

Conflict and Cooperation (1945-2000)

Topic 2: Arab-Israeli Conflict (1948-1979)

SAJC History Unit, 2024

Learning Outcomes (from the Examination Syllabus)	5
Essential Questions for this topic:	5
Guiding Questions for this topic:	5
1. Introduction	6
1.1 Understanding the Arab-Israeli Conflict	7
1.2 Context for the Conflict: Land of Palestine	8
2. Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict	9
2.1 Long Term Origins: Clash in Nationalisms	9
2.1.1 Jewish Nationalism (Zionism)	10
2.1.2 Arab Nationalism in Palestine	11
2.2 Long Term Origins: Economic Division	13
2.3 Long Term Origins: Competing identities and Religion	15
2.3.1 Arab vs Jewish Culture/Values	15
2.3.2 Judaic vs Islamic Claims over Palestine	16
2.4 Short Term Origins: Superpower Interests	16

9174/01 H2 History Paper 1
Theme III: Conflict and Cooperation (1945-2000)

2.4.1	The British	17
2.4.2	UN Partition Plan	17
2.4.3	UN Resolution 181	17
2.4.4	Soviet Support for Partition	18
2.4.5	American Support for Partition	18
3.	Outbreak of the Arab-Israeli Conflict (Combatant States)	19
4.	Protracted Regional Conflict: the Arab-Israeli Wars	21
4.1	The War of Independence/Al-Naqba (1948)	21
4.1.1	How the War began	21
4.1.2	Consequences	22
4.2	The Suez Crisis (1956)	23
4.2.1	How the Crisis began	23
4.2.2	Consequences	24
4.3	The Six-Day Crisis (1967)	25
4.3.1	How the Crisis began	25
4.3.2	Consequences	26
4.4	The Yom-Kippur War (1973)	28
4.4.1	How the War began	28
4.4.2	Consequences	29
5.	Expansion of Superpower influence	30
5.1	Role of the USA	31
5.2	Role of USSR	33

9174/01 H2 History Paper 1
Theme III: Conflict and Cooperation (1945-2000)

6. Rise and Impact of Extremism	34
6.1 Jewish Fundamentalism	34
6.2 Impact of Jewish Fundamentalism	36
6.3 Secular Palestinian Extremism	37
6.3.1 Rise and Impact of Palestinian Extremism	37
6.4 Islamic Fundamentalism	38
6.4.1 Rise of Islamic Fundamentalism	38
6.4.2 Impact of Islamic Fundamentalism	39
6.5 Rise of the Israeli Hardliners	40
7. The search for an Elusive Peace (Effectiveness of Peacekeeping)	42
7.1 A slow and difficult Peace Process	42
7.2 Role of UN	42
7.3 UN Peacekeeping Operations	43
7.3.1 UNTSO (1979-Present)	43
7.3.2 UNEF I (1956-1967)	44
7.3.3 UNEF II (1973-1979)	45
7.3.4 UNDOF (1974-Present)	45
7.3.5 UNILIF (1978-Present)	46
8. UNSC Resolutions 242 and 338	47
8.1 Resolution 242	48
8.2 Resolution 338	49
9. American involvement in the search for an Arab-Israeli Peace	50

9174/01 H2 History Paper 1
Theme III: Conflict and Cooperation (1945-2000)

9.1	Kissinger's Shuttle Diplomacy	52
9.2	Camp David Accords	52
9.2.1	Egypt's Motivations for Peace	52
9.2.2	Israeli's Motivations for Peace	53
9.2.3	The Camp David Summit	53
10.	Effectiveness of Conflict Management (Diplomacy)	56
10.1	Diplomatic Efforts during the War of Independence/Al-Naqba (1948)	57
10.2	Diplomatic Efforts during the 1956 Suez Crisis	57
10.3	Diplomatic Efforts during the 1967 Six-Day Crisis	59
10.3	Diplomatic Efforts during the 1973 Yom-Kippur War	59
11.	Conclusion and Food for Thought	60

Learning Outcomes (from the Examination Syllabus)

Students are able to:

- evaluate causes of conflicts
- evaluate the roles of different actors in the development of conflicts over time
- evaluate the effectiveness of conflict management

Essential Questions for this topic:

- *Why did conflicts occur and how did they affect the international order?*
- *Why do countries/ethnic groups engage in war and conflict with one another?*
- *Why do wars and conflicts usually remain protracted and difficult to resolve?*
- *What are the consequences of war and conflict for affected countries and the region at large?*
- *How effective were the attempts to manage these conflicts?*

Guiding Questions for this topic:

- Who or what were responsible for the Arab-Israeli conflict?
- 'Territorial concerns were the main source of contention between the Palestinians and the Israelis'. Assess the validity of this statement in the period 1945-2000.
- 'It was Cold War interests that caused the Arab-Israeli conflict.' How far do you agree?
- How far were the Arab states responsible for the Arab-Israeli conflict?
- 'The refusal of the Palestinians to accept Jewish rights to Palestine has led to the intractability of the Arab-Israeli conflict between 1948-2000'. How far do you agree?
- 'The root cause of the Arab-Israeli conflict is the dispossession and dispersal of the Palestinian Arabs'. Discuss with reference to the period 1948-2000.
- Evaluate the importance of religion in the development of the Arab-Israeli conflict between 1945-2000.
- Why has the Arab-Israeli conflict been so resistant to attempts at resolution?

- To what extent did the Camp David Accords of 1978-1979 mark a turning point in the Arab-Israeli conflict?
- Assess the consequences of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

1. Introduction

- The Arab-Israeli conflict, a protracted and intricate struggle, finds its origins rooted in a century-long quest for national identity and sovereignty. This geopolitical crisis, which emerged prominently in 1948 and evolved considerably through 1979, encapsulates a fierce clash between Zionist aspirations for a Jewish homeland and the Palestinian Arab quest for self-determination. Over these decades, an amalgamation of political, cultural, and territorial disputes continually reshaped the Middle Eastern landscape, entangling regional and international powers in its wake.
- The genesis of the conflict can be traced back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries, marked by the rise of nationalist movements among both Jews and Arabs under Ottoman rule. The Balfour Declaration of 1917 further intensified the situation, as British support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine fueled Arab resentment. Following World War II, the Holocaust underscored the exigent need for a Jewish homeland, leading to the United Nations' 1947 partition plan, which proposed separate Jewish and Arab states.
- In 1948, the declaration of the State of Israel and the subsequent Arab-Israeli War galvanized the conflict, resulting in significant territorial gains for Israel and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs. The armistice agreements of 1949 established the contours of a tense standoff, setting the stage for future confrontations.
- Throughout the 1950s, regional dynamics were defined by border skirmishes, socio-political upheavals, and the influence of Cold War politics. The 1956 Suez Crisis exemplified the intersection of regional and global interests, with Israel allying with British and French forces against Egypt. The Six-Day War in 1967 was another pivotal moment, as Israel captured the West Bank, Gaza Strip,

Sinai Peninsula, and Golan Heights, transforming the conflict's territorial dimensions.

- The ensuing years saw attempts at diplomacy and peace, most notably with the Camp David Accords of 1978 between Israel and Egypt, brokered by the United States. This agreement, culminating in the 1979 Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty, marked the first formal peace between Israel and an Arab state, signaling a shift towards potential conflict resolution.
- However, the fundamental disputes over land, refugees, and mutual recognition remained deeply ingrained, perpetuating a complex and often violent trajectory. By 1979, the regional and global ramifications of the Arab-Israeli conflict underscored its enduring significance, laying the groundwork for future dialogues and confrontations.

1.1 Understanding the Arab-Israeli Conflict

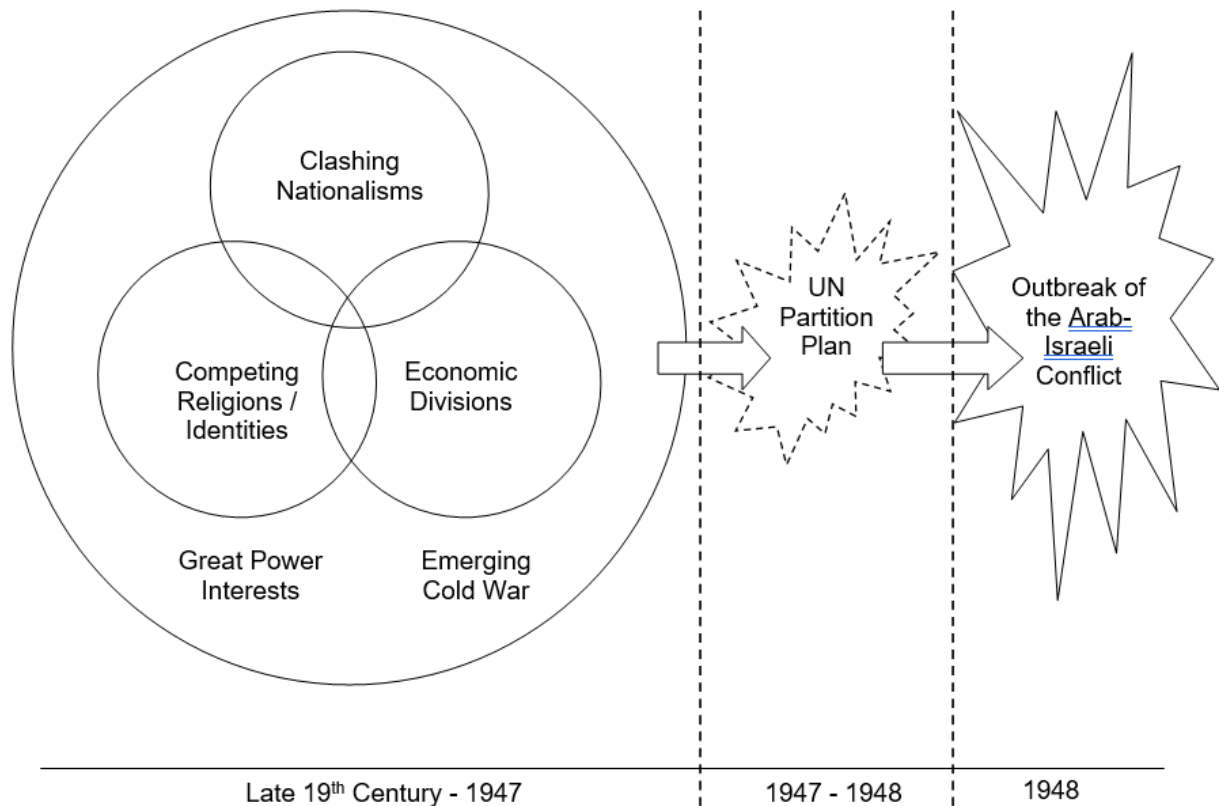
- The bitter struggle between the Arabs and Israelis represents one of the most intractable and protracted conflicts of modern history, repeatedly defying any attempts at resolution, as exemplified by the recent Israeli attacks on the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip in October 2023.
- It is deeply embedded in regional history, politics, economic conditions and culture, although it has also embroiled external powers such as the USA and the USSR, with global repercussions.
- While the nature of the Arab-Israeli conflict has evolved over the course of time, its fundamental issues have largely remained the same.
- We will explore the long-term and short-term origins of the conflict and shed light on how this complex conflict came to be and how it has endured to this day.

1.2 Context for the Conflict: the Land of Palestine

- The area upon which the Arab-Israeli Conflict would erupt was a territory in the Middle East ruled by the Ottoman (Turkish) Empire since 1517. In the late 19th century, it comprised of two administrative districts: the Mutasarriflik of Jerusalem and the Vilayet of Beirut, inhabited predominantly by the Turks' Arab subjects, who called the land Filastin or Palestine. The presence of a Jewish minority there for religious beliefs was inconsequential.
- By the end of WWI, the regional balance of power had been altered considerably. The Great War brought about the destruction of the extensive Ottoman Empire, and its dismemberment into a number of smaller political units. These would later become the independent Arab states of the contemporary Middle East.
- Britain and France assumed direct administrative responsibility for the former Ottoman territories in the Middle East. Four centuries of Ottoman rule over the land now known as Palestine was replaced by British control spanning the next three decades, as a Mandate from the newly formed League of Nations. The British were committed to forming a Jewish home in Palestine, which would have serious repercussions.

Palestine therefore provided the context for the origins of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The indigenous Arab population, which comprised two-thirds of the population by the mid-1940s, opposed for a variety of reasons the increasing immigration of Jews to Palestine. This struggle would eventually explode into open conflict in 1948.

2. Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict



2.1 Long-Term origins: Clash in Nationalisms

- At the very heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict lies the dispute between two opposing nationalisms vying for exclusive political and territorial control over Palestine and demographic supremacy within it.
- Jewish immigrants and their descendants, guided by the nationalist ideology of Zionism, collided with the Palestinian Arab majority inhabiting the land, whose nationalist sentiments developed in response to the arrival of Zionism upon their shores. The political dimension of the Arab-Israeli conflict can thus be traced to the fact that Palestine was a 'twice-promised land', one the British promised to both Jews and Arabs.

2.1.1 Jewish Nationalism (Zionism)

- From the time of the Jewish Diaspora at Roman hands, the Jews experienced dispersion, dispossession and persecution for nearly two millennia. Over time, the focus of Jewish life shifted to Europe. It was the birthplace of Zionism, which emerged in the late 19th century as a political reaction to the twin challenges of rampant European anti-Semitism as well as the exclusion of Jews from various national communities that were developing there.
- The father of Zionism, Theodor Herzl, advocated a territorial solution to the Jewish 'problem'. Since the Jews were a people who had not been allowed to assimilate into European life, they had to unite in a state of their own. Under his leadership, the first Zionist Congress was held in 1897, which aimed at creating a 'home' for the Jews in Palestine – the land of their ancestors.

[Source A]

Source A

The aim of Zionism is to create for the Jewish people a home in Palestine secured by public law. The Congress contemplates the following means to the attainment of this end:

1. The promotion, on suitable lines, of the colonisation of Palestine by Jewish agricultural and industrial workers.
2. The organisation and binding together of the whole of Jewry by means of appropriate institutions, local and international, in accordance to the laws of each country.
3. The strengthening and fostering of Jewish national sentiment and consciousness.
4. Preparatory steps towards obtaining government consent, where necessary, to the attainment of the aim of Zionism.

The First Zionist Congress: Basle Declaration, August 1897

- In 1917, the British formally committed themselves to Jewish nationalism with the Balfour Declaration, in their bid to gain another ally in WWI to help sustain the Eastern front. As Mandatory authority over Palestine, Britain subsequently

turned the declaration into a legally binding statute in 1922, and backed Jewish immigration to the territory. **[Source B]**

Source B

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by the Cabinet.

"His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may 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.

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

Yours Sincerely,

Arthur James Balfour

British Foreign Minister Arthur Balfour: The Balfour Declaration, 2 November, 1917

- Faced with the ascendancy of Hitler's regime and rabid anti-Semitism in Europe during the 1930s, Jews left the continent in significant numbers for Palestine. The culmination of anti-Semitism in the Jewish Holocaust, which devastated Europe's Jewry during WWII, proved instrumental in generating a strong desire amongst its survivors to secure their future in their own hands, through Jewish statehood.
- The early Zionists in Europe had coined the slogan, "A land without a people for a people without a land", due to Palestine's perceived desolation under the

Ottoman Empire. 'Zion', however, was not an empty land waiting for the Jews to simply claim and possess it. It was the home of another increasingly politically conscious people, the Palestinian Arabs.

2.1.2 Arab Nationalism in Palestine

- During WWI, Britain had also made pledges to Arab warlords and nationalist groups, promising to support them if they aligned themselves with the British against the Ottoman Empire. Once the war was over, they would be granted the right to establish an Arab state or states in the Middle East. The story of the pledge was taken up by later Arab nationalists, and formed the basis of their claims
- A clearly defined national consciousness did not exist amongst the Palestinian Arabs when the first Zionist settlers arrived. The secular concept of the nation and its expression in a modern state was a concept alien to the Arabs. Nationalism, however, would emerge and crystallise in the first two decades of the 20th century, in response to Zionism, a perceived threat to their political rights.
- To the Arabs, Palestine was an Arab land whose soil they had cultivated for generations, and entitled to independence as any other Arab country. They felt that their political aspirations for self-government and control over their own lives and destinies were frustrated by the growing influx of Jews (to them a religious minority and not a nationality, who thus did not qualify for self-determination). **[Source C]**

Source C

The whole Arab people is unalterably opposed to the attempt to impose Jewish immigration and settlement upon it, and ultimately to establish a Jewish state in Palestine. Its opposition is based primarily upon right. The Arabs of Palestine are descendants of the indigenous inhabitants of the country, who have been in occupation of it since the beginning of history; they cannot agree that it is right to subject an indigenous population against its will to alien immigrants, whose claim is based upon a historical connection which ceased effectively many centuries ago. Moreover they form the majority of the population; as such they cannot submit to a policy of immigration which if pursued for long will turn them from a majority into a minority in an alien state; and they claim the democratic right of a majority to make its own decisions in matters of urgent national concern...

Excerpt from The Arab Office: The Arab Cause for Palestine, March 1946

- It became clear with the Arab Revolt of 1936-39 that the political contest over the territory was going to be an intractable one, between two opposing nationalisms, for national survival. The Arabs rejected the idea of a Jewish national homeland embodied in the Balfour Declaration, and refused to become a minority in their own country.

2.2 Long-Term origins: Economic Division

- Apart from their clash over national self-expression, the economic disparities that emerged between the Arabs and the Jews further fuelled their intensifying differences. Following in the wake of Zionist settlement were land purchases, which led to economic marginalisation and dispossession of the Palestinian Arabs, and this served to compound difficulties between the two peoples.
- Most of the Arabs inhabiting Palestine were cultivators, and the Great Depression of 1929 had hit them hard, creating indebtedness. Many lost their land as a consequence of foreclosures (forfeiting of land as a result of failure to repay debts); those who migrated to cities were relegated to the bottom of

the economic ladder. While the Zionists were not drawn to Palestine for economic reasons, the increasing numbers of Jewish settlers aggravated the problem of Arab landlessness.

- As more and more Jews entered Palestine, they bought more and more land for settlement and/or cultivation (land purchases). Over the course of the 1930s, some 30% of Palestinian farmers became totally landless and another 75-80% did not even have enough land to support themselves. The Zionists also consciously severed their economy from the Arabs such as refusing to employ Arabs, as they sought economic autonomy in Palestine.
- By the post-WWII years, the inequitable distribution of resources between the two peoples within Palestine had brought the Arabs to the brink of economic disaster. They were now even more determined to halt the Zionist enterprise, to them not just a political but also an economic evil, an alien source of economic peripheralisation and impoverishment stifling their economic development. **[Source D]**

Source D

...The superior capital resources at the disposal of the Jews, their greater experience of modern economic technique and the existence of a deliberate policy of expansion and domination have already gone far towards giving them the economic mastery of Palestine. *The biggest concessionary companies are in their hands; they possess a large proportion of the total cultivatable land, and an even larger one of the land in the highest category of fertility; and the land they possess is mostly inalienable to non-Jews. The continuance of land-purchase and immigration, taken together with the refusal of Jews to employ Arabs on their lands or in their enterprises and the great increase in the Arab population, will create a situation in which the Arab population is pushed to the margin of cultivation and a landless proletariat, rural and urban, comes into existence.* This evil can be palliated but not cured by attempts at increasing the absorptive capacity or the industrial production of Palestine; the possibility of such improvements is limited, they would take a long time to carry out, and would scarcely do more than keep pace with the rapid growth of the Arab population; moreover in present circumstances they would be used primarily for the benefit of the Jews and thus might increase disparity between the two communities.

Excerpt from The Arab Office: The Arab Cause for Palestine, March 1946

2.3 Long-Term origins: Competing Identities and Religions

2.3.1 Arab vs Jewish Culture/Values

- To the Arabs, the increasing Jewish presence within Palestine would only lead to the subversion of traditional family and communal life, and to the destruction of its Arab character. Theirs was a deeply-rooted society comfortable with the culture and way of life in the Middle East, and regarded the Zionists as trespassers who came to subvert and corrupt the indigenous culture.

- Zionism had never been about cultural integration with the Middle East. To the Zionists, the Arabs represented fatalistic passivity, social and cultural stagnation, as well as political tyranny. The Jews identified themselves with European culture and sought to recreate this in Palestine, viewing themselves as cultural and moral emissaries.

2.3.2 Judaic vs Islamic Claims over Palestine

- The holy city of Jerusalem has been significant as a Judaic religious centre and pilgrimage site for centuries. It marks the capital of David and Solomon's biblical kingdom, and the Temple Mount is the site of the Western (Wailing) Wall, which is the only remaining remnant of Judaism's second temple. The Zionists referred to the Hebrew Bible as evidence to support their claim over Palestine.
- For the Arab Muslims, their claim over the land was self-evident. The Temple Mount (Haram al-Sharif, the Noble Sanctuary) marks the site of the great Dome of the Rock and al-Aqsa mosques, the spot of Muhammad's ascent to heaven during his night journey. Palestine was also one of the core areas of Islam (circa. 7th century). The first Muslims prayed in the direction of Jerusalem, not Mecca and Medina.

2.4 Short-Term origins: Superpower Interests

- The mounting Arab-Jewish confrontation over Palestine did not unfold in a vacuum, and was subject to the interests of the British Mandatory authority, and after WWII, those of the superpowers.
- While the dispute over Palestine followed a logic of its own, it came to a head just as the superpower confrontation was crystallising, and the convergence of Cold War interests with the regional dispute contributed to the emerging Arab-Israeli conflict.

2.4.1 The British

- Britain's commitment to the Jews ended in 1939 as she sought to secure the oil of the Middle East as well as communications to Asia with the threat of another war looming. A new policy (the 1939 White Paper) limited Jewish immigration and affirmed their minority status. After WWII, the British remained pro-Arab as the oilfields of the Middle East were deemed crucial to economic reconstruction.
- Outraged by Britain's 'betrayal' of Zionism, the Jews in Palestine began openly confronting the British. Radical Zionist groups like the Irgun and Stern Gang unleashed terror attacks on the British, including blowing up their HQ at the King David Hotel in Jerusalem on 22 July 1946. By February 1947, Britain placed the Palestine issue before the newly founded UN in despair.

2.4.2 UN Partition Plan

- The UN formed a Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP), which passed recommendations in August 1947 for: (1) the partition of Palestine between the Arabs and Jews (45% of the British Mandate was allocated to the Arabs, and 55% to the Jews), (2) an economic union joining the two proposed states, and (3) the internationalisation of Jerusalem. While the Zionists accepted the partition plan, the Arabs rejected it outright.

2.4.3 UN Resolution 181

- After two months of intense debate, UN Resolution 181 partitioning Palestine into Jewish and Arab states was passed on 29 November 1947. Due to Superpower support for the resolution (and in particular, American pressure), the UN General Assembly endorsed the partition plan by a required two-thirds majority (33 to 13). The Arabs promised that the partition line would be a "line of fire and blood".

2.4.4 Soviet Support for Partition

- The Soviets supported the idea of partition. They believed that the Zionist movement, then dominated by the socialist-oriented Labour Party, was open to good relations with Moscow, and represented a potential ally in the Middle East. They also reckoned that an independent Jewish state would break the stranglehold of the Western powers over the region, which would be to Soviet advantage and serve the USSR's Cold War interests. **[Source E]**

Source E

...As we know, the aspirations of a considerable part of the Jewish people are linked with the problem of Palestine and of its future administration. This fact scarcely requires proof... During the last war, the Jewish people underwent exceptional sorrow and suffering...The United Nations cannot and must not regard this situation with indifference, since this would be incompatible with the high principles proclaimed in its Charter...The fact that no Western European State has been able to ensure the elementary rights of the Jewish people and to safeguard it against the violence of the fascist executioners explains the aspirations of the Jews to establish their own state. It would be unjust not to take this into consideration and to deny the right of the Jewish people to realise this aspiration.

*Excerpt from UN Debate Regarding the Special Committee on Palestine:
Gromyko Statement 14 May 1947 77th Plenary Meeting*

2.4.5 American Support for Partition

- On one hand, the US State Department opposed partition as it was wary of antagonising the Arabs, which would threaten the supply of Middle Eastern oil to the West, and drive the Arabs into Soviet orbit. On the other, Clark Clifford, Special Advisor to President Truman, warned that if the US did not favour partition, the Soviets, who did, would gain political mileage and influence in the Middle East by US inaction.

- While there were proposals that Palestine become a UN trusteeship, Truman was unwilling to send troops to enforce this plan, given the situation in Europe, and thus supported partition as there was no feasible alternative. Truman's sympathy for Jewish suffering, political pragmatism (to raise his domestic standing for the coming election and partly to satiate the domestic Jewish lobby) and growing Cold War concerns all factored behind US support for the UN partition plan.

3. Outbreak of the Arab-Israeli Conflict (Combatant States)

- While the Zionist yearning for statehood was finally fulfilled with the passing of the UN partition plan, it was greeted with disturbances across the Arab world, most seriously in Palestine itself. Fierce hostilities between the Arab and Jewish communities in Palestine immediately broke out – a general strike organised by the Arabs on 1 December 1947 rapidly escalated to armed conflict. Palestine was plunged into civil war.
- On 14 May 1948, Britain relinquished its Mandate over Palestine and withdrew its forces. At the same time, the Jews proclaimed the establishment of the state of Israel. By then, the Zionists had already extended the boundaries of the nascent Jewish state beyond the original UN partition lines, following a successful military campaign against the Palestinian Arabs.
- With the proclamation of the state of Israel, Palestine seemed to disappear from the map of the Middle East. The Palestinians, however, did not disappear, and their quarrel remained. Moreover, the neighbouring Arab states rejected a Jewish state in their midst. The Palestinians' cause now took on a regional dimension. On 15 May 1948, the regular armies of Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Saudi Arabia invaded Israel. The Arab-Israeli conflict had begun in earnest.

9174/01 H2 History Paper 1
Theme III: Conflict and Cooperation (1945-2000)

Pause to Think:

1. What would you consider as central to explaining the origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict?

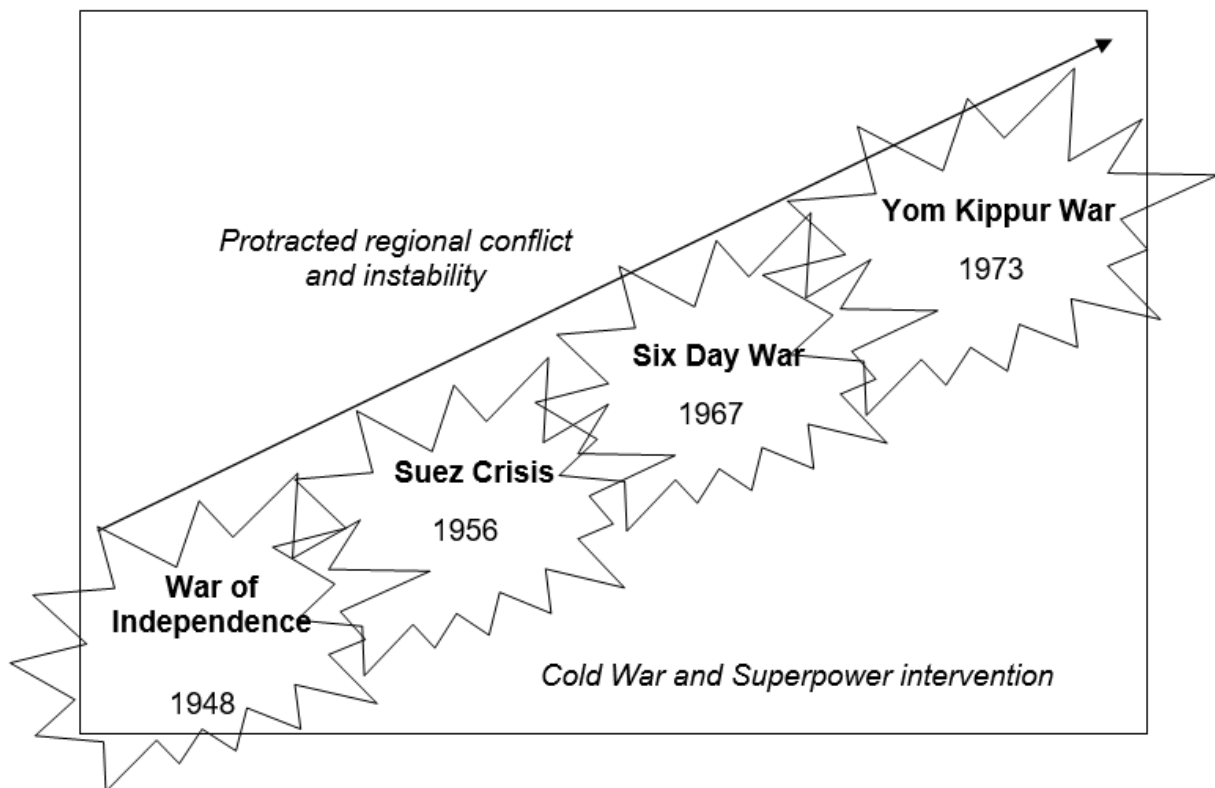
- Clash in national aspirations?
- Economic divisions between Jews and Arabs?
- Competing religions and identities?
- Interests of the Great Powers and the Superpowers?
- Role of the UN?

2. Was the Arab-Israeli Conflict at its roots a territorial, political, economic or religious struggle?

3. As the Arab-Israeli Conflict unfolded from 1948, the conflict acquired new dimensions. What were these dimensions?

4. Protracted Regional Conflict: the Arab-Israeli Wars

- The Arab-Israeli Conflict manifested itself directly and most conspicuously in several wars fought between the Israelis and the neighbouring Arab states.
- Each Arab-Israeli war contributed to the protracted nature of the conflict, as well as left its imprint on the development of the conflict itself. Ultimately, these wars represented a major source of regional instability which was itself a major consequence of the Arab-Israeli Conflict.



4.1 The War of Independence/Al-Naqba (1948)

4.1.1 How the War Began

- The coalition of Arab states that invaded Israel on 15 May 1948 did so ostensibly in support of the Palestinian people. Securing a state for them along the lines of UN Resolution 181, however, had been less of a motive

for the Arab leaders. They were driven to war largely due to popular pressure, as well as their own ambitions over territory (or thwarting those of their Arab rivals).

- Across Arab societies, Israel was predominantly viewed as a Jewish reincarnation of the medieval Crusader state. Seen as a beachhead for Western imperialism, it was thus a colonial, illegitimate regime that threatened the Arab world. Afraid of losing their political legitimacy if action was not taken, Arab leaders therefore intervened in Palestine.
- Inter-Arab politics also played an important role behind the first Arab-Israeli war. In 1948, the Arab states were divided into two rival camps. Jordan and Iraq were on one side; lined up against them were Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia on the other. The leaders of Jordan and Egypt both aspired towards leadership over the Arab world, which included territorial designs over Palestine.

4.1.2 Consequences

- Although Israel triumphed militarily over the Arabs, the latter refused to recognise Israeli sovereignty and sign peace treaties with their foe. In January 1949, hostilities ended through armistice agreements that expanded Israel's borders considerably beyond the partition plan – it now incorporated 80% of the land in Palestine. Without any conclusive peace, tensions continued and the ground for future Arab-Israeli wars was laid.
- The Palestinians paid a high price for Israeli sovereignty. With the dispersion of some 3/4 of a million Palestinians, the Palestinian refugee problem was born. Palestine subsequently also became a convenient battle-cry for the entire Arab world, acting as the cohesive glue of pan-Arab nationalism. This exiled Palestinian population thus formed a core element of the Arab-Israeli conflict.
- This 'Catastrophe' for the Arabs also added the Arab-Israeli interstate dimension to what had originally been a local conflict. Upon this, a Cold War

dimension was further imposed when the Arab states turned to Moscow to balance Western support for Israel.

4.2 The Suez Crisis (1956)

4.2.1 How the Crisis Began

- In the years preceding the second Arab-Israeli war, border tensions between Israel and the surrounding Arab states increased as a result of 'infiltration' by the disinherited Palestinians. Some crossed the 1949 armistice line to reclaim their property by harvesting crops or carrying away moveable property. Others did so to commit acts of sabotage and terror against their Israeli oppressors.
- The Israelis, however, did not distinguish between the two and launched reprisal raids against Arab states from which such 'infiltration' occurred, to induce them into policing their borders more diligently. In 1955, an Israeli raid on an Egyptian military post in Gaza left 38 soldiers dead and about 40 wounded. This triggered a chain of events that would lead to the Suez Crisis.
- Neither the Israelis nor the Palestinians were a priority for Egyptian President Gamal Abdul Nasser after he seized power. Instead, Nasser had focused on ending the British presence in Egypt forever. In the wake of the 1955 Israeli raid on Gaza, he turned to the West for arms, but they rebuffed him. Nasser reacted by signing an arms deal with Czechoslovakia and granting the PRC official recognition.
- To teach Nasser a lesson for his disloyalty, America vetoed Egypt's request for a loan from the World Bank to finance the Aswan High Dam. Nasser's consequent nationalisation of the Suez Canal dealt a severe blow to British as well as French economic and strategic interests. Israel and Egypt were now caught in a wider game involving Britain and France in the last throes of European imperialism.
- After the nationalisation of the Suez Canal, Britain, France and Israel colluded to invade Egypt. The Israelis were motivated by the view that they were encircled by hostile Arabs who sought to wipe them out of existence, enemies

who would neither forgive nor forget the shame of the 1948 war. To survive, Israel thus had to deter the Arabs, and the conditions arose with the backing of two major Western powers.

4.2.2 Consequences

- During the Suez Crisis, Israel captured the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip, but withdrew from its territorial gains after the crisis due to US pressure.
- The Palestinians, however, felt neglected as they had not been consulted in the post-war settlement. Suspicious that they were being used by the Arab states as political pawns and afraid that the world had forgotten about them, the Palestinians would undergo a political revival, beginning with Yasser Arafat's founding of the Fatah movement in 1959.
- As a result of the Suez Crisis, Nasser perceived the West in conspiratorial terms, and he pursued Arab unity to resist this Western conspiracy. Israel represented a threat to pan-Arab nationalism as its very presence divided Arab territory, and Nasser sought to use the Palestinian issue as a mobilising banner for an all-Arab struggle against the Israelis. In 1964, he helped form the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). **[Source F]**

Source F

Eleven years after this tragedy, the people of Palestine have not changed. They, and we, are working for the restoration of their rights in their homeland. The rights of the people of Palestine are Arab rights above all. We feel it is our sacred duty to regain those rights for the people of Palestine.

By this unity which is binding you and the power of Arab unity and Arab nationalism, we can march along the road of freedom and liberation in order to get back the usurped rights of the Palestine Arabs.

Excerpt from Gamal Abdel Nasser's Address in Aleppo (Syria), February 1960.

- By pushing the Palestinian issue to the forefront of the Arab-Israeli conflict, Nasser radically transformed its parameters. As the Egyptian-controlled PLO proved to be ineffective as a voice for the Palestinians, Arafat concluded that militancy was needed: the only hope the Palestinians had was to escalate tensions that would lead to a war in which Israel would be defeated by the regular Arab armies.
- The resurgence of the Palestinians' struggle against Israel created fertile ground for belligerent Arab rhetoric to flourish and sabre-rattling to overflow. As Egypt was not ready to fight another war, Nasser had remained cautious, but Hafez Assad of the Baathists, which gained influence in Syria in 1964, was prepared to take up Fatah's cause. This set the Middle East on the path to the next Arab-Israeli war.

4.3 The Six-Day Crisis (1967)

4.3.1 How the Crisis Began

- The Syrian-Fatah alliance raised regional tensions to new levels, as Fatah raids served as a major source of irritation and instability for Israel. To deter any Israeli retaliation against Syria, Nasser signed a defensive pact with the Syrians in November 1966. While this raised Syria's confidence, it also involved Egypt more closely in the increasingly tense confrontation between Syria and Israel.
- All-out Arab-Israeli military conflict seemed likely, but no one was planning for war. Its trigger came on 13 May 1967 when the Soviets informed Nasser that Israel planned to invade Syria and was amassing forces. The USSR could have spread false alarm to provoke further tensions, in the belief that this would aid in consolidating its alliance with the Arabs, and enable it to replace the US as the regional hegemonic power.
- Things rapidly spiralled out of control: Egyptian moves to counter Israel's alleged troop deployments saw full Israeli mobilisation from 20 May. The next day, Nasser gave the Israelis a further *casus belli* by blockading the Straits of

Tiran, which was Israel's outlet to the Red Sea. Nasser's incendiary speeches in defiance of Israel also raised the Arab clamour for war. On 30 May, Jordan concluded a military treaty with Egypt, and the PLO pledged Israel's destruction.

- Surrounded by a hostile Arab coalition aggressively supported by the USSR, and without any security guarantees from the West, the Israelis decided to go to war on 4 June to pre-empt their enemies. The early hours of 5 June witnessed Israel launching the largest offensive in the history of the Middle East, including the single most decisive air strike in the post-war era, (and possibly, of all time).

4.3.2 Consequences

- A key issue in the Arab-Israeli conflict was Israel's legitimacy as a Jewish political entity in the region. The cessation of the 1967 war heralded a fundamental change in the nature of the conflict, as a cease-fire was conceived on the basis of Israel's 1948 borders, which the Arab states previously rejected. The overwhelming Israeli military victory had finally granted the Jewish state its long sought-after legitimacy.
- Israel's spectacular triumph over the Arab states left it in control over all the lands of mandatory Palestine, as well as extensive Egyptian and Syrian territory – the Sinai Peninsula, Gaza Strip, West Bank and the Golan Heights. Israel was now also an occupying power in control of Arab destinies, and how it resolved this would be the central issue in the Arab-Israeli conflict over the following decades.
- The disastrous showing of the Arab states in the war proved to the Palestinians that these were incapable of defeating Israel. Moreover, the war had exacerbated the Palestinian refugee problem. They were now convinced liberation would take place only if they took matters into their own hands. In 1968, Arafat became PLO leader, and committed it to 'armed struggle' and 'commando action' against Israel. **[Source G]**

Source G

- Armed struggle is the only way to liberate Palestine. Thus it is the overall strategy, not merely a tactical phase. The Palestinian Arab people assert their absolute determination and firm resolution to continue their armed struggle and to work for an armed popular revolution for the liberation of their country and their return to it. They also assert their right to normal life in Palestine and to exercise their right to self-determination and sovereignty over it.
- Commando action constitutes the nucleus of the Palestinian popular liberation war. This requires its escalation, comprehensiveness, and the mobilisation of all the Palestinian popular and educational efforts and their organisation and involvement in the armed Palestinian revolution. It also requires the achieving of unity for the national struggle among the different groupings of the Palestinian people, and between the Palestinian people and the Arab masses, so as to secure the continuation of the revolution, its escalation, and victory.
- The Palestinian people believe in Arab unity. In order to contribute their share toward the attainment of that objective, however, they must, at the present stage of their struggle, safeguard their Palestinian identity and develop their consciousness of that identity, and oppose any plan that may dissolve or impair it.
- The Arab Palestinian people, expressing themselves by the armed Palestinian revolution, reject all solutions which are substitutes for the total liberation of Palestine and reject all proposals aiming at the liquidation of the Palestinian problem, or its internationalisation.

Excerpts from The Palestinian National Charter, July 1968

4.4 The Yom-Kippur War (1973)

4.4.1 How the War Began

- In the prelude to the 1967 war, the Arab states had called for the annihilation of Israel. The Egyptians and Syrians did not, however, launch the next Arab-Israeli war to revise the results of 1948. Instead, they were motivated by unresolved territorial issues that arose in the wake of the 1967 war, and believed that another (limited) war was necessary to force Israel to cede the territories it had conquered.
- All Egyptian President Anwar Sadat wanted was to break the stalemate and unleash a political process – not only by shaking the Israelis out of their complacency, but also capturing the attention of the superpowers (which had now focused on *détente*), forcing them to reactivate the search for a settlement. His strategy did not aim at military victory; this was a political move executed by military means. **[Source H]**

Source H

We have fought and will fight to liberate our territories which the Israeli occupation seized in 1967...We are prepared to accept a cease-fire on the basis of the immediate withdrawal of the Israeli forces from all the occupied territories...to pre-5th June 1967 lines...We are prepared, as soon as the withdrawal from all these territories has been completed, to attend an international peace conference at the United Nations, which I will try my best to persuade my comrades, the Arab leaders directly responsible for running our conflict with the enemy [to accept]. I will also do my best to convince the Palestinian people's representative about this so that they may participate with us...in laying down rules...for a peace...based on the legitimate rights of all the peoples of the area.

Excerpt from a speech made by Anwar Sadat, 16 October 1973

- Given Israel's military might, Syria's cooperation was thus essential to Sadat's scheme. Egyptian and Syrian generals sought to achieve an element of surprise, and then wage a war of attrition to exhaust Israel. This would hopefully produce the concessions that Sadat and Assad (who had since taken power in Syria) desired. On 6 October 1973, on Yom Kippur, the holiest date in the Jewish calendar, Israel came under attack.

4.4.2 Consequences

- Although Israel recovered quickly from the surprise attack and was poised to inflict yet another dramatic victory on its foes, hostilities ended through a joint US-Soviet sponsored ceasefire. Sadat and Assad ultimately succeeded in recovering territory through American diplomacy and pressure: as a first step, Israel withdrew from the west bank of the Suez Canal, and part of the Golan Heights (Quneitra).
- Through the recovery of land, Arab dignity was restored, which was a vital precondition for future diplomacy. Sadat would subsequently usher in a new era in Arab-Israeli relations, by shifting the politics of the Middle East from the discourse of war to that of peacemaking (notwithstanding a major war in Lebanon as well as Palestinian uprisings in the occupied territories).
- Given the changed regional political climate in the wake of the 1973 war, the PLO realised that diplomacy was now necessary. It proposed a 'mini-state' solution in the West Bank and Gaza in July 1974, and in October, the Arab states acknowledged it in effect as a government in exile. By November 1975, it was granted observer status in the UN, and could voice the Palestinian issue directly to the global community. **[Source I]**

Source I

The Palestine Liberation Organisation has earned its legitimacy because of the sacrifice inherent in its pioneering role, and also because of its dedicated leadership of the struggle. It has also been granted this legitimacy by the Palestinian masses, which in harmony with it have chosen it to lead the struggle according to its directives. The Palestine Liberation Organisation has also gained its legitimacy by representing every faction, union or group as well as very Palestinian talent, either in the National Council or in people's institutions. This legitimacy was further strengthened by the support of the entire Arab nation, and it was consecrated during the last Arab Summit Conference which reiterated the right of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, in its capacity as the sole representative of the Palestinian people, to establish an independent national state on all liberated Palestinian territory.

Excerpt from Yasser Arafat's address to the UN General Assembly, 13 November 1974

5. Expansion of Superpower influence

- While the Arab-Israeli conflict had preceded global superpower competition, it soon became a tool of this bipolar struggle, as it provided opportunities for the US and USSR to expand their influence in the Middle East and thus serve their Cold War interests.
- The transformation of the Arab-Israeli conflict into a major site for Cold War conflict was another of its key defining features. Being a vital platform for superpower competition from the 1950s onward served powerfully to keep regional tensions high, and the conflict alive.

5.1 Role of the USA

- The basis for American involvement in the Middle East and the Arab-Israeli conflict was its policy of containment. In its quest to prevent Soviet penetration into the region, America supplied some of the Arab states with arms from 1954 onwards. Through this, the US sought to create an anti-Soviet bloc around the Arab states that were hostile to the West and potentially pro-Moscow, like Egypt.
- Subsequently, in Jan 1957, America announced the 'Eisenhower Doctrine', which pledged that the US would use armed force to help any Middle Eastern country that requested support against communism. With the exit of Britain and France from the Middle East after the Suez Crisis, a power vacuum had emerged. America aimed at filling this vacuum before it was occupied by a USSR perceived to be expansionist. **[Source J]**

Source J

The action which I propose would have the following features. It would, first of all, authorise the United States to cooperate with and assist any nation or group of nations in the general area of the Middle East in the development of economic strength dedicated to the maintenance of national independence.

It would, in the second place, authorize the Executive to undertake in the same region programs of military assistance and cooperation with any nation or group of nations which desires such aid.

It would, in the third place, authorise such assistance and cooperation to include the employment of the armed forces of the United States to secure and protect the territorial integrity and political independence of such nations, requesting such aid, against overt armed aggression from any nation controlled by International Communism.

Excerpt from Eisenhower's Special Message to Congress, 5 January 1957

- America and Israel also grew closer after the 1967 war as the US recognised that the latter's military might was a valuable asset in the struggle to contain Soviet influence in the Middle East. This new 'strategic relationship' began in 1968 with the sale of 50 of its latest Phantom fighter-bombers to Israel. It was also American military aid which enabled Israel to recover from the Arabs' devastating initial assault during the 1973 war.
- By supplying Israel with enough weaponry to keep it stronger than the sum of its enemies, the US hoped that the Arabs would no longer have the option of war. If the Arabs wanted their territory returned, they would have to negotiate with Israel, and if they were unwilling to do so, the US could be approached to help pressurise Israel. In the zero-sum Cold War game, it would benefit the US if the Arabs turned to her.

5.2 Role of USSR

- Soviets exploited the Arab-Israeli conflict in an effort to break containment and thus obtain a regional advantage over their Cold War adversary. This might then translate into a global advantage. After the Suez Crisis, they embarked on a 'noble mission' to aid the Egyptians and other Arab states. Soviet communism and radical Arab nationalism were, however, only partners of convenience. **[Source K]**

Source K

Soviet behaviour is...best explained not in terms of expansionist objectives at all, whether motivated by ideological/revolutionary goals or those of traditional Russian imperialism, whether planned or reactive, whether reckless or cautious. Rather, it is proposed, all actual Soviet behaviour in the Middle East from World War II until Gorbachev can be explained in terms of a combination of traditional defensive concerns, the ongoing dynamic of the cold war or geostrategic rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union, and Soviet aspirations to be recognized and accepted as a superpower equal in influence and prestige to the United States

The Soviets clearly were...motivated by the desire to be accepted as a superpower of equal standing and influence to the United States. Indeed, much of their behaviour could be interpreted simply as emulation of the United States. In this view, the Soviet military presence in the Mideast played the same function as the Sixth Fleet did in U.S. policy: to show the flag, to deter intervention against its clients by its superpower rival, and to maintain the capability to intervene if necessary to protect a client state threatened by allies or proxies of its adversary.

Excerpt from Jerome Slater, The Superpowers and an Arab-Israeli Political Settlement: The Cold War Years, Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 105, No.4

- Apart from the provision of arms to Egypt in 1955, the USSR had also deliberately escalated regional tensions on the eve of the 1967 war to energise an anti-Israel, pro-Soviet alliance. In addition, it restocked the arsenals of its clients in the aftermath of the war, so that they were able to launch an attack on Israel again in 1973. The Soviets were thus the chief suppliers of the military option to the various Arab states.

Pause to Think:

1. Why do you think the Arab-Israeli Conflict was so difficult to resolve?
2. Apart from their consequences on regional security and the Arab-Israeli conflict itself, the series of wars fought between the Arabs and Israelis would also affect the international community. What then, do you think, were the global dimensions of the Arab-Israeli conflict?

6. Rise and Impact of Extremism

- Although it contained religious undertones, the Arab-Israeli conflict was primarily a secular struggle that focused on political issues. It would, however, for different reasons, stimulate the growth of secular Palestinian extremism, and Islamic and Jewish fundamentalism in the Middle East. These were, in turn, powerful new factors in the dynamics of the conflict, which increasingly assumed religious dimensions from the 1970s onwards. More will be covered on the global and regional impact of the rise of Religious Fundamentalism in subsequent lectures.

6.1 Jewish Fundamentalism

- The blossoming of Jewish fundamentalism in Israel was catalysed by specific developments in the Arab-Israeli conflict (namely, the political outcomes of the 1967 and 1973 wars). The formation and subsequent phenomenal success of fundamentalist groups like the Gush Emunim

shifted Israel's pragmatic national agenda towards religious redemption, and created a potent, yet dangerous mix of religion and politics.

- Israel's 1967 'mother of all victories' aroused messianic instincts within the Israeli psyche, and even those who belonged to the very core of the socialist-oriented Labour Party experienced religious exaltation. The return of biblical Judea and Samaria (West Bank) to Israel and reunification of Jerusalem was interpreted as a miracle, in which God had shown his might to rescue his chosen people in their darkest hour. **[Source L]**

Source L

The entire Nation was exalted and many wept upon hearing the news of the capture of the Old City. Our Sabra Youth and most certainly our soldiers do not tend to sentimentality and shy away from revealing it in public. However, the strain of battle, the anxiety which preceded it, and the sense of salvation and of direct participation of every soldier in the forging of the heart of Jewish history cracked the shell of hardness and shyness and released well-springs of excitement and spiritual emotion. The paratroopers, who conquered the Wailing Wall, leaned on its stones and wept, and as a symbol this was a rare occasion, almost unparalleled in human history. Such phrases and clichés are not generally used in our Army but this scene on the Temple Mount beyond the power of verbal description revealed as though by lightning deep truths...

Excerpt from Israeli Chief of Staff Yitzhak Rabin's Address at the Hebrew University, 28 June 1967

- While the rest of the Jewish state remained overwhelmed by the events of 1967, Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook's disciples believed that the 'liberated' lands, God's sacred trust to the Jews, had to be secured through settlement. This was now their religious mission, and in 1968, they established a presence in Hebron. These were the founders of what was later the Gush Emunim movement, which would set into motion relentless Jewish settlement of the West Bank.

- After the shock of the 1973 war, Jewish fundamentalists resolved to oppose further Israeli territorial concessions and established the Gush Emunim, which dedicated itself to the extension and defence of Jewish presence within the occupied territories by creating 'facts on the ground'. These settlements proved highly provocative to the Palestinians, as they were both a symbolic and tangible reminder of Israeli power and territorial claims.

6.2 Impact of Jewish Fundamentalism

- With the 1993 Oslo Accords and beginning of negotiations between the Israelis and PLO over the occupied territories, Jews who identified with the Gush Emunim felt alienated from their government. They viewed their leaders' plans to withdraw not only as politically mistaken, but also religiously heretical. Relinquishing the land God had promised to them threatened Israel's very existence, and violated divine will. Such sentiments were to have grave consequences.
- Baruch Goldstein was one of the West Bank settlers who shared this belief that the land was an inalienable part of the Jewish inheritance. On 25 February 1994, he attacked and killed 29 Palestinian worshippers at the Tomb of Patriarchs/Mosque of Ibrahim in Hebron. While the Israeli government responded by hastening its withdrawal from Gaza, in April, a Palestinian suicide car bomber drove into a school bus line in Israel, killing 7 and injuring over 50.
- In May 1994, Israel and the PLO agreed on the nature of Israel's withdrawal from the Occupied Territories (Gaza Strip and West Bank). While most Israelis accepted this, the fundamentalists and settlers feared what it might entail. On 4 November 1995, Yigal Amir, a Jewish student against Israeli concessions, assassinated Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin (from the Labour Party) at this critical moment in the search for peace.

6.3 Secular Palestinian Extremism

- Akin to the Arab-Israeli conflict, the involvement of the superpowers and imposition of a Cold War framework over the region's politics has also served to hinder the resolution of the Indo-Pakistani conflict over Kashmir. Similarly, the US and USSR provided the two antagonists in the Kashmir dispute with the military option as well as extended political support for Pakistan and India respectively – only to protract the conflict.

6.3.1 Rise and Impact of Palestinian Extremism

- The late 1960s inaugurated a new, more dangerous phase in the Arab-Israeli conflict. This saw secular Palestinian militants turning to acts of terror to achieve their objective of regaining Palestine.
- Under the overall framework of the PLO, 'armed struggle' against Israel took different forms. While Arafat's Fatah movement pursued its policy of guerrilla raids, other groups resorted to extreme methods. George Habash's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) pioneered the practice of striking at the more vulnerable and headline grabbing target of airliners to bring Palestinian grievances to the forefront of the world's consciousness.
- Whether out of opportunism or loyalty to the Palestinian cause, or both, Arafat acquiesced. From 1968, the PFLP launched a series of attacks on El-Al and other airlines flying to Israel. One of the attacks saw a Swissair flight blown up while it was still mid-air (February 1970). This string of acts of terror by the PFLP climaxed in September 1970, when three airliners departing different airports were hijacked and subsequently blown up in the Jordanian desert.
- Another of the numerous high-profile international incidents devised by the Palestinian militants occurred during the 1972 Munich Olympics. This event, in addition to other acts of Palestinian terror, did little to foster compromise from the Israeli government, and further stoked tensions.

6.4 Islamic Fundamentalism

6.4.1 Rise of Islamic Fundamentalism

- The unbridled expropriation of land in the West Bank and Gaza Strip for settlement built up such a strong Jewish presence in the occupied territories that they became indissolubly bound to Israel, territorially and economically. This now posed the greatest obstacle to the Palestinians' political aspirations, and their collective rage and frustration exploded spontaneously in the December 1987 *intifada*, a popular uprising to 'shake off' the Israeli occupiers.
- Apart from a revolt against occupation, the *intifada* also represented an expression of discontent towards the PLO, whose sterility, indiscriminate international terrorism and corruption compounded the Palestinians' woes. Believing that Islamic fundamentalists would be more effective in helping them achieve their nationalist aims, Palestinians thus shifted their support from the PLO to groups like Hamas and PIJ (Sunni Islamist militant group).
- Islamic fundamentalists had since gained a foothold in the occupied territories by being seen as selfless purveyors of charity and social services, unlike the venal, self-serving PLO. Moreover, the success of other Islamic movements in the Middle East raised these fundamentalist groups' appeal to the Palestinians. Secular governments/organisations had failed time after time to liberate Palestine, and their failure would translate into the fundamentalists' triumph.
- Akin to the PLO, Hamas and PIJ's main political goal was the liberation of Palestine. In contrast to the PLO, these refused Israel recognition, nor supported a two-state solution. They kept the campaign to liberate all of Palestine alive, declaring it to be an Islamic trust that could not be divided or surrendered, and also sought to recreate Palestinian society according to Islamic principles.

- Over the years, the PLO's compromises with Israel over the occupied territories further increased Palestinian support for Hamas, PIJ and other fundamentalist groups. These Islamic organisations were ultimately enthroned as hegemonic powers in the Gaza Strip, and also became a powerful counterweight to the PLO's leadership of the Palestinian national cause.

6.4.2 Impact of Islamic Fundamentalism

- Like various militant groups associated with the PLO, Hamas and Islamic Jihad similarly used terrorism to air Palestinian grievances as well as sabotage any attempt to arrive at a settlement that compromised their territorial demands. Terror attacks by these fundamentalists groups sought to discredit the PLO and provoke a strong Israeli military response or a shift to the right in Israeli politics, which would thus undermine and cripple any peace process.
- Following the outbreak of the 1987 Intifada in the Israeli-occupied territories, Hamas and Islamic Jihad carried out internal terror attacks against Israeli targets both within the occupied territories as well as those in Israel itself. Their tactic of suicide bombings injected a new lethality into the struggle between the Israelis and Palestinians, and frequently coincided with initiatives to reach some sort of Arab-Israeli accord.
- Ultimately, these numerous (and shocking) terrorist incidents from the late 1960s onwards served to keep the Palestinian issue alive at a time when the international community would just as soon have wanted it to go away. There was also a method to the secular and religious militants' madness: they were against those who would compromise Palestinian rights in order to reach a settlement: the Israelis, pragmatists within the PLO, as well as moderate Arab regimes searching for an end to the conflict.

6.5 Rise of the Israeli Hardliners

- Hardliners first came to power in Israel in the wake of the 1973 war, and subsequent right-wing governments would be elected after waves of Palestinian terror aimed at undermining the Israeli public's confidence in the Labour Party's peace strategy and ability to maintain security. By hardening Israeli attitudes, the Palestinian militants achieved their objective, and under Likud Party Prime Ministers, any resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict in its entirety remained even more elusive than before.
- Following the 1967 war, the Labour-dominated Israeli government was unable to articulate a clear vision for the future, especially on how to proceed with its newly acquired territory. The right-wing Likud Party, in contrast, made political inroads with its more belligerent stand against the Arab states and territorial assertiveness. The Israeli electorate would later also hold the Labour Party responsible for Israel's near disaster of 1973.
- Unsurprisingly, the 1977 Israeli elections saw a Likud Prime Minister, Menachem Begin, brought to power for the first time. Surprisingly, he would play a significant role in the future Arab-Israeli peace process. Other Likud leaders, however, like Yitzhak Shamir and Benjamin Netanyahu, remained true to Likud's basic position – that Israel should not enter negotiations with its neighbours on the basis of prior conditions, and that the land of Israel was inviolable.
- As they held shared goals, secular Likud governments worked hand in glove with the Gush Emunim, and even turned the idea of settlement into something much more far-reaching than the Gush's haphazard ventures. Under Likud, Jewish settlements in the occupied territories were not only built near centres of Palestinian habitation, but in them as well. These were to be a significant obstacle in all future negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians.
- Likud leaders also pointed to attacks on Jews as evidence that no concessions should be made to the Palestinians. Rabin's death brought a

9174/01 H2 History Paper 1
Theme III: Conflict and Cooperation (1945-2000)

Likud government under Benjamin Netanyahu to power, one that resisted further concessions and attempted to minimise the impact of those already given. Continued Palestinian violence played into Likud's hands – citing security fears, the Netanyahu government would seek to mitigate the effects of the Oslo Accords.

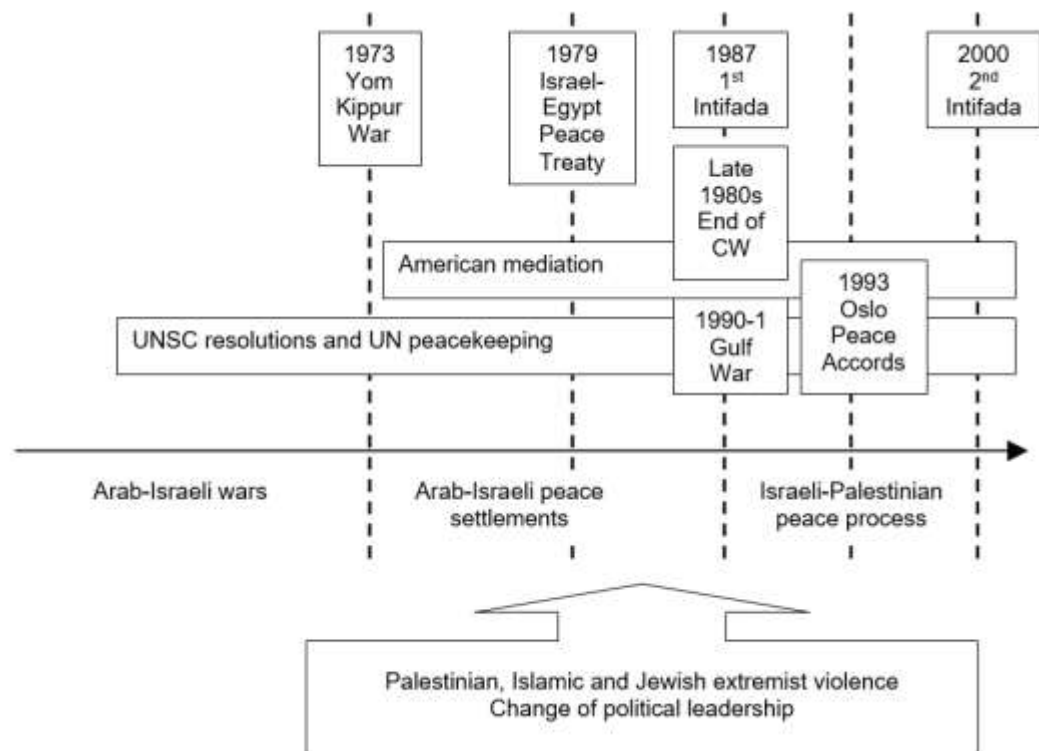
Pause to Think:

What effects would the rise of extremism and hard-line Israeli politics have on any attempt to resolve the Arab-Israeli Conflict and bring peace to the region?

7. The search for an Elusive Peace (Effectiveness of Peacekeeping)

7.1 A slow and difficult Peace Process

- The threat that the Arab-Israeli conflict posed to both regional as well as global peace and security prompted various attempts at solving the dispute. Some were initiated by the parties directly involved in the conflict themselves, while others took place under the auspices of the international community. Despite these efforts to arrive at an overall Arab-Israeli settlement, the road to peace has been a long one, fraught with numerous difficulties.



7.2 Role of UN

- In its endeavour to maintain international peace and security, the UN actively sought to expedite a political solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict,

and the Middle East soon became the focus of UN mediation and peacekeeping. While these efforts were unsuccessful in securing a lasting peace, peacekeeping operations helped reduce the level of conflict, and more critically, UNSC Resolution 242 would become the cornerstone of diplomacy in the region from 1967 onwards.

- By the 1970s, however, the UN had ceased being an independent actor of any consequence in the Arab-Israeli conflict. UNSC Resolution 338, which produced a ceasefire between the Arabs and Israelis in 1973, was a joint US-Soviet endeavour. Moreover, while its initial peacekeeping operations in the Middle East were initiated by the UN itself rather than any prominent member state or states, those that came in the wake of the 1973 war were a result of the superpowers' exploitation of peacekeeping to stabilise their own relationship.

7.3 UN Peacekeeping Operations

7.3.1 UNTSO (1979-Present)

- In response to the outbreak of war between the Arabs and Israelis in 1948, the UNSC appointed a mediator, Count Folke Bernadotte, who quickly arranged a 4-week truce. This took effect on 11 June, under the supervision of international military observers, the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO). In spite of mediation efforts, both sides could not agree on an extension of the truce, and hostilities resumed on 8 July.
- On 15 July, the UNSC decided that the situation in Palestine constituted a serious threat to international peace. It ordered a ceasefire and declared that failure to comply would bring an immediate consideration of enforcement measures under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. A second truce thus came into force on 18 July, but sporadic fighting would continue later in 1948 into early 1949, through which Israel was able to take over even more of Palestine.

- A second truce provided the opportunity for Bernadotte to continue pursuing a diplomatic solution to the conflict. In the midst of renewed negotiations, however, he was murdered by radical Jews (17 September 1948) who believed his plans were unfavourable to Israel. Bernadotte's successor, Ralph Bunche, was just as able, and between February and July 1949, each of the Arab states signed armistice agreements with Israel under UN auspices.
- In August 1949, UNTSO was called upon by the UNSC to supervise the Arab-Israeli armistice agreements. These agreements were essentially the basis for an uneasy truce until the next crisis. However, as they were meant as the first step to a full peace settlement, the borders delineated were provisional and reinforced the Israeli view that they were still technically at war with their neighbours, and Israel existed in a continual state of tension.

7.3.2 UNEF I (1956-1967)

- After the eruption of the Suez Crisis, the UNSC convened on 30 October 1956 at America's behest. The US put forward a draft resolution that called for Israel's immediate withdrawal as well as non-interference from other UN members. This provoked vetoes from both the British and French. The issue was consequently transferred to the UNGA, in accordance with the 'Uniting for Peace' resolution, with the support of the ever-opportunistic USSR.
- On 4 November 1956, the UNGA passed a resolution proposing the creation of a United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF I). Its mandate was to accomplish the mutual disengagement of opposing forces and stabilisation of the general situation, not by force, but through interposition and moral authority. As it excluded troops from permanent UNSC members, this also ensured that the crisis was not drawn further into the Cold War.
- The first UNEF peacekeepers entered the Suez Canal Zone on 15 November, which was followed by the withdrawal of British and French occupation forces just before Christmas, 1956. Although the process of Israeli

disengagement was a much slower one, progress was made. UNEF I brought an uneasy truce until May 1967, when Egypt withdrew consent to the force's presence amidst high Arab-Israeli tensions that would lead to the momentous 1967 war.

7.3.3 UNEF II (1973-1979)

- As the Middle East began to increasingly preoccupy the superpowers from the 1960s onwards, the space for UN involvement contracted. No UN peacekeeping operation had been established in the aftermath of the Six Day War. The second UNEF operation in the region was thus in all respects an American-Soviet initiative to manage the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the UN was reduced to an element of superpower *détente*.
- Given the mutual superpower interest in UNEF II, both its deployment (26 October 1973) and operations were efficient and effective. Its mandate was to prevent any recurrence of fighting and ensure both sides returned to positions held on 22 October 1973. Egypt and Israel had little alternative but to cooperate with an operation that, although having on the surface the imprimatur of the UN, was an enterprise by their respective patrons.
- Within 6 years, the UNEF II peacekeepers would depart the region. After Israel and Egypt attained bilateral peace in 1979, the USSR sought to terminate UNEF II's mandate, out of the fear that this Israeli-Egyptian peace would change the role of the peacekeepers from a buffer between Israel and Egypt into an 'anti-Arab' force. The conclusion of the UNEF II mission was thus a result of Soviet attempts to maintain ties with the Arabs.

7.3.4 UNDOF (1974-present)

- Multilateral involvement on the other front of the 1973 war, however, was not as readily attained, with sporadic fighting continuing across the Israeli-Syrian border. Syria was not receptive to UN intervention in fear that this would lead to a consolidation of Israeli gains. It took US diplomacy in May

1974 to make Israel withdraw in effect to its 1967 positions, and for Syria to acquiesce to UN peacekeepers stationed on land the Israelis returned.

- This additional peacekeeping operation in the Middle East, known as the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), was created in June 1974. To minimise the impression that it embodied an occupation force threatening Syria's territorial sovereignty, the peacekeepers were designated as an observation force. Since its establishment, UNDOF has played a key role in maintaining calm along the Israeli-Syrian border.
- As an interpositionary force between two hostile former belligerents, UNDOF proved invaluable in the maintenance of regional stability. Even so, the UN had essentially, once again, acted as the executive arm of superpower diplomacy as it authorised this second peacekeeping mission in the Middle East only after the US completed truce negotiations between Israel and Syria.

7.3.5 UNILIF (1978-Present)

- In 1975, civil war broke out in Lebanon. Although the civil war ended in 1976 with Syrian intervention, the country descended into anarchy into the early 1980s. In particular, fighting started again between Palestinians and Lebanese Christians in the Lebanese south. In 1978, the Israelis invaded and created a semi-independent Christian puppet state in the south, while in the process flushing out the Palestinian militia in the border area.
- In the wake of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1978, the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) was established by the UNSC to confirm Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon and to assist the Lebanese government in restoring stability and authority in the area.
- The Israelis withdrew partially with UN peacekeeping in place. In 1982, Israel invaded Lebanon again, ostensibly to root out the Palestinians from south Lebanon and to evict the PLO from Beirut, Lebanon's capital. Zionists

in Israel also entertained ideas of annexing parts of Lebanon which they claimed belonged to Israel by biblical right.

- For three years, UNIFIL remained behind the Israeli lines, with its role limited to providing protection and humanitarian assistance to the local population to the extent possible. In 1985, Israel carried out a partial withdrawal, but it retained control of an area in southern Lebanon manned by the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) and by Lebanese de facto forces (DFF), the so-called "South Lebanon Army" (SLA). Hostilities continued between Israeli and auxiliary forces on the one hand, and Lebanese groups who proclaimed their resistance against the Israeli occupation on the other.
- While UNIFIL could not fulfill its mandate, it contributed to the protection of civilians in the conflict zone and the stability of the region amidst intermittent violence and fighting.

8. UNSC Resolutions 242 and 338

- UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 are pivotal documents within the framework of Middle Eastern geopolitics and the broader context of international diplomatic efforts. Adopted in the aftermath of significant Arab-Israeli conflicts, these resolutions aimed at establishing a foundation for peace and stability in a region fraught with tension and hostilities.
- Resolution 242, passed in 1967 following the Six-Day War, emphasised the "inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war" and called for the withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied during the conflict, alongside the acknowledgment of every state's right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries.
- Building on this, Resolution 338, adopted in 1973 after the Yom Kippur War, underscored the need for an immediate ceasefire and the commencement of negotiations to implement Resolution 242. Together, these resolutions form the cornerstone of diplomatic initiatives aimed at resolving the Arab-

Israeli dispute through principles of mutual recognition, territorial compromise, and peace negotiations.

8.1 Resolution 242

- After the 1967 war, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) discussed the situation in the Middle East, and then referred the issue to the UNSC. The way forward manifested itself following lengthy deliberations, in the British-sponsored UNSC Resolution 242, adopted on 22 November 1967. It established the concept of 'land for peace', calling for Israel's withdrawal from the territory it occupied in 1967 in exchange for peace with her Arab neighbours. [Source M]

Source M

The Security Council:

1. Affirms that the fulfilment of Charter principles requires the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East which should include the application of both of the following principles:
 - (i) Withdrawal of Israel armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict;
 - (ii) Termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every state in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognised boundaries free from threats or acts of force;
2. Affirms further the necessity
 - (a) For guaranteeing freedom of navigation through international waterways in the area;
 - (b) For achieving a just settlement of the refugee problem;
 - (c) For guaranteeing the territorial inviolability and political independence of every state in the area, through measures including the establishment of demilitarised zones;
3. Requests the Secretary General to designate a special representative to proceed to the Middle East to establish and maintain contacts with the states concerned in order to promote agreement and assist efforts to achieve a peaceful and accepted settlement in accordance with the provisions and principles in this resolution.

Excerpt from UN Security Council Resolution 242, 22 November 1967

- Resolution 242 was conceived as the basis for negotiations to a full settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict by UN mediator Gunnar Jarring. His mission, which lasted until 1971, proved barren as the gulf between the Arabs and Israelis was simply too far apart. Soon after the 1967 war, at a summit held in Khartoum, Sudan, the Arab leaders decided on 3 infamous 'no's': (1) no peace with Israel, (2) no negotiations with Israel, and (3) no recognition of Israel.
- Apart from the Arabs' refusal to negotiate with Israel, the simple 'land for peace' formula was also difficult to implement as a result of the ambiguity in the resolution's wording, which elicited different interpretations of an

Israeli withdrawal. To the Arabs, this implied all of the territories, but to the Israelis, this meant only some of them. Moreover, Israel's messianic attitude to the territories made it reluctant to return land, and peace thus proved elusive.

- Nonetheless, Resolution 242 has provided the foundation for every serious attempt at peace-making from 1967. All the Arab states eventually accepted the resolution, and when doing so, they accepted Israel's right to exist, which facilitated peace between the Arab states and Israel. It was not until 1988, however, that the PLO accepted Resolution 242, and up to that point, any Israeli-Palestinian settlement proved to be elusive.

8.2 Resolution 338

- Although the superpowers had initially supported their clients during the 1973 war, in its last days, they turned to diplomacy instead. Given the developing atmosphere of *détente*, their instincts were now to manage the conflict rather than pursue victory for their clients. On 19 October, Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev invited US President Richard Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger to Moscow immediately to work out a cease-fire.
- This cease-fire arrangement was quickly concluded on 21 October, and the superpowers 'informed' Israel, Egypt, and Syria that they were no longer fighting. The next day, it was officially embodied in UNSC Resolution 338, which was jointly sponsored by both the US and USSR and was meant to serve as the basis for future negotiations for a 'just and durable' peace. It reiterated the call for a cease-fire, and its implementation in 12 hours.
- With the tide of war turning in its favour, Israel was reluctant to comply and continued its hostilities against the Egyptian army on the western bank of the Suez Canal. This sparked off a momentary crisis when the USSR began deploying its Mediterranean fleet as well as airborne divisions, and the US responded by putting all of its forces on high alert. Facing a potential conflict between the superpowers, Israel quickly fell in line and abided by Resolution 338. **[Source N]**

Source N

The Security Council

1. Calls upon all parties to the present fighting to cease all firing and terminate all military activity immediately, no later than twelve hours after the moment of the adoption of this decision, in the positions they now occupy;
2. Calls upon the parties concerned to start immediately after the cease-fire the implementation of Security Council Resolution 242 (1967), in all of its parts;
3. Decides that immediately and concurrently with the cease-fire, negotiations start between the parties concerned under appropriate auspices aimed at establishing a just and durable peace in the Middle East.

UN Security Council Resolution 338, 22 October 1973

9. American involvement in the search for an Arab-Israeli peace

- Initially, the US was more concerned with containing Soviet penetration into the Middle East than the need to forge an Arab-Israeli peace. In the aftermath of the 1973 war, US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger sought to initiate a peace process between the Arabs and Israelis, but aimed to use this to undermine the Soviet position in the region. This, however, failed to bring any conclusive end to the Arab-Israeli conflict.
- Subsequent American attempts to broker an overall Arab-Israeli settlement under President Jimmy Carter unfolded under significant changes to US strategy in the Middle East. Carter was someone genuinely on a peace mission, and sympathised with the plight of the Palestinians on humanitarian grounds. Even so, his efforts similarly did not meet with complete success. Nevertheless, on the whole, America did play a vital role in the pursuit of an Arab-Israeli peace.

9.1 Kissinger's Shuttle Diplomacy

- Kissinger did not believe that a dramatic leap from war to a comprehensive Arab-Israeli settlement was feasible. He thus sought to broker interim peace agreements through the 'Rhodes format', whereby the Israelis and Arabs would communicate via a mediator, but did not engage in direct negotiations and met only at the end of the entire process to endorse these agreements. Kissinger's 'shuttle diplomacy' represented the most famous use of the 'Rhodes format'.
- Following the war of 1973, Kissinger shuttled back and forth from Tel Aviv, Cairo and Damascus, working on a plan to disengage armies that got entangled in the last days of fighting, and initiate individual peace negotiations between Israel and its Arab neighbours. Kissinger brokered separate Egyptian-Israeli and Syrian-Israeli agreements, which then inextricably intertwined the US in the search for peace in the region, and reduced the USSR to a mere observer of events.
- However vigorous Kissinger's 'shuttle diplomacy' throughout the Middle East was, he had neglected the central issue of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and did not address the future of the Palestinians. Moreover, 'shuttle diplomacy' would not produce peace treaties based on 'land for peace'. It was the main protagonists in the Arab-Israeli conflict themselves who negotiated these face to face. Even so, US diplomacy was essential in building trust and confidence in the region.

9.2 Camp David Accords

9.2.1 Egypt's Motivations for Peace

- Having accomplished his war aims in 1973, Anwar Sadat now genuinely desired peace with Israel, Egypt's long-time adversary. His subsequent peace overtures were born from the belief that continued hostility towards Israel would only end up draining Egypt's resources and condemn its population to a life of misery, poverty and backwardness. In fact, Egypt

was already on the brink of bankruptcy when Sadat decided to embark on the Yom Kippur War.

- Moreover, Sadat had never enjoyed the popularity of his predecessor, Nasser, and had to find something that would shore up domestic support for his government: e.g. by regaining the Sinai Peninsula, which Nasser lost in the 1967 war, or obtaining substantial US economic aid (as part of a peace deal) to strengthen Egypt's civilian economy. Through these potential gains that came with peace, Sadat hoped to earn his people's devotion.

9.2.2 Israeli's Motivations for Peace

- Few observers would have guessed that Menachem Begin, the leading hawk of Israeli politics, would mark the acceleration of Middle Eastern peace rather than its demise, upon his coming to power. Although he held a deep emotional commitment to Judea and Samaria, and would not allow their transfer to non-Jewish sovereignty under any circumstances, Begin was in all respects a peacemaker who sought an end to the Arab-Israeli dispute.
- Begin's strategy for peace comprised of 'capsulating' the West Bank and with it the Palestinian problem within a backdrop of binding peace agreements between Israel and the surrounding Arab states. This, he believed, would allow the Israelis to exercise full control over 'Eretz-Israel' and deny the Palestinians the opportunity of triggering an all-Arab war against Israel in the future. The Palestinians would then have no option but negotiate.

9.2.3 The Camp David Summit

- On 20 November 1977, Sadat stunned the world by travelling to Jerusalem and making a historic address to the Israeli Knesset. Sadat's message of breaking down 'psychological barriers' between the Arabs and Israelis resonated deeply with his hosts, and generated immense goodwill. The pattern of Arab-Israeli relations would never be the same from that point

onwards. Yet, peace was not a foregone conclusion, and negotiations that followed made little real progress. **[Source O]**

Source O

...This wall constitutes a psychological barrier between us, a barrier of suspicion, a barrier of rejection, a barrier of fear, of deception, a barrier of hallucination without any action, deed or decision.

A barrier of distorted and eroded interpretation of every event and statement. It is this psychological barrier which I described in official statements as constituting 70 percent of the whole problem...

Conceive with me a peace agreement in Geneva that we would herald to a world thirsting for peace. A peace agreement based on the following points:

Ending the occupation of the Arab territories occupied in 1967.

Achievement of the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people and their right to self-determination, including their right to establish their own state.

The right of all states in the area to live in peace within their boundaries, their secure boundaries, which will be secured and guaranteed through procedures to be agreed upon, which will provide appropriate security to international boundaries in addition to appropriate international guarantees.

Commitment of all states in the region to administer the relations among them in accordance with the objectives and principles of the United Nations Charter. Particularly the principles concerning the nonuse of force and a solution of differences among them by peaceful means.

Ending the state of belligerence in the region.

Excerpts of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's speech to the Knesset, 20 November 1977

- Despairing over the limited progress made by bilateral peace negotiations between Egypt and Israel, Carter decided to bring Sadat and Begin together at Camp David to salvage the nascent Arab-Israeli peace process. Sadat and Begin's propitious first encounter thus did not decline into failure largely due to Carter's leadership and the concept of peace his administration developed – namely, the need to create a Palestinian homeland.
- The American-sponsored Camp David Summit of 5-17 September 1978 produced the following accords: (1) the normalisation of relations between Egypt and Israel in return for a complete Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula, (2) the signing of a bilateral peace treaty within 3 months, and (3) transitional arrangements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip for not more than 5 years, to provide full Palestinian autonomy for eventual self-government. **[Source P]**

Source P

...the parties are determined to reach a just, comprehensive and durable settlement of the Middle East conflict through the conclusion of peace treaties based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 in all their parts. Their purpose is to achieve peace and good neighbourly relations. They recognise that, for peace to endure, it must involve all those who have been most deeply affected by the conflict. They therefore agree that this framework is as appropriate is intended by them to constitute a basis for peace not only between Egypt and Israel, but also between Israel and each of its other neighbours which is prepared to negotiate peace with Israel on this basis...

Excerpt of the Framework for Peace signed at Camp David, 17 September 1978

- Although the 'spirit of Camp David' was widely hailed as a breakthrough for peace in the region, it was soured right from the onset as a result of differing interpretations of the transitory arrangements for the Palestinians.

Moreover, Palestinians in the occupied territories saw Camp David as the ultimate betrayal by their most powerful ally, which condemned them to eternal Israeli military occupation. This view was widely shared by the other Arab states.

- Despite condemnation from both the Arab states and the Palestinians, on 26 March 1979, Begin and Sadat signed a peace treaty in Washington. While it marked a watershed in Arab-Israeli relations, as Israel was now officially at peace with its most powerful Arab enemy, the goodwill between both sides had since dissipated. This was a cold peace, but even so, it would survive the trials and tribulations that the next two decades brought.

Pause to Think:

What role did leadership play in the search for a solution to the long and intractable Arab-Israeli conflict, and how significant was this?

10. Effectiveness of Conflict management (Diplomacy)

- The Arab-Israeli conflict, a prolonged and deeply rooted struggle, has been one of the most complex and enduring conflicts in modern history. Spanning from the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 to the Camp David Accords in 1979, this period witnessed numerous wars, skirmishes, and diplomatic efforts aimed at resolving the hostilities between the Arab nations and Israel. The effectiveness of conflict management, particularly through diplomacy, during this era is a subject of significant historical and political analysis. Diplomacy, as a tool for conflict resolution, involves negotiation, dialogue, and compromise, and its application in the Arab-Israeli conflict has been both lauded and criticized.

10.1 Diplomatic efforts during the War of Independence/Al-Naqba (1948)

- The first Arab-Israeli War was a brutal and transformative conflict. The war resulted in significant territorial changes, with Israel expanding its borders beyond the UN-proposed partition lines. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were displaced, creating a refugee crisis that persists to this day.
- Diplomatic efforts during this period were largely overshadowed by the immediate military engagements. The war ended with armistice agreements in 1949, but these agreements were not peace treaties. They established ceasefire lines, known as the Green Line, but left many issues unresolved, including the status of refugees and the final borders of Israel and a potential Palestinian state.
- No comprehensive peace was achieved, leaving deep-seated animosities and unresolved issues.

10.2 Diplomatic efforts during the Suez Crisis (1956)

- The Suez Crisis quickly drew the attention of the United States and the Soviet Union, the two superpowers of the time. Both nations had strategic interests in the Middle East and were keen to prevent the conflict from escalating into a broader war. The United States, under President Dwight D. Eisenhower, was particularly concerned about maintaining stability in the region and preventing Soviet influence from expanding. The Soviet Union, led by Nikita Khrushchev, saw an opportunity to support Egypt and bolster its position in the Arab world.
- Diplomatic efforts to resolve the Suez Crisis were swift and intense. The United States and the Soviet Union, despite their Cold War rivalry, found common ground in their opposition to the tripartite invasion. Eisenhower, in particular, was adamant that the use of force by Britain, France, and Israel was unacceptable and could destabilize the region. He pressured the

British and French governments to cease their military operations and withdraw their forces. The Soviet Union also issued stern warnings, threatening to intervene militarily if the aggression continued.

- The United Nations played a crucial role in mediating the Suez Crisis. On November 2, 1956, the UN General Assembly convened an emergency session and passed Resolution 997, calling for an immediate ceasefire, the withdrawal of foreign troops, and the reopening of the Suez Canal. The resolution also established the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF), the first-ever UN peacekeeping mission, to supervise the ceasefire and ensure the withdrawal of British, French, and Israeli forces from Egyptian territory.
- The diplomatic pressure exerted by the United States, the Soviet Union, and the United Nations ultimately led to a resolution of the Suez Crisis. By early 1957, British, French, and Israeli forces had withdrawn from Egypt, and the UNEF was deployed to monitor the ceasefire and maintain peace in the region. The Suez Canal was reopened to international shipping, and Egypt retained control of the waterway. Nasser emerged as a hero in the Arab world, having successfully defied the former colonial powers and maintained Egypt's sovereignty.
- The Suez Crisis also illustrated the significant influence of superpowers in shaping the outcomes of international conflicts. The United States and the Soviet Union, despite their ideological differences, were able to collaborate diplomatically to prevent the crisis from escalating. This cooperation highlighted the potential for superpowers to act as stabilising forces in global affairs when their interests align. It also emphasised the importance of diplomatic channels and communication between major powers in managing international crises.

10.3 Diplomatic efforts during the Six-Day Crisis (1967)

- One of the critical challenges in the effectiveness of diplomacy post-Six-Day War was the ambiguous language of UNSC Resolution 242. The resolution's call for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from "territories occupied" was deliberately vague, leading to differing interpretations by the involved parties.
- The differing interpretations of UNSC Resolution 242 have had profound implications for the peace process. For Israel, the resolution provided a basis for negotiating territorial adjustments that would ensure its security. For the Arab states, it was seen as a mandate for a full Israeli withdrawal from all occupied territories, including the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem. This fundamental disagreement has made it difficult to reach a consensus on the terms of peace, as each side has adhered to its interpretation of the resolution. The lack of a clear, mutually agreed-upon framework has led to repeated breakdowns in negotiations and has hindered efforts to achieve a comprehensive peace settlement.

10.4 Diplomatic efforts during the Yom-Kippur War (1973)

- Diplomatic efforts were instrumental in bringing about a ceasefire and ending the Yom Kippur War. The United States and the Soviet Union, the two superpowers of the time, played pivotal roles in mediating between the warring parties. The U.S., under President Richard Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, engaged in intense shuttle diplomacy, traveling between the capitals of the involved nations to negotiate a ceasefire. The Soviet Union, which had close ties with Egypt and Syria, also exerted pressure on its allies to agree to a ceasefire.
- The Yom Kippur War led to a significant shift in U.S. policy towards the Middle East. Prior to the war, the U.S. had maintained a relatively hands-off approach, providing support to Israel but not actively engaging in peace efforts. The war highlighted the volatility of the region and the potential for

superpower confrontation, prompting the U.S. to take a more active role in Middle East peace initiatives. This shift in policy was evident in the subsequent diplomatic efforts led by Henry Kissinger's "shuttle diplomacy," which aimed to broker peace agreements between Israel and its neighbours.

- One of the significant diplomatic achievements following the Yom Kippur War was the disengagement agreements between Israel and Egypt, and later between Israel and Syria. These agreements, brokered by the U.S., involved the withdrawal of Israeli forces from certain territories and the establishment of buffer zones monitored by the UN. The first disengagement agreement between Israel and Egypt was signed in January 1974, followed by a second agreement in September 1975. These agreements were crucial in reducing tensions and preventing further hostilities.
- The diplomatic efforts during and after the Yom Kippur War laid the groundwork for future peace initiatives in the Middle East. The disengagement agreements between Israel and Egypt eventually paved the way for the Camp David Accords in 1978, where Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin, with the mediation of U.S. President Jimmy Carter, signed a peace treaty. This treaty marked the first time an Arab country officially recognized Israel and established diplomatic relations, setting a precedent for future peace efforts in the region.

11. Conclusion and Food for Thought:

- In conclusion, the Arab-Israeli conflict from 1948 to 1979 was a complex and multifaceted struggle that reshaped the Middle East. It involved not only the direct participants but also global powers and regional actors, each with their own interests and agendas. The legacy of this period is still felt today, as many of the issues and grievances that emerged during these years remain unresolved.

- The conflict underscored the deep-seated historical, religious, and cultural tensions in the region, and while significant strides towards peace were made, particularly with the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty, a comprehensive and lasting resolution has yet to be achieved. The events of these three decades laid the groundwork for the ongoing quest for peace and stability in the Middle East, a quest that continues to challenge and inspire efforts towards reconciliation and coexistence.
- The crux and the kernel of the Arab-Israeli conflict is the Palestine Problem. The Arab-Israeli interstate conflict is derivative from the non-resolution of the Palestine Problem. The crux and kernel of the Palestine Problem is the struggle between two national movements: on the one hand, the Zionist movement (and, since 1948, its embodiment, Israel), and on the other, the Palestinian national movement. The crux and kernel of this struggle has been, and continues to this day to be, the issue of the control or sharing of the land of Palestine.”- *Walid Khalidi, a founder and the General Secretary of the Institute for Palestine Studies, 1991.*
- “The root cause of the conflict is the dispossession and dispersal of the Palestinian Arabs, an original sin which was compounded by Israel’s subsequent territorial acquisitions. In (Arabs’) view, Israel is an inherently aggressive and expansionist state and th real source of violence in the region.” – *The 1967 Arab-Israeli War: Origins and Consequences* (Ed. Avi Shlaim et al.)
- “Eventually we will have to reach permanent borders. But, if the Palestinians will not respond, how long can we wait? I will have then to build an internal, domestic consensus, and if all this will fail to bring the Palestinians [to reasonable positions] we will be forced to undertake unilateral steps with a wide international backing.” - *Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, 24 March 2006.*