffered from bias – and sometimes even discrimination” at the United Nations, he said. Back at headquarters a week later, Ban withdrew the substance of the comment without denying he had made it. The retraction was less surprising than the original assertion, which was remarkable because of the identity of the speaker, not for what was said, the reality of which is about as well concealed as the sun on a cloudless noon.

states among its members, reshaped the body’s stance toward the Middle East and its central “conflict.” The United Nations became the principal instrument for advancing Arab claims and actions against Israel, including even legitimating Palestinian terrorism.

Thus, in October 1974, 14 years before the Palestine Liberation Organization even nominally forswore terrorism, the General Assembly voted to invite it to send a spokesman to take part in assembly deliberations. No one who was not a rep-

...the Non-Aligned Movement...reshaped the body’s
stance toward the Middle East and its central “conflict.”

■ *Israel’s History at the United Nations*

Israel’s status as a pariah state at the United Nations reflected a change in the world body dating from the 1970s. In its early decades, the UN was dominated by the Cold War competition between East and West, but between 1952 and 1968 these two blocs became outnumbered by a third, as the UN’s rolls increased from 82 to 126 member states. Most of the new members were former colonies that had recently won their independence, and they formed what became the leading bloc at the UN, the Non-Aligned Movement.

The new anti-Western, anti-American *zeitgeist* of the UN, and the dominance of the NAM, with Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser among its leaders and many Arab and other Muslim

representative of a government – except the pope, and even he was the head of a quasi-state – ever before had been granted such a privilege. But the vote to extend the invitation was overwhelming, 105 to 4, with only the United States, Israel, and two Latin American governments opposed.

Not a single European or other major industrial state joined America in resisting this extraordinary move. Most of them abstained, although a handful voted with the majority, largely because the PLO had proved so adept at playing on European fears. Harris Schoenberg, an author who represented the NGO B’nai B’rith at the UN, interviewed various European delegates who told him that “PLO spokesmen had undertaken to halt and actively seek to prevent further Arab aerial piracy and terrorist attacks in countries other

than Israel if permitted to participate in the General Assembly debate.”

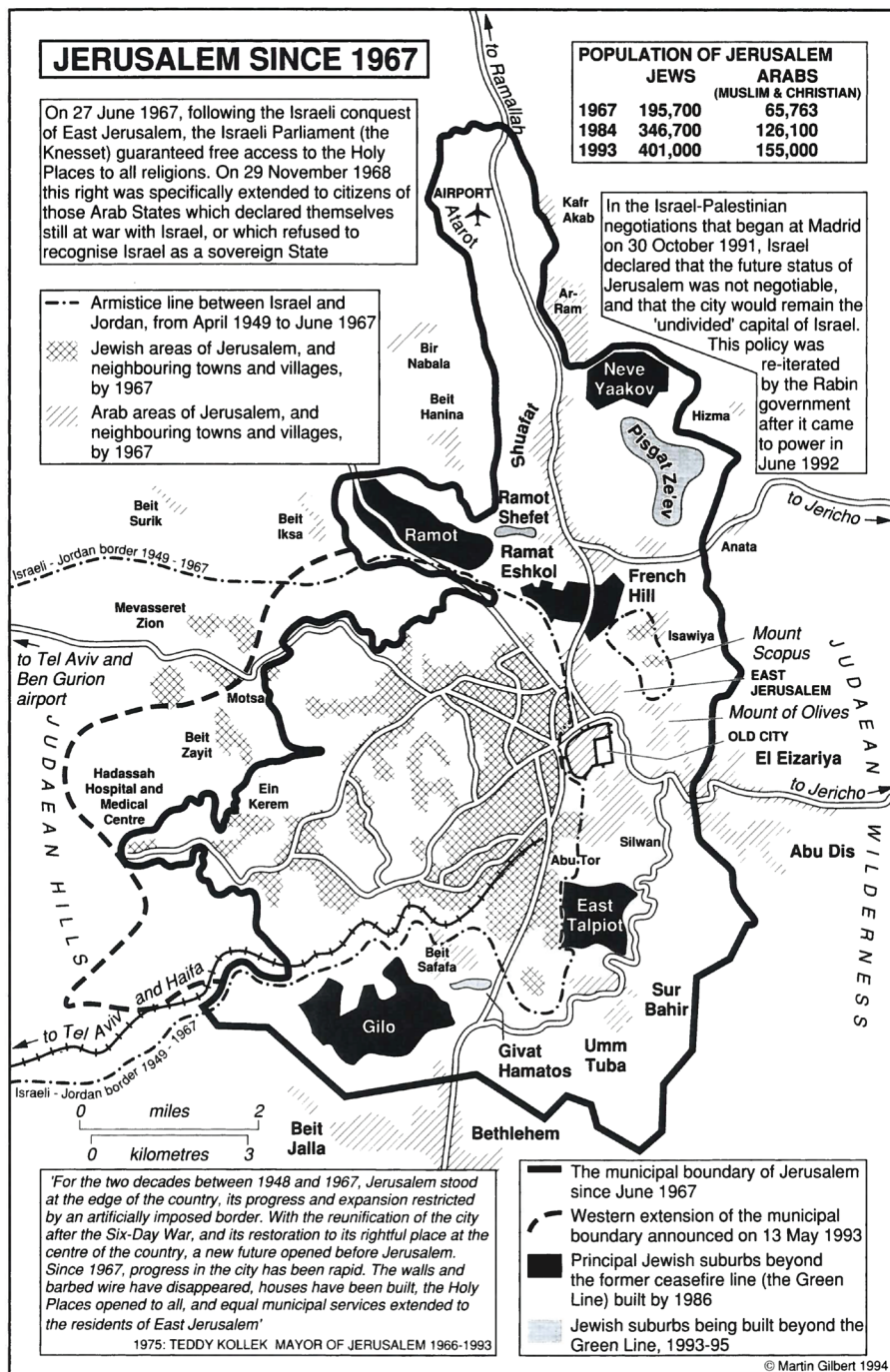
The assembled delegates heard Yasser Arafat proclaim the necessity of getting at the “historical roots” of the issue, namely, “the Jewish invasion of Palestine [that] began in 1881,” and addressing it with a “radical...antidote,” rather than “a slavish obeisance to the present.” The “present” from which Arafat wished to banish “obeisance” was the very existence of Israel. He pledged his “resolve to build a new world...a world free of colonialism, imperialism, neo-colonialism, and racism in each of its instances, including Zionism.”

This harangue was received with a standing ovation unique in its intensity. An alliance of Communist and third-world states was after the scalps of its chosen enemies. The United States, in the throes of losing its agonizing war in Vietnam, resisted with diminished strength, often unable to rally even its Western allies.

■ Continuing a Trend

Besides Taiwan, which had been replaced by mainland China as the Chinese representative at the world body in 1971, the most vulnerable of the Soviet bloc-third world enemies was South Africa. To the black-majority states of sub-Saharan Africa, South Africa's formal system of racial hierarchy with minority whites on top and majority blacks oppressed was an insufferable insult. In 1974, South Africa's credentials were rejected by the General Assembly, which meant that the country “was effectively expelled,” wrote America's then UN ambassador, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, in *A Dangerous Place*. This violated the UN Charter, which left decisions about membership to the Security Council, but few were willing to speak up for due process lest they appear equivocal about South Africa's repugnant racial system.

The next year, the foreign ministers of the Organization of the Islamic Conference determined to have Israel expelled in the same way. The PLO lined up support for this move at a meeting of the African states, while training its sights on a ministerial meeting of the NAM scheduled a



month later, August 1975, in Lima, Peru.

Washington pulled out all the stops. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger delivered a major speech on the subject, with a thinly veiled warning that the United States might turn its back on the United Nations. In addition to Washington's hard line, the drive to expel Israel was also slowed by disarray within the ranks. At the Lima conference, allies of Moscow and Beijing turned on each other, as did oil producers and consumers, and these

stumbles were capped by a Peruvian coup that overthrew the host government during the conference. The most decisive factor disrupting the expulsion maneuver was the surprising position of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, who announced his opposition because “Israel must be present at the United Nations if it is expected to comply with its resolutions.”

But sighs of relief in Jerusalem at the collapse of this effort to anathematize Israel proved premature. Its enemies soon

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ginned up an alternative that did Israel almost as much damage: a resolution of the General Assembly, echoing Arafat and Soviet propagandists declaring Zionism to be “a form of racism.” As Moynihan pointed out, the United Nations was predicated on the equal legitimacy of all political systems, however odious. It mattered not a whit how repressive a regime was or whether it starved or slaughtered its own subjects. Only one thing was declared unacceptable: racism. To label Zionism a form of racism was to declare Israel inherently illegitimate, regardless of its borders or behavior.

■ *Political Warfare*

In 1982, the body declared that Israel “is not a peace-loving member state and that it has not carried out its obligations under the Charter.” Since the Charter itself specifies that “membership...is open to all...peace-loving states which accept the obligations contained in the...Charter,” this kept alive the threat to expel Israel. Moreover, it called for an international campaign against that country, exhorting

Nonetheless, every year the General Assembly votes on anywhere from 70 to 100 or so resolutions, apart from meaningless consensus resolutions on administrative matters and the like. Between 15 and 20 of these votes pertain to Israel, all in a pejorative way. Very few of the world’s most repressive or blood-soaked regimes have received even a single rebuke from this august chamber. Of all General Assembly resolutions that criticize a particular country, three-quarters apply to Israel.

The European view that these resolutions amount only to empty rhetoric is true insofar as there are no enforcement mechanisms attached to these words. But this ignores the fact that third world countries, lacking the military, economic, and political power of the large industrial states, attach great importance to the United Nations and therefore are likely to be influenced by its declarations. It ignores, too, that the relentless recitation of UN declarations impedes compromise and peace by reinforcing the conviction in the Arab world that all right lies on the Arab side and that Israel is irredeemably evil.

To label Zionism a form of racism was to declare
Israel inherently illegitimate, regardless of its
borders or behavior.

“all member states to cease forthwith...all dealings with Israel in order totally to isolate it in all fields.” It even called upon “all states to put an end to the flow to Israel of human resources,” thereby stamping the UN’s imprimatur on the practice of the Soviet Union and other European Communist regimes of denying freedom of emigration – specifically Jewish emigration to the Jewish homeland.

This language was adopted again and again throughout the 1980s, although the fever cooled a little with the end of the Cold War and the disappearance of the Soviet Union, which also led to the rescinding of the resolution equating Zionism with racism in 1991.

■ *Sanctifying Violence*

The General Assembly’s positions also sanctify violence and even terrorism – so long as it is carried out in the name of an approved cause. This stance, which contradicts the UN Charter, originated in the struggles for African independence and then was carried over to the Arab-Israel conflict. In the 1960s, the General Assembly passed several resolutions regarding Portugal’s colonies and the white-ruled states of southern Africa, affirming “the legitimacy of the struggle of the colonial peoples to exercise their right to self-determination and independence” (e.g., Resolution 2548). In 1970, an important modification was added in

the phrase “by all the necessary means at their disposal” (Resolution 2708).

The PLO, backed by the Arab States and the Islamic Conference, was to cite this language as sanctioning its deliberate attacks on civilians. In his famous speech to the General Assembly, Arafat claimed “the difference between the revolutionary and the terrorist lies in the reason for which each fights. Whoever stands by a just cause...cannot possibly be called [a] terrorist.”

Just a week after Arafat’s appearance, the General Assembly affirmed “the right of the Palestinian people to regain its rights by all means” (Resolution 3236). Any ambiguity in this phrase was wiped away in a 1982 resolution that lumped the Palestinian case together with lingering cases of white rule in southern Africa and affirmed “the legitimacy of the struggle of peoples against foreign occupation by all available means, including armed struggle” (Resolution 37/43). Since the Palestinians were engaged neither in conventional nor even, for the most part, guerrilla war with Israel, but rather a campaign of bombings and murders aimed at civilian targets, this is what was meant by “armed struggle.”

As if the General Assembly’s topsy-turvy stance on terrorism were not enough, the UN Commission on Human Rights went even further, affirming that Palestinian terrorism (i.e., “resist[ing] Israeli occupation” by “all available means, including armed struggle”) was not only “legitimate” but even a means of “fulfilling...one of the goals and purposes of the United Nations.”

■ *Only Israel*

This was only a particularly tangy example of the commission’s well-articulated system of double standards where the Jewish state was involved. The governments that most egregiously abused or repressed their citizens escaped year after year without a word of censure. Indeed, many of them – the People’s Republic of China, the Soviet Union, Cuba, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Syria, and others of



United Nations General Assembly Hall in New York City. (Photo: Basil Sou)

their ilk – were members of the commission. Occasionally, a dictatorship that had become politically isolated, such as, say, Burma’s, would suffer the indignity of a single diplomatically worded resolution chiding it for misdeeds. Meanwhile, at every session some five to eight separate resolutions would excoriate Israel.

This bias also infused other UN activities conducted in the name of human rights. The UN’s 2001 World Conference Against Racism in Durban, South Africa, was so extreme in its anti-Israel focus and tone that Secretary of State Colin Powell ordered the U.S. delegation to leave. Israel was front and center; the actions of Hutus toward Tutsis or Turks toward Kurds or Russians toward Chechens or Serbs toward Albanians or scores of other cases of inter-group conflict that might also have been on the agenda were not mentioned. When a resolution decrying bigotry was adopted, a proposal to include anti-Semitism on the list of proscribed prejudices almost was turned aside.

Eventually, the hypocrisy that had become the hallmark of the Commission on Human Rights so alarmed then-UN Secretary General Kofi Annan that he said it cast “a shadow on the reputation of

the United Nations system as a whole.” At Annan’s initiative, the commission was replaced in 2006 by the Human Rights Council, which was designed with somewhat different rules of selection and procedure intended to make the body more faithful to its mission than its predecessor. But these hopes were to be disappointed badly on all counts. Most of the world’s worst human-rights abusers never have suffered even mild rebuke, while Israel continues to be chastised as often as all the rest of the countries combined and in terms more condemnatory.

The new council, like the commission before it, includes the “Human Rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories” as a separate agenda item at every meeting, while no other country or situation is treated in this way. Indeed, all other countries of the world together constitute a single additional point on the agenda, as do various thematic and administrative issues, such as “racism” and periodic reports from the high commissioner for human rights. In 2007, the council mandated a follow-up conference to the 2001 Durban confab against racism, selecting Moammar Qaddafi’s government in Libya to

chair the preparatory committee.

The council’s special rapporteur on the right to food, Jean Ziegler, a Swiss sociologist and activist, concentrated primarily on castigating Israel for allegedly depriving the people of Gaza of nourishment, although he also found time to denounce the “imperialist dictatorship” that rules the United States for “genocide” of Cubans by means of its embargo.

■ *The Practical Effect*

While it is true that most UN bodies are devoid of practical power and cannot enforce their resolutions, this endless drumbeat, from one body to the next, from one corner of the world to another, singling out Israel as the pariah among nations, shapes the political environment in which Israel must live, trade, defend itself, and pursue peace with its neighbors. Moreover, to dismiss the UN as a feckless “talk shop” is to overlook those of its actions that do indeed have practical consequences. The Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories has produced little. But two other bodies, also dedicated entirely to

the question of Israel and Palestine (also having no analog regarding any other countries), have had a major impact.

The first, created in 1975, is the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. Whereas the “special committee” is only a whip to lacerate Israel, this one has the broader, more affirmative mandate of helping the

There is, however, a critical difference. Over the decades, the High Commissioner has moved on from one group of refugees to another, helping them to rebuild their lives, either through repatriation or resettlement. After dealing successfully with the refugees from World War II, UNHCR’s next concern was Hungarians fleeing the Soviet invasion of their

with their neighbors should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date.”

Not only did the Arab states thus wish to pick and choose among General Assembly resolutions, but their insistence that Resolution 194 conferred a “right of return” ignored its qualifying phrase “wishing to...live at peace with their neighbors.” There was of course no “practicable” way that Israel or anyone else could sort individuals by this criterion in the absence of an overall reconciliation between Jews and Arabs. In any event, the Arabs themselves insisted that the refugees be treated not as individuals but “as a group,” and that group was not prepared to make peace with Israel, thus rendering Resolution 194 moot in this case.

The Arabs’ view that the refugee question was political rather than humanitarian prevented UNRWA from concentrating resources on those most in need. Such efforts met objections from the Arab host countries and Palestinian leaders. They insisted that the refugees were entitled to the benefits offered by UNRWA regardless of individual circumstance.

Ban Ki-moon’s extraordinary confession in 2013 afforded a fleeting glance into a sordid picture. By its countless one-sided resolutions and numerous “investigations” of Israel with predetermined results; by providing a global infrastructure for the movement to boycott, divest from, and sanction (BDS) Israel; and by UNRWA, which sustains the alleged “right of return,” the United Nations has served systematically to challenge Israel’s legitimacy and weaken its global position – a damaging and malign role entirely at odds with the world body’s founding purposes – and one which disqualifies the United Nations from any role in Mideast peacemaking.

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...the work of UNRWA is wholly political, and only incidentally humanitarian.

Palestinians to achieve their larger goals. That goal, for some Palestinians, may be a state alongside Israel. But for many it remains what it was at the outset of this committee’s work – a state in place of Israel.

Of the 20 member states appointed to this body, 18 had voted in favor of the resolution equating Zionism and racism, and 16 refused to have diplomatic relations with Israel. The PLO, which was of course not a member of the United Nations and was still associated with terrorism, was nonetheless appointed a member of the drafting committee that wrote the larger committee’s first report.

■ UNRWA and UNHCR

The largest material impact that the United Nations has on the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians and other Arabs is through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. When UNRWA was created in 1949, its original purpose, as seen by the Americans who conceived it, was to provide temporary succor to those who were uprooted by the war that marked Israel’s birth. At almost the same time, another UN agency was created, the High Commissioner for Refugees, designed to assist persons who remained displaced from World War II. Although both UNRWA and the High Commissioner were created as short-term projects, both have endured in perpetuity.

country in 1956. Then came the spillover from Algeria’s war of independence, and then other crises in Asia, Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, and eventually even Europe again, with the Balkan crisis of the 1990s.

But while UNHCR has a staff of fewer than 8,000, serving 16 million people it classifies as refugees (the agency lists 65 million “forcibly displaced people”), UNRWA reports it has a staff of 34,000, serving five million – in other words, four times as many staff for almost one-fourth as many beneficiaries. The essential reason for these differences is that according to its statute, “the work of the High Commissioner shall be of an entirely non-political character; it shall be humanitarian and social.” But the work of UNRWA is wholly political, and only incidentally humanitarian.

The General Assembly resolution creating the UNHCR called on all states to “promot[e] the assimilation of refugees, especially by facilitating their naturalization.” The Arab states, except for Jordan, ignored this injunction precisely because they wished Israel to disappear and therefore insisted that all Arabs who had fled or been expelled must be repatriated. They insistently pointed to a 1948 General Assembly decision, Resolution 194, which recommended “refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace

The Six Day War on Campus: Back to the Future Past

by **ERIC ROZENMAN**

Rumors of Arab-Israeli war were overshadowed by studying for finals late in May, 1967 at Ohio University.

On the tree-shaded Main Green a professor spoke to approximately 20 students gathered at the War Memorial, a monument to the fallen of Athens County. The professor was conducting an impromptu teach-in, though not about the conflict that most concerned O.U.'s nearly 15,000 students, the one in South Vietnam.

When he declared Egypt's closure of the Straits of Tiran a *casus belli*, I stayed to hear the rest. A political liberal – the professor would run for Congress, unsuccessfully, as a Democrat in 1972 – this history instructor made the case that Israel's Arab neighbors were threatening it with aggression.

In less than two weeks most Americans, Jews and non-Jews, would be introduced to Moshe Dayan and Yitzhak Rabin, heroes of Israel's Six Day War victory. In less than two weeks non-Jewish students would stop telling jokes about Jews and start telling them about Arabs.

Those six days, June 4th through June 9th, reshaped the Middle East and Diaspora Jewry. Former Israeli ambassador to the United States, Michael Oren, has written that the Six Day War transformed Israel from dangerously vulnerable to a regional power. Former Soviet refuseniks like Natan Sharansky, now head of the Jewish Agency for Israel, have said the Israeli victory over Moscow's Arab clients catalyzed the Soviet Jewry movement, a force that eventually would lead to the migration to Israel of more than 1 million Jews and help undermine the Soviet Union itself. And Israel's triumph has been credited with

encouraging American Jews to feel more self-assured, to be more openly Jewish.

But nothing abides unchanged or unchallenged, even the glow of a seeming miracle. Analyzing how anti-Zionism is both fueled by and bleeds into anti-Semitism, Sharansky applies the "3-D's" test: Double standards, delegitimization and demonization.

One day, a little more than 20 years later, while commuting on Metro in Washington, D.C., I recognized the professor as a fellow passenger. He said he was conducting research at a local uni-

Jordanian-Palestinian peace initiative, and all the rest had not happened. The professor was focused on what he saw as Israeli obstruction and oppression.

His wife was worse. Yes, the Jews had suffered in the past, she acknowledged. But they had no right to inflict such pain on others now. A Jewish state might have seemed like a good idea once, she said, but it was clear now the establishment of Israel had been a mistake.

Such blame-shifting, such inversion of past and present reality—and from people who once knew better—proved

Such blame-shifting, such inversion of past and present reality – and from people who once knew better – proved infuriating.

versity that semester. He and his wife chanced to be renting near me, so I invited them to dinner.

It was during the first Palestinian intifada and I worked for a pro-Israel organization at the time. How, my former instructor and exponent of Israeli self-defense in 1967 wanted to know, could I support Israel now, given its occupation of and discrimination against the Palestinian Arabs and its rejection of concessions that might induce them to make peace?

It was as if the 1972 Munich Olympics massacre, the 1973 Yom Kippur War, the 1979 Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty and subsequent Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula, the Palestine Liberation Organization's rejection of self-rule and celebration of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's assassination, PLO leader Yasser Arafat's sabotage of the 1985

infuriating. After we brought the evening to a premature close, my wife said, "Those were the worst dinner guests we've ever had." They were proponents, whether they recognized it or not, of the anti-Israel, anti-Jewish "3 D's."

They were also examples and harbingers of the left intelligentsia's abandonment of the Jewish state.

Early in the fall, 2014 semester, Ohio University President Roderick McDavis invited Student Senate President Megan Marzec to participate in the ALS "ice-bucket challenge" to raise awareness and funds for research into amyotrophic lateral sclerosis ("Lou Gehrig's disease"). Instead, Marzec posted a video of herself pouring red-tinted water over her head while wearing a pink T-shirt emblazoned with "Ohio U Divest From Israel."

According to *The Cleveland Plain*



Obervant soldier recites morning prayers next to his camouflaged tent in the Negev on May 27, 1967. (Photo: Lavi Shlomo/Israeli Government Press Office)

Dealer and www.cleveland.com, she claimed to be showing “student concern of the genocide in Gaza and the occupation of Palestine by the Israeli state.” Her “blood-bucket challenge” symbolized “the thousands of displaced and murdered Palestinians, atrocities which OU is directly complicit in through cultural and economic support of the Israeli state.”

The Student Senate apologized for Marzec’s actions, but at its next meeting, four members of the Bobcats for Israel student group—Max Peltz, Rebecca

Sebo, Gabriel Sirkin and Jonah Yulish – were arrested by campus police called by Marzec herself. Officers charged the quartet with disturbing a lawful meeting. The students said they were attempting to counter Marzec’s biased allegations against Israel.

Some students, faculty and administrators backed Marzec’s stance against Israeli “fascism” and its supporters. Hillel International demanded the university apologize to the Bobcats for Israel quartet and make sure they

were cleared of charges.

This writer, an Ohio University alum and then Washington director of CAMERA, the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America, repeatedly offered to put McDavis and other school administrators in touch with agencies such as the Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy for background on the underlying anti-Zionist, antisemitic nature of the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement. The Student Senate president had parroted BDS lines.

Ohio University administrators declined, McDavis preferring instead to issue vague generalities about the school’s commitment “to free speech and civility.” He made no reply to a recommendation he join more than 600 other academics and administrators in signing an online petition opposing academic boycotts of Israel.

Ohio demonstrated its commitment “to free speech and civility” – when it came to pro-Israel activism – by letting the disturbance charges hang over the four students from Bobcats for Israel until March 2015. According to CampusReform.org, they were dropped after defense lawyers called for dismissal due to lack of a speedy trial. Sebo’s attorney, Kenneth Bossin, said “This whole case was driven by the university and the university police department.”

In 1967, Israel burst into public consciousness as a small but powerful state, supported by many who considered themselves both liberal and pro-Western. By relentless psychological warfare, its enemies have been undermining such support ever since. Consider Ohio University’s 1967 teach-in and 2014 “blood bucket challenge” affair just two of many such time-lapse snapshots.

Imaginative military strategy and daring underlay the Six Day War miracle. Nothing less than similarly imaginative information strategy – and moral and sometimes even physical courage in the face of anti-Zionist anti-Semitism – is required today.

ERIC ROZENMAN is a communications consultant for the Jewish Policy Center.

Six Days of War and Israel's Current Security Challenges

by **EHUD EILAM**

After the 1948-1949 War of Independence, Israel created a security policy based on several principles:

- Threats to the existence of the state;
- Lack of strategic balance between Israel and the Arab states in population, size of territory and natural resources;
- The need to depend on state power;
- Lack of strategic depth – mostly in the center of the country.

After Israel's establishment in 1948 its main national security challenge was high-intensity war. If/when war occurred, Israel had to win or face annihilation. The constraints of security policy meant the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) had to win quickly and decisively. In mid-May 1967, tens of thousands of Egyptian troops entered the Sinai Peninsula and an alliance against Israel was formed between Jordan and Egypt. Syria and Egypt already had an agreement to assist each other in case of war. Both sides now prepared for conflict.

On June 5, the Israeli air force (IAF) struck first and neutralized the Egyptian, Jordanian and Syrian air forces. At almost the same time, Israeli ground units attacked in Sinai. After a few days of combat, Egypt's armed forces collapsed and its soldiers fled to the Suez Canal. The IDF pursued them and took control of Sinai.

In the West Bank, after Jordan opened fire, the IDF launched an offensive on June 5th and took all the West Bank while quickly defeating the Jordanian military. On June 8th, following ongoing Syrian shelling from the Golan Heights, the IDF attacked and seized that area in two days.

After the war, Arab states refused to talk with Israel, let alone to accept its right to exist, despite Israel's swift and decisive victory. Perhaps there had not been a clear and present danger to Israel before June 4, 1967 because the war showed that Arab militaries were no match for the IDF, but Israel could not have known that in advance.

In wars like that of 1967, Israel's main foes were Arab states, mostly those near it, i.e. Egypt, Syria, and Jordan. Since 1979, there has been formal peace between Israel and Egypt and since 1994 there has been an Israeli-Jordan peace treaty also. In recent years, Syria has almost become a failed state and Iraq struggles to survive. The grim situation

Hezbollah in Lebanon in 2006, and Gaza-based Hamas in 2008-09, 2012 and 2014. Israel also conducted a prolonged low-intensity war in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in 2000-05 with Palestinian movements including armed groups affiliated with Fatah, Hamas, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad. In 2017, it might have to deal with hybrid and/or low-intensity war.

■ **The West Bank and Gaza**

The Palestinian Authority (PA), dominated by the Fatah organization and led by President Mahmoud Abbas, received control of most of the Gaza Strip from Israel in 1994 and the rest in 2005. In 2007, Hamas expelled the

The constraints of security policy meant the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) had to win quickly and decisively.

of Syria and Iraq has not changed so far in 2017, so Israel does not have to be as concerned about those large Arab countries as it had been in the past. Israel, even with its internal problems – including economic ones – is in much better shape than Arab states around it.

In recent decades, Israel's main security challenge has not been a war with an Arab state but rather confrontations with Arab non-state organizations such as Hezbollah and Hamas. Those groups have hybrid forces, mixing conventional, guerrilla, and terror capabilities. Israel fought hybrid conflicts against

PA from Gaza in a “five day war.” Since then, Hamas has controlled the Strip. Israel could reconquer all of Gaza and topple Hamas, which would pave the way for Abbas' PA to regain its hold over the Strip. The PA, however, might refuse to be seen as depending on Israel's security forces, although this is the reality in the West Bank. Even if the PA does retake control in Gaza, it might lose the area again. Given the demographic, economic, political and military headaches, Israel does not want to administer the Gaza Strip again and so it tolerates Hamas's rule there.



A soldier with the IDF's Givati Brigade. (Photo: Israel Defense Forces)

Hamas is aware of its weaknesses, including military ones. Iran and Hezbollah did not support their erstwhile partner against Israel in its wars of 2008-2009, 2012 and 2014. In 2012 and 2014 they sat on their hands because Hamas had refused to help Iran's ally, dictator Bashar al-Assad, in the Syrian civil war. In a new round against Israel, Hamas might again be without allies.

Fearing an Israeli offensive, Hamas has been trying to restrain other radical groups in the Gaza Strip from launching rockets at Israel. At the

and miscalculation. In 1967, Israel (and possibly Egypt) also did not want war but it occurred regardless, following an escalation that started with Egyptian provocations, mostly the massive deployment in Sinai and blocking of the Straits of Tiran.

■ **Outlook for 2017**

The UN Security Council approved Resolution 2334 on Dec. 23, 2016, which might encourage the PA to take steps against Israel. Israel might also absorb blows at the diplomatic, economic, and

confrontation in the West Bank. Israel and the PA must maintain existing security coordination between them to prevent a dangerous outburst.

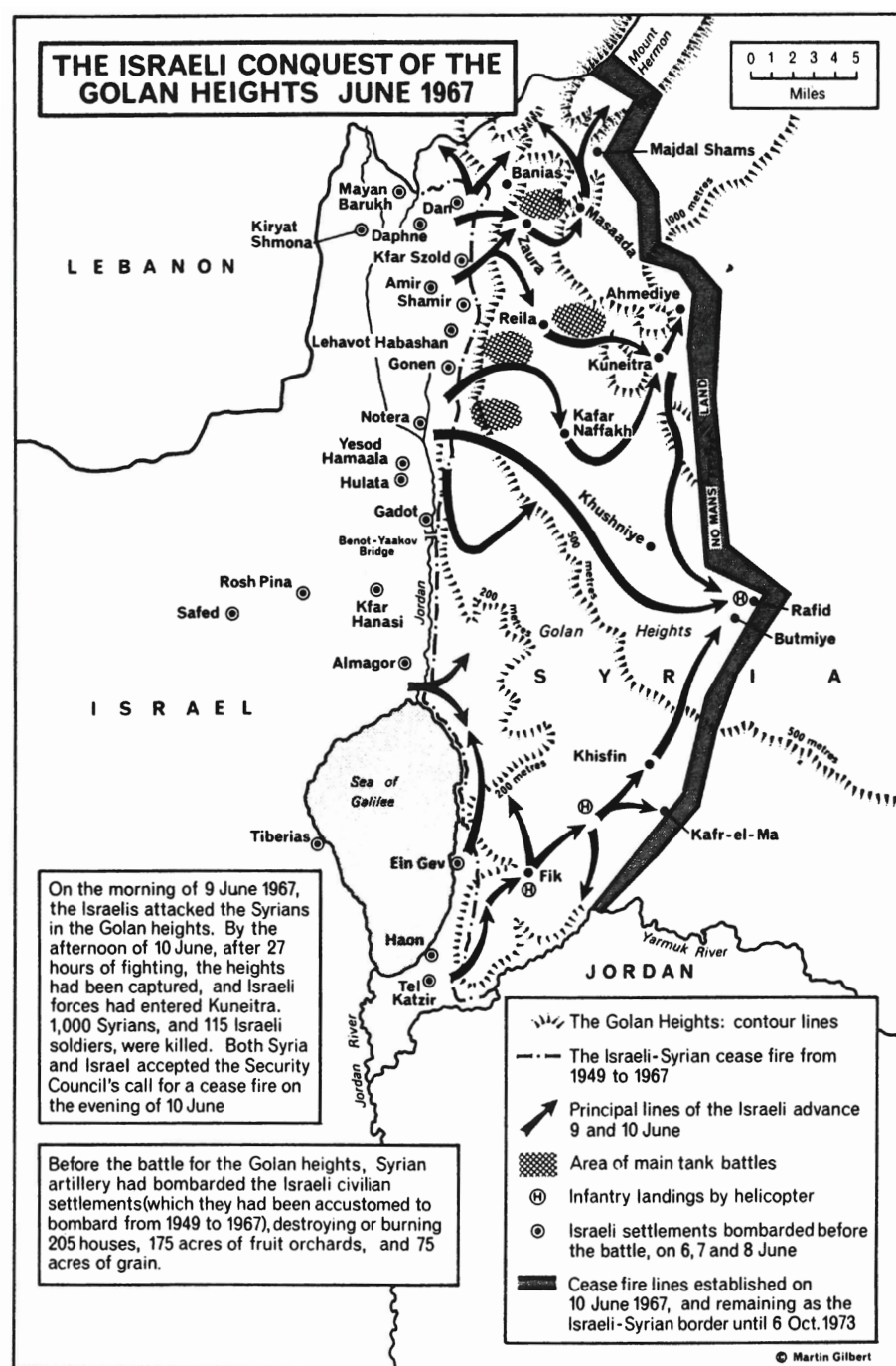
This might not be enough. Without some kind of a political process there will be lack of hope among Palestinian Arabs that could push some to confront Israel with violence. Considering the huge obstacles the two sides face in reaching an agreement, chances for one appear low. However, there should be an attempt, a serious one, preferably with the assistance of brokers like the United States and European Union, to try to stop the next confrontation in the West Bank.

Such a clash might resemble the 2000-2005 second intifada, which was a low-intensity war that included ambushes of Israeli vehicles and suicide bombers. A fight could also look like the first intifada, from 1987-1993, when the Palestinians relied on throwing stones and firebombs, with gunmen contributing to the upheaval. A new West Bank confrontation could also combine the effects of those two collisions.

Although now neither Hamas nor Israel seeks war, it might happen because of deterioration on the border and miscalculations.

same time, Hamas has been preparing for the next round, mostly by digging tunnels and producing its own rockets. Although now neither Hamas nor Israel seeks war, it might happen because of deterioration on the border

legal levels. Israel will retaliate against such measures and that might exacerbate already strained relations between Israel and the PA. There could be other circumstances when, against the will of Israel and/or the PA, there might be a



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High and Low Intensity Warfare

In August 2015, the IDF published the "IDF Strategy." According to this document, Israel's strategy is "aimed at ensuring the existence of Israel, creating effective deterrence, neutralizing threats as necessary, and delaying the next conflict." In 2017, the IDF is expected to continue to have an edge over Arab militaries, including in air power.

Since 1949, the IDF's buildup has been based on ground and air forces as part of its offensive approach at the operational level. Although the IDF might continue to depend on offense, defense has become more and more important, and in recent years, the IDF invested heavily in developing its active defense, producing weapon systems such as Iron Dome and David's Sling aimed at intercepting rockets and missiles. At the

same time, Israel must make clear to current and potential enemies that it is willing to conduct an attack, including on the ground if necessary, and not only to conduct defensive operations and/or relying only on air power.

Since the late 1980s, Israel has fought hybrid and low-intensity wars while traditionally preparing for a high-intensity war. The latter threat has diminished to a large extent, yet Israel never has been able to rule out a large, conventional war with Egypt – whose large, modernized, U.S.-backed military now focuses on internal and external threats from Islamists and reportedly cooperates with Israel. But under a different leadership that potentially could change. With all the importance of training for a hybrid war, the IDF should not allocate too many resources to that at the expense of preparing for a possible collision with Egypt. The latter, despite its enormous economic problems, has been pouring money into its military, including buying 24 Rafale jets from France. This effort is not meant to confront ISIS in Sinai but to get ready for a high intensity war with Israel, if it happens. Neither state seeks war and there is tight security cooperation between Israel and Egypt against ISIS. However Israel has been monitoring Egypt's military buildup. It was one reason the Israeli air force has been assimilating the new U.S.-built F-35 Joint Strike Fighter.

In both a high intensity war against Egypt and a hybrid war, the IDF will strive for a quick victory, as in 1967. The IDF might implement similar methods, such as penetrating deep into Arab territory while advancing on a wide front. There are, of course, major differences between hybrid and high-intensity wars since the capability of the Egyptian military is much bigger than any hybrid foe Israel has to deal with. Hybrid forces, mostly Hezbollah, have tens of thousands of rockets, including long range ones, but in contrast to the Egyptian armed forces, such groups don't possess weapon systems like tanks, let alone

in large numbers. Those groups rely on light arms, IEDs, mortars and anti-tank missiles. Hamas, Hezbollah, ISIS and others do not possess planes, only UAVs, while Egypt has more than 200 U.S.-supplied F-16s.

Iran has been assimilating the S-300, an advanced Russian anti-aircraft system. Once an Israeli raid on Iran commenced, the latter might retaliate. Both sides would calculate whether and for how long to continue striking each

Bashar al-Asad regime against both Islamist and more secular rebels has made Israeli intervention more difficult, despite certain understandings between Israel and Russia. Until now, Assad has not retaliated for Israeli air raids, but if he feels stronger after success against the rebels, he might respond militarily to future Israeli bombardments. In the worst case this could lead to a war between Israel and Assad and/or Hezbollah, which assists Assad.

Israel has been careful not to become entangled in the Syrian civil war. Some in Israel claimed the country could not ignore the large-scale suffering and massacres of Syrian civilians and therefore should act. However, Israel learned in 1982 in Lebanon that it should avoid intervention in Arab civil wars. Only if an assault from Syria inflicts heavy casualties among Israelis would Israel would hit back hard, which then might cause an escalation. Meanwhile, Israel has provided medical treatment for more than 2,600 Syrians who came to Golan Heights checkpoints seeking help.

Before the 1967 war Israel was deeply worried by the Arab coalition arrayed against it. In 2017, several Arab states are in decline and Israel has strategic

Although the IDF might continue to depend on offense, defense has become more and more important...

■ *Could There Be an Israeli Attack on Iran?*

Since the late 1970s Iran has been a sworn enemy of Israel. The leaders of this Shi'ite theocratic police state want to destroy Israel. Possessing nuclear weapons would enable Iran to attempt to accomplish this goal. Iran might breach the July 2015 agreement [JCPOA] with the United States, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Russia and China not to produce a nuclear weapon. If that happened, The Trump administration might not act militarily against Iran but might allow Israel to do so. An Israeli raid on Iran's nuclear infrastructure could ignite a war between Israel and Iran and/or the pro-Iranian Hezbollah in Lebanon.

In 1967, Arab states had bombers that could reach any spot in Israel. Hezbollah has missiles that can hit every place in Israel. Hezbollah, which has up to 150,000 rockets and missiles, could launch them at a rate of about 1,200 per day. The IDF would conduct a large-scale ground, air and sea offensive in order to suppress this fire. Israel is aware that preventing the biggest threat to its future – Iran with a nuclear weapon – might ignite a war with what is currently the greatest danger to the Jewish state – Hezbollah's arsenal.

The Israel Air Force (IAF), during a raid on Iran, would have to overcome various challenges such as distance and Iranian air defense and fighters. Lately

other, and when to return to their prolonged cold war. It is also possible that there might not be an immediate, large-scale war if Iran's initial military retribution was minor. Instead, Iran could take its revenge by launching cyber and/or terror attacks against Israeli and/or Jewish objectives worldwide.

■ *The Syrian Civil War*

From 1974 to 2011 there was total quiet on Israel's border with Syria in the Golan Heights. Since 2011 and civil war in Syria there have been more than 100 incidents along that border. Most have been minor, including mortar and tank

shells landing inside Israeli territory, to which the IDF responded immediately. The IDF also changed its deployment in the Golan Heights, from preparing to stop a massive Syrian land offensive to containing and getting ready to handle guerrilla and terror assaults from Syria.

In recent years Israel tried to reduce the delivery of sophisticated weapons, such as long-range surface-to-surface missiles, via Syria to Hezbollah including conducting air strikes inside Syria. Russian intervention on behalf of the

Since the late 1980s, Israel has fought hybrid and low-intensity wars while traditionally preparing for a high-intensity war.

superiority over both Arab states and non-state organizations. The latter, Israel's main active enemies, could inflict casualties and damage but do not pose a threat to the survival of the country. Still, Israel should not underestimate its foes; the IDF prepares accordingly.

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A Peace to End All Peace

review by JULIANA GERAN PILON

This year marks the half-century anniversary of the 1967 war against Israel that shattered Arab hopes for an immediate annihilation of the Jewish state. But Israel's stunning military victory on the battlefield did not bring peace to that historically contested birthplace of the Abrahamic faiths. Snatching a diplomatic victory from the jaws of his ignominious defeat, Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser proceeded to set the stage for the escalating international campaign against Israel that has emboldened Palestinian extremists ever since. This accomplishment, which Michael Sharnoff calls *Nasser's Peace*, was testimony to the Egyptian leader's skill in cynically manipulating every tool of statecraft.

Though Nasser has been amply studied, his reaction to the aftermath of his defeat by Israel has not been analyzed with the full care it deserves. In his timely new book, Sharnoff draws on recently declassified information from Soviet and American archives, revealing new details about diplomatic exchanges at the highest levels, which he compares with pronouncements by Nasser's confidant and official spokesperson Muhammad Hassanein Heikal, editor-in-chief of the popular Egyptian newspaper *al-Ahram*, that Nasser used in concert with other influence operations tactics. What emerges is the outline of a shrewd, cynical strategic communication operation, whose ultimate outcome was Security Council Resolution 242 of November 22, 1967.

Resolution 242 famously provided for negotiations regarding the political status of "occupied territories," which was understood to denote the land that Israel had gained after pushing back the attacking Arab armies earlier that year. (Notably, no reference was made

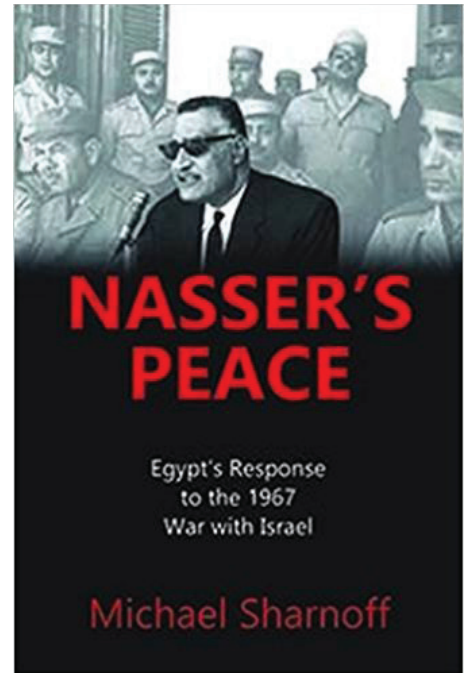
to those territories illegally occupied by Arab states after having expelled or killed all its Palestinian Jewish inhabitants in 1949.) The next step, in theory, was for members of the Arab world and Israel to engage in negotiations, with the expectation that Israel would concede territory in exchange for recognition of its right to exist.

Unsurprisingly, the vaguely worded resolution paved the way to the ensuing charade known euphemistically as "the peace process." Blame for lack of progress in negotiations was routinely placed on Israel – specifically, on the existence of settlements which were deemed illegal even when constructed on land within Israel's pre-67 area and thus not subject to Resolution 242. Lost in the cacophony of hate-filled rhetoric was objective appreciation of history and law.

True, Resolution 242 had not been a complete victory for Nasser, who had intended to defeat Israel at the negotiating table, even as he never quite abandoned his dream of destroying it militarily. Yet Nasser did succeed in the end, as the resolution bought plenty of time to manipulate world opinion against Israel. His shrewdly orchestrated diplomatic effort, duplicitous in the extreme, was a tour de force.

That effort consisted of four distinct, seemingly contradictory but mutually reinforcing communication strategies, both public and private.

The first part involved postwar public declarations implying that Egypt would never recognize Israel's right to exist. In the immediate aftermath of the defeat, he also disseminated the lie that Israel and not Egypt, had been the aggressor, and could never have prevailed without massive U.S. and British support. Not only



*Nasser's Peace:
Egypt's Response
to the 1967 War
with Israel*

Michael Sharnoff

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did he permit Egyptian officials and the media to circulate stories of collusion, but frequently propagated the allegations himself, or had them conveyed through his mouthpiece, Heikal. Several Egyptian embassies, in Algeria and elsewhere, provided fabricated "evidence" of Israeli atrocities perpetrated during and after the war and screened movies on victims of napalm bombs. By the time Nasser finally retracted formally the myth of Western collusion in March 1968, the damage had been done.



From left to right: President Gamal Abdel Nasser, Vice President Anwar Sadat, Arab Socialist Union head Ali Sabri, and Vice President Hussein el-Shafei in Alexandria in 1968.

Not that it made much difference to the Arab world, for which Israel's illegitimacy was always a given, but it helped shape a consensus in the larger international community. The destruction of Israel, and not statehood for the Palestinians, was their – and Nasser's – principal goal. It is therefore no accident that after 1967, Nasser consistently demanded that Israel had to return all the land it had occupied, and deliberately omitted references to Sinai and the Gaza Strip from the demand of "eliminating the consequences of aggression" to suggest that he was open to negotiation in at least some area. Sharnoff notes that "this broadens the explanation of [Nasser's] goal as eliminating Israel" altogether.

Nasser's second strategy consisted of private consultations with Western and Soviet leaders, characterized by "an Egypt-first approach centered on territorial concessions between Israel and Egypt, occasionally demanding the return of Jerusalem and the West Bank. The aim of this diplomacy – which involved telling the opposite things to Americans and to the Soviets – was "to explore what concessions he could acquire without having to recognize Israel and sign a peace treaty." Among

the most important revelations of this book is the bald-faced lying that characterized Nasser's diplomacy, telling diametrically opposite things to the two superpowers he was courting like a rug salesman eyeing the better deal, with duplicity stunning even by the standards of this profession, whose only rival is the world's first.

The third strategy involved using the Egyptian media to project Nasser as

thought would avoid violating the Arab League's principles of no peace, no recognition, and no negotiations with Israel. If deliberations failed to produce results favorable for Egypt, Nasser planned to shift the blame to the international community: he had his bases covered.

From the outset, Nasser had displayed almost total disinterest in establishing a Palestinian state: "Nasser commonly deemphasized a distinct Palestinian identity by addressing them as 'Arabs of Palestine' or even more broadly as 'the people of Palestine.'" How little he cared for them is demonstrated by Nasser's continuation of his predecessor's policy of Egyptian control over Gaza, home to more than a quarter of a million Palestinians. Under Nasser's rule, these hapless people "were denied Egyptian citizenship and were harshly ruled by a string of Egyptian governors, who severely restricted their freedom of movement and expression." On March 29, 1955, Nasser stressed to a crowd in Gaza the broader concept of Arab nationalism at the expense of Palestinian nationalism: "We will never forget the conspiracies hatched to eliminate Arab nationalism in Palestine." Their well-being was subsumed to Nasser's pan-Arab designs. They were being held hostage.

...Nasser commonly deemphasized a distinct Palestinian identity by addressing them as 'Arabs of Palestine'...

a relentlessly anti-Western, anti-Israeli, pan-Arab hero. Nasser's aim was to gain more diplomatic leverage during private party talks. By using the media to routinely question or deny Israel's existence, writes Sharnoff, "Nasser sought to project moderation to his Western and Soviet hosts when he privately repudiated these assertions."

Finally, the fourth strategy involved diplomatic efforts at the United Nations and other political venues, which he

Yet he blamed British colonial policies and aggression for their suffering. On November 28, 1955, Nasser proclaimed that those policies had "left the Arab people of Palestine at the mercy of the Zionist armed gangs." Nasser insisted that "justice for the Palestinians" could only occur after Israel's destruction, proclaiming to the world that Egypt defended their "rights," even as he was making their lives miserable under his rule.

And so instead of being absorbed by their fellow Arabs, the Muslims born in Palestine were being weaponized, used to advance Nasser's ambitions as leader of the Arab world and indeed beyond. At an international peace conference for developing nations held in Bandung, Indonesia, on April 15, 1955, for example, Nasser portrayed the Palestinians as victims of injustice, part of the general Afro-Asian struggle against imperialism and colonialism.

Nasser was interested primarily in the PLO's commitment to the destruction of Israel rather than in establishing an independent Palestinian state.

It was at that conference that Nasser was catapulted upon the world stage. Writes Shadoff: "The policies and goals espoused at Bandung inspired the creation of the Non-Aligned Movement six years later." The plight of the Palestinians would prove invaluable to Nasser's strategy as he prepared for war against Israel. But in order to go beyond the rhetoric and turn them into effective instruments to be wielded as needed, he first had to organize and control them.

He started by creating the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) at the first Arab League Summit in Cairo, which Nasser organized in January 1964. There, he handpicked Ahmad Shukeiri, a former Saudi Ambassador to the United Nations, as the PLO's first chairman. The job was accomplished within just a few months: "Nasser's vision of creating a Palestinian entity under his control was realized during the first session of the Palestinian Council in East Jerusalem

between May 28, 1964 and June 2, 1964." It was at that session that the Council adopted the infamous PLO Covenant, which condemned the partition of Palestine as illegal, and also claimed that the United Nations had approved liberating Palestine as a "defensive" act.

But as transpired during negotiations with Washington after his defeat in the Six Day War, Nasser was interested primarily in the PLO's commitment to the destruction of Israel rather

than in establishing an independent Palestinian state. Desperately seeking to convince the United States to pressure Israel into retreating from all the territories it had captured in that war, at one point he proposed a settlement that would involve a resolution of the "Palestinian problem" by compensating refugees rather than resettling them. "This exposed the fact that in spite of decades of pro-Palestinian propaganda," concludes Sharnoff, "Nasser would sacrifice their cause for an Egypt-first policy."

To be sure, Nasser was ultimately unable to retrieve the land he had lost in the war, and his country suffered terrible economic hardship resulting from decline in tourism and oil revenues, and insufficient wheat shipments. Yet in one respect, his campaign against Israel was successful, as his intransigence over the matter of its security set the parameters for the protracted violence that has hurt everyone involved. This thoughtful, measured book shows that Nasser's "peace" was a travesty. As the new administration considers moving the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem, it is time to set the record straight.

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■ *A Final Thought ...*

Back to the Future

What is commonly called the “Palestinian-Israeli conflict” is, in fact, the “Arab-Israel conflict.” The Arab states rejected Israel’s independence in 1948 and made war against it multiple times. UN Resolution 242 was designed to provide Israel with the security and legitimacy it had been denied by its accepting Israel’s control of territory beyond the 1949 Armistice Line until the Arabs came forward. Demonstrable Arab acceptance of UN Resolution 242 would pave the way for the “secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force” to which Israel is entitled.

That could pave the way for a return to the 1993 Oslo Accords, which made no mention of statehood for the Palestinians, but which envisioned a “permanent settlement based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.”

Radical Palestinian nationalism threatens the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan more than it does Israel. Without further discussion between the Palestinians and King Abdullah II, an important American ally remains at risk. But a settlement based on UN Resolution 242 could include a Palestinian relationship with both Israel and Jordan that is more than autonomy and less than statehood, with economic and social integration across the Jordan River.

It is useful, too, to remember that American support for the Palestinian experiment was not full-fledged support for statehood without conditions. President Clinton signed the Oslo Accords, and President George W. Bush said in 2002:

When the Palestinian people have new leaders, new institutions and new security arrangements with their neighbors, the United States will support the creation of a Palestinian state whose borders and certain aspects of its sovereignty will be provisional until resolved as part of a final settlement.

The burden is on the Arab states and Palestinians to meet obligations dating as far back as 1948 and proceeding through 1967 and 1993. Only when they arrive in the 21st century, can a workable solution be found for Israel, the Palestinians, and Jordan.

– Shoshana Bryen
Senior Director, Jewish Policy Center