



Forum: Historical Security Council (HSC)

Topic: The Third Arab-Israeli War

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Position: Deputy President

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear delegates,

My name is Sofia Papadaki and I am currently attending the 10th grade at Athens College. This year I will have the utmost honour of serving as a Deputy President in the Historical Security Council (HSC) of the 3rd SCMUN conference. This conference will be my second time chairing and my eighth conference overall.

Although this study guide is going to constitute the main source of information on the topic, it is advised that you use this document as the steppingstone for your own research on the issue which will be discussed. In this way, you will be able to have a broader picture of the topic and better knowledge of your delegation's position on the matter.

I encourage you, hence, to conduct your own research and explore the links attached to the Bibliography section at the end of the study guide. In case you have any questions either regarding this study guide or the topic itself, you can always contact me; my email is sofiafan2008@gmail.com.

I am looking forward to meeting you all in-person this February and hope for a fruitful and unforgettable debate.

Kind regards,

Sofia Papadaki



TOPIC INTRODUCTION

The Third Arab-Israeli War, otherwise referred to as the June War, Naksah or the Six-Day War, was short in duration but bloody in terms of casualties, taking place between the 5th and 10th of June 1967. Despite it being short-lasting, the war changed the geography of the Middle East. The war broke out between Israel and the Arab states, (Egypt, Syria and Jordan) after decades of political and military tension.

The conflict resulted from a combination of factors, the primary one being the rejection by the Arab nations of the validity of the establishment of the State of Israel. Though the UN General Assembly approved Israeli independence, this was seen by the Arab nations as illicit due to Jews being, according to them, a non-indigenous minority in the land.

The Six-day became a milestone signifying the beginning of a new era, full of conflict and bloodshed between Israel and the Palestinians. With its victory, Israel left thousands of Palestinian as refugees and forced one million Palestinians to live under Israeli rule in the occupied territories. Due to the United Nations' efforts to promote peace in the region, diplomatic progress was facilitated, a characteristic example of which established "Resolution 194".

The casualties numbered by each nation were extremely uneven. Egypt's casualties were more than 11,000, Jordan's numbered 6,000 and Syria's 1,000, whilst Israel numbered only 700 casualties. It is suggested that some 20,000 casualties from the Arab nations and 800 troops from Israel were killed in 132 hours of battling. In any case, both statistics justify the characterization "brief but bloody"¹ which has been attributed to this war.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Arabs

¹ History.com Editors. "Six-Day War." *History.Com*, A&E Television Networks, 5 June 2023, www.history.com/topics/middle-east/six-day-war.



An ethnic group inhabiting most of the Middle East and North Africa, originating from the Arabian Peninsula, nowadays primarily characterised by the Arabic language.²

Balfour Deceleration³

The Balfour Declaration of 1917 is a statement made by Britain expressing the nation's support in establishing a national home for the Jews in Palestine.

Bar lev Line⁴

"The Bar Lev was a chain of fortifications built by Israel along the eastern coast of the Suez Canal after it captured the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt during the 1967 Six-Day War."

Casualties

An individual wounded or killed in a severe accident or war.⁵

Ceasefire

"An agreement, usually between two armies to stop fighting in order to allow discussions about peace."⁶

Gaza Strip

"A 25-mile-long by 6-mile-wide region, bounded by the Mediterranean Sea to the west, Israel to the north and east and Egypt to the south."⁷

Guerilla

² "Arab." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 17 Nov. 2023, www.britannica.com/topic/Arab.

³ "Balfour Declaration." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 26 Oct. 2023, www.britannica.com/event/Balfour-Declaration.

⁴ Sensegates, and Dominique Dutoit Yann Picand. "Definition and Meaning of Bar-Lev_line." *Bar-Lev_Line Definition and Meaning | Sensagent Editor*, dictionary.sensagent.com/Bar-Lev_Line/en-en/.

⁵ "Casualty." *Cambridge Dictionary*, 2023, dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/casualty.

⁶ "Ceasefire." *Cambridge Dictionary*, 2023, dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/ceasefire.

⁷ Al-Kassab, Fatima. "What Is the Gaza Strip? Here's What to Know." *NPR*, 10 Oct. 2023, www.npr.org/2023/10/10/1204873146/what-is-gaza-strip.



“A member of an unofficial military group that is trying to change the government by making sudden, unexpected attacks on the official army forces.”⁸

Israelis

“A native or inhabitant of the State of Israel.”⁹

Jews

“Any person whose religion is Judaism. In the broader sense of the term, a Jew is any person belonging to the worldwide, ethnoreligious group that constitutes, through descent or conversion, a continuation of the ancient Israelites, who were themselves descendants of the Hebrews of the Bible.”¹⁰

League of Nations

“Organization for international cooperation established at the initiative of the victorious Allied powers after World War I.”¹¹ It functioned as predecessor of the United Nations (UN).

Mandate

“an authorization granted by the League of Nations to a member nation to govern a former German or Turkish colony.”¹²

Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO)¹³

⁸ “Guerrilla.” *Cambridge Dictionary*, 2023, dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/guerrilla.

⁹ “Israeli Definition & Meaning.” *Merriam-Webster*, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Israeli.

¹⁰ “Jew.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Inc., 17 Nov. 2023, www.britannica.com/topic/Jew-people.

¹¹ “League of Nations.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Inc., 16 Oct. 2023, www.britannica.com/topic/League-of-Nations.

¹² “Mandate.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Inc., www.britannica.com/topic/mandate-League-of-Nations.

¹³ “Palestine Liberation Organization.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Inc., 16 Nov. 2023, www.britannica.com/topic/Palestine-Liberation-Organization.



“Umbrella political organization claiming to represent the world’s Palestinians—those Arabs, and their descendants, who lived in mandated Palestine before the creation there of the State of Israel in 1948”

Palestine

A geographical term, originating from Roman administrative boundaries (the territory of former Judea). It has been used continuously, especially after the 1st century AD, to refer to the Biblical Holy Land, historically populated by Jews, but would later come to be inhabited primarily by Muslim Arabs.

Palestinians

“A member of the native Arab population of the region of Palestine (including the modern state of Israel).”

Partition Plan¹⁴

Resolution calling for the separation of historic Palestine into two states, one for the Jews and one for the Arabs. The General Assembly passed Resolution 181, which proposed the Partition Plan, in 1947, after Britain, by whom the land of historic Palestine was overlooked since the end the first World War, called for the League of Nations’ aid into terminating the conflict between the Jews and the Arabs.

Pre-emptive strike¹⁵

A military action taken as preventative measure against a pending attack or threat in general.

Self-determination¹⁶

¹⁴ Imeu. “IMEU Institute for Middle East Understanding.” *IMEU*, 27 Nov. 2012, imeu.org/article/backgrounder-the-un-partition-plan-for-palestine.

¹⁵ “Preemptive Strike.” *Encyclopedia.Com*, 18 Nov. 2023, www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences/applied-and-social-sciencesmagazines/preemptivestrike#:~:text=A%20preemptive%20strike%20is%20a%20military%20action%20taken,is%20undertaken%20to%20counter%20a%20more%20distant%20threat.

¹⁶ “Self-Determination.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 1 Oct. 2023, www.britannica.com/topic/self-determination.



The procedure by which a group of individuals, typically holding a certain degree of national consciousness, form a state and decide upon a government on their own.

Straits of Tiran¹⁷

“Narrow straits or sea passages between the Sinai Peninsula and the Arabian Peninsula, which link the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba.”

West Bank¹⁸

“A portion of land east of Israel which is home to nearly 3 million Palestinians, and would make up the heart of any Palestinian state.”

Zionism¹⁹

Jewish nationalist movement aiming at creating and supporting a Jewish national state in Palestine. The movement takes its name from ‘Zion’, a synonym for Jerusalem or the land of Israel as a whole, to which the Zionists sought to return to create the Jewish state.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The disputes over the land prior to 1967

The land where today's Israel is located had been desired by the Arab nations for a long time, especially after the end of World War 1. Since the beginning of the 19th century, both Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs were claiming the land.

On one hand, the Jews supported that they should be the legal holders of the land, remembering the promise of God to them as His chosen people, through the patriarch Abraham. According to the Bible, the Jews had the “divine right” on this land. Archaeological and historical records show that the Jews lived in the region of what would subsequently come to be known as Palestine since the 2nd millennium BC. However, they were progressively expelled from the land by imperial powers such as the

¹⁷ Bada, Ferdinand. “Where Are the Straits of Tiran?” *WorldAtlas*, 11 Dec. 2019, www.worldatlas.com/articles/where-are-the-straits-of-tiran.html.

¹⁸ Beauchamp, Zack. “What Is the West Bank?” *Vox*, 20 Nov. 2018, www.vox.com/2018/11/20/18080034/west-bank-israel-palestinians.

¹⁹ “Zionism.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 16 Nov. 2023, www.britannica.com/topic/Zionism.



Babylonians and the Romans, leading to the creation of large communities of Jewish diaspora across the Middle East, North Africa, and Europe.

Across the areas where they lived in exile, the Jews were often the object of heavy discrimination across the centuries. Famously, Spain's Catholic Monarchs expelled all Jews from the country under the Spanish Inquisition in 1492. During the 19th century, following a wave of brutal pogroms²⁰ (riots with the aim of massacring an ethnic group) against the Jews took place, being one of the main factors for the development of the Zionist (Jewish nationalist) movement in the latter part of the century, as many Jews felt increasingly unwelcome in the countries in which they lived. Similar to other nationalisms arising at the time, Zionism sought to create a nation-state for the Jews, where they would be independent from foreign rule. For the Zionists, the land in which this state was to be created could only be Palestine – their historic homeland.

The creation of the Jewish nation-state posed a unique issue: there was no one land where the Jews inhabited or were a majority. Thus, during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Jewish immigration to Ottoman, and later British, Palestine increased, as part of the Zionist plan to create a Jewish majority land in which the establishment of the State of Israel would be possible. Part of this was the acquisition of large estates from Arab landowners and the eviction of the native Palestinian inhabitants.

At the time, the vast majority in the land were Palestinian Arabs, who supported that they were the rightful owners of the land, as the indigenous inhabitants and descendants of Arabs who had been living there since the 7th century AD, unlike the Zionist Jews who had only recently immigrated to Palestine. From their perspective, the Zionists were a colonial force attempting to methodically displace and ultimately ethnically cleanse the native population, for the purpose of creating a Jewish-majority state.

Nevertheless, the British supported the Zionist movement following their acquisition of this land from the defeated Ottoman Empire. In 1917, the Balfour Declaration was published, indicating Britain's support for "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people". Britain made this promise in

²⁰ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "Pogroms." *Ushmm.org*, 2019, encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/pogroms.

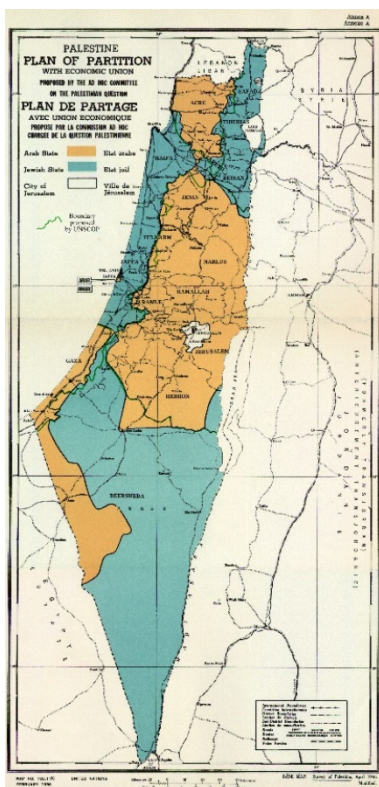


exchange for Jewish support during the First World War, in addition to rising Zionist sentiment amongst certain groups of western Christians. At this point, it was still ambiguous whether this “national home” would constitute a sovereign state. The Declaration was accepted by the Allied powers and was included into Britain’s mandate of Palestine.

In 1918, when the war was over, Britain was responsible for controlling Palestine. The British received a mandate for Palestine by the League of Nations, legally giving Britain administrative control of Palestine and involved requirements for achieving what the Balfour Declaration suggested, until the local population could rule the land on its own.

From 1936 to 1939, the Arabs revolted, causing damages in Jewish settlements. This was the first time that the Arabs of Palestine cooperated and shared the same aspiration: to prevent Jews from coming to their land. The Arab response made the Jews increase their military presence. Britain’s interventions in the Arab rebellion resulting in further disorganization within the Arab community. Britain also attempted to appease the Arabs, not bearing in mind their actions’ impact on the Jews, by taking measures such as but not limited to slowing down and procrastinating the Jewish waves of immigration. Decisions just like the aforementioned bothered the Jews, as they were pressured by the persecution of Nazis and therefore needed to get to Palestine as soon as possible. However, after this the Arabs asked for what they wanted the most: stopping the migration of Jews to their land.

In 1939, when World War II began, the Jews were allies of Britain and the Arab leadership was allied with Germany, as they were discontent with the situation and the fact that they would have to share Palestine with them. The majority of Zionists living in Europe were exterminated during the Holocaust and the refugees left were to return to



where their “home” was. However, the Arabs didn’t want to share Palestine with the Jews. Overwhelmed by the situation, Britain decided to hand over the issue to the UN. The UN proposed the Partition Plan, but when the Arabs realized that the resolution passed and they would have to share the land with the Jews, they were about to begin another conflict.

Figure 1: UN Partition Plan for Palestine²¹

The Jews accepted the Partition Plan, accepting the establishment of the Jewish state on the territory of approximately half of historic Palestine. On the other hand, the Arabs felt cheated by all the nations who voted in favour of the Partition Plan. They were discontent that the Jews, making up around 33% of the population – most having immigrated recently – and owning merely 7% of the land, were to be given 56% of Palestine. The Israeli counterargument to this would be that a large part of the land given to the Jewish state was uninhabited desert and was given to the Jews to populate it and develop it.

In 1947, the two sides fought, with Britain trying to exit the conflict as fast as it could. When Britain eventually stopped intervening, the Jews won over the Arabs, due to their skills in organization. More specifically, the Jews had better settlements in terms of development and had an articulate leadership and structure. In contrast with the Arabs, the Jews had concentrated their forces and their military organizations shortly transformed into a professional Army. Lastly, and most importantly, though, the Jewish motivation was way higher than the Arab; the Jews were not fighting for the land, like the Arabs did, but for their existence.

In May 1948, Israel was, officially, granted independence by the United Nations

²¹ Winder, Alex. “UN Partition Plan, 1947.” *Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question – Palquest*, www.palquest.org/en/highlight/159/un-partition-plan-1947#:~:text=Palestine%20partition%20plan%20proposed%20by.



(UN), claiming Palestinian territory. Soon, troops from neighbouring nations, Egypt, Lebanon, and Jordan, invaded the newly-founded Israel to take the land. The Israeli forces responded by consolidating their control over the territory ceded by the UN plan, as well as further expanding into some lands of the proposed Arab state. At the same time, a UN peacekeeping operation was being upheld in order to eradicate tensions. Over the next two decades multiple clashes occurred between Israel and its neighbours over trade routes, global and political alliances, as well as disputes over the holy city of Jerusalem. One of their most significant clashes is known as the Suez Crisis, which erupted in 1956. Both the military losses of the Arab nations and the refugee crisis resulting from Israel's victory in 1948, frustrated the Arab leaders. At the same time, Israel felt insecure and deemed that the Arab nations were a threat that threatened Israel's existence.

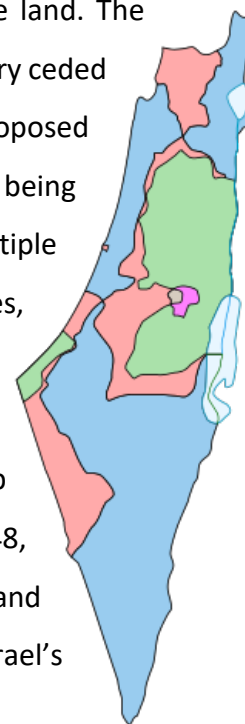


Figure 2: Outcome of the 1948 war ²²

- red and grey indicate the land gains of Israel compared to the UN Plan*
- green and purple indicate lands occupied by Transjordan and Egypt*

Events leading to the Six-Day War

The war was ultimately caused by some border disputes. During the mid-1960s, reprisal raids were provoked by the Israel Defence Forces resulting from the staged attacks of Syrian-backed Palestinian guerillas along the Israeli borders. In April 1967, Israel and Syria had a brutal air and artillery engagement, where the Syrian forces lost six of their fighter jets. Following the air battle, Egypt was provided with intelligence by the Soviet Union, informing them that Israel was moving its troops in preparation of an invasion on its northern border with Syria. Although the information was not accurate, the Egyptian President, Gamal Abdel Nasser, mobilized troops in the region of the Sinai Peninsula, while also discharging the peacekeeping operation which had managed to keep the situation somewhat stable for more than a decade.

²² Wikipedia Contributors. "United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 17 Mar. 2019, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Partition_Plan_for_Palestine.



In mid-May, an alliance was formed between Syria, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt. On May 22 1967, the Egyptian President forbade Israeli ships from passing through the Straits of Tiran, a sea passage of utmost importance as it connected the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba, resulting in a disruption of Israel's sense of security. About a week later, Nasser signed a military agreement with King Hussein of Jordan, under which neither Jordan nor Egypt would be able to attack the other for the next 5 years. Given that the atmosphere in the Middle East was gradually worsening, US President Lyndon B. Johnson warned both Israel and the Arab nations against starting an open conflict, and attempted to gather support for an international maritime operation which would enable shipping from Israel through the Straits of Tiran. The plan was never put into action, and in early June 1967 Israel's leaders voted in favour of a strike against the Arab military.

The eruption and the course of the war

On the 5th of June 1967, the Israel Defence Forces introduced Operation Focus, which was an organized air assault on Egypt, and soon after on Jordan, Syria, and Iraq. As a result, Israel won total aerial control over its neighbouring countries. On the same day, ground war began in Egypt. Tanks from Israel entered the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip, while simultaneously continuing their air strikes. Jordan entered West Jerusalem but was eventually overmatched by Israel about two days later. Israel also attacked Syria on the 9th, managing to capture the Golan Heights by the end of the month.

On the 7th of June, after the Israeli troops had taken over the Old City of Jerusalem, the United Nations Security Council called for a ceasefire. Jordan accepted immediately, while Egypt accepted on the 8th and Syria on the 10th. On this day, the ceasefire took effect, and the Six-Day War was called over.

Aftermath of the war



By the end of the war Israel had tripled in size, bolstering their national pride. In under a week, Israel had captured the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip from Egypt, the West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan, and the Golan Heights from Syria.²³

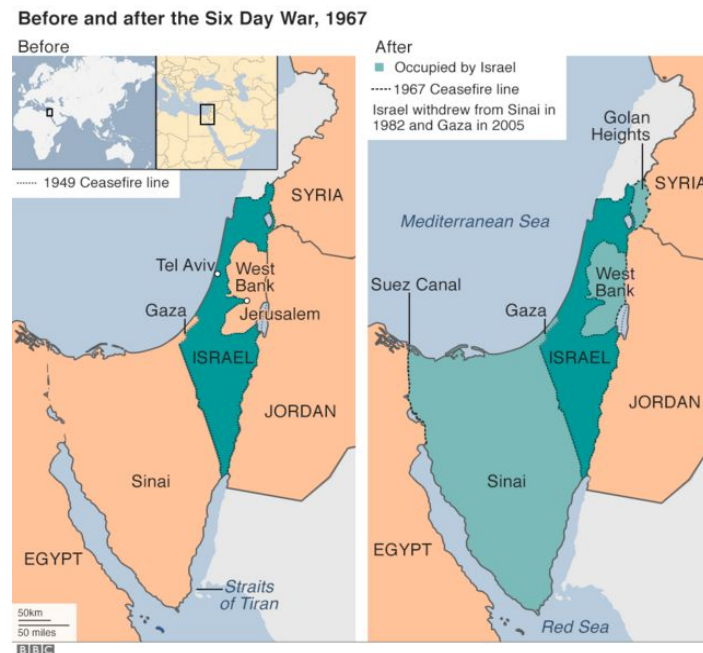


Figure 3: Depiction of how the map changed after the Six-Day War²⁴

The Arab leaders were disappointed by this loss: in August, they gathered in Khartoum, Sudan and signed a resolution against Israel, which denied any chances of peace, recognition, or negotiation towards the Israeli nation.

By occupying lands which used to be part of the other Arab nations, Israel took under its new borders more than one million Palestinian Arabs, several of whom fled these territories, unwilling to live under Israeli rule. Thus, the already existing refugee crisis was exacerbated, and political tensions rose.

It is estimated that the casualties numbered by Egypt were around 11,000, 6,000 for Jordan and 1,000 for Syria, whilst Israel numbered 6,000.²⁵ The Arab armies also lost a large portion of their weaponry and equipment.

²³ History.com Editors. "Six-Day War." *History.Com*, A&E Television Networks, 5 June 2023, www.history.com/topics/middle-east/six-day-war.

²⁴ Bowen, Jeremy. "1967 War: Six Days That Changed the Middle East." *BBC News*, BBC, 4 June 2017, www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-39960461.

²⁵ The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica, and Adam Augustyn. "Six-Day War." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 2023, www.britannica.com/event/Six-Day-War.



TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date of the Event	Event
November 2 1917	The Balfour Declaration
May 1948	Israel declares independence following the UN Partition Plan. Arab Nations reject this and launch an attack, leading to an Israeli victory and conquest of 77% of the land, with the remaining territories taken by Jordan and Egypt.
April 1967	Fierce air fight between Israel and Syria, resulting in a Syrian defeat and loss of six fighter jets.
May 22 1967	Egyptian President Nasser prohibits Israeli access through the Straits of Tiran.
May 30 1967	Egypt signs a military treaty with Jordan, agreeing that no conflict can occur between the two for 5 years.
June 5 1967	Israel initiates air assaults on the Arab nations, overpowering them. Ground war erupts in Egypt.
June 7 1967	The Security Council calls for a ceasefire. Jordan accepts the request.
June 8 1967	Egypt accepts the Security Council's call for a ceasefire.
June 10 1967	Syria accepts the ceasefire, and the war comes to an abrupt



	end. ²⁶
August 1967	At a summit in Khartoum, Sudan, Arab nations sign “The 3 ‘No’s of Khartoum”’: no peace, no recognition, no negotiation

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

Israel

Israel was established as an independent nation, following the UN’s approval, in the land of British Mandate Palestine. After many military confrontations, Israel absorbed the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights, from the surrounding Arab nations, within its new borders. Israel is considered a Jewish state and everyone with Jewish ancestry has the “right of Aliyah” which permits every Jew to return to Israel as an immigrant.

Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)

At the outbreak of the war, Palestinians mainly found themselves in the West Bank, which had been annexed by Jordan in 1948, and in the Gaza Strip, occupied by Egypt – both natives to those regions and those who settled there as refugees from the lands Israel had annexed in 1948. Other Palestinians lived in refugee camps located in Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. In 1964, the Palestine Liberation Organization was founded by the Arab League, which was mostly controlled by Egypt. That year’s Arab League summit also ordered the deployment of a Palestine Liberation Army. During the six days of the war, the Palestinian Division and some Egyptian ones held the first line in the Gaza Strip. The Arab nations’ armies were defeated by Israel, yet guerillas who had contributed to the outbreak of the war were content. This is due to the fact that they had both been turned into the central point for Arab resistance to Israel at an especially difficult time and had recruited a large number of individuals.²⁷

²⁶ History.com Editors. “Six-Day War.” *History.Com*, A&E Television Networks, 5 June 2023, www.history.com/topics/middle-east/six-day-war.

²⁷ “Palestinians.” *The Six-Day War*, 12 Jan. 2023, www.sixdaywar.org/players/palestinians/.



Egypt

Egypt was one of the nations which did not approve of Israel's foundation as an independent nation. As a sign of its disapproval, Egypt banned the passing of Israeli ships from the Straits of Tiran, putting Israel's stability at stake, an action which was considered an act of war and a violation of the armistice agreements²⁸. Egypt also expelled the UN peacekeeping operation, which functioned for over a decade in the area ensuring stability. During the war, it fought against Israel; however, it was defeated and lost the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip to Israel.

Transjordan / Jordan

The Emirate of Transjordan initially disapproved of the establishment of Israel. After the 1948 war, it took over the West Bank and East Jerusalem – part of the territories of the UN-proposed Palestinian state, then being renamed to "Jordan". Although King Hussein had serious personal disputes with Egyptian President Nasser, when the other Arab nation united to take over, Jordan joined them²⁹. By the end of the Six-Day War, East Jerusalem was annexed, and the West Bank was occupied by Israel.

Syria

In 1965, Syria expressed its support towards the Palestinian Fatah fedayeen (guerillas) attacks, which were taking place across the armistice line with Israel. In the year leading up to the war of 1967, Syria and Israel engaged in a small-scale conflict. Both aforementioned facts contributed to increasing tensions between the two nations. When Syria was falsely informed that Israeli forces were on the Syrian borders, it took action. Syrian planes started bombarding northern Israel on the first day of the war. During the following days, Syria both attacked multiple Israeli communities and attempted to bomb Israel's oil refineries.³⁰ In spite of Syria's efforts to defeat Israel, the latter was victorious, and was able to even occupy a piece of Syrian territory: the Golan Heights.

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)

²⁸ "Egypt." *The Six-Day War*, 12 Jan. 2023, www.sixdaywar.org/players/egypt/.

²⁹ "Jordan." *The Six-Day War*, 12 Jan. 2023, www.sixdaywar.org/players/jordan/.

³⁰ "Syria." *The Six-Day War*, 12 Jan. 2023, www.sixdaywar.org/players/syria/.



Although the Soviet Union was initially showing its support towards Israel, when it realized that the Zionist state no longer served the purpose of achieving Soviet influence on the Middle East, it started supporting the Arab nations. The Soviet Union was a major supplier of state-of-the-art weaponry to Egypt and Syria, and its military tactics were used by these two Arab nations during the war. The Soviet Union misinformed Syria and Egypt regarding Israel's intentions, delivering false alerts that Israeli troops were planning an attack on Syria. The outcome of the war impacted the Jewish population of the Soviet Union immensely and it initiated their exodus from the country.³¹

United States of America (USA)

The United States opted for generally friendly affairs with the Arab nations. Following a series of events and disputes with Egypt, US-Egypt relations fell to their lowest point. Egypt then pursued an alliance with the USSR. Through the years that followed, the USA guaranteed Israel's right of passage through the Straits of Tiran – which had been prohibited by Egypt – provided Israel with aid in the form of weaponry and sponsored a UN resolution introducing the United Nations Emergency Force presence between the Egyptians and the Israelis. Leading up to the War, the US constantly rejected Israeli requests for both military assistance and authorisation for an Israeli pre-emptive attack on Egypt. The United States decided to not take part in the war militarily. Instead, the USA pursued diplomatic solutions to resolve the conflict.³²

France

France was the main supplier of weaponry to Israel prior to the war. When the war was about to break out, France reinforced Israel with fighter jets. By 1967, Charles de Gaulle, President of France, changed the country's policies. More specifically, he deemed that closer affairs with the Arab nations would strengthen French rule in Algeria, with the intention of France becoming a global power, independent of both the US and the USSR.³³

Great Britain

³¹ "The Soviet Union." *The Six-Day War*, 12 Jan. 2023, www.sixdaywar.org/players/the-soviet-union/.

³² "United States." *The Six-Day War*, 12 Jan. 2023, www.sixdaywar.org/players/united-states/.

³³ "France." *The Six-Day War*, 12 Jan. 2023, www.sixdaywar.org/players/france/.



Before the war, Britain benefited from the region, as the Arab world's activities helped Britain in many ways. A way in which they did so was investing in Great Britain's capital, London. Acknowledging their less powerful role, Britain focused on favouring and promoting stability over change. Britain considered a secure Israel a source of stability for the Middle East as a whole. Consequently, Britain had no issue with supplying Israel with weapons for the purpose of self-defence. Britain, believing an Israeli victory might damage them in some way, decided to stay neutral. Nevertheless, after the end of the war, the British Foreign Secretary openly supported the Arabs in a speech of his, demanding that Israel withdraw from the territories it conquered from Egypt, Jordan, and Syria during the war. Thereafter, the period of close collaboration between Britain and India ended.³⁴

United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

As one of the UN's main organs and with its main responsibility being the maintenance of international peace and security,³⁵ the Security Council called for a ceasefire on the 7th of June 1967, expecting all nations involved in the open conflict to accept the order and end the war.

United Nations (UN)

When Egypt, Lebanon and Jordan attacked Israel, immediately after its independence declaration, the UN deployed a peacekeeping operation so as to stabilize the area. The operation was running in Gaza and the Sinai for over a decade, until the Egyptian President, Gamal Abdel Nasser, expelled it.

RELEVANT TREATIES, CONVENTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS

The Balfour Declaration³⁶

The Balfour Declaration was published on the 2nd of November 1917 and was

³⁴ "Great Britain." *The Six-Day War*, 12 Jan. 2023, www.sixdaywar.org/players/great-britain/.

³⁵ "Main Bodies." *United Nations*, 2023, www.un.org/en/about-us/main-bodies.

³⁶ "Balfour Declaration." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 26 Oct. 2023, www.britannica.com/event/Balfour-Declaration.



written by Arthur James Balfour, the British foreign secretary, addressed to Lionel Walter Rothschild, a leader of the Anglo-Jewish community. It expressed Britain's support for "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people." The Declaration was embraced by the Allied powers and became a part of Britain's mandate regarding Palestine. However, in 1922 Britain modified the policy in the Churchill White Paper. The alteration proposed that there be an end to immigration by the year 1944, and that, though Palestine would be a home for the Jews, it would not become a Jewish state in which Arabs would be subordinate. The Zionists did not approve of the new policy and accused Britain of favouring the Arabs.

United Nations Resolution 181 (Partition Plan)

Resolution 181 called for the division of British Mandate Palestine into two states, one Arab and one Jewish. Jerusalem was to become a "corpus separatum", governed internationally by the UN. The region had been under Great Britain's control since 1922 and since then it had also been the destination for increased Jewish migrant waves, which lead to the eradication of tensions between the Jewish community and the Arabs.



Figure 4: UN Partition Plan 1947³⁷

However, in April 1947, after the end of the second World War, Great Britain decided to withdraw from the Middle East and address the issue of Palestine to the UN.³⁸ The UN established a specialised committee on Palestine, called the UNSCOP, which later

³⁷ The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica. "United Nations Resolution 181 | Map & Summary." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2 Nov. 2014, www.britannica.com/topic/United-Nations-Resolution-181.

³⁸ "Palestine: Facts & Related Content." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., www.britannica.com/facts/Palestine.



presented two proposals for the Jews and Arabs to choose from. The first one suggested that Palestine be split into two separate states with a shared economy, while the second one proposed the establishment of a single state with autonomous regions for the Jews and Arabs respectively. The Jewish community was in agreement with the first one, whilst the Arabs disagreed with both. Then, a counterproposal recommended that the Jews who had arrived in Palestine prior to the Balfour Declaration were to be considered citizens of the state, but this was not approved by the Jews. The UNSCOP's modified majority report issuing the partition of Palestine was introduced to the General Assembly³⁹ on the 29th of November 1947, and eventually passed with 33 votes in favour.

Resolution 194

During the war of 1948 between the Arabs and the Jews, over 700,000 Palestinians were forced to flee their residence and seek refuge, in an exodus called "*nakba*", meaning "catastrophe" in Arabic. By some scholars, it has been described as an ethnic cleansing. Having won the war, Israel conquered much of the land of the proposed Arab state, as well as West Jerusalem, while Egypt occupied the Gaza Strip, and Jordan annexed the West Bank and the Eastern part of Jerusalem, including the historic Jewish quarter of the city. Resolution 194, passed by the General Assembly in 1948, called for the repatriation of the Palestinians who fled the area. More specifically, the resolution stated that "refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible."

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

UN Partition Plan

On November 29 of 1947 the General Assembly voted in favour of the Partition Plan proposed by Resolution 181. According to the plan, Palestine, formerly governed by

³⁹ "United Nations Resolution 181." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 29 Sept. 2023, www.britannica.com/topic/United-Nations-Resolution-181.



Great Britain, was to be divided into separate Jewish and Arab States, with the city of Jerusalem in neither state, but instead as a “corpus separatum”⁴⁰ under international control. Although the Jewish response was positive and deemed it a legal steppingstone for the establishment of Israel, the Arabs rejected the proposal, leading to the escalation of tensions between the Jews and the Arabs.

Repatriation plan for Palestinian refugees

In 1948, the UN General Assembly voted upon Resolution 194, which was to grant the Palestinian refugees the right to repatriate by returning to the land belonging to Israel. Their repatriation the soonest date possible would be accompanied by compensation offered by both the government and the responsible authorities, so as to aid the Jews financially for their damaged property.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Two-state solution

The division of the land into Jewish and Arab states, as initially proposed in 1947, could benefit both sides. In this way, Palestinians would not be forced to flee the area and they would be able to live in relative peace. The stability of the situation could be monitored by troops sent by the UN in the form of a UN peacekeeping operation, similar to the one expelled by the former president of Egypt. The city of Jerusalem could either be partitioned or governed by a third party, so as to not further eradicate tensions, given that the Holy City is wanted both by the Jewish and the Arab side.

One-state solution

A one state-solution could go several ways. Firstly, Israel could still occupy and incorporate all the land it annexed, including the West Bank, Gaza Strip, the Sinai Peninsula, and the Golan Heights. In this case, all the citizens who lived in the occupied territories could be incorporated along with the new land, in Israel, by being given

⁴⁰ “United Nations Resolution 181.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 29 Sept. 2023, www.britannica.com/topic/United-Nations-Resolution-181.



citizenship. Secondly, Israel could keep the land it took control of and formerly belonged to the Arab nations but would have to settle with the establishment of a binational state which would be given a different name and would enable both the Jews and the Palestinians to live peacefully. In any case, the nation altogether could be governed as a federation, which would permit, partially, a degree of self-governing and freedom to the smaller region it has separated itself into. Just because the two sides are merged, it would presumably not mean that Israel would be destroyed, as creating a solely Palestinian state in the whole land would not be realistic at this time. The Palestinians would no longer have to emigrate as refugees and those who had done so in the previous years, resulting from previous conflicts, would have to be granted their respective right of return.

Return to pre-1967 situation

This would mean Israel would give up the territories it occupied after the war. More specifically, the West Bank would be returned to Jordan, the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip would be reincorporated into Egypt and the Golan Heights would return to Syria. Returning to the pre-1967 state would also mean that the Palestinian refugee problem would not intensify further. However, given that the refugee issues still existed and some of the Palestinians were still migrants to the Arab nations, the Arab nations to which they had fled would have to give them citizenship, if the Jews either didn't want to return to the land, or were not allowed to do so.



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