ISARMUN 2019

Study Guide

The Arab-Israeli Conflict and
Six Days War (1967)

Authors: Ismail Ismail, Michael Segata, Evangelina Nathanail

Table of Contents

Welcome Letter

Dear Delegates,

It is our great pleasure to welcome you to the 2019 Histrorical Security Council at IsarMUN! During the four days of debates, compromises and diplomacy, you will take on the historical roles of delegates facing the aftermath of the 1967 Six Days War between the Arab States and the State of Israel, in which Israel managed to gain territories five times as large as its size before the war.

We will not only serve as your Chairs during the time of the conference, but also as your guide for your preliminary preparation and questions of any kind. We have therefore prepared this background paper to give you the framework for your research.

Given that the Historical Security Council is an expert committee, we expect a very high level of debate and diplomacy skills, as well as exciting and controversial speeches made by the fifteen delegates of the Security Council.

Even though, or perhaps because the HSC is an expert committee, we would love to stress on the fact that preparation is the key to being a successful diplomat, which is the exact purpose of this study guide: Providing you with the first basic understanding of the topic at hand and the situation of the world back in 1967, at the height of the Cold War. Nevertheless, we would like to add that this background paper is serving solely as a basic understanding of the topic and thorough research is of highest importance and inevitable to ensure a productive conference.

However, no one is born as the perfect diplomat, so please do not hesitate to contact us at any time with questions of any kind - no questions are unnecessary! For this purpose you can use our committee's email: unsc@isarmun.org

We are very excited to meet you in beautiful Munich and wish you all the success for your preparations and IsarMUN 2019!

Yours,

Evangelia Nathanail   Michael Seget'a   Ismail Ismail

Function

The United Nations Security Council was created to primarily maintain international peace and security across the world. It is also entitled to accept new members to the United Nations and accept changes to the UN charter.

Powers

The UN Security Council has the power to establish peacekeeping operations and enforce international sanctions as well as authorize military actions through the resolutions it submits. It is also the only UN body that is authorized to issue binding resolutions to its member states, meaning that all countries have to abide by the passed resolutions of the Security Council.

Structure

The Security Council consists of fifteen members, including five permanent members and ten non-permanent members, elected on a regional basis to serve a term of two years. The five permanent members can veto resolutions and clauses without giving an explanation.

UNSC in 1967

The Security Council in 1967 consisted of the 5 permanent members (China, France, UK, USA and the Soviet Union) as well as Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Denmark, Ethiopia India, Japan, Mali and Nigeria) with the involved parties Egypt, Israel, Syria and Jordan all sending representatives during the negotiations of resolution 242.

Figure 1: Security Council composition in 1967

Welcome to 1967! The Beatles are at the height of their career, Disney just published *The Jungle Book* and Pablo Picasso is still producing excellent sculptures. All around the world, the 60s have brought connection over radio and television in a new wave of internationalism, but in its core the world remains divided – the Cold War is experiencing a brand-new peak, with the Vietnam War blazing and coup d'états and revolutions bursting globally. Red and blue, Soviet and American, the world is divided and espionage, mistrust and fear conquer relations between and within states. Through this inability to live peacefully on earth, the superpowers have turned their eyes to their stars: the US just launched the Apollo program and the (failed) launch of Apollo 1 just a few weeks ago. But let us focus on the launches, failed or successful, of missiles or of diplomatic talks, in a part of the world that is as turbulent as it is colorful: the Middle East, specifically the area of Palestine.

Ottoman rule and British Mandate for Palestine (before 1900 – 1947)

As one of world history's largest empires, throughout its reign the **Ottoman Empire** spanned across a vast geographical area, encompassing multiple regions and national groups. This included the inhabitants of the area of Palestine, who up until the end of the 19th century consisted almost purely of Arabs. This time frame is characterized by the global nationalist movement, meaning the identification of people as nations and the call for national sovereignty across the world. This was also the case with the Jewish community, who, following intense persecution worldwide, gave birth to their own national movement: Zionism. This movement saw Palestine as the historic homeland of the Jews and called upon them to repatriate there, with mass emigration occurring at least since 1882. Thus, the question of which national entity, Arab Palestinians or Jews, had rights over Palestine, first came to be.

Due to the multitude of nationalities and the lack of discreet borders within the Ottoman Empire relative peace was held between Arab Palestinians and Jews, with mainly antagonism for economic resources bringing the two groups to clash. However, as soon as the Empire's collapse became apparent, global superpowers such as France and Great Britain began involving themselves in the affairs of the Middle East, trying to establish alliances and influence the region for the moment the empire collapsed. As World War I erupted in 1914, the British made promises to both inhabitants of Palestine regarding the future of their nations. Firstly, it promised the Arab

Figure 2: British troops dynamiting Arab positions in Jaffa to quench a protest (1936), British Empire Archives

Palestinians the establishment of the Arab State of Transjordan in the **McMahon-Hussein Correspondence** of 1915[1] and in the **Sykes-Pikot Agreement** with France of 1916[2]. Secondly, regarding the Jews, the **Balfour Declaration** was issued in 1917[3]. This document was especially important because it was the first recognition ever of a right for the Jewish people to be living in Palestine and of Zionism as a valid political notion and national basis. This official recognition of a Jewish nation in Palestine lead Palestinian Arabs to coil around

---

[1] The McMahon-Hussein Correspondence, 14 July 1915 - 10 March 1916, http://www1.udel.edu/History-old/figal/Hist104/assets/pdf/readings/13mcmahonhussein.pdf

[2] The Sykes-Picot Agreement : 1916, https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/sykes.asp

[3] Balfour Declaration: 1917 https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/balfour.asp

their own national identity more, leading the previously economic struggle between the two groups to become nationalistic.

After the first World War and the victory of Great Britain over the Ottoman Empire, the League of Nations entrusted Great Britain to rule over Palestine under the **British Mandate for Palestine**, which came into force in 1922[4]. In Mandatory Palestine insurgencies and clashes became ever more common and violent between the two groups, as nationalism and self-determination movements grew world-wide (Figure 2). Additionally, the number of Jews immigrating to Palestine was increasing, especially European Jews, due to the discrimination they were facing in countries such as Germany. The increasing amount of people led for the revolts between Palestinians Arabs and Jews to peak during the second World War and the years after it. In 1947 the situation was so dire that the British decided to terminate Mandatory Palestine and to refer to the newly-founded United Nations (UN) to find a solution to the question of Palestine.

Partition Plan for Palestine and the 1st Arab-Israeli War (1947-1949)

After this request for assistance, the UN formed the UN Special Committee on the Status of Palestine (UNSCOP) and eventually passed **Resolution 181** in its General Assembly on November 19th, 1947[5]. Resolution 181, better known as the **UN Partition Plan for Palestine**, called for an end to the British mandate and the creation of two separate states, Israel and Palestine, in the area of Palestine. This partition would include an Economic Union between the two states and the city of Jerusalem would be under Corpus Separatum, meaning it would have its own international regime, separate from Israel and Palestine, due to its high historical and religious significance for both nations. The Partition Plan can be seen in Figure 3.

While Jews, both the public and their spokespeople, generally accepted the plan, Arabs across the Middle East and Northern Africa were enraged by the creation of two states, instead of a single Arabic one. The Arab League, which had been founded in 1945 as a representative and communicational forum for all Arab governments, unanimously rejected both the Partition Plan and the possibility of the existence of an Israeli state in Palestine.

---

[4] C. 529. M. 314. 1922. VI., Communiqué au Conseil et aux Membres de la Société (1922), SOCIÉTÉ DES NATIONS, https://ecf.org.il/media_items/291

[5] A/RES/181(II) (29 November 1947), https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/0/7F0AF2BD897689B785256C330061D253

On May 14th, 1948 Jews declared their independence and the foundation of the state of Israel. Immediately civil war broke out in major cities in Palestine, with Arabs fighting against Jews, and it quickly spread to the outskirts. Many escaped to neighboring Arab states, such as Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Egypt, to avoid the bloodshed. On the following day, the 15th of May 1948, the Secretary General of the Arab League informed the Secretary General of the United Nations of the Arab League's stance via telegram[6]: they reaffirmed their belief in an independent state of Palestine and, seeing as the state of Israel impeded on that and the poorly armed Palestinians were bound to lose the civil war that had just erupted, decided to invade Palestine to support the Palestinian Arabs in their fight for independence.

Thus, the civil war between Palestinian Arabs and Jews turned into the **First Arab-Israeli War of 1948**. In the first days of the fight the Arab armies, comprising of Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon and Syria, were advancing quickly into Palestine, but the UN established a broker truce which halted their advance and allowed Israel to supply itself with European arms and artillery, like its opponents. This increase in its military power allowed it to eventually repel the Arab forces even beyond the borders of the UN Partition Plan and to

Figure 3: Palestine Plan of Partition, UN GA Resolution 181 (1947)

thereby take over land that was originally planned for the state of Palestine. Growing ever more worried about the intensity of the hostilities and bloodshed, the UN Security Council (UNSC) demanded a ceasefire (Resolution 54) and an armistice (Resolution 62) in July 1948. After long negotiations the first armistice agreement was signed with Egypt on February 24th, 1949, and Lebanon, Jordan and Syria quickly followed. This was, however, no peace treaty, meaning the countries had theoretically merely stopped and not ended the hostilities.
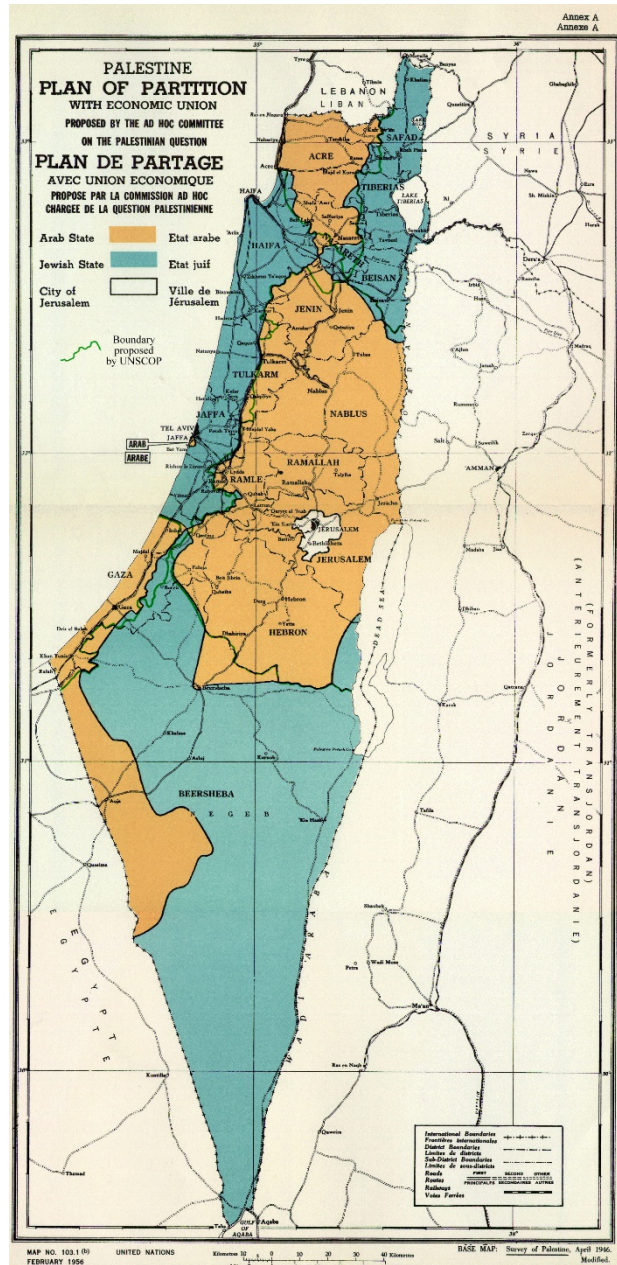
---

[6] S/745 (15 May 1948)
https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/0/A717E30BD2F6E5EC8525761E0072E9B3
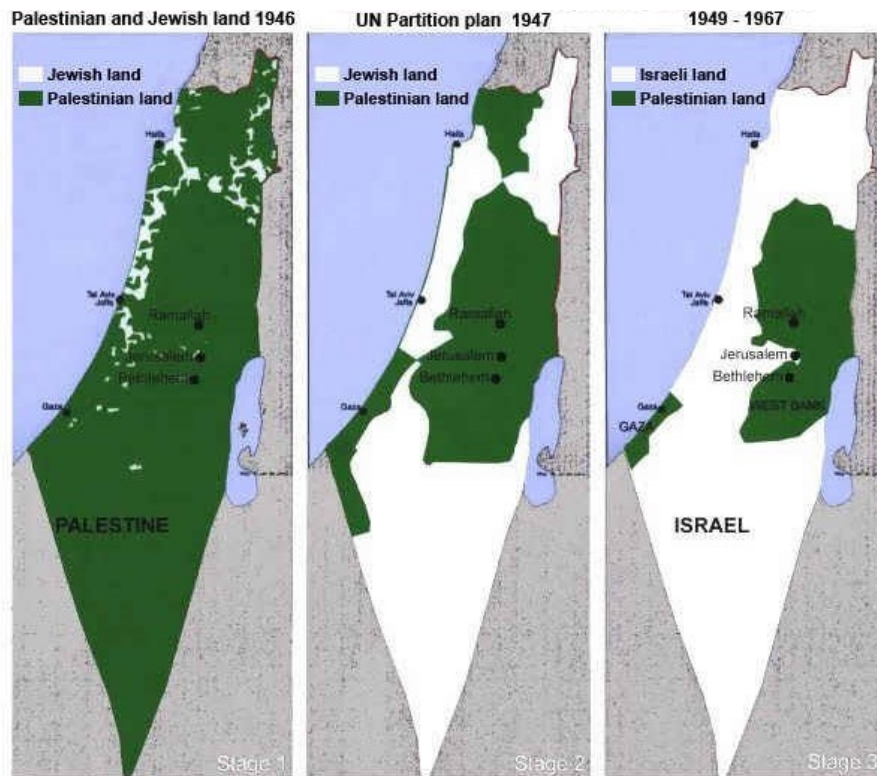
Figure 4: Israeli controlled areas in Palestine until 1967, Foreign Policy Journal

The image of Palestine after the First Arab-Israeli War was the following: Israel extended over most of Palestine, over the borders of the 1947 Partition Plan, with Palestinian Arabs being enclosed in small territories (Figure 4); Jordan controlled the West Bank and East Jerusalem, while Egypt administrated the Gaza Strip and demilitarized zones (DMZs) were established along the borders of the state of Israel; the conflict led up to 750.000 Palestinians to flee their homes, creating a huge refugee wave to the surrounding Arab countries. This came to be known as "al-Nakba", meaning "the catastrophe", since Israel declared that these refugees would not be allowed to repatriate and return to their homes on Palestinian ground. Ultimately, the First Arab-Israeli War was clearly won by the Israeli side, symbolized by the UN recognition of Israel on May 11th, 1949, and, apart from the consequences it had on a geopolitical scale, further greatly affected the fight of Palestinian Arabs for independence. The grand losses they suffered in fighting power pacified them and passed the torch of the Arab-Israeli struggle to the surrounding Arab states for the near future.

Suez Crisis and the 2nd Arab-Israeli War (1950-1956)

After 1949 the Middle East was characterized by tension and clashes, but relative stability when it came to the interaction with the newly founded state of Israel. The surrounding Arab countries refused to recognize the country and continued arguing for the creation of the state of Palestine. The Arab League, led by Egypt, founded a representative body for the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, called the All-Palestine Government, and exercised continuous provocatory language against Israel and provocatory actions in the borders with the country. Syria was particularly active in its border war, often subsidizing guerilla Palestinian fighters to attack the DMZs along the Syrian border to Israel.

Since the War of 1948, Egypt had been one of the most important states against Israel. In 1952, following a military coup d'état, General Nasser came to rule over Egypt, overtaking the presidency in 1954 and assuming a firm anti-colonialist stance. General Nasser had served in the Egyptian army in the War of 1948 and, as a part of his stance against Israel, closed the Straits of Tiran, a vital geographic location to control the trade between Israel and the Indian ocean (see Figure 5). He additionally established firm ties with the Soviet Union, arming Egypt with tanks, aircraft and artillery from Czechoslovakia and reducing ties to the United Kingdom and France, who favored the former king. In an effort to weaken the influence of these two superpowers in the region, Nasser **nationalized the Suez Canal** in July 1956, removing the anglo-french Suez Canal Company and angering the two countries greatly. Wanting to remove Nasser from power and retrieve their influence in the region, the UK and France established a deal with Israel: Israel would attack Egypt with the nationalization of the canal as pretext and then agree to withdrawing their forces only after the UK and France had control over and had 'established peace' in the canal again.
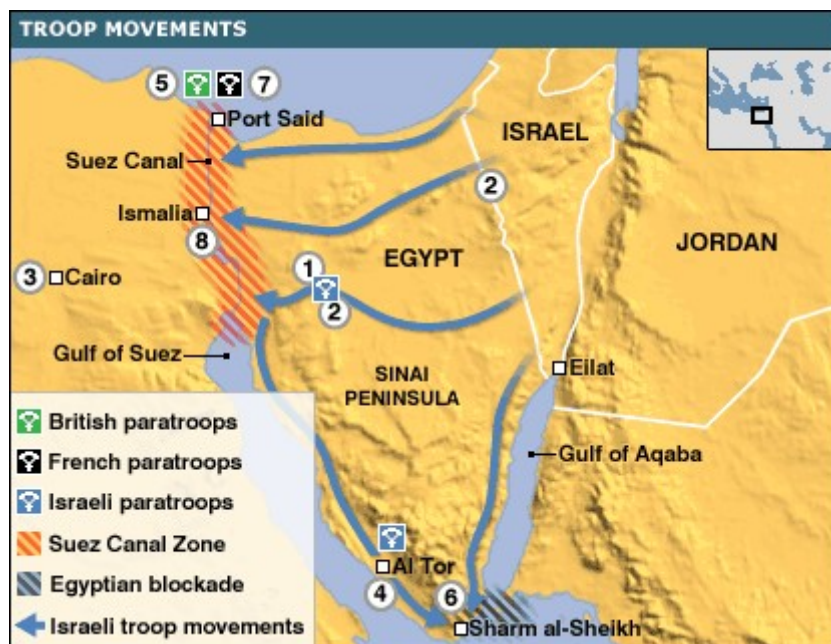

Figure 5: Troop movements and blockades during the Suez Crisis of 1956, BBC News

On October 29th, 1956 the Israelis crossed the border into Egypt, marching towards the Suez Canal through the Sinai Peninsula. The British and French were quick to call for the Egyptian and Israeli armies to fall back, however Egypt refused to do so. Trying to gain access to the canal, British and French troops landed in Egypt in November 1956. However, their move was generally seen as interventionist, leading the UNSC to discuss it in two of its meetings (749th and 750th meeting). Due to the two countries' veto power, the issue was moved to the General Assembly, which universally condemned the move and pressured the countries to remove their troops. They left in December 1956, which is seen as a landmark moment in the end of the influence of the two superpowers in the Middle East. In the meantime, the Israelis were still occupying the Sinai Peninsula, from which they withdrew their forces in March 1957. Following that a UN peacekeeping force was established between Egypt's and Israel's borders, encompassing Sinai and Gaza, and it was decided that the Suez Canal and the Straits of Tiran were to be left mandatorily open to Israel. Altogether, the Suez Crisis was a military defeat, but a political win for Egypt and for the Arabs in general in regard to the Arab-Israeli War and granted Nasser respect and popularity amongst Arab countries.

The establishment of the peacekeeping force hindered clashes and safeguarded peace on the border between Israel and Egypt, but in reality proliferation and espionage where at their height between Israel and Arab states. On the Israeli side, Israeli settlements had begun, with the country aiming to incorporate more and more of the previously Arab parts of the UN Partition Plan to its grounds. Additionally, military operations such as Operation Focus were on their way, keeping the Israeli military ready to enter another war with its neighbors, either as the attacker or the attacked. After all, 1967 was merely 18 years after Israeli independence and 22 years after World War II and the Holocaust. Arab States were developing similar operations, along with establishing mutual defense agreements (e.g. Syria-Egypt in 1955) and founding the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) on May 28th, 1964. Although the Israeli-Egyptian border was peaceful, the Israeli-Syrian and Israeli-Jordanian borders were characterized by disputes and skirmishes, sometimes so important that they were condemned by the UNSC (Res 228, 25/11/1966). 4

However, it is not only political motives that moved the actions of the Arabs and Israelis. As the Middle East is known for its deserts and uninhabitable areas, waters and rivers have served as beds of civilization since the Babylonian Empire. As Cooley stated "Long after oil runs out, water is likely to cause wars, cement peace, and make and break empires and alliances in the region, as it has for thousands of years"[7]. It is therefore natural that since the foundation of Israel, the Jordan River, which separates Israel from Syria and Jordan, has been used as a bargaining chip and as a weapon between the three countries. Up until 1964 all countries tried to divert the river's water to profit their own agriculture and cause chaos in the other countries, who usually responded by bombarding the construction sites of the diversion works. After reaching a compromise in 1964, Israel moved beyond the compromise and diverted the water from the Sea of Galilee in its border to Syria, depriving 35% of the river flow, leading Jordan and Syria to respond with border clashes and further polarizing the Israeli-Arab conflict. This general struggle over water in the region is also known as "**The War over Water**" and further feeds the feud between the three countries.

Such polarization, along with military proliferation, espionage and diplomatic tension were characteristic not only to the Middle East at the time, but to the world as a whole. By 1967 the **Cold War** was in full effect, with the Cuban Missile Crisis having taken place in 1962 and the Vietnam War reaching its height in the 1960s. The Arab-Israeli conflict also bears close connections to the global polarization of this era. On the Arab side, Egypt and Syria both had the USSR as the main provider for their modern air force, although they were not strictly aligned with them politically. On the Israeli side, significant military support had been received from France and the UK, while the USA also played an important role as a political ally to the country. Lastly, the country displayed significant military build-up, in which it imposed mandatory military service for all, especially Jews migrating to Israel, with more than 1 million migrants absorbed since 1949. [9] All in all, the escalation of this conflict came at a time when conflicts quickly turned into wars, much like this one did in the Six Day War of 1967.

---

[7] Cooley, J. (1984) The War over Water, Foreign Policy, n° 54, pp.3-26.

Immediate buildup to the war

In May of 1967, two weeks before the beginning of the Six days war, the Egyptian government received intelligence reports that later turned out to be false from the Soviet Union, its biggest ally at that time, that the Israeli Army was mobilizing on the Syrian border. After the aforementioned tensions on the borders ever since the Suez Crisis, the mobilization was the biggest move yet after months of heightened levels of alert. Gamal Abdelnasser, the Egyptian President as well as the highest commander of the Egyptian Armed forces, thus ordered the mobilization of the Egyptian Army in Sinai and on the border to Israel (see figure 6). The UNEF[8] forces, stationed in Sinai and Gaza since the Suez crisis, were expelled on May 19th. The strategically important UNEF outpost in Sharm El Sheikh was taken over by the Egyptian Armed forces. It's importance lies in it overlooking the Strait of Tiran, a 6 kilometer wide sea passage between Sinai and the Arabian Peninsula that is Israel's only

Figure 6: Arab Troop Movements between May 19th and June 4th 1967

waterway to its main port in the city of Eilat[9] (See figure 7). Thus, control of the Strait comes with a de facto control over all the maritime traffic in the Gulf of Aqaba.

Israel's response to Nasser's action was its repeated declaration that a closure of the Strait of Tiran would be considered an act of war. However, on May 22nd 1967, Gamal Abdelnasser closed the Strait of Tiran to Israeli shipping. This action is regarded as the main tipping point to moving from a state of minor guerilla-like attacks since 1957 to a full-on war a few days after the closure.

"Israel [will] not initiate hostilities…until or unless (Egyptian forces) close the Straits of Tiran to free navigation by Israel" – Prime Minister Levi Eshkol message to France's President de Gaulle.

The weeks between May 22nd and June 4th were filled with military preparations from both sides as well as statements from both sides that they shall stop at nothing to reach their goals. Over 250,000 troops were mobilized by six Arab countries surrounding the states of Israel, while the Israel, supported by the United States, mobilized its troops and reserves

---

[8] The First United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF):
https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/past/unefi.htm
[9] Geographic location and importance of the Strait of Tiran:
https://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/images/81772/strait-of-tiran-red-sea-and-gulf-of-aqaba

(estimated to be around 200,000) on two borders, to Sinai in the South, and to the Golan Heights in the Northwest, which were then an unoccupied part of Syria. Prime Minister Eshkol stated that "Israel would stop at nothing to cancel the blockade. It is essential that President Nasser should not have any illusions." While Nasser responded that "Egypt will not accept any…coexistence with Israel.…Today the issue is not the establishment of peace between the Arab states and Israel….The war with Israel is in effect since 1948". – Gamal Abdel Nasser during a press conference on May 28th 1967.

Furthermore, in order to protect the West Bank (then under Jordanian Control) from an immediate Israeli attack, King Hussein of Jordan signed a mutual defense pact with Egypt, similar to the one between Egypt and Syria on May 30th.

Figure 7: Location of the Strait of Tiran and the city of Eilat

Military preparations

The military preparation on both sides were extensive as war was inevitable at this point. In the months pertaining the war, Israeli Air forces trained extensively on reducing the time needed to refit airplanes to be deployable in the war again, effectively doubling the efficiency of each fighter jet as opposed to the air forces on the Arab sides. This gave the Israeli Air force the sovereignty over the sky, a crucial advantage in the outcome of the war.

On the other hand, the Egyptians built fortified defenses in Sinai, especially around the narrow passageways in the middle of Sinai, as a ground invasion was more likely to happen through them rather through unknown desert terrain. The Egyptian Army however, led by Field Marshall Abdelhakim Amer, was scattered throughout Sinai and along the border to Israel, with no retreat plan and no strategic defense points except those fortified defenses that were not covered by air defense missiles.

On the eve of the war, the Israeli army has a total of 260,000 troops including reservists, of which 40,000 were stationed on the border to the West bank. The Egyptian side massed approx 150,000 troops in Sinai, of which a third was involved in the Yemeni Civil War in 1962.

Syria's army amassed a total of 75,000 troops, all stationed on the border to Israel, while the Jordanian forces included 55,000 troops, all deployed in the West Bank and in the Jordan Valley.

The Arab forces mainly relied on Soviet weaponry, while Israeli weaponry was mainly of French and American origin.

The War

7:45 am on June 5th, Israel launched operation "Focus"[10] , in which the Israeli Air Force launched a massive airstrike on all Egyptian Air forces on the ground all around Egypt's military airports. Surprised by the attack and unable to retaliate, Israel proceeded to destroy the air defences of other neighboring countries, including Syria, Jordan and Iraq. Four hours later, the Israeli Air forces had destroyed over 450 aircrafts, nearly 90% of Egypt's airforce as

well as 18 airfields around Egypt, leaving Egypt defenseless in the air throughout the war. The attacks managed to reach airports in the furthest points of Egyptian soil, reaching as far as Luxor to the South and attacking all three airfields in Cairo, the capital of Egypt (See figure 8). Operation Focus is thus regarded as one of the most successful air attack campaigns in military history.

A crucial point in the unprecedented success of Operation Focus was the shutting down of all Egyptian Air defense, given that Field Marshall amer and Lt. Gen. Sedky Mahmoud were en route to visit commanders of the Armed forces in Sinai by plane.

Figure 8: Operation area of "Operation Focus"

Throughout the Six days, Israeli Air force regularly bombarded any runways in order to prevent their possible return to usability.
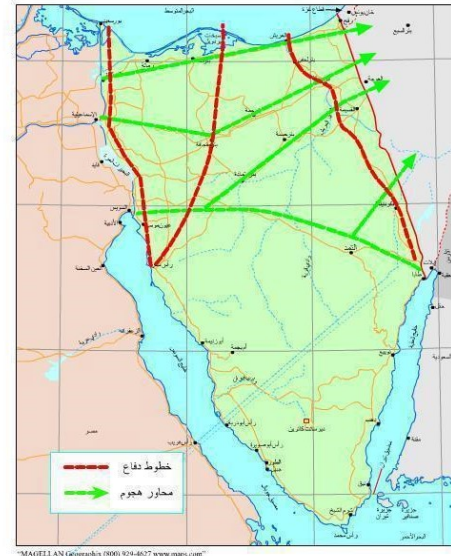
On June 5th, and after securing that Israeli forces cannot be attacked by air, Israeli military advanced towards Sinai, taking over the Gaza Strip (then administered by Egypt) in the process. Israeli forces met some resistance by the Egyptian forces stationed in Sinai and around the border to Israel, however, the advancement to El Arish, the first larger city near the Israeli border on the Mediterranean, was inevitable due to the Israeli air cover received as well as due to the lack of an action plan of the scattered Egyptian brigades.

On June 6th, and upon learning that the important rod junction of Abo-Ageila[11] had fallen, Field Marshall Amer panicked and ordered all units in Sinai to retreat to the Suez Canal, effectively sealing the defeat of Egypt and the loss of Sinai to Israel. The retreat was ordered to happen within 24 hours, with no clear retreat plan, no manner nor sequence of withdrawal.

---

[10] Aloni, S. (2019). Six-Day War 1967: The Devastating First Strikes That Won Israel Air Supremacy. London, UNITED KINGDOM: Osprey Publishing.

[11] Gawrych, George W. "The Egyptian Military Defeat of 1967." Journal of Contemporary History 26, no. 2 (1991): 277-305. http://www.jstor.org/stable/260792. P 4ff

A strategically planned withdrawal to the narrow passageways around the city of Nekhel and the Gidi pass in middle of Sinai[12] (see Figure 9), around 150 km west of the Suez Canal, could have been able to stop the Israeli forces, as passing through the desert terrain instead of the passageways and facing resistance would not have been an easy task. The red lines in Figure 9 depicts natural barriers over which no mechanical vehicle can pass without further assistance, while the green lines show the passageways that are used by ground troops. Hence, natural cover is provided against incoming attacks.

According to a high-ranking Egyptian officer at that time, around 10,000 men were killed on the first day of action alone, while many others died of hunger and thirst due to the unorderly withdrawal of the Egyptian forces. The Sinai Peninsula fell to the Israeli forces and was fully captured by June 8th 1967.

استراتيجية سيناء العسكرية: محاور الهجوم وخطوط الدفاع

Figure 9: Natural lines of defenses in Sinai (red lines)

On the other hand, on June 6th 1967, the United Nations brokered a ceasefire agreement between all parties involved. While Israel and Jordan agreed to the ceasefire and Jordan ordered its troops to retreat from all areas of conflict, including the Jordanian-administered West Bank, effectively granting Israel entrance to East Jerusalem and the occupation of the West Bank, Syria and Egypt refused the ceasefire plans and continued the fighting on the remaining fronts. The blockage of the Strait of Tiran thus was broken by June 8th.

Looking at the Syrian front, Syria largely remained out of the conflict up until June 8th 1967. Upon hearing the false Egyptian reports (see figure 10) that Egyptian forces are "on the doorsteps of Tel Aviv", Syria decided to enter the war and started bombarding cities in the Galilee region of Northern Israel.
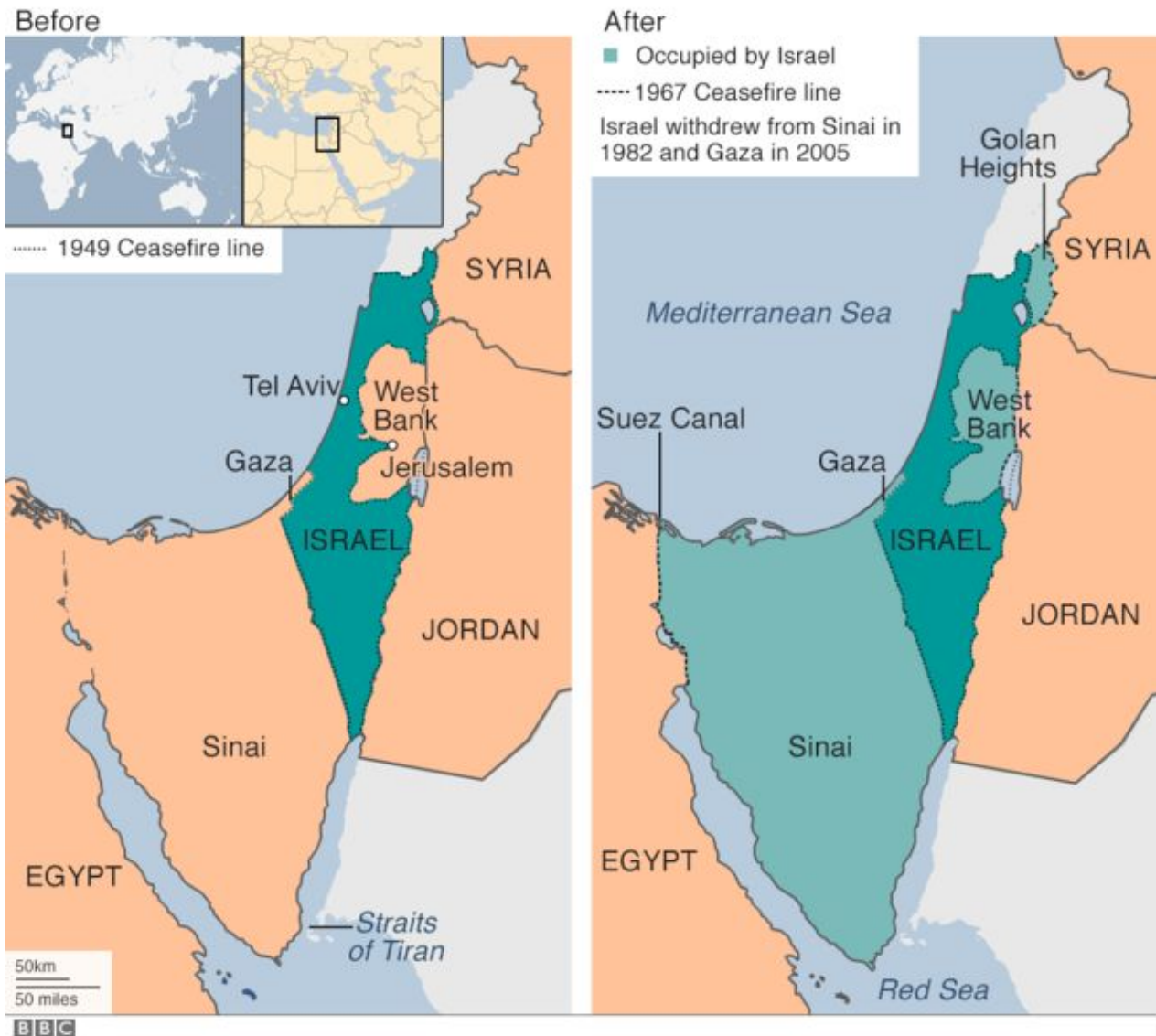
At first, Israeli forces were reluctant to attack the Golan heights, given that Israel has been already fighting on two different fronts (Sinai, West Bank). However, after the early and surprisingly fast victories on the two fronts in Sinai and in the West Bank, Israel decided to attack the Golan

Figure 11: Egyptian national newspaper on June 6th 1967. Headline: "Our forces are penetrating into Israel!"

---

[12] Importance of Sinai passes: https://www.nytimes.com/1975/02/12/archives/israeli-general-calls-sinai-passes-vital.html

Figure 10: Before and After the Six Days War

Before and after the Six Day War, 1967

Before

...... 1949 Ceasefire line

SYRIA

Tel Aviv · West Bank

Gaza · Jerusalem

ISRAEL

JORDAN

Sinai

EGYPT

Straits of Tiran

50km
50 miles

BBC

After

■ Occupied by Israel
..... 1967 Ceasefire line
Israel withdrew from Sinai in
1982 and Gaza in 2005

Golan Heights

SYRIA

Mediterranean Sea

Suez Canal

West Bank

Gaza

ISRAEL

JORDAN

Sinai

EGYPT

Red Sea

Heights on the morning of June 9th, even though Syria had accepted the cease fire by then. Realizing the strategic importance of the Golan Heights, the Israeli forces pushed towards capturing it as fast as possible. Syria, realizing that the Egypt has been defeated and that the capturing of the Golan Heights by Israel is inevitable, falsely reported the fall of the city of Quneitra in the Golan Heights, in order to pressure the United Nations into enforcing a ceasefire[13].

By June 10th, all belligerents have agreed on the ceasefire imposed by the United Nations. Israel was now in control of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula, a combined area five times as large as Israel's size before the 5th of June. (See Figure 11)

The Aftermath

---

[13] http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,837237,00.html

About one million Arabs were under direct Israeli control in the newly captured territories, mainly in the West Bank, Gaza and the Golan heights, as Sinai was sparsely populated. Israel's growth in size within six days provided it a strategic depth that it benefits from until today.

In Egypt, Gamal Abdelnasser admitted responsibility to the military defeat of the Six days war. His decision to expel international peacekeeping forces from Sinai, and the closure of the Strait of Tiran despite Egypt's military unpreparedness, is what eventually led to the loss of the strategically important Sinai peninsula and the closure of the Suez Canal to maritime shipping, an important source of foreign currency to Egypt.

During the six days of war, around 700-900 Israeli Soldiers were killed and fifteen captured by enemy forces. On the Arab side, casualties amounted to numbers between 10,000 and 15,000, with approximately 5,000 captured soldiers.

In the wake of the war, the heads of Arab states met in Khartoum as part of the Arab League Summit in order to discuss the further dealing with the situation in the Middle East. On the 1st of September 1967, two months after the war, they issued the Khartoum Resolution, in the capital of Sudan, which called for a continued state of war with Israel, ending the Arab oil boycott imposed during the Six day war and ending the Yemeni Civil War. The Khartoum resolution is famous for its three No's in paragraph three: "no peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel, no negotiations with it..."[14]. The Khartoum resolution has later become one of the most important milestones in the negotiations with Israel.

Resolution 242

United Nations Resolution 242, which was adopted on November 22nd 1967, five months after the Arab defeat in the Six Days war, was adopted unanimously by members of the Security Council, including its five permanent members. The resolution called for "the withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from "territories" occupied in recent conflict and the termination of all claims or states of belligerency and the respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every state in the are and the right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force."[15]

While the Israeli delegation was in support of the resolution because of its call to Israel's right to live in peace and thus the recognition of the Arab states, the Arab states on the other hand accepted it because of its clause calling Israel to withdraw from "territories occupied in recent conflict". Resolution 242 thus created the notion of "Land for peace", sponsored and administered by British Ambassador Caradon, which saw Israel give up the territories occupied in return for recognition and peace with its neighboring states.

---

[14] The Khartoum Resolution: http://www.sixdaywar.org/content/khartoum.asp
[15] UN resolution 242:
https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/0/7D35E1F729DF491C85256EE700686136

The resolution also addresses the just settlement of the refugee problem that was created in the wake of the first Arab Israeli war in 1948, 20 years earlier.

One of the main controversies of resolution 242 is in the different languages it is drafted in.

While the English version of the subclause 1.i. reads: "Withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict" it is translated in French as: "Retrait des forces armées israéliennes des territoires occupés lors du récent conflit."

The difference in the two versions is in the absence of a definite article "the" in the English version, while the word "des" is present in the French version, which would be translated to "the occupied territories" as opposed to the vague "occupied territories" in the English version of the resolution. This difference has was reason for different interpretations by the parties involved. The controversy lies in the face that both version are of equal legal force, as both English and French are recognized languages of the United Nations.

The Israeli side has interpreted Resolution 242 as it calling for the withdrawal from territories as part of a negotiated peace and diplomatic recognition, meaning that the withdrawal would only come into effect as a result of Arab concessions to meet their own obligations in resolution 242.

The Arab side has interpreted Resolution 242 as a call for Israel to withdraw to its pre 1967 border first prior to a peace agreement between both sides.

In the wake of resolution 242, Jordan and Israel made peace without Israel withdrawing from the West Bank, as Jordan did not claim the West Bank and recognized the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) as the only representative of the Palestinians and their cause.

Egypt began negotiating with Israel before the withdrawal of Israel from occupied territories, with the Gaza Strip never returning to Egyptian administration again.

Resolution 242 is one of the most affirmed and agreed upon resolutions of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and has formed the basis for all of the latter negotiations between the Arabs and Israel. In the lead to the Yom Kippur War of 1973 and its aftermath, it has led to the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel in 1979 and Jordan and Israel in 1994. It has also formed the basis of the Oslo Accords[16] between Israel and the Palestinian Authorities.

---

[16] The Oslo Accords - Fast Facts: https://www.history.com/topics/middle-east/oslo-accords

Key Players & Figures

Israel

Levi Eshkol

Levi Eshkol served as the Israeli Prime Minister from 1963 until his death in 1969. He also assumed the role of Minister of Defense from 1963 until 1967. Levi Eshkol was also the first Israeli leader to be formally invited to the White House. His excellent relationship with then American Lyndon B. Johnson greatly affected the Israeli-US relations in the long run and had a positive impact on providing Israel with a strategic and military advantage during the Six Days war.

Moshe Dayan

Moshe Dayan served as chief of staff of the Israeli defense forces during the 1956 Suez Crisis, but became known to the world as a fighting symbol of the state of Israel in his role as the Defense minister during the Six Day War. He personally oversaw the capture of East Jerusalem during the war and was widely regarded as one of the most popular politicians in Israel. His hawkish views included his preference of Sharm Al Sheikh, the city overlooking the Tiran Strait, without peace than peace without Sharm Al Sheikh. He played an important part in the peace agreement with Egypt in 1979.

Egypt

Gamal Abdelnasser

Gamal Abdelnasser served as the second president of Egypt from 1954 until his death in 1970. Nasser's popularity arose from his pan-arabist, anti-colonialist stances during and after the Suez Crisis of 1956. Following Egypt's defeat in the Six Days War and the loss of the Sinai Peninusla, Nasser resigned, but returned to office after demonstrations called for his return.

Abdelhakim Amer

Abdelhakim Amer served as the Minister of Defense and the Chief of Staff of the Egyptian Army from 1956 until his defeat in the Six Day War in 1967. Historians argue that much of Egypt's failure during the war can be attributed to him. His decision to completely withdraw all armed forces from Sinai is commonly seen as the main reason of the loss of Sinai. In August of 1967 he was arrested for allegedly plotting a coup against Nasser. He committed suicide in September 1967 by swallowing a large amount of poison pills.

<u>Salah Jadid</u>

Salah Jadid was a Syrian general and left wing political figure in Syria and the country's de facto leader from 1966 until 1970. The public support of his government declined sharply following Syria's defeat in 1967 and the loss of the Golan Heights. Consequently, his strongman leadership and government was not unquestioned internally.

<u>Nureddin Al-Atassi</u>

Mustafa Al-Atassi was President of Syria from 1966 until 1970. He was considered to be a ceremonial figurehead, with the real power vested in Salah Jadid (see above). He was deposed in 1970 along Salah Jadid in coup led by Hafez Al-Assad, his then Defense Minister.

Jordan

<u>King Hussein</u>

King Hussein of Jordan was the King of Jordan from 1952 until his death in 1999. He led his country through decades of the Arab Israeli conflict, balancing the pressures from Arab nationalists, the Soviet Union, Israel and the west. After 1967, he was engaged in strong efforts to solve the Palestinian problem.

Questions to be addressed

1. *How are the advances in the war affecting the borders in the region?*
2. *What would you suggest as the theoretical borders of Palestine when potentially becoming a legitimate state?*
3. *Do you believe that the request of Palestine becoming a legitimate state with its own government and rights is a credible request?*
4. *To what extent do you believe that this conflict is dividing Western society?*
5. *To what extent do you believe that the United Nations are to blame for this conflict?*
6. *Is Western society the one to be blamed for the conflict?*
7. *Do you believe that post-colonial Britain should be more involved in the negotiations nowadays?*
8. *Will there ever be a "land for peace"?*

Bibliography

[1] Cohen, Michael J. (14 April 1989). *The Origins and Evolution of the Arab-Zionist Conflict*. University of California Press. ISBN 978-0-520-90914-4.

[2] Barr, J. (2011). *A Line in the Sand: Britain, France and the Struggle that Shaped the Middle East*. Simon & Schuster. p. 60. ISBN 978-1-84983-903-7.

[3] (2002). *PDF copy of Cablegram from the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States to the Secretary-General of the United Nations: S/745: 15 May 1948: Retrieved 6 June 2012*. Un.org.

[4] Motti, G. (2005), *From Civil War to Interstate War and Back again. The War over Israel/Palestine, 1945–2000*, Zeithistorische Forschungen/Studies in Contemporary History, Druckausgabe: S. 54-70, https://zeithistorische-forschungen.de/1-2005/4495

[5] Goldsmith, A. (2007). *A Brief History of Egypt.* New York: Facts on File, https://archive.org/details/briefhistoryofeg00gold

[6] Bassiouni, M.; Fisher, M. (2012). *Thee Arab-Israeli Conflict – Real and Apparent Issues: An Insight Into Its Future from the Lessons of the Past*. St. John's Law Review.

[7] Gluska, A. (2007). *The Israeli Military and the Origins of the 1967 War: Government, Armed Forces and Defence Policy 1963–67*. Routledge. p. 152. ISBN 978-1-134-16377-9.

[8] *Events leading to the Six Day War (1967),* Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs https://mfa.gov.il/mfa/aboutisrael/maps/pages/events%20leading%20to%20the%20six%20day%20war-%201967.aspx

[9] Bowen, J. (2017), *1967 war: Six days that changed the Middle East*, BBC Middle East, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-39960461

[10] Gawrych, George W. (1991) "The Egyptian Military Defeat of 19 67." Journal of Contemporary History 26, no. 2 (1991): 277-305. http://www.jstor.org/stable/260792

[11]Aloni, S. (2019). Six-Day War 1967: The Devastating First Strikes That Won Israel Air Supremacy. London, UNITED KINGDOM: Osprey Publishing.

[12] Melhem H. (2017). The Arab World Has Never Recovered From the Loss of 1967, Foreign Policy, https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/06/05/the-arab-world-has-never-recovered-from-the-loss-of-1967/

Table of figures

Figure 4: Israeli controlled areas in Palestine until 1967, Foreign Policy Journal, https://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/2009/12/15/for-palestinians-every-day-is-kristallnacht/

Figure 5: Troop movements and blockades during the Suez Crisis of 1956, BBC News, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/5195068.stm

Figure 6: Events leading up to the Six Days War of 1967 https://mfa.gov.il/mfa/aboutisrael/maps/pages/events%20leading%20to%20the%20six%20day%20war-%201967.aspx

Figure 7: The location of the Tiran Strait and the port of Eilat
https://www.wilburministries.com/six-day-war-and-jerusalem-day/

Figure 8: Operation Focus http://zionism-israel.com/dic/Operation_Focus.htm

Figure 9: Sinai strategic passageways https://khaledfahmy.org/ar/2017/07/03/%D8%AE%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%86-%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%A7-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D9%87%D8%B2%D9%8A%D9%85%D8%A9-%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%86%D9%8A%D9%88-%D9%A9-%D8%B9%D9%86%D8%A8-%D9%88%D8%A8%D8%B5%D9%84-%D8%B9/

Figure 10: Egyptian national newspaper "Al Akhbar" on June 6th 1967 https://akhbarelyom.com/

Figure 11: Before and After the Six Days war https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-39960461

Further Reading

Barr, J. (2011). *A Line in the Sand: Britain, France and the Struggle that Shaped the Middle East*. Simon & Schuster. p. 60. ISBN 978-1-84983-903-7.

Documentary: (2017) *The War in June 1967*, Aljazeera https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/specialseries/2017/05/war-june-1967-170529070920911.html

Cohen, J. (1989). *The Origins and Evolution of the Arab-Zionist Conflict*. University of California Press. ISBN 978-0-520-90914-4.

Gawrych, George W. "The Egyptian Military Defeat of 19 67." Journal of Contemporary History 26, no. 2 (1991): 277-305. http://www.jstor.org/stable/260792

Aloni, S. (2019). Six-Day War 1967: The Devastating First Strikes That Won Israel Air Supremacy. London, UNITED KINGDOM: Osprey Publishing.