THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

Falling from Grace: United Nations Peacemaking and Peacekeeping in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1947-1982

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Declaration

I certify that the thesis I have presented for examination for the MPhil/PhD degree of the London School of Economics and Political Science is solely my own work other than where I have clearly indicated that it is the work of others (in which case the extent of any work carried out jointly by me and any other person is clearly identified in it).

I declare that my thesis consists of 88,468 words.

Statement of Inclusion of Previous Work

I can confirm that parts of section 1 of chapter 1 were developed and included in my article on the Palestine Commission, published in *Middle Eastern Studies*, Volume 60, Issue 5 (2024).

Note on Transliteration

When choosing how to spell the names of Arabs and Israelis in English, the first choice was always to seek out an English document on which they signed their name and then use their preferred spelling. This choice, stemming from respect to these historical figures, sometimes came at the expense of transliteration rules and consistency. For example, the Egyptian foreign minister in 1956 is mentioned here as Mahmoud 'Fawzi', whereas the Egyptian chief of staff in 1967 is listed as Mohammed 'Fawzy', because this is how each of them spelled his own name in English – even though they share the same Arabic family name. If some character's preferred spelling could not be found, the selected spelling was as close as possible to the original form without overly burdening the English language reader.

Note on the Use of Nouns

Whenever this thesis refers to a nation or its nationals, for example 'Israel' or 'Israelis', it refers to the political, diplomatic, and/or military leadership of this nation or its representatives, depending on the context, rather than its public. The term 'UN' is also context-dependent but generally refers to those organs or individuals within the UN to whom the statement made applies. 'New York' is a slightly different term but also context-dependent, referring specifically to those UN organs who operate from the headquarters: the Secretariat, Security Council, and/or the General Assembly.

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Abstract

This PhD thesis examines United Nations (UN) peacemaking and peacekeeping efforts in the Arab-Israeli conflict between 1947 and 1982. It explores the goals and strategies employed by the UN, their efficacy, and the belligerents' response to them, in what could be best described as a slow yet steady fall from grace. In 1947 the General Assembly adopted the partition plan with the intention to create one Jewish and one Arab state in historical Palestine. However, a failure to implement this plan left the Arab-Israeli conflict hanging. By the end of 1982, the UN's ongoing failure in mediating the Arab-Israeli conflict stripped it of its mediatory and peacekeeping prominence. Drawing upon an extensive range of primary sources in Arabic, Hebrew, and English, this PhD thesis advances four interconnected arguments: First, while many dominant powers in New York always seemingly favoured a 'just and lasting peace', this was often not the priority of Arabs and Israelis. Second, Arabs and Israelis cooperated with UN decisions voluntarily when it suited their interests, or when coerced by the international community. Third, UN practices that always failed were the appointment of underequipped UN envoys, the reliance on short-term condemnations, and on peacekeeping forces. Fourth, UN tactics that did work included the use of UN observers and the imposition of ceasefires. This thesis also shows that one seemingly basic technique that the UN never tried in the examined period was to attach Arab and Israeli advisers to peacemaking and peacekeeping missions, plausibly due to the assumption that unbiased mediators must be outsiders. Overall, this study demonstrates that in some cases, such as the Palestine Commission and the Lebanese government in 1982, military power did not necessarily correlate to historical significance.

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always cherish you for being my sanctuary near and far, for helping me enjoy the good and overcome the bad, and for having taught me the meaning of love.

Abbreviations

ADF – Arab Deterrent Force.

DMZ – Demilitarised Zone.

EIMAC – Egyptian-Israeli Mixed Armistice Commission.

ISMAC – Israeli-Syrian Mixed Armistice Commission.

MAC – Mixed Armistice Commission.

MFO – Multinational Force and Observers in Sinai.

PCC – Palestine Conciliation Commission.

PLO – Palestine Liberation Organisation.

UN – United Nations.

UNDOF – United Nations Disengagement Observer Force.

UNEF – United Nations Emergency Force.

UNEF II – Second United Nations Emergency Force.

UNIFIL – United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon.

UNSCOP – United Nations Special Committee on Palestine.

UNTSO - United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation.

Introduction

After the victory of the Entente in World War I, the Ottoman Empire's centuries-old rule over historical Palestine ended. The Treaty of Versailles, which addressed Germany's responsibilities toward the victors, also provided for the creation of the League of Nations, an international apparatus that would prevent violence through diplomacy and negotiations, and retrospectively would serve as the precursor to the UN. The League of Nations' Covenant Article 22 proposed that 'Certain communities formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire' should be placed under an international mandate until they could become independent. Based on Article 22, as well as understandings between the Great War's victors, historical Palestine was placed under a British mandate that would eventually last until 1948.[1] Throughout the mandate years, London and its agents were forced to reconcile the conflicting national aspirations of the two peoples now inhabiting the land. The Zionists, most of whom were refugees and immigrants, sought to establish a Jewish sovereign state in Palestine, to shelter Jews who suffered from antisemitism, and to fulfil the Jewish religious-historical connection with this territory. On the other hand, the native Arab population demanded sovereignty over the land, either by joining a larger Arab state such as 'Greater Syria' or by establishing an independent Palestinian state, with the latter idea gaining momentum most notably in the 1930s and 1940s. Both Jews and Arabs challenged the mandatory authority in Palestine, while also perpetrating violence against each other.[2]

By the end of World War II, a new order entered place both locally and internationally. In Palestine, Britain despaired of its failed attempts to reconcile the conflicting national aspirations of Zionists and Palestinian Arabs.[3] Meanwhile on the international scene, the League of Nations was dissolved following its failure to prevent World War II. However, the victors did not forsake the vision of an international organisation, on the contrary; they established the UN, which was meant to be a more effective and inclusive international organisation than its predecessor.[4] The 1945 UN Charter stated that the main purpose of the organisation was to 'unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that

[1] Gregory Harms and Todd M. Ferry, *The Palestine-Israel Conflict* (Pluto Press, 2008), 65–86; Eugene L. Rogan, *The Fall of the Ottomans* (Basic Books, 2015), 385–406.
[2] For both perspectives, see: Efraim Karsh, ed., *Israel* (Frank Cass, 2000); Rashid Khalidi, *The Iron Cage* (Beacon Press, 2006).
[3] Martin Jones, *Failure in Palestine* (Bloomsbury Academics, 2016).
[4] F. S. Northedge, *The League of Nations* (Holmes & Meier, 1986), 278–92.

armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples'.[5]

The fates of the UN and the Arab-Israeli conflict ultimately intertwined in 1947 when Britain, anxious to cut down on expenses abroad following the financial damages of World War II and unwilling to risk further animosities with either the Arab world or Zionist Jewry, decided to pass the question of Palestine over to the fledgling UN without recommendations.[6] The international organisation appointed the United Nations Special Commission on Palestine (UNSCOP) to review the causes for the conflict and recommend a solution. Following several months of enquiry, UNSCOP's majority proposal was to partition Palestine into two states, one Jewish and one Arab.[7] The General Assembly adopted UNSCOP's partition plan on 29 November 1947 through its Resolution 181. The 22-page long document entailed the creation of the two nation states, one Jewish and one Arab, with Jerusalem placed under an international regime. A UN preparatory commission, later to be known as the 'Palestine Commission', was to ensure an orderly transfer of power from the mandate to the new countries. Each state was meant to feature its own government, militia, and democratic elections. The two were also to be joined in an economic union, overseen by an economic commission.[8] The adoption of Resolution 181 serves as the starting point for this thesis.

Topic, Research Questions, and Arguments

This thesis examines UN peacemaking and peacekeeping in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Given this choice of topic, it would be useful to begin by defining what 'peacemaking' and 'peacekeeping' are. Since this work aims to understand these concepts through the lens of the historical agents, it would have been ideal to simply rely here on some official UN definitions for peacemaking and peacekeeping, dating back to around 1947 when the UN preoccupation with the conflict began. However, in practice these concepts have proved much more elusive. As Higgins pointed out in her book on UN peacekeeping missions in the Middle East, 'The concept of "peacekeeping" is open to a variety of definitions, and it has been used in several ways by different persons writing on the subject'.[9] An official UN booklet about peacekeeping, published as late as 2008, noted that it set out to retrospectively define the

[5] *Yearbook of the United Nations (1946-1947)* (UN Department of Public Information, 1947), 831.
[6] Elad Ben-Dror, *The Road to Partition [הדרך לכ"ט בנובמבר]* (Yad Yitzhak Ben Zvi, 2019), 17–29.
[7] Ben-Dror, *The Road*.
[8] General Assembly Resolution A/RES/181(II), 29 November 1947, the United Nations Digital Library (UNDL).
[9] Rosalyn Higgins, *United Nations Peacekeeping: Documents and Commentary: Volume I: The Middle East*, with Royal Institute of International Affairs (Oxford University Press, 1969), ix.

terminology of this field after many decades during which 'the conduct of UN peacekeeping operations has been guided by a largely unwritten body of principles'.[10] The same goes for peacemaking; the terminology of peacemaking and peacekeeping evolved on the go and usually after the fact. A textual search on the UN yearbooks revealed that these documents only incorporated the terms 'peacemaking' and 'peacekeeping' into their lingo around 1968. To make matters even more complex, as the years went by an abundance of similar yet unidentical terms evolved to describe the nuances of the conduct of peace: as the abovementioned UN booklet notes, 'the boundaries between conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and peace enforcement have become increasingly blurred'.[11] With these caveats in mind, the booklet notes that peacemaking 'generally includes measures to address conflicts in progress and usually involves diplomatic action to bring hostile parties to a negotiated agreement'.[12] Peacekeeping meanwhile is 'a technique designed to preserve the peace, however fragile, where fighting has been halted, and to assist in implementing agreements achieved by the peacemakers'.[13] For the purpose of this thesis, suffice to deduce from the above that peacekeeping is the effort to prevent future Arab-Israeli escalations into war, and/or to extinguish such conflagrations after they had erupted. Peacemaking is the attempt to permanently resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict, by promoting a viable settlement between the belligerents. Peacekeeping and peacemaking are two complementary efforts; put simply, the former is reactive and 'prevents the bad', while the latter is proactive and 'promotes the good'. Both terms are consciously applied here in retrospect, even to peacekeeping and peacemaking operations that were not necessarily described using this terminology in real time.

Another clarification in order is about the UN itself. As is demonstrated throughout this work, the international organisation is by no means homogenous or monolithic. First, many of its organs such as the Security Council or General Assembly are no more than a hub for different state representatives, each of them debating to ensure the private interests of their respective country. These delegates might form agreements with their peers and even pass resolutions unanimously, but they by no means answer to the same masters. Member states are also not equal in their UN influence; major powers such as the United States or the Soviet Union inherently carry more weight in various UN processes and benefit from unique powers in some organs, such as the Security Council where they have a permanent seat and veto rights in substantive votes. Second, the UN organs are occupied by two distinct types of

[10] Jean-Marie Guéhenno, ed., *United Nations Peacekeeping Operations* (United Nations, 2008), 8.
[11] Guéhenno, *UN Peacekeeping Operations*, 18.
[12] Guéhenno, *UN Peacekeeping Operations*, 17.
[13] Guéhenno, *UN Peacekeeping Operations*, 18.

officials: the first are the abovementioned state representatives, and the others are UN officials who are paid by the international organisations and expected to represent its interests, as opposed to the interests of any individual member state. The agenda and methods of UN official often differ from those of the member states. Third, different UN organs often operate independently and separately from one another; for example, during the very same crisis the General Assembly might adopt resolutions that greatly diverge from the Security Council counterparts. These gaps stem from the fact that each UN organ houses different member states and/or UN officials and thus is dominated by different political powers and considerations. Taken together, these three layers of heterogeneity generate many internal disagreements and inconsistencies in UN conduct, and the organisation is not a diplomatic actor *per se* as organised and hierarchical states are. Thus, when terms like the 'UN' or 'New York' are used throughout this work they consciously refer to various independent organs loosely grouped together, and not to any hierarchical or monolithic organisation. Some parts of this work highlight disharmonies between UN organs that inhibited UN response to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Four main research questions are explored in this thesis. The first pertains to the UN's goals: what were the peacemaking and peacekeeping missions that the relevant UN organs set for themselves vis-à-vis the Arab-Israeli conflict in the periods examined? Exploring how the UN organs articulated their own agenda in the Middle East is a natural starting point, because their aspirations serve to contextualise their Middle Eastern activity. The second question relates to the UN's actions: upon selecting their peacemaking and peacekeeping goals, what strategies were employed by the UN organs to achieve them? If the former question touched on the UN organs' theoretical aspirations, this question delves into how the UN organs interacted with the conflict in practice. The third question ties the former two and concerns the issue of effectiveness: to what extent were the chosen peacemaking and peacekeeping strategies useful in securing the pronounced goals, and why? By evaluating New York's effectiveness, one can draw not only historical conclusions regarding the role played by the UN throughout the conflict but also yield contemporary insight as to how future peacemakers and peacekeepers could perform better by avoiding the mistakes of their predecessors. While social scientists developed academic criteria to determine what constitutes 'effective' peacekeeping and/or peacemaking,[14] this work adheres to historical methodology by evaluating the effectiveness of UN actions according to the standards posited by the historical actors themselves. For example: if Security

[14] On this, see: Jessica Di Salvatore and Andrea Ruggeri, 'Effectiveness of Peacekeeping Operations', in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*, 2017, https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.586.

Council Resolution 242 defined the mission of UN Mediator Gunnar Jarring as to 'promote agreement and assist efforts to achieve a peaceful and accepted settlement' between the parties,[15] to what extent did Jarring ultimately fulfil this mission and why? The fourth question relates to the belligerents' reaction: were the Israelis and Arabs resistant or receptive to UN peacemaking and peacekeeping activity at each stage, and why? Scrutinising belligerent cooperation with the UN is another means to review UN effectiveness by exploring whether UN efforts were even realistic and/or desirable in the eyes of the locals. It is also a means to understand structural and ideological obstacles that prevented Arab-Israeli peace in the period discussed, many of which remain relevant even today.

The main argument that stands at the centre of this thesis is that from 1947 to 1982, the process of UN peacemaking and peacekeeping in the Arab-Israeli context can be best described as a slow yet steady fall from grace. During the formative decades in which the Arab-Israeli conflict galvanised, the UN organs took various steps to prevent wars and promote peace between the belligerents, but to no avail. UN policy failed to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict, and sometimes even unintentionally exacerbated it such as with the adoption of the partition plan in 1947 or the rushed withdrawal of the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) in 1967. The long-lasting impasse ultimately eroded the credibility and relevance of the UN organs as reliable peacemakers and peacekeepers. Consequently, the belligerents came to favour non-UN avenues for their diplomacy. Both Arabs and Israelis eventually came to rely more on Washington than on New York; around 1971-1972 the UN lost its capacity to mediate the Arab-Israeli conflict as a peacemaker, and by 1981-1982 its peacekeeping monopoly was also broken.

It would also be useful to address each of the four research questions separately. On the first question which concerns the UN's goals, the UN agenda in the Middle East was highly dynamic between 1947 and 1982. The first aspect of this dynamism revolves around the scope of UN aspirations; sometimes New York sought to promote no less than a full and comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace, whereas at other times it aimed for a modest goal such as striking a short-term ceasefire between two warring parties. UN goals were also dynamic in that New York's attention span for the Arab-Israeli conflict greatly diverged; in some periods, most notably in earlier years, it was one of the most important topics on the UN agenda, but over time New York's interest in the Middle Eastern problem decreased significantly. It is noteworthy that there was not necessarily a correlation between the scope of the goals set and the degree of UN preoccupation; in fact, sometimes it was precisely when the UN

[15] Security Council Resolution S/RES/242, 22 November 1967, UNDL.

was least preoccupied with the Middle East that its personnel more frequently made bombastic and general statements about the need to completely resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict. This thesis highlights the fluidity of both UN aspirations and UN preoccupation with the Middle Eastern problem.

As for the UN's actions, throughout the years the Arab-Israeli conflict served as a testing ground for UN peacemaking and peacekeeping tools. These included, *inter alia*, the appointment of mediators, UN observers, and peacekeeping forces, as well as the adoption of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. Like in the case of goals, UN activity vis-à-vis the Arab-Israeli conflict greatly diverged throughout the years examined. It will be shown through this work that at least in some cases, New York chose minimalistic actions that served more to disengage from the Arab-Israeli conflict than to resolve it.

Regarding effectiveness, some forms of UN intervention were often helpful, such as the use of UN observers and the issuance of Security Council ceasefire resolutions. However, a second group of steps always proved ineffective, like the appointment of underequipped UN envoys and the establishment of peacekeeping forces. Even though these ineffective strategies repeatedly failed to produce their intended results, they were employed over and over and became staples of UN policy in the region.

And in relation to the belligerents' reaction, any successful UN policy necessitated the cooperation of the belligerents, whether voluntary or coerced. Israelis and Arabs oftentimes disagreed with UN organs on what actions would be just or desirable, and when New York did not bother to convince or coerce them to align themselves with UN policy they undermined and resisted it, greatly damaging its efficacy.

Methodology and Sources

By virtue, an investigation of UN peacemaking and peacekeeping in the Arab-Israeli conflict entails the scrutiny of many parties and players. It is the story of the UN organs, whose actions stand at the centre of this work; it is the story of Arabs and Israelis, whose conflict invited the UN intervention and whose activity influenced and was influenced by New York; it is the story of the Superpowers, who interacted with the conflict unilaterally while also navigating much of the UN activity; and it is the story of other UN member states. Therefore, one of the first questions that arose in the process of writing this thesis naturally was: who is its protagonist? As more thoroughly outlined under

'Historiography', most past scholars who grappled with this question decided to select one or few of the parties involved – UN, Arabs, Israelis, Superpowers, or others – and focused on these powers in themes and sources. By contrast, this thesis offers a different outlook altogether; while it focuses on the story of UN peacemaking and peacekeeping in the Arab-Israeli context, it refuses to rely solely on the assumptions, themes, and/or sources of any one party involved. Instead, it situates itself on the nexus of UN, Arab, and Israeli interests. This triangular approach allows one to uncover the fascinating 'in-betweens': the disagreements, misunderstandings, and deliberate disinformation that existed between all sides, inhibiting UN policies and Arab-Israeli peace in the years examined. By highlighting the multilateral contradictions, one can account for some of the 'messier' and understudied aspects of the conflict, for example: why some UN policies paid off, even though every belligerent wanted them or cooperated with them for very different reasons. This approach also highlights the significance of some formerly unexplored UN episodes, such as the 1948 Palestine Commission project, the 1970-1973 Egyptian UN activity, or the Lebanese government's prominence in the 1978 creation of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

This methodology, aiming to break away from national or international historiographies to investigate the conflict itself, is naturally tied to the selection of sources. To date, much of the mainstream research on the Arab-Israeli conflict in general and UN peacemaking and peacekeeping in particular relies fully or almost exclusively on those sources available in European languages. Repositories originally produced in Hebrew find their way into this scholarship to some extent, thanks to the fact that primary and secondary Israeli materials are sometimes translated into other languages. However, these translated manuscripts are often abbreviated and/or altered, and numerous other sources remain available only in Hebrew. An even worse situation arises in relation to Arabic sources, which are usually not translated at all and are thus completely omitted. This thesis therefore aims to harness the full potential of sources in all relevant languages – mostly Hebrew, Arabic, and English – to reveal fascinating yet unexplored facets of the Arab-Israeli conflict and its UN intervention. The underlying assumption here is that unlike histories that focus on a relatively narrow perspective, the art of conflict research is the ability to untangle national myths from all sides, by scrutinising all sides; it is about finding as many narratives, figures, and claims as possible – under the humble assumption that the truth, if one can even find it, is somewhere in the middle.

Thesis Structure

This thesis includes five chapters, each dedicated to one major Arab-Israeli war. These moments of explosion were initially chosen as the anchors guiding this work, on the supposition that active wars would represent the most interesting and relevant moments in the conduct of peacemaking and peacekeeping. However, this assumption was later revealed to be inaccurate; in fact, times of buildup or the aftermath of wars often proved to be more insightful and fascinating than when the guns were blazing. Therefore, for the sake of clarity and order the chapters are still organised around the wars; nevertheless, many sections delve more into the 'befores and the afters' than into the conflicts themselves. Additionally, those moments when the UN organs were inactive or sidelined were examined as deeply as the moments of UN prominence; this is because it is important to delve not only into success but also into failure to fully understand the motivations behind and the efficacy of UN action. Scrutinising these periods when non-UN action was favoured by various participants sheds light on motivations they had not to cooperate with the UN, and more broadly on the reasons for the gradual erosion in the UN's role in the conflict.

The first chapter is dedicated to the 1948 Israeli War of Independence/Palestinian Nakba. Thematically, it highlights the dynamism in both UN goals and actions between November 1947 when the war started and July 1949 when the last Arab-Israeli armistice was signed. It primarily discusses the often-forgotten episode of the Palestine Commission, tasked with to implementing Resolution 181; the brokerage and two truces of the first UN-appointed mediator in the Arab-Israeli conflict, Count Folke Bernadotte; Bernadotte's assassination and Ralph Bunche's takeover as acting mediator; the Rhodes negotiations; and the signing of the armistice agreements that concluded the war.

The second chapter focuses on the 1956 Israeli Sinai Campaign against Egypt, which took place within the broader context of the Suez Crisis. It contextualises the UN response to the crisis by discussing New York's gradual disengagement from the conflict after the 1948 War, the return of international attention to the Middle East following the Suez Crisis, the initial and universal reluctance to raise the Suez Crisis in the UN forums, and the eventual convergence of the Suez Crisis with the Arab-Israeli conflict following the joint attack of Britain, France, and Israel against Egypt, which finally led to intensive UN treatment of the crisis. The chapter ends with the UN postwar arrangements, which focused more on restoring activity in the Suez Canal than on resolving Arab-Israeli grievances.

The third chapter delves into the 1967 Six Day War. It begins with an analysis of the UN organs' activity in the Middle East in the early 1960s, as well as the obstacles to the failing armistice

regime. After discussing the marginalisation and eventual withdrawal of the UN branches in the Middle East, the chapter progresses into the Six Day War itself, when the New York organs finally entered the fold; by now, their counterparts in the Middle East could no longer feed them reliable and up-to-date information, which rendered the UN largely immaterial throughout the war. The chapter concludes with the postwar period, when the Security Council eventually adopted Resolution 242, albeit without significantly changing the reality in the Middle East.

The fourth chapter revolves around the 1973 October War. Here the thesis focuses on three main opportunities that arose after 1967 for a potential Arab-Israeli peace settlement: the first is the mission of Gunnar Jarring, the Swedish ambassador to Moscow and a UN-appointed mediator to the Arab-Israeli conflict. The second is Anwar Sadat's ascension to the Egyptian presidency, and Cairo's diplomacy though the UN and the United States to seek an agreement with Israel. The third is the UN discussions that immediately preceded the war and failed to produce any kind of progress. The chapter ends with an analysis of the war itself, the inability of the UN to prevent and stop it, and the resulting 'downgrade' of the UN institutions from mediators in the Arab-Israeli conflict to facilitators, as was evident in the role assigned to the UN in the subsequent Geneva conference.

The fifth chapter deals with the 1982 Lebanon War. It starts by exploring the notion of a UN force for Southern Lebanon, which existed in Lebanese, American, and even Israeli discourse long before the official decision to establish UNIFIL in March 1978. The chapter then moves on to discuss and account for the failure of UNIFIL's peacekeeping in Southern Lebanon until May 1982. And eventually, the chapter discusses the Israeli invasion into Lebanon in June 1982 and the decision to set up a non-UN multinational force under American auspices, heralding the loss of the last UN monopoly in the Middle East over peacekeeping operations.

Literature Review

While scholarly literature on the UN's role in the Arab-Israeli conflict is abundant, it is also highly fragmented. It would be useful to begin by introducing the four main genres that deal with the topic directly or tangentially: national histories, international histories, biographies, and UN histories.

National histories are works primarily engaged with the history of the Israeli and Arab belligerents. These writings focus on their nations of choice both in themes and sources and are often written by scholars who are Israeli or Arab themselves, thus making them fluent in local languages and

sensitive to local mentalities. National histories help account for the intended and accidental impact that UN action has on the Arab-Israeli conflict. For example, Mousa explained how Bernadotte hoped to use his first truce to secure an Arab-Israeli peace settlement, but the parties merely used it as a tactical respite to regroup and rearm, with the balance of power ultimately shifting in favour of the Zionists.[16] Moreover, national histories offer domestic or interstate explanations to account for the belligerents' willingness or reluctance to reciprocate UN initiatives. For example, Shakib explained that Egypt entered the Rhodes Negotiations at the end of the 1948 War seeking purely military negotiations; it was still unwilling to recognise Israel or to conclude full peace, and that is what failed Bunche's efforts to push the negotiations further than a mere armistice.[17] National histories also sometimes boast an author with intimate knowledge and unique access to the topic. For example, the abovementioned Shakib was both a scholar and a retired major-general in the Egyptian army, which granted him access to unpublished and classified documents from the Egyptian Armed Forces and the Senate concerning Egypt's attitude toward the UN.[18] As for the weaknesses of national histories, because their authors often confine themselves thematically and methodologically to their countries/organisations of interest, their analysis usually excludes the more international aspects of UN policies surrounding the Arab-Israeli conflict. Additionally, because many national histories were written by people who hail from or feel a personal connection to one side of the conflict, and because they emphasise one of the parties thematically and in sources, they are often highly unbalanced in their account.

International histories are histories that focus on international politics and the Superpowers, most notably the United States and the Soviet Union. These works are usually attentive to the context of the Cold War and the global alliances and rivalries that informed Superpower policy in the UN, and by extension in the Arab-Israeli conflict. A main component here is the UN forums, namely the Security Council and General Assembly, which served as an arena of struggle where the Superpowers and their respective allies promoted their conflicting visions for the Middle East. The United States and the West typically sided with Israel, whereas the Soviet Union, the Communist bloc, and the Muslim countries usually supported the Arabs. Both parties attempted to produce General Assembly and Security Council resolutions that would benefit their preferred side, while blocking resolutions favourable to the other; the Middle Eastern conflict was thus extended to the UN and global sphere.

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[16] Suleiman Mousa, *Days Unforgotten* [أيام لا تنسى] (The Jordanian Armed Forces Press, 1997), 339–80.
[17] Ibrahim Shakib, *The 1948 Palestine War* [حرب فلسطين، ١٩٤٨] (al-Zahraa for Arab Press, 1986).
[18] Shakib, *The 1948 War*.

International histories contribute to the field by dissecting the balance of power that led to the adoption of various UN resolutions. For example, Ashton's work explained that in 1967 Britain was able to push its Arab-Israeli agenda and eventually produce Resolution 242 because it was considered a less biased arbiter than the United States and because it had a relatively large manoeuvring space.[19] Similarly, Gelber's article, also on Resolution 242, explained how the Superpower deadlock in 1967 led to the vague wording of the resolution.[20] A main shortcoming of international histories is that, while they provide invaluable information on the Superpower activity within the UN forums, they tend to neglect the treatment of other UN organs. Moreover, international histories emphasise the polemical nature of the UN and the traditional Cold War alliances; however, the UN involvement in the Arab-Israeli conflict sometimes does not fit into these traditional pattern. For example, Schulze pointed out how a convergence of domestic and foreign American interests drove Washington in 1956 to team up with the Soviets in the Security Council against its own allies, and to force the evacuation of the Anglo-French-Israeli forces out of Egypt in the 1956 Suez Crisis.[21]

Biographies are academic works that discuss the personal and/or professional life of an individual who was involved in UN peacemaking and peacekeeping in the Arab-Israeli context. They vary in their scope; some begin as early as the person's childhood and upbringing, while others are specifically dedicated to the protagonist's involvement in the conflict. Biographies are useful in that they incorporate a diverse corpus of materials produced by the person in question. For example, Ben-Dror delineated Bunche's significance in 1948-1949 by using Bunche's personal documents such as private papers and diary, on top of official UN records.[22] Biographies are also helpful in that they often provide input into the values and history of their protagonists beyond just their immediate preoccupation with the conflict, thus serving to contextualise their behaviours. One example is Zacher's book on UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, which delved into Hammarskjöld's worldview and the way it informed his diplomatic activity.[23] The main flaw of biographies is that their authors often exaggerate or even glorify the role of their protagonist to make their work more appealing or out of genuine appreciation for the person in question. This sympathy could potentially lead to a

[19] Nigel J. Ashton, 'Searching for a Long and Lasting Peace?', *The International History Review* 38, no. 1 (2016): 24–44.
[20] Yoav Gelber, 'The Road to UN Resolution 242 [242 הדרך להחלטת האו"ם]', *Israel 1967-1977*, 2017, 432–59.
[21] Kirsten E. Schulze, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Routledge, 2017), 31–32.
[22] Elad Ben-Dror, *Ralph Bunche and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: Mediation and the UN, 1947-1949* (Routledge, 2019).
[23] Mark W. Zacher, *Dag Hammarskjöld's United Nations* (Columbia University Press, 1970).

biased description of history, which overstates the role and the good character of that individual at the expense of other important characters and events.

And finally, UN histories are works that specifically focus on UN peacemaking and peacekeeping in the Arab-Israeli conflict, both in themes and in sources; these will be reviewed with relation to each of the periods discussed in this thesis. Starting with the 1948 War, it was near impossible to locate a UN history dedicated to its earlier stage, namely the Palestinian-Zionist civil war until May 1948. Hamdan and Bailey each briefly noted that after the adoption of Resolution 181, the Palestine Commission established by it attempted to facilitate the creation of the Zionist and Arab-Palestinian states, but to no avail. Meanwhile, neither the Security Council nor the Superpowers did a great deal to halt the escalating violence in Palestine.[24] The second stage of the war, between Israel and the Arab states, is more thoroughly scrutinised. Seemingly the most popular topics in this period have been Bernadotte and Bunche, the two UN mediators who engaged in peacemaking and peacekeeping throughout the war. Ilan dedicated a full biography to Bernadotte's Middle Eastern mission,[25] Ben-Dror did the same for Bunche,[26] and other scholars such as Touval, Caplan, and Rosenne engaged with the mediators' conduct on a smaller scale.[27] The aftermath of the war was also covered by Caplan, Forsythe, and to a lesser extent Touval who examined the Palestine Conciliation Commission (PCC) and the postwar efforts to secure Arab-Israeli peace.[28]

There is little research available on the UN involvement around the Suez Crisis, and most of it is more about the Anglo-French-Egyptian component of the conflict than about its Israeli-Egyptian aspect, known as the Sinai Campaign. One important exception is Theobald's thesis, which examined the role and difficulties of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO), which supervised the Arab-Israeli armistices, between 1949 and 1956. Theobald also succinctly mentioned UNTSO's perilous position during the Sinai Campaign itself.[29] Like Bernadotte and Bunche before him, Hammarskjöld received great scholarly attention as the main UN official to mediate the Arab-Israeli conflict before, during, and after the Suez Crisis. Lash and Urquhart dedicated hefty bits of their

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[24] Zuhair Mohammed Hamdan, 'A Study of the Arab-Israeli Conflict in the United Nations' (The Union for Experimenting Colleges and Universities, 1976), 112–20; Sydney D. Bailey, *Four Arab-Israeli Wars and the Peace Process* (Palgrave Macmillan, 1990), 1–19.
[25] Amitzur Ilan, *Bernadotte in Palestine, 1948* (Palgrave Macmillan, 1989).
[26] Ben-Dror, *Ralph Bunche and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*.
[27] For example: Saadia Touval, *The Peace Brokers* (Princeton University Press, 1982), 24–75; Neil Caplan, *Futile Diplomacy* (Frank Cass, 1983), 3: 17–56; Shabtai Rosenne, 'Bunche at Rhodes', in *Ralph Bunche: The Man and His Times*, ed. Benjamin Rivlin (Holmes & Meier, 1990).
[28] David P. Forsythe, *United Nations Peacemaking*, with Middle East Institute (Washington, D.C.) (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972); Touval, *Peace Brokers*, 76–105; Caplan, *Futile*, 3: 162–211; Neil Caplan, *The Lausanne Conference, 1949* (Tel Aviv University, 1993).
[29] Andrew Gregory Theobald, 'Watching the War and Keeping the Peace' (PhD diss., Queen's University, 2009).

biographies on Hammarskjöld to this topic.[30] Apart from these works, it was mostly national and international histories that covered state diplomacy inside and outside the UN throughout the crisis. Noteworthy works here are Bassiouni's book and al-Naggar's article on the Egyptian perspective,[31] Morris's book on Israel;[32] Kyle, Fry, Lyon, Miller, and Johnson on Britain and the Commonwealth;[33] and Oren on several local and international parties to the crisis.[34]

The 1967 War generated great scholarly attention, although a systemic analysis of the UN role is largely absent. One exception is Lall's book, covering UN peacemaking and peacekeeping throughout the war and across the UN organs.[35] Even if useful, Lall's book is limited in perspective because it was written immediately after the fact, relies almost exclusively on official UN documents, and does not delve deep enough into the background to and the aftermath of the war. Apart from this UN history, some UN activities were examined in other genres. The national histories of Shlaim, Parker, and Gat emphasised how the rushed withdrawal of UNEF from Sinai inadvertently exacerbated the Arab-Israeli escalation in May, which eventually culminated in war.[36] International histories such as those of Ashton and Gelber primarily focused on the background to and the impact of Resolution 242, adopted by the Security Council in the aftermath of the war as a basis for future Arab-Israeli peace.[37]

UN histories on the 1973 War touched mostly on the times before and after the conflict. The works of Waage and Mørk, as well as one of Touval's chapters, focused on the mission of Gunnar Jarring, the UN-appointed mediator that pursued Arab-Israeli peace in the years 1967-1972.[38] Stein on the other hand dedicated a chapter to the UN-sponsored Geneva conference held after the war, in an

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[30] Joseph P. Lash, *Dag Hammarskjold* (Greenwood Press, 1961), 66–111; Brian Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld* (Norton, 1994), 132–230.

[31] Salah Bassiouni, *Egypt and the Suez Crisis [مصر وأزمة السويس]* (Dar al-Ma'aref, 1970); Abdallah abd al-Ati al-Naggar, 'The Suez Crisis and the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 [1956 أزمة السويس وثورة المجر]', *Journal of Historical Facts* 31 [مجلة الوقائع التاريخية], no. 1 (2019): 313–45.

[32] Benny Morris, *Israel's Border Wars, 1949-1956* (Oxford University Press, 1993).

[33] Keith Kyle, *Suez* (St. Martin's Press, 1991); Michael G. Fry, 'Canada, the North Atlantic Triangle, and the United Nations', in *Suez 1956*, ed. Roger Lewis and Roger Owen (Oxford University Press, 1991); Peter Lyon, 'The Commonwealth and the Suez Crisis', in *Suez 1956*, ed. Roger Louis and Roger Owen (Oxford University Press, 1991); J. D. B. Miller, 'Australia and the Crisis', in *Suez 1956*, ed. Roger Louis and Roger Owen (Oxford University Press, 1991); Edward Johnson, '"The Umpire on Whom the Sun Never Sets"', *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 8, no. 1 (1997): 249–78; Edward Johnson, 'The Suez Crisis in the United Nations', in *Reassessing Suez 1956*, ed. Simon C. Smith (Routledge, 2008); Charlotte Peevers, 'Conducting International Authority', *London Review of International Law* 1, no. 1 (2013): 131–40.

[34] Michael B. Oren, *Origins of the Second Arab-Israel War* (Frank Cass, 1992).

[35] Arthur S. Lall, *The UN and the Middle East Crisis, 1967* (Columbia University Press, 1968).

[36] Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall* (Penguin, 2001), 252–53; Richard B. Parker, ed., *The October War: A Retrospective* (University Press of Florida, 2001), 74–77; Moshe Gat, 'Nasser and the Six Day War', *Israel Affairs* 11, no. 4 (2005): 608–35.

[37] Ashton, 'Searching'; Gelber, 'The Road'.

[38] Touval, *Peace Brokers*, 134–64; Hulda K. Mørk, 'The Jarring Mission' (University of Oslo, 2007); Hilde Henriksen Waage and Hulda Kjeang Mørk, 'Mission Impossible', *The International History Review* 38, no. 4 (2016): 830–53.

effort to permanently resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict.[39] With the exception of Pogany's chapter on the Security Council,[40] little was written about the UN organs' activity during the war. Furthermore, it was impossible to locate thorough research that tied the prewar, war, and postwar periods into a single analysis. Meanwhile, national and international histories like those produced by Gelber and Quandt mostly focused on American mediation in the Arab-Israeli conflict, rather than on its UN counterpart, before and after the war.[41]

UN activity around the time of the 1982 War mostly preoccupied scholars in the context of the UNIFIL, which was stationed in Southern Lebanon since before Israel's invasion in 1982. This literature explores UNIFIL's mission, as well as the structural and belligerent obstacles to its work.[42] Pogany's book on the Security Council and the Arab-Israeli conflict included a chapter on the Security Council's conduct in 1982, relying mostly on UN documents.[43] But apart from these works on specific UN organs, it was impossible to locate a work that analysed the activity of the UN organs around the year 1982 more holistically.

Overall, UN histories on the Arab-Israeli conflict have been incomplete and fragmented. Some stages and aspects of UN diplomacy were thoroughly scrutinised, while others were either understudied or wholly omitted. Considering the strengths and weakness of the works mentioned above, it can be concluded that this thesis is innovative in three main fields: theme, sources, and chronology. Thematically, unlike existing scholarship that often confines itself to deal with one or several belligerents, the Superpowers, and/or a single UN organ – this work brings out the contradictory efforts, narratives, and perceptions to tell the story of the conflict itself. Regarding sources, this work is innovative in that it relies on repositories produced by all parties involved, with emphasis on the understudied sources available in Arabic. Chronologically, this work is novel in that it explores the neglected episodes and aspects of UN history within the Arab-Israeli conflict, such as the early stages of the 1948 War or the wartime of 1973, to deliver a more wholesome analysis than before. Another chronological benefit lies in the fact that this work was written in the 2020s, which meant it was easier to access new and/or previously unavailable primary and secondary materials from all parties; the internet proved especially useful in locating an invaluable wealth of manuscripts,

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[39] Kenneth W. Stein, *Heroic Diplomacy* (Routledge, 1999), 117–45.
[40] Istvan S. Pogany, *The Security Council and the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Gower, 1984), 115–48.
[41] William B. Quandt, *Peace Process* (Brookings Institute Press, 2005), 55–176; Yoav Gelber, *Hubris [הדוב]* (Kinneret, Zmora, Dvir Publishing House, 2021), 97–190.
[42] For example: Alan James, 'Painful Peacekeeping', *International Journal: Canada's Journal of Global Policy Analysis* 38, no. 4 (1983): 613–34; Nathan A. Pelcovits, *Peacekeeping on Arab-Israeli Fronts* (Westview Press, 1984), 17–24; Bjørn Skogmo, *UNIFIL* (Lynne Reinner Publishers, 1989).
[43] Pogany, *The Security Council*, 149–96.

newspapers, and documents, beyond what was available in conventional archives and libraries. These innovations are meant to make this thesis as comprehensive, inclusive, holistic, and broad as possible.

Chapter 1 - The 1948 War: Starting Big, and Little

The ambitious Resolution 181 faced a major obstacle: the Arabs of Palestine, one of the two principal parties to the partition plan, never agreed to it. In fact, the Palestinian Arab Higher Committee had boycotted UNSCOP's work. The Palestinian leadership believed that the very attempt to solve the international Jewry's problems at the expense of their homeland and national rights was unjustified. Furthermore, they contended that UNSCOP was biased; according to them, its composition included only pro-Zionist states, and the seemingly impartial enquiry was really a façade meant to justify the political solution that the Superpowers had already chosen since the beginning.[1] Still two months before the adoption of Resolution 181, Jamal al-Husseini who was a high-ranking official in the Arab Higher Committee, warned the General Assembly's Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestinian Question not to adopt partition. According to him, 'One thing was clear: it was it was the sacred duty of the Arabs of Palestine to defend their country against all aggression. The Zionists were conducting an aggressive campaign with the object of securing by force a country which was not theirs by birthright'.[2] The Jewish Yishuv was equally eager to become a country, even by force and without UN support if necessary. David Ben-Gurion, the Zionist leader and later the first prime minister of Israel, wrote in his diary on 10 October 1947: 'I was asked about the [military] plan: [are we going to be] defending life in the majority borders [namely in the territory allocated by partition to the Jews] or throughout the country. I replied: this depends on the UN's resolution; if the decision should be convenient, we would defend every settlement, only take over the territory of the [Jewish] state according to the decision. If there should not be a decision: we would defend every settlement, push back any attack, provide services to the Jewish Yishuv and to all the willing Arabs, not set any territorial boundaries'.[3]

Given these statements, it is no surprise that after the adoption of the partition plan, both parties turned to force; the Zionists mobilised to establish their country while the Arabs set out to stop them. Thus began the 1948 War, known in Israel as the 'War of Independence' and in Palestine as the 'Catastrophe' (Nakba). In the first stage of the war, essentially a civil war inside historical Palestine, the Zionist militias defeated the Palestinian irregulars and on 14 May 1948 Israel was proclaimed. In the second stage of the war, the Arab armies of Egypt, Transjordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq launched an attack against the Jewish state. However, Israel withstood the onslaught to the surprise of many, among

[1] Ben-Dror, *The Road*, 94–103.
[2] General Assembly document A/AC.14/SR.3, 29 September 1947, 2, UNDL.
[3] Ben-Gurion's Diary, entry 10 October 1947.

other things owing to its superior military organisation and due to internal Arab divisions. Armistice agreements were eventually signed between Israel and the different Arab states in Rhodes in 1949.[4]

This chapter analyses UN peacemaking and peacekeeping efforts from November 1947 to July 1949, namely from the adoption of Resolution 181 to the signing of the last armistice. In accordance with the military developments on the ground, the staff and delegates of the nascent UN realigned the policy of the UN organs several times along two main axes: the scope of the goals to be pursued, and the scope of the actions through which to pursue them. During the first stage (November 1947 – April 1948), an attitude of 'big goals and little actions' prevailed; after the Arab states and Palestinians rejected the grandiose Resolution 181, New York proved reluctant to implement it. The one UN organ that was truly committed to partition, namely the Palestine Commission, failed to implement Resolution 181 because the belligerents refused to voluntarily cooperate with its work, while the Security Council and Britain rejected its appeals to impose partition by force. In the second period (May – September 1948), the pendulum swung in the complete opposite direction of little goals and big actions; Resolution 181 was put aside mostly for the sake of shorter-term efforts to secure a truce, even if some peaceful settlement was still discussed in the background. In the final phase (September 1948 – July 1949), the UN organs switched to a high gear of big goals accompanied by big actions. The belligerents were forced by New York to stop the war, armistice agreements were signed, and more serious negotiations were initiated to secure peace, even if these eventually failed.

This chapter shows that the 1948 War served as a microcosm for the entire UN handling of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the years to follow. A dynamic, even if sometimes unwilling, UN responded to this war with a wide scope of peacemaking and peacekeeping techniques; some proved more useful than others. New York initially charted an ambitious course of peace in the onset of the war, but later abandoned it for the sake of temporary armistices, an ominous sign of the UN disengagement from the Arab-Israeli conflict in subsequent stages. In terms of actions, as would be the case in future wars, any UN policy had to meet one of two conditions to succeed: either it was a limited goal that the belligerents could accept voluntarily because it aligned with their private interests, or a more ambitious objective that New York was willing to impose upon the parties. The belligerents also set the bar for their future dealings with the UN organs: on the one hand, they mostly avoided defying the UN directly, barring the Arab rejection of Resolution 181; but on the other hand, they often circumvented, ignored, or resisted UN policy. While the attitude of the belligerents limited the chance for peace, it did

[4] Schulze, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 17–21.

allow New York to at least promote smaller settlements that resonated with the warring parties' pragmatic interests.

In relation to the greater argument of this thesis, the UNSCOP enquiry and the adoption of Resolution 181 showed that clearly, many UN officials and delegates placed high hopes in the new UN, seeing it as an organisation that could redraw the world's orders and promote national self-determination across the globe. However, the Arab rejection of the partition plan and the subsequent 1948 War proved that symbolic resolutions might not be enough in creating a new, peaceful reality in the Middle East. When war broke out, the various UN organs proved either unable or unwilling to stop it until the belligerents themselves had had enough; peace was not at all in store. Resolution 181 resulted in the proclamation of Israel, the defeat of the Arab states, the marginalisation of the Palestinians, and the absence of peace; in other words, the UN formally gave birth to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Many of the major peacemaking and peacekeeping obstacles that New York faced during the 1948 War, like incapacitating deadlocks in the Security Council or a profound belligerent reluctance to make peace, would continue to trouble the UN organs all the way to 1982.

Big Goals, Little Actions (November 1947– April 1948)

After Resolution 181 was adopted, Palestinian leaders, Arab heads of surrounding state, and Arab League Secretary-General Azzam Pasha - all made clear that they would fight against the partition plan.[5] By December 1947 actions followed words: the Palestinian leadership announced a general strike and clashed with the Jews. Already in the first days of violence, dozens of casualties were reported in the press.[6] The first month of the conflict went in favour of the Arabs; the Jewish parts of Jerusalem were nearly encircled, and the Zionist hold over the Jewish settlements in the Negeb almost broke.[7] The UN organs were aware of the developments in Palestine from their onset,[8] and now had to decide whether to stand their ground and see partition through, or not. And in striking contrast to UNSCOP's preparatory work and the far-reaching political program envisaged in Resolution 181, the practical measures taken in New York to make partition a reality were miniscule. This would prove to

[5] 'The Armed Organisations' [Arabic], *Falastin*, 30 November 1947, 1; 'Arab Men' [Arabic], *al-Wihda*, 30 November 1947, 1; 'The Arab States' [Arabic], *al-Difa*, 1 December 1947, 1.
[6] '49 Dead' [Arabic], *al-Difa*, 3 December 1947, 1; 'Groups of Rioters' [Hebrew], *Davar*, 3 December 1947, 1; 'Yesterday's Events' [Hebrew], *Davar*, 4 December 1947,2.
[7] Abba Eban, *Abba Eban: An Autobiography* (Random House, 1977), 101–2.
[8] Trygve Lie, *In the Cause of Peace* (Macmillan, 1954), 163.

be the first of several occasions in which the UN policy failed due to a combination of big aspirations accompanied by inadequate implementation.

Starting with the General Assembly, prior to Resolution 181 it made several nominal attempts to reconcile the parties but failed entirely, earning the criticism of several delegates for the cursory and feeble attempts.[9] By adopting Resolution 181, the General Assembly effectively washed its hands of Palestine and delegated its implementation to others: the new Palestine Commission was charged with Arab-Jewish conciliation, as well as the facilitation of the new states; the Security Council was instructed to ensure peace and security in Palestine throughout the process; and the Trusteeship Council, the organ responsible for territories placed under an international trusteeship system, was to develop the unique international regime in Jerusalem. Soon after assigning these complex tasks to the different bodies, the General Assembly rested, only to reconvene many months later.

At the Trusteeship Council's end, work proved tardy. On 1 December 1947, it appointed a working committee to formulate a draft for the international regime in Jerusalem.[10] On 23 January 1948, the working committee adopted Draft Statute T/118 for submission to the Trusteeship Council.[11] But it then became locked in revisions, and only in mid-March did it decide that the draft was in suitable form.[12] Later, toward the end of April, the Trusteeship Council concluded that the statute for Jerusalem required the approval of the General Assembly, effectively rolling the ball back to the court of the international forum.[13] In parallel, the Trusteeship Council also formulated lengthy guidelines for the future governor of Jerusalem,[14] but this trajectory also proved disappointing; American Quaker lawyer Harold Evans was appointed governor as late as May, during the last hours of the mandate, only to resign a month later due to the Arab refusal to recognise his position.[15]

The Security Council meanwhile was deadlocked due to Superpower disagreements. Britain insisted on maintaining its neutrality and refused to impose any arrangement that was not acceptable for both Arabs and Jews;[16] the Soviets remained steadfast in their support of Resolution 181 and cooperated closely with the Jewish Agency to defend it, in the hope that partition would serve to eject

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[9] General Assembly documents A/RES/107(S-1), A/516, A/AC.14/SR.23, A/PV.128, 15 May-29 November 1947, UNDL.
[10] Trusteeship Council meetings T/PV. 33-34, 1-2 December 1947, UNDL.
[11] *Yearbook of the United Nations (1948)* (UN Department of Public Information, 1949), 779.
[12] Trusteeship Council meeting T/SR.62, 10 March 1948, UNDL.
[13] *UN Yearbook 1948*, 780–81.
[14] Trusteeship Council document T/144, 9 March 1948, UNDL.
[15] 'Robert Evans' [Hebrew], *Hamashkif*, 14 May 1948, 1; 'Evans Resigned' [Hebrew], *Davar*, 23 June 1948, 1.
[16] General Assembly document GA/PAL/76, 20 November 1947, The United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL).

Britain from the mandatory Palestine area;[17] and the Americans, after having initially supported Resolution 181, gradually came to believe that it was not realistically feasible, and therefore proposed to replace partition with a UN trusteeship government over Palestine.[18] The deadlock engendered passiveness. On 9 December 1947 and following the referral of Resolution 181 from UN Secretary-General Trygve Lie to the Security Council,[19] it drew attention to the resolution, but postponed the debate on the topic. When the first progress report came from the Palestine Commission in February, the Council decided to only read it, without making operational decisions.[20] Between March and April, the actions of the Security Council amounted to little more than resolutions appealing to the belligerents to avoid 'disorders' in Palestine and calling on the mandatory government to contain the violence, as well as a short-lived attempt to broker a truce.[21] Just like the Trusteeship Council, the Security Council decided eventually to pass responsibility back to the General Assembly: on 1 April, it adopted a resolution requesting that Secretary-General Lie convoke a special session of the General Assembly to consider further the question of Palestine.[22] Pogany concluded that the Security Council 'failed conspicuously in its handling of the first phase of the Arab-Israeli war'.[23]

It seems that the only UN body that made a genuine effort to implement partition was the Palestine Commission, assisted by the dedicated Lie. Yet this has generally been overlooked in the UN histories covering the period of the 1948 War. Some, like Hamdan, Comay, and Bailey mentioned it in passing, pointing out the work of the Palestine Commission but prioritising later UN efforts.[24] Others, such as Touval, Caplan, or Pelcovits, dismissed this period entirely and began their analysis with the mediation of Bernadotte in May 1948.[25] The scholarly emphasis on the period from May 1948 and beyond at the expense of the earlier phase seems unjustified. The war had already begun in November 1947, with the UN deeply involved since the beginning, even if ineffectively; after all, it was Resolution 181 that triggered the war to begin with. Ergo, elaborating only on May 1948 and beyond is telling merely a part of the story. Furthermore, understanding the UN's early behaviour of 'big goals

[17] Eban, *Abba Eban*, 105–6; Galia Golan, *Soviet Policies in the Middle East* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 34–35.
[18] Philip C. Jessup, *The Birth of Nations* (Columbia University Press, 1974), 262–69.
[19] Security Council document S/614, 2 December 1947, UNDL.
[20] *UN Yearbook 1948*, 403.
[21] Security Council resolutions S/RES/42-43, S/RES/46, 5 March-17 April 1948, UNDL; Pogany, *The Security Council*, 30.
[22] Security Council Resolution S/RES/44, 1 April 1948, UNISPAL.
[23] Pogany, *The Security Council*, 31.
[24] Hamdan, 'A Study', 112–20; Michael Comay, *U.N. Peace-Keeping in the Israel-Arab Conflict, 1948-1975*, Jerusalem Papers on Peace Problems (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1976), 12–13; Bailey, *Four Wars*, 1–19.
[25] Touval, *Peace Brokers*; Caplan, *Futile*, vol. 3; Nathan A. Pelcovits, *The Long Armistice* (Westview Press, 1993).

and little actions', namely, to adopt the ambitious partition plan but do very little to implement it, directly contributes to one's understanding of what led to the later shift into the contrasting approach of 'little goals and big actions', as will be demonstrated later in this chapter. Therefore, the Palestine Commission is instrumental in understanding the developments before May 1948. It was almost alone in its enthusiasm to enforce partition among the UN bodies, and its difficulties and eventual failure illuminate the more general constraints that handicapped the effectiveness of UN involvement in the first months of the war. The remainder of this section will therefore examine the work of the Palestine Commission, sometimes referred to here as 'the Commission', and uncover the main obstacles that stood in the way of its peacemaking and peacekeeping. It will be argued that it mainly failed for two reasons: on one hand it was forced into a partiality that prevented the implementation of partition voluntarily, and on the other hand it was also devoid of executive jurisdiction and therefore could not impose partition by force.[26]

The Palestine Commission's first meeting took place on 9 January 1948. Lie gave an opening statement and reiterated its three main goals: to establish the frontiers of the Arab and Jewish states and the City of Jerusalem; to progressively assume responsibilities for Palestine from the mandate pending the establishment of the independent states; and to establish provisional councils of government in the two states and direct their activities in the transitional period. Lie mentioned the 'unfortunate and deplorable' incidents in Palestine, but reassured the Commission that, should it require assistance, the Security Council would assume the full measure of responsibility in implementing the General Assembly's resolution.[27] Lie's promise, as will be shown, would prove inaccurate in hindsight.

The first flaw in the Palestine Commission's quest to implement Resolution 181 was its partiality. The Commission was not to blame for this bias, as it was the result of the attitudes it received from the warring parties in Palestine. Because they rejected partition, the Palestinians refused to work with the Commission;[28] at the same time, the Jewish Agency bearhugged it, in the hope to use the UN apparatus to promote its interests. For example, the Zionists pushed the Palestine Commission in January to place an arms policy in Palestine that would deny arms from those who undermine General Assembly resolutions,[29] clearly referring to the Palestinians. On another occasion, the Zionists appealed to the Palestine Commission to convince the British to postpone their departure from

[26] After writing this chapter, I published an article covering the work of the Palestine Commission in greater detail: Jonathan Franco, 'The Palestine Commission', *Middle Eastern Studies* 60, no. 5 (2024): 763–76.
[27] Secretary-General document PAL/100, 9 January 1948, UNISPAL.
[28] Hamdan, 'A Study', 113–14; Bailey, *Four Wars*, 3–5.
[29] Palestine Commission document A/AC.21/JA/5, 21 January 1948, UNISPAL.

Jerusalem after the Jewish military position there became precarious.[30] The Palestine Commission often lacked the ability to cater to the Jewish requests, but it was certainly willing to consider and discuss them, possibly because of its sense of responsibility for the cooperating party. The Arab boycott alongside with the Zionist bearhug deprived the Palestine Commission of any chance to maintain impartiality and meant that the facilitation of Resolution 181 could not be carried out on a voluntary and equal basis. In retrospect, it seems somewhat unlikely that the Commission could have promoted any kind of mutually acceptable peace in Palestine, let alone establish the two states envisaged in the partition plan, without having contact with one of the two principal parties.

Facing local resistance to its mission, the Palestine Commission hoped to impose partition through coercion, and since it lacked jurisdiction in the field of international security, it turned to the Security Council for help – but to no avail. Comay noted that the Palestine Commission failed to convince the Security Council to dispatch an international force to enforce peace in Palestine,[31] but did not develop this point. Which factors, then, inhibited the effective cooperation between the Palestine Commission and the Security Council, and why did the Security Council reject the idea of an international force? It appears that the alienation of the Palestine Commission from the Security Council stemmed mainly from the Commission's composition. Its five members were Bolivia, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Panama and the Philippines. David Horowitz, one of the Jewish Agency's liaison officers to the Palestine Commission, pointed out two problems with this body of states: the members were countries that lacked political power in the international arena, and which previously displayed a reserved stance toward partition.[32] In this context however, the greatest shortcoming of the Palestine Commission's constitution was that none of its delegates was a Security Council member. It is plausible that the inclusion of Security Council delegations as members, or at least as observers, in the Commission's meetings could have allowed for greater coordination between the two organs. Regardless, nothing was done to rectify this gap, and both organisations were left to their own devices.

In February 1948 the Palestine Commission submitted its second report, which was addressed to the Security Council and dealt specifically with Palestine's security. It concluded that the situation in Palestine was escalating, and therefore urged the Security Council to assemble an international peacekeeping force.[33] But the still-deadlocked Security Council was reluctant to act. The rift between the two UN organs surfaced when Karel Lisicky, the chairman of the Palestine Commission, presented

[30] Palestine Commission document A/AC.21/AP/30, 1 April 1948, UNISPAL.
[31] Comay, *U.N. Peace-Keeping*, 12–13.
[32] David Horowitz, *In Service of a Country Born [בשירות מדינה עולדת]* (Shocken Publishing House, 1951), 325.
[33] Palestine Commission document A/AC.21/9; Security Council document S/676, 16 February 1948, UNISPAL.

the second report before the Security Council on 24 February 1948. His main point concerned 'the necessity of providing for an international security force in order to implement the recommendation of the [General] Assembly'. However, the American UN Representative Warren Austin questioned whether the situation in Palestine was at all a matter of international security, and hinted that it was Britain's responsibility to deal with the problem by suggesting that 'in considering whether or not the situation in Palestine is a threat to international peace, the Security Council should consult with the United Kingdom, which as mandatory power, is responsible for the protection of Palestine and the maintenance of internal order therein'. The British delegate Arthur Creech Jones, in turn, deflected and reminded that since before Resolution 181, 'my government was not prepared to accept any responsibility under the General Assembly's recommendations which could involve the use of United Kingdom troops as the means of enforcing a decision likely to be resisted by Jews or by Arabs'.[34] In the subsequent session the Syrian Faris al-Khouri went on a tirade denouncing the illegality of Resolution 181, contending that the very creation of the Palestine Commission was 'inconsistent with the rules of procedures of the General Assembly', and contending that the Palestine Commission's suggestion to establish an international force 'has no justification in the functions of the Security Council and should be rejected'.[35] The second meeting was then adjourned, along with the Palestine Commission's hope to spur the Security Council into action.

One individual who shared the Palestine Commission's concern was Lie, but he was powerless to help. He, too, had contemplated the idea of an international force as early as December 1947, but refrained from presenting his ideas to the Security Council after having realised that the consensus around partition began eroding.[36] Following Lisicky's failure in the Security Council, Lie met with Austin and expressed his shock and 'almost personal grievance' following the American withdrawal from partition. He even suggested to Austin that the two of them should resign together. Austin replied that the American reversal of policy should not be taken personally and advised Lie to remain in office. Afterwards, Lie went to see the Soviet delegate, Andrei Gromyko. Here there were compliments: Lie thanked him for the Soviet government's 'commendable' Palestine policy. Gromyko also urged Lie not to resign, and so the Secretary-General gave up the idea.[37] It appears that as goodwilled as Lie was, he had very little say as to what steps the Security Council should take, and his only weak leverage was threats of resignation.

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[34] Security Council meeting S/PV.253, 24 February 1948, UNDL.
[35] Security Council meeting S/PV.254, 24 February 1948, UNDL.
[36] Lie, *In the Cause*, 164–67.
[37] Lie, *In the Cause*, 171.

Aside from its partiality and dependence on the unsupportive Security Council, arguably the biggest obstacle to the effectiveness of the Palestine Commission was Britain; just as the Security Council blocked its international efforts, London curtailed the Commission's initiatives inside Palestine. Even though Resolution 181 instructed the Commission to gradually assume power from the mandatory government, the British institutions in London and Jerusalem were bent on maintaining their full authority until the very last day of the mandate. The first problem posed by British policy to the Palestine Commission was in the field of the Commission's physical access to Palestine. While the Commission carried out its work from Lake Success, it asked the British UN Representative Alexander Cadogan in January 1948 whether it could send members of its secretariat to Palestine to make preliminary arrangements, a forward group that would later be called the 'Advance Party'.[38] The Commission later drafted a memorandum that outlined the various tasks to be assigned to the Advance Party, like preparing the logistical ground for the arrival of the Palestine Commission, initiating preliminary contacts with local entities, and studying from up close Palestine's pressing issues such as Jewish immigration or policing.[39] The British provided several different and contradictory responses to Advance Party proposal, before finally deciding that the Palestine Commission could only send members of its secretariat to Palestine two weeks prior to the expiry of the mandate.[40] After further convincing, London allowed the earlier arrival of the Advance Party but made clear that it would not be responsible for its accommodation and security needs.[41] Despite the difficulties, the Advance Party made its way to Palestine on 2 March 1948. Pablo de Azcárate who was the Palestine Commission's assistant secretary and who served as the head of the Advance Party, recounted the problematic British logistical framework: no one came to receive the Advance Party members when they landed at Lydda Airport; they were placed in horrid accommodations, which the British did eventually provide; and sometimes, the mandatory authorities failed to supply them with essentials, such as food – also partially due to the war conditions. Azcárate recalled that the British authorities' 'chief preoccupation lay in impeding by every possible method the presence in Palestine of anybody or anything remotely connected with the UN, and particularly with the Palestine Commission'.[42]

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[38] Palestine Commission documents A/AC.21/SR.24, A/AC.21/8, A/AC.21/SR.29, 28 January-3 February 1948, UNISPAL.
[39] Palestine Commission document A/AC.21/M/2, 2 January 1948, UNISPAL.
[40] Palestine Commission documents A/AC.21/SR.24, A/AC.21/8, A/AC.21/SR.29, 28 January-3 February 1948, UNISPAL.
[41] Palestine Commission documents A/AC.21/8, A/AC.21/UK/23, A/AC.21/UK/57, 30 January-6 March 1948, UNISPAL.
[42] Pablo de Azcárate, *Mission in Palestine, 1948-1952* (The Middle East Institute, 1966), 6–11.

Another field in which Britain complicated the work of the Palestine Commission was when the latter tried to form a 'local militia' to enforce Resolution 181, an effort that coincided with the international force trajectory. Despite the pleas of the Palestine Commission, London's representatives insisted that the mandatory power could not permit the creation of any militia prior to the termination of the mandate. On 8 March, the Philippine representative to the Palestine Commission submitted a report that summarised all the dealings in this matter and concluded that no useful purpose could be served in further pursuing the issue of a militia with the mandatory power.[43] As a last resort, the Palestine Commission hoped to at least use the help of the British to organise a municipal police force that would specifically maintain order in Jerusalem. In early February, Britain reported to the Palestine Commission that there were 900 British and 350 Palestinian police officers stationed in Jerusalem, supported by more than a brigade of troops. London promised that before the end of the month, the mandatory authorities would attempt to develop a municipal police force of 300 Arabs and 300 Jews, which would remain in place until after the termination of the mandate. The memorandum estimated that an additional force of 1,000 non-Jews and non-Arabs would be the minimum requirement to maintain security in the city and its surroundings.[44] A few days later, Lisicky informed Cadogan that the Palestine Commission would be willing to employ former mandatory policemen who would volunteer for the new force.[45] By April however, the British retreated from their promises to mobilise the municipal police. They notified the Palestine Commission that should the Palestine Commission proceed with 'their' effort to create a police force for Jerusalem, London would be willing to advise the Palestine Commission as to the record of volunteers from the Palestine police force; they were not, however, prepared to put forward names to the Palestine Commission themselves.[46]

The Palestine Commission did its best to push the Jerusalem police forward where possible. It obtained funding for the police from Lie, who provided two months-worth of funds for the sake of a short-term emergency force.[47] They also secured British consent for the dispatch of a specialist to Palestine, to oversee the establishment of the militia. In addition, the mandatory government acquiesced to ascertain for the Palestine Commission the number of British police officers who were willing to join the force under similar contracts to what they had had.[48] The results of the British enquiry, however, were disappointing: in late April it was reported to the Palestine Commission that

[43] Palestine Commission report A/AC.21/UK/61, 8 March 1948, UNISPAL.
[44] Palestine Commission report A/AC.21/UK/6, 4 February 1948, UNISPAL.
[45] Palestine Commission document A/AC.21/UK/74, 18 March 1948, UNISPAL.
[46] Palestine Commission document A/AC.21/UK/91, 1 April 1948, UNISPAL.
[47] Palestine Commission document A/AC.21/M/31, 8 April 1948, UNISPAL.
[48] Palestine Commission document A/AC.21/UK/101, 12 April 1948, UNISPAL.

only 50 low-ranking constables had offered their services to the Palestine Commission, none of whom were officers. In addition, some of the volunteers had local connections that according to the British report made them 'unsuitable for employment in an international force'.[49] The Palestine Commission was frustrated with the lack of progress, and Azcárate recalled that around mid-April he had already recommended the dissolution of the Commission to Lie.[50] Come May, the peacekeeping efforts of the Palestine Commission ceased almost entirely and its meetings revolved around administrative issues, such as Sterling balances, shipping agreements, and food supplies to Palestine.[51] It seems as though the Palestine Commission realised that peacekeeping was beyond its capacity and hoped to at least formulate policy in more accessible areas. Or maybe it simply came to understand that no good would come of its work whatsoever and thus buried itself in formalities, waiting to be put out of its misery. Contemporaries such as Horowitz and Azcárate criticised the Palestine Commission for having been feeble, helpless and inefficient.[52] But this analysis seems somewhat harsh; the truth was that the Commission was pitted against an impossible task. It was a group of representatives from minor states, who tried to tackle a major international crisis alone and underequipped. Its members tried to the best of their abilities to implement Resolution 181, and even to impose it through an international force, a local militia, and a Jerusalem police force. But they eventually failed, owing to a noxious mix of Arab rejection, a Zionist bearhug, a lack of Security Council cooperation, and a British bureaucratic war of attrition.

In connection to the wider thesis of this chapter, the Palestine Commission aimed at big goals but was forced into little actions. It was meant to do no less than to instil peace in Palestine and to turn warring communities into two nation states living in peace and bound by an economic union. But in disharmony with the great task that was placed on its shoulders, the Palestine Commission was devoid of any executive powers. The Arab boycott meant that it could not facilitate peace through voluntary engagement, and its dependence on the unwilling Security Council and Britain prevented it from achieving its goal through coercion. The Commission had to fight even just to send its representatives to Palestine, as the mandatory government maintained its absolute authority to ensure the safe evacuation of its people and property from the war-torn land. The Palestine Commission's experience is indicative of the more general UN trend from November 1947 to April 1948; while the General Assembly adopted Resolution 181 in the outset, the UN organs were willing to do very little to see the

[49] Palestine Commission document A/AC.21/UK/108, 19 April 1948, UNISPAL.
[50] de Azcárate, *Mission in Palestine*, 30.
[51] Palestine Commission meetings A/AC.21/SR.72-74, 3-5 May 1948, UNISPAL.
[52] For example: Horowitz, *In Service*, 325; de Azcárate, *Mission in Palestine*, 5.

resolution through. The result was fruitless deliberations, evanescent committees and subcommittees, and mutual referrals of the matter from one body to the other. This treatment earned the ire of both warring parties: the Arabs felt under attack, since the international organisation forced partition down their throats through what they considered to be an illegal process.[53] The Zionists meanwhile felt betrayed by the fact that the General Assembly adopted Resolution 181, only to leave them to fend for themselves in the face of the repercussions.[54]

Little Goals, Big Actions (April 1948 – September 1948)

Starting from mid-April, the UN organs changed their behaviour. This divergence was likely driven by the developments on the battlefield. The first four months of clashes went badly for the Jews,[55] as both parties were fighting a somewhat sporadic guerrilla warfare against each other.[56] But by April, the British gradual withdrawal from Palestine allowed the Zionists to reorganise their forces and transition toward a more centralised, full-fledged military structure. Late in the month, the Jews went on the offensive and executed Plan D, a military operation to capture territories allotted to both the Jewish and Arab countries, in preparation for the successful proclamation of an independent state.[57] The Zionists gained the upper hand, and the war assumed a more serious and urgent form. As a result, the UN organs refocused their goals; instead of further pursuing the full implementation of Resolution 181 for all its political and economic implications, the new priority became the cessation of hostilities between Jews and Arabs.

The Security Council's actions were at first still limited, yet more practical than on previous occasions. In late April, the final days of the Palestine Commission, it appointed a Truce Commission, comprising of the consuls of the Security Council members in Jerusalem, barring Syria that refused to participate. The Truce Commission was to supply the Security Council with information on the developments and assist in the implementation of UN resolutions in the frontline. The Security Council also requested that Lie furnish the Truce Commission with personnel and assistance as it may require.[58]

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[53] For example: Amin al-Husseini, *The Reasons for the Disaster of Palestine [أسباب كارثة فلسطين]*, ed. Hisham Awdh (Dar al-Fadhila, 1957), 62–67; Mohammed Hussein Heikal, *Memoirs on Egyptian Politics [مذكرات في السياسة المصرية]* (Egyptian Renaissance Library, 1953), 2: 323–24.
[54] Horowitz, *In Service*, 326; Eban, *Abba Eban*, 113.
[55] Meir Pa'il, *Independence: 1948-1949 [עצמאות : תש״ח-תש״ט]* (The Israeli Ministry of Defence Publication, 1990), 33.
[56] Pa'il, *Independence*, 33–35.
[57] Ilan Pappé, *The Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict 1947-1951* (Tauris, 1994), 54–55.
[58] Security Council Resolution S/RES/48, 23 April 1948, UNDL; *UN Yearbook 1948*, 415–16.

Several days later the Truce Commission reported that the situation in Palestine was deteriorating, as areas that were evacuated by Britain immediately became battlegrounds, and that Arab regular armies from surrounding countries were preparing to intervene in aid of the Palestinians.[59]

Meanwhile, the General Assembly finally ended its hiatus and reconvened on 16 April. Following the request of the Security Council and Lie, it held a Special Session on the Palestine question.[60] As will be shown below, the primary goal for many General Assembly members was to ensure the protection of Jerusalem. This preoccupation with Jerusalem is noteworthy because it served as a recurring theme in UN peacekeeping of the time. It seemed to arise from three main reasons: first, many holy sites to all three monotheistic religions are situated in Jerusalem. The UN members were aware of this, and sometimes referred specifically to the need to protect the holy places in Jerusalem in their resolutions.[61] Second, Jerusalem had been the mandatory seat of power, and both the Jews and the Arabs hoped to establish their centres of government there, giving it a major place in their military and political plans. And third, the preoccupation with Jerusalem had been inherited from the agenda of the Palestine Commission, which prioritised the protection of the holy city.

As a first step and on 26 April, the General Assembly adopted Resolution 185(S-2) that referred the protection of Jerusalem to the Trusteeship Council,[62] which in turn consulted with the Arab Higher Committee and the Jewish Agency. While the parties rejected the solutions proposed by the Trusteeship Council, it was possible to arrange a truce between them in Jerusalem, starting from 2 May. The Trusteeship Council also advised the General Assembly to request that the mandatory high commissioner appoint a neutral arbiter under the title of 'special municipal commissioner',[63] a proposal that was adopted by the General Assembly through Resolution 187 (S-2).[64] Now, the General Assembly's First Committee, responsible for disarmament and international security, created two subcommittees. The first was subcommittee 9, established on 5 May to propose a formula for the provisional regime in Palestine. The second was subcommittee 10, created on 11 May to specifically consider the protection of Jerusalem.[65] The reports from the two subcommittees were discussed in the decisive session of the General Assembly on the very last day of the mandate.[66] Eventually the General Assembly adopted arguably its most important resolution in the 1948 War: Resolution 186 (S-2) of 14

[59] Security Council document S/732, 30 April 1948, UNDL.
[60] *UN Yearbook 1948*, 257–58.
[61] For example: General Assembly Resolution A/RES/186(S-2), 14 May 1948, UNDL.
[62] General Assembly Resolution A/RES/185(S-2), 26 April 1948, UNDL.
[63] General Assembly document A/544, 5 May 1948, UNDL.
[64] General Assembly Resolution A/RES/187(S-2), 6 May 1948, UNDL.
[65] *UN Yearbook 1948*, 268–75.
[66] General Assembly meeting A/PV.135, 14 May 1948, UNDL.

May, relieving the obsolete Palestine Commission of its responsibilities, empowered instead a UN mediator in Palestine, to be chosen by a committee of the 'Big Five': China, France, the Soviet Union, Britain, and the United States. According to the Resolution, the mediator had several functions, chiefly to arrange for the protection of the holy sites, to promote peace and humanitarian operations in Palestine, and to render reports to the Security Council.[67]

Resolution 186 (S-2) heralded the second aspect of the new UN policy: on top of it being focused in goals, it was also more centralised in conduct. Since it became clear that ensuring the security of Palestine was the primary mission, the UN organs decided to let the Security Council take the lead in managing the crisis. As explained above, even though Resolution 186 (S-2) was adopted by the General Assembly, the appointed mediator was to be elected by the 'Big Five', the five permanent members of the Security Council. Furthermore, the mediator's mandate was designed to support the work of the Security Council. About a month later the Trusteeship Council also acknowledged the prominence of the Security Council, when it decided to postpone its work on the Statute of Jerusalem, so as not to interrupt the parallel work conducted by the Security Council and its mediator.[68] This helped prevent gaps between UN organs, as was previously the case with the Palestine Commission and the Security Council. The Security Council selected Count Folke Bernadotte, Swedish Vice-Chairman of the Red Cross who had diplomatic-humanitarian experience from the time of World War II, to be its mediator.[69] Ralph Bunche, formerly the secretary of the Palestine Commission and Lie's personal representative, was now assigned as one of Bernadotte's assistants. The two drew up a plan: Bernadotte would first approach Arab officials, because 'it was the Arabs, after all, who were adopting the offensive'. After consulting with them, he would turn his focus to the Jews, and only then propose an agreement that both parties could accept.[70]

Meanwhile, the situation in Palestine looked grim. In the last days of the mandate, the Truce Commission was able to facilitate another truce in Jerusalem alongside the British high commissioner,[71] but the calm was short-lived and was only possible thanks to the large British garrison still attached to the city until 14 May.[72] To make matters worse, on 15 and 16 May the Security Council was notified that the regular armies of Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Transjordan, and Iraq invaded

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[67] General Assembly Resolution A/RES/186(S-2), 14 May 1948, UNDL.
[68] *UN Yearbook 1948*, 781.
[69] Ilan, *Bernadotte*, 19–38.
[70] Folke Bernadotte, *To Jerusalem* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1951), 5–6.
[71] Security Council documents S/741-742, S/742, 9-10 May 1948; General Assembly meeting A/C.1/SR.139, 13 May 1948, UNDL.
[72] Security Council document S/762, 21 May 1948, UNDL.

Palestine.[73] On 21 May the Truce Commission wrote in its desperation that the only way to cease hostilities in Palestine at that time was through the deployment of an international force.[74] Azcárate, now the secretary of the Truce Commission, recalled that its members were around then frustrated and irritated, feeling that they had been abandoned by New York. They could barely ensure their own personal safety, let alone strike agreements between the warring parties.[75] In New York, Lie and his agents appealed to the Security Council members to act, fearing that failure to respond to the situation could permanently tarnish the UN's reputation as a serious institution, capable of adopting binding resolutions and protecting the world peace.[76]

The silver lining was that the escalation in Palestine served to reunite the divided Security Council. Around 12 May the Americans realised that they probably could not secure a majority for their trusteeship proposals and were now willing to focus more on international action to stop the violence.[77] Later that month, possibly because it no longer had to defend its mandatory interests in Palestine, Britain abandoned its passive stance and agreed to promote a truce agreement, even by imposing it.[78] A new consensus that something had to be done manifested itself in the Security Council meeting on the evening of 27 May. While the Arab representatives argued that the Arab armies entered Palestine to restore peace and security, most of the Security Council members were unconvinced by this reasoning. The Ukrainian, American, Soviet and British delegates all agreed that urgent and resolute action must be taken. Cadogan even went as far as to propose a resolution that would call upon a truce, including a threat that refusal could be met with sanctions.[79] Two days later this British concept was incorporated into Security Council Resolution 50. It ordered a truce in Palestine for four weeks; called to refrain from import and export into or from Palestine and the Arab warring countries, essentially placing an embargo on the belligerents; instructed the mediator and the Truce Commission to supervise the truce conditions; invited the now-Israeli and Arab authorities to communicate their acceptance of the resolution; and decided that rejection by either side would be reviewed under Chapter VII of the UN Charter – the chapter that permits the use of sanctions.[80]

[73] Security Council documents S/736, S/738, S/743, S/745, S/748, 5-16 May 1948, (1948), UNDL.
[74] Security Council document S/762, 21 May 1948, UNDL.
[75] de Azcárate, *Mission in Palestine*, 36–48.
[76] Lie, *In the Cause*, 173–85.
[77] Jessup, *The Birth*, 274.
[78] Lie, *In the Cause*, 186.
[79] Security Council meeting S/PV.306, 27 May 1948, UNDL.
[80] Security Council Resolution S/RES/50, 29 May 1948, UNDL.

On 1 June both Israel and the Arab League states agreed to the truce in principle,[81] although both parties refused to accept it unconditionally and presented their demands to Bernadotte. The Arabs demanded that the influx of Jews into Palestine must stop during the truce, out of fear that the immigrants would smuggle weapons into the Jewish state or join the Jewish forces. The Israelis meanwhile insisted that immigration was part of their newfound country's domestic policy which the UN had no jurisdiction over. Another point of contention was the Jewish demand to allow passageway for provisions to their holdings in Jerusalem. Eventually and after many difficult consultations by Bernadotte with the two parties, they agreed at the very last minute to enter an unconditional truce, to begin on 11 June. A team of international officers was also dispatched to assist Bernadotte with supervision – the body of observers that made up the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO).[82]

Thus began what later became known as the 'First Truce', lasting from 11 June to 8 July. The testimonies of Bernadotte and Lie revealed that the truce was meant to serve two purposes. The short-term purpose was military: the immediate cessation of hostilities in Palestine. The second purpose was diplomatic: the truce was perceived as the first milestone on the path to a more permanent settlement between Arabs and Israelis.[83] The truce was successful in the military sense: apart from isolated incidents, it was a relatively calm time in Israel/Palestine. Understandings were even reached regarding the Jewish supply convoys to Jerusalem.[84] Diplomatically, shortly after the truce was concluded Bernadotte returned to his headquarters in Rhodes, to devise with his team a solution for Palestine. Then he proceeded to relentlessly meet separately Arab and Israeli officials, in hope of learning what the needs of the two parties were, and accordingly to tailor a peace proposal that could be mutually acceptable. These consultations culminated in June in the First Bernadotte Plan. This plan saw historical Palestine and Transjordan forming a Jewish-Arab union. The borders between the two union members were to be determined through negotiations, with Bernadotte's assistance. A central council was to oversee the union and manage common services, although each member was to exercise full control over its own affairs, including foreign relations. Immigration was to be controlled individually, albeit each member could request that the union review the immigration policy of the other where the

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[81] Security Council documents S/804, S/810, 1 June 1948, UNDL.
[82] Bernadotte, *To Jerusalem*, 45–80.
[83] Bernadotte, *To Jerusalem*, 94–95; Lie, *In the Cause*, 187.
[84] Bernadotte, *To Jerusalem*, 82–166; David Ben-Gurion, *The War of Independence: Ben-Gurion's Diary [יומן המלחמה: מלחמת העצמאות, תש"ח-תש"ט]*, ed. Gershon Rivlin and Oren Elchanan (The Israeli Ministry of Defence Publication, 1982); Abdallah al-Tel, *The Disaster of Palestine [كارثة فلسطين]* (Dar al-Huda, 1990), 209–42; Adel Arsalan, *Memoirs of the Amir Adel Arsalan 1948 [مذكرات الأمير عادل أرسلان ١٩٤٨]*, ed. Youssef Ibsh (Bisan Publishing, 1994), 124–43.

union's interests were in question. Religious rights and the holy places were to be preserved by the union and the UN.[85]

The Arabs and Israelis criticised Bernadotte's First Plan and eventually rejected it. Even after hearing from the Arabs that recognition of Israel was still out of the question, Bernadotte approached the failure practically and attempted to improve his plan to make it more favourable to the parties.[86] While he did receive various explanations as to how this or that clause bothered the belligerents, it is argued here that on the substantive level, both parties did not desire peace at that point in time, regardless of the details. According to the Egyptian UN Representative Mohammed Heikal, the Arab armies had entered Palestine to undo Resolution 181 and to 'throw the Jews who had assembled there into the sea'.[87] As Bernadotte was working toward a truce, the encouraging news from the front were that Egyptian forces were expected to enter Tel Aviv shortly. Accordingly, there was no real reason for the Arab forces to back down.[88] Syrian Diplomat Adel Arsalan added that there was also a political consideration at play: the Arab publics were highly supportive of the Palestinian cause, and thus their leaders could not give up the war, even if they wanted to.[89] It was therefore highly unrealistic to expect that the Arab leaders could suddenly reverse their policies and make full peace with the fledgling Israeli state.

Why, then, did the Arabs agree to the truce? The answer was the cold facts of reality. First, there was the formula of Resolution 50: during their meeting in Amman, the Arab foreign ministers expressed their fears that noncompliance with the Security Council-mandated truce could be met with economic sanctions, or worse.[90] Another motivating factor was the military situation. Unlike Heikal's optimistic account, Egyptian Officer Gamal Abd al-Nasser who served on the Egyptian-Israeli front described the situation much more negatively: units advanced hastily for political reasons, leaving their flanks and rears vulnerable to attack. Fake news of successful operations was sent home to Cairo. Reliable intelligence, military plans and equipment were all in short supply.[91] As for the eastern front, Commander of the Arab Legion's Sixth Battalion in Jerusalem Abdallah al-Tel remembered that Transjordan appealed to the Arab states to accept the truce, because the Arab Legion was struggling to

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[85] Bernadotte, *To Jerusalem*, 108–31.
[86] Bernadotte, *To Jerusalem*, 143–59.
[87] Heikal, *Memoirs*, 2: 336.
[88] Mohammed Hussein Heikal, *Memoirs on Egyptian Politics [مذكرات في السياسة المصرية]* (Egyptian Renaissance Library, 1953), 3: 47–48.
[89] Arsalan, *Memoirs 1948*, 113.
[90] Heikal, *Memoirs*, 3: 47–48.
[91] Gamal Abd al-Nasser, 'Nasser's Memoirs of the First Palestine War', trans. Walid Khalidi, *Journal of Palestine Studies* 2, no. 2 (1973): 10–12.

hold its position in the holy city.[92] Arsalan shed light on the situation in the north: the Syrian and Lebanese armies remained eager to fight, but the former was weak and the latter too small to conduct its own offensive. Furthermore, a general Arab shortage of weapons and munitions prevailed.[93] The acceptance of the truce was therefore neither the abandonment of the Palestine cause nor recognition of the need for peace, but a mere acceptance of a tactical respite for the sake of reorganisation and rearmament. Mousa analysed the Arab position at the time as follows: if the Arab goal was to eradicate the enemy, then the attempt clearly failed. If the goal was to remove the Zionists from key locations, then the Arabs only succeeded in taking Old Jerusalem and a few isolated Jewish settlements while the Zionists occupied many Arab cities and towns with relative ease. The Arab leaders, he concluded, agreed to the truce because their countries came to the war unprepared. They would not have accepted the truce, had they had a greater influence over the turn of events.[94]

The Israelis, too, viewed the truce as a tactical manoeuvre. In the Israeli government meetings between 26 May and 6 June, the ministers debated the truce proposal and were generally inclined to accept it. However, their reasoning had nothing to do with any quest for peace but hinged on military strategy. They concluded that a truce could help halt the Arab momentum in Jerusalem and provide Israel with precious time to fortify its position and procure weapons. They also contemplated delaying the start of the truce, to complete several ongoing arms shipments before the import restrictions entered force.[95] And so, when the first truce began, the arms race commenced. On 14 June Israeli Prime Minister Ben-Gurion announced to his government his five-point plan for the truce: supplying Jerusalem, strengthening the military forces, increasing military goods production, establishing new Jewish settlements, and promoting Jewish immigration to Palestine, 'while avoiding publicity'. It was decided to establish a special committee for the supply of Jerusalem, and to formulate a comprehensive immigration plan.[96]

A fact less known is that during the same period, the Arabs too tried to procure arms. However, they were not as successful as the Israelis.[97] Mousa noted that the Egyptian, Iraqi, and Transjordanian armies relied on British armaments, and when London stopped its arms shipments to these countries in accordance with the truce conditions they were cut off from their regular supplies.[98] Arsalan described

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[92] al-Tel, *The Disaster*, 202–3.
[93] Arsalan, *Memoirs 1948*, 109–16.
[94] Mousa, *days*, 316–17.
[95] Israeli government meetings 26 May 1948, 2; 30 May 1948, 21-25; 6 June 1948, 3, The Israel State Archives (ISA).
[96] Israeli government meeting 14 June 1948, 2-30, ISA.
[97] al-Tel, *The Disaster*, 230.
[98] Mousa, *days*, 313–14.

some of his country's procurement efforts that he was aware of, like the purchase of plane bombs from a factory in Istanbul. He also outlined the obstacles that complicated Syrian military buildup at the time, such as Damascus' failure to establish an effective central bank.[99] At the same time, the Arabs were aware of and concerned about the Israeli preparations. For example, Tel appealed to the Truce Commission in late June, complaining that Jewish convoys were travelling to Bab al-Wad unsupervised by UNTSO and carrying weapons. He also wrote to the commander of the fourth brigade on the situation in Jerusalem, stating that while the Arabs of the city gradually returned to their normal lives, this was only a temporary calm since the Jews brought to the front munitions, mortars, and possibly heavier cannons.[100] Similarly, Arsalan wrote in his diary several entries throughout the truce about arms shipments that made their way to Israel, while criticizing the Arab bloc for having failed to procure arms or to assemble its forces with similar efficiency.[101] Given all these developments, it seems somewhat peculiar that Bernadotte appealed to the Arabs to accept his plan or at the very least to prolong the truce during its final days. One can imagine that by then, they were not only increasingly worried about the strengthening of Israel's position but also disappointed and furious with the inability of the UN to control arms in Palestine and to enforce its truce restrictions. Bernadotte's calls fell on deaf ears, and the war resumed when the truce was originally set to expire.[102] The Arab leaderships preferred to take a risk and try again to break through the Jewish lines,[103] rather than to sit idly as their enemies were further beating them in the arms race.

After the truce expired, its effects revealed themselves. The Israeli government was surprised by the Arab refusal to extend the truce but wasted no time and immediately went on the offensive. The UN observers meanwhile were fleeing the country as their apparatus was falling apart. On 14 July Bernadotte proposed another truce, but this time Israel rejected the proposal, as the Arabs had previously rejected the extension of the first truce and faced no UN repercussions.[104] The Arab armies fell into disarray, and could not unite their divided leaderships.[105] Ben-Gurion wrote in his diary: 'the great deeds that were done in the short days following the truce are almost unimaginable'.[106] The period between 8 and 18 July, referred to as the 'Ten Day Battle', earned Israel decisive victories and completely altered the balance of power. Meanwhile, on 12 July Bernadotte submitted his report to the

[99] Arsalan, *Memoirs 1948*, 117–26.
[100] al-Tel, *The Disaster*, 213–17.
[101] Arsalan, *Memoirs 1948*, 125–42.
[102] Bernadotte, *To Jerusalem*, 137–63.
[103] Heikal, *Memoirs*, 3:48–49.
[104] Israeli government meetings 8 July 1948, 2-4; 9 July 1948, 3; 17 July 1948, 16, ISA.
[105] Abd al-Nasser, 'Nasser's Memoirs', 23–27; al-Tel, *The Disaster*, 243–44.
[106] Ben-Gurion, *The War of Independence*, 588.

Security Council and flew to Lake Success to explain it orally. He urged the Security Council to take firm action to reintroduce a truce in Palestine, even under the threat of the use of force if necessary, and to resupply him with a greater number of observers than what he had had before.[107] Three days later the Security Council fulfilled his request by issuing Resolution 54, which was very similar in content to its predecessor Resolution 50. It ordered the warring governments in Palestine to desist from further military actions, enter another truce and an unconditional ceasefire in Jerusalem, and to cooperate with the mediator. It warned that failure to comply would be reviewed under Chapter VII of the UN Charter.[108]

While both sides acquiesced to the terms of Resolution 54,[109] Azzam Pasha lodged a complaint against what he described as the 'apparent partiality' of the Security Council.[110] He reminded that the Arabs agreed to the 29 May truce proposal, but the Zionists exploited its defective supervision and implementation. Despite complaints that were made to the UN observers by Arab parties, nothing was done on the ground. Now the Arabs felt apprehensive about another truce considering past events, but were forced to accept it, so that the Security Council would not misinterpret their reluctance as defiance against the UN. He also mentioned that the Arab countries opposed the recognition of Israel, and thus considered the UN's accommodation of the Israeli government a bias in itself.[111] Israel was equally untrusting of its Arab truce partners. Ben-Gurion warned the government that the Arabs might either accept the truce while trying to capture additional territories in the very last minute before it entered into force, 'like last time', or they would reject the truce altogether. The government accordingly decided upon the pre-emptive recruitment of reserves and the formulation of war plans.[112]

It was in this atmosphere of no-confidence that the Second truce began, to last from 18 July to 15 October. While it was longer, this truce was more volatile and more frequently violated than its predecessor.[113] The Security Council had to publish another threatening resolution in August to keep the parties in line.[114] Bernadotte put together his Second Plan; this time the mediator left aside any unions and proposed two separate and fully independent states: the Jewish Israel, which would include the northern coastline and the Galilee, and Transjordan which would also annex the Negeb, the Gaza

[107] Security Council documents S/888, S/PV.333, 12-13 July 1948, UNDL.
[108] Security Council Resolution S/RES/54, 15 July 1948, UNDL.
[109] Security Council documents S/902-903, 15-16 July 1948, UNDL.
[110] Security Council document S/908, 18 July 1948, UNDL.
[111] Security Council document S/908, 18 July 1948, UNDL.
[112] Israeli government meeting 18 July 1948, 2-30, ISA.
[113] For example: Security Council document S/977, 18 August 1948, UNDL.; Ben-Gurion, *The War of Independence*, 603, 672–80; Arsalan, *Memoirs 1948*, 152–70.
[114] Security Council Resolution S/RES/56, 19 August 1948, UNDL.

Strip, and the West Bank. Jerusalem was to remain under UN control.[115] Immediately after presenting his Second Plan, Bernadotte was assassinated by fighters from the Lehi, a Jewish armed group that viewed not only the Arabs but also British and some UN officials as enemies of the Yishuv.[116] The second truce and the final efforts of Bernadotte did not bring the parties any step closer to conciliation. This outcome is unsurprising, given that the belligerents had lost all trust in the UN in the months preceding the truce. Back in the days of the first truce, Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett mentioned in an Israeli government meeting that he had met with Bernadotte and requested that the two decide together upon the truce supervision protocol. However, the mediator replied that he left the supervision of the truce in the hands of others and preferred to focus on 'high politics'.[117] Perhaps this was Bernadotte's gravest error: he failed to recognise the fact that the supervision on the ground was tightly connected to his credibility at the negotiation table. And no matter how much effort he was willing to put into negotiations and proposals, an agreed-upon settlement could only be achieved if both Arabs and Israelis trusted the word of the UN operatives.

All in all, the second episode in the UN peacekeeping in the 1948 War saw the focus and centralisation of UN efforts: rallying around the Security Council to stop the violence in Israel/Palestine. This shift in UN behaviour, combined with the lifting of the Security Council deadlock, led to a greater involvement of the UN organs in the war. Mediator Bernadotte tried to tackle the Palestine issue by prescribing truces for the temporary cessation of violence, alongside negotiations for a sustainable and permanent peace agreement. At his disposal was Security Council support that the preceding Palestine Commission could only dream of. But the ineffective supervision of the first truce tilted the balance of power in Israel's favour and depleted the last remaining shreds of confidence that the Arabs had in the system. The truces, coined with the misnomer 'the Bernadotte truces', were in fact the product of Security Council resolutions and threats of force, with Bernadotte fixing the dates and ironing out the details. When a truce did take place, each party used it to better its military position, rather than to participate in some meaningful diplomatic process.

Paradoxically, Bernadotte's practicality was sometimes a curse. He thought that making peace between Arabs and Israelis was about meticulously perfecting the formula, and accordingly invested all his energy into drafting an agreement that both parties would find just and fair. As he tirelessly dotted the i's and crossed the t's, he lost sight of the true obstacle: the rejection by both parties of the

[115] General Assembly document A/648, 17 November 1948, (1948), UNDL; Ilan, *Bernadotte*, 190–92.
[116] Ilan, *Bernadotte*, 193–96.
[117] Israeli government meeting 14 June 1948, 2 ISA.

very notion of conciliation, regardless of specificities. Unlike Bernadotte, the Security Council took a more forceful approach that did not necessarily depend on the belligerents' voluntary consent. Here, success was noted: whenever the Security Council coerced the parties to accept a truce under the threat of sanctions, they complied, even if unwillingly. Perhaps, therefore, the UN could have succeeded to a better degree at this stage had it acknowledged that a voluntary peace treaty was simply too optimistic a prospect, and that realistically there were only three possible courses of action: to take a step back and let the war resolve itself militarily; to settle for a cessation of hostilities through a truce that was not temporary or fixed in time, as indeed would be done in the following period; or to decide upon a full peace formula, to be enforced upon the belligerents through another stern UN action.

Big Goals, Big Actions (September 1948 – July 1949)

The UN intervention in the 1948 War took its last turn in mid-September 1948. After Bernadotte's assassination, his assistant Ralph Bunche was appointed acting mediator in Palestine by Lie.[118] In this new stage, the UN organs attached a greater importance to resolving the conflict entirely, and the centralised leadership of the Security Council was replaced by a twofold approach: the Security Council continued its effort to promote truces and later the more permanent armistices, whereas the General Assembly took over the longer-term goal of a permanent Arab-Israeli peace.

At first however, the UN was again hesitant. When Bernadotte was murdered in September 1948, the second truce was formally still in place, but ominous signs hinted at what was to come. On 1 October Bunche reported that the situation in Palestine was deteriorating as both Arabs and Israelis displayed a 'disturbing tendency' to withhold cooperation from UNTSO, and to disregard Security Council resolutions. He requested that the Council remind the parties of their truce obligations.[119] The Security Council reacted slowly. In early October it was otherwise engaged, and only returned to the issue of Palestine on the 14th. Bunche's report was reviewed, and he supplemented it with a verbal statement; nevertheless, the meeting was adjourned without the adoption of resolutions.[120] On 15 October the second truce expired. A few days earlier, skirmishes between Israel and Egypt had already erupted in the Negeb. The Israeli government decided that since the UN observers were not ensuring the safe passage of convoys to the Jewish settlement in the South, it was up to Israel to break through.

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[118] *UN Yearbook 1948*, 304-312,450; *Yearbook of the United Nations (1949)* (UN Department of Public Information, 1949), 167.
[119] Security Council document S/1022, 30 September 1948, UNDL.
[120] Security Council meeting S/PV.365. 14 October 1948, UNDL.

They even contemplated directly breaking the truce and taking further military action.[121] When the truce was officially over, Israel launched major offensives in the Negeb that placed it in an undeniable military advantage. Egypt was rapidly losing ground, and a major part of its army was encircled in Faluja, the famous 'Faluja Pocket'.[122]

Only on 19 October did the Security Council adopt two resolutions: Resolution 59 reminded the parties of their truce obligations,[123] and Resolution S/1044 ordered a specific truce in the Negeb: both Israel and Egypt were to return their forces to their pre-escalation lines, accept the UN-sanctioned convoy arrangements, and negotiate on the outstanding problems in the Negeb and the permanent stationing of UN observers throughout the area.[124] Bunche set the Negeb truce to start on 22 October, and both parties reported that the necessary military orders were given to the soldiers in the field.[125] But the situation remained complicated, probably the result of the long erosion of Arab and Israeli trust in the intentions and capabilities of the UN. Several days after the Negeb truce came into place, Egypt reported that Israel was 'constantly and increasingly' violating it and urged the Security Council to act, lest Egypt take matters into its own hands. Bunche complained that observers could not examine the Egyptian allegations due to road closures carried out by both parties, and because Israeli authorities prevented UNTSO access to the Negeb.[126] In the face of the truce violations and Bunche's warnings, the UN remained shaken. After long deliberations and few conclusions, the Security Council established a subcommittee to revise a pending draft resolution.[127] The General Assembly meanwhile convened for its Third Regular Session, but apart from one resolution on assistance to the Palestinian refugees,[128] it too failed to produce any meaningful resolution on the ongoing war in Israel/Palestine. On 4 November the Security Council finally recovered from its shock and assumed a firmer approach. It reviewed the report of its subcommittee and adopted Resolution 61. It called for Israel and Egypt to establish direct contact and returned to their position before the latest outbreak of violence. It also appointed a committee out of the Security Council members to advise Bunche on his responsibility, should any of the parties fail to comply.[129] This important resolution signalled to both parties that from now on, Bunche would have greater Security Council backing, with all options being on the table.

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[121] Israeli government meeting 6 October 1948, 3-32, ISA.
[122] Shakib, *The 1948 War*, 318–40.
[123] Security Council Resolution S/RES/59, 19 October 1948, UNDL.
[124] Security Council resolution S/1044, 19 October 1948, UNDL.
[125] Security Council document S/1049, 23 October 1948, UNDL.
[126] Security Council documents S/1052; S/1055, 23-25 October 1948, UNDL.
[127] Security Council documents S/PV.374-375, S/RES/60, 28-29 October 1948, UNDL.
[128] General Assembly Resolution A/RES/212(III), 19 November 1948, UNDL.
[129] Security Council documents S/PV.377-378, S/RES/61, 4-9 November 1948, UNDL.

From 9 November onward, the Security Council held several meetings that Bunche attended personally to share his views on Palestine. He contended that the truce was regarded by both parties as a mere interruption to hostilities. It was therefore necessary to create a new framework, one that would signal the definitive end of war in Palestine and the beginning of peace: the armistice. Bunche explained that unlike the truce, the armistice would involve the separation of warring forces in Israe/Palestine and their reduction to peacetime sizes, to prevent a later renewal of hostilities. Bunche accordingly proposed a draft resolution, which was amended and adopted on 16 November by the Security Council as Resolution 62. It called upon the belligerents to promote peace by pursuing an armistice agreement, either directly or indirectly.[130] The Israelis were reluctant at that time to sign an agreement, preferring to complete their military victory over their foes. This is evident in many Israeli actions: attempts to reverse the American support for truce violation sanctions, so that Israel could fight on uninterruptedly; the contemplation of the appointment of an Israeli Negeb governor, as a signal that the region was now permanently a part of the Jewish state; the dispatch of Officer Yigal Yadin to Paris, to argue against Bunche's ideas and to rally international support for Israel's offensive; suggestions to conduct direct peace talks with Transjordan outside the framework of the UN; and deliberately stalling replies to Bunche's queries, in order to buy more time for the military onslaught.[131]

On the Arab side, a rift was opening between the political and military leaderships. The military top brass remained enthusiastic about the war: on 10 November the Arab chiefs of staff met in Cairo for a two-day conference, to discuss the situation in Palestine and to put together a report for the political committee of the Arab League. The attendees found that Israel came to the war better prepared and utilised the truce more effectively, and consequently the Israeli forces became numerically and qualitatively superior to the Arab forces. However, the report did not recommend stopping the war, on the contrary: it contended that the Arab states must stop holding back and harness their full power to defeat Israel, while also giving the military commanders a larger say on the management of the war at the expense of the politicians.[132] The political elite, on the other hand, disagreed with this interpretation. On the surface, the political committee endorsed the report, unanimously rejected partition again, and upheld the Arab identity of all of Palestine. Azzam Pasha promised that the Arabs would fight 'to the last cartridge' to protect their Palestinian brethren.[133] But beyond the aggressive

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[130] Security Council documents S/PV.378-381, S/RES/62, 9-16 November 1948, UNDL.
[131] Israeli government meetings 7 November 1948, 2-6; 10 November 1948, 2-3; 14 November 1948, 6-9; 18 November 1948, 2, ISA.
[132] Shakib, *The 1948 War*, 349–53.
[133] Ahmed al-Shuqayri, *40 Years in the Arab and International Life [أربعون عامًا في الحياة العربية والدولية]* (Dar al-Nahar, 1969), 544.

rhetoric, various Arab leaders were worried about the heavy toll that the war was taking on their governments. Politically, the misconduct of the war bred a rising tide of public unrest that endangered their control domestically. Economically, several Arab countries and most notably Egypt and Iraq had accumulated major war debts that were becoming increasingly difficult to bear.[134] Different Arab leaders therefore explored exit routes from the costly war. For example, Transjordanian King Abdallah was contemplating separate ceasefire negotiations with Israel,[135] whereas Lebanese Prime Minister Riad al-Solh tried to convince his colleagues to accept the Second Bernadotte Plan which was still pending the verdict of the General Assembly as a means of political solution.[136]

With the Israeli military superiority and Arab political crisis in mind, both parties took several days to consider Resolution 62's demand for an armistice. The Israelis agreed to enter immediate dialogue with the Arab governments on an armistice, and to withdraw their forces in the Negeb to their 14 October positions as a token of goodwill. However, their demands were otherwise harsh: they insisted that any further territorial concession be under a permanent agreement with the Arabs. When UNTSO Commander William E. Riley met Israeli representatives, he made three requests regarding the pre-truce arrangements: to attach UN observers to the Israeli units in the Negeb, to appoint an Egyptian police governor in Israeli-occupied Beersheba, and to let the Egyptian forces trapped in the Faluja Pocket out. Israel rejected all three counts.[137] Meanwhile, Arab countries began signalling Israel that they have had enough. On 12 December, Ben-Gurion reported to his government that Egypt had announced to the Security Council that it was ready to negotiate with Israel. In addition, Damascus-born Israeli Diplomat Eliahu Sasson met with Tel, who had informed him that Transjordan too was willing to enter dialogue. Lebanon, it was estimated, also desired a ceasefire, but was too 'ashamed' to make separate peace and preferred to wait for a move on behalf of the other Arab League members.[138] A few days later, though, Ben-Gurion stated that it was not yet time to finish the war and expressed his desire to launch two last offensives: one in the Negeb, and the other in the area known as the Triangle.[139]

Israel's military dominance was also accompanied by successful Israeli political actions in the General Assembly. Israeli UN Representative Abba Eban recounted that the Jewish state focused its efforts in the Third Regular Session on promoting its admission to the UN, defeating the Second

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[134] 'Arab Politics' [Arabic], *Hakikat al-Amr*, 10 November 1948, 1-2.
[135] Arsalan, *Memoirs 1948*, 222.
[136] 'The Arabs Expect' [Hebrew], *Haboker*, 12 November 1948, 1.
[137] Israeli government meetings 18 November 1948 (evening), 18-19; 24 November 1948, 2-3, ISA.
[138] Israeli government meeting 12 December 1948, 2-4, ISA.
[139] Israeli government meeting 19 December 1948, 2-42, ISA.

Bernadotte Plan, and consolidating the Israeli territorial claim on the newly conquered Negeb. Israel succeeded on all three counts: the resolutions adopted contained no reference to the Bernadotte plan; the PCC was appointed under Resolution 194(III) to promote peace negotiations between the belligerents; and while Israel was not admitted to the UN on its first attempt in November, it successfully built itself a strong international network of support and prevailed on its second application in early 1949.[140] At the same time, the Arab countries struggled to promote their interests in the General Assembly, or even to define what those interests were. Their only clear agenda was to postpone further examination of the Palestine problem, in the false hope that Thomas Dewey would defeat the pro-Israeli Harry Truman in the American presidential elections. Egypt, possibly due to its desire to separately quit the war, made unilateral moves without coordinating with the other Arab countries. For example, when the Arab delegations agreed to support Pakistan's nomination to the Security Council, Egypt refused to cooperate with the plan and instead nominated itself, successfully becoming a member. Arsalan's diary revealed the Arab rift and confusion: he described a growing Syrian paranoia over Transjordanian aspirations to annex Arab Palestine, and Egyptian unilateral policies. He also complained about how Damascus failed to send proper directives to the delegation and left the latter to its own devices. Arsalan lamented that by the end of November 1948, the Arabs found themselves almost alone in the General Assembly, with only Pakistan and Burma vocally supporting their case.[141]

It was against this backdrop that Bunche announced to the Security Council on 6 January 1949 that the governments of Egypt and Israel unconditionally accepted a proposal for a ceasefire, to begin on 7 January. The ceasefire was to be immediately followed by direct negotiations on the implementation of all the UN resolutions from 4 to 16 November 1948. The Security Council accordingly decided to suspend any further action on its part, pending the result of the negotiations. And indeed, the Israeli-Egyptian negotiations began in Rhodes on 12 January 1949, under the chairmanship of Bunche. On 24 February, an armistice agreement was signed between the two in Rhodes.[142] One body of literature, written mostly by Israeli diplomats who were directly involved, primarily accredited the success of the Egyptian-Israeli negotiations to Bunche's conduct. For example, when accounting for the outcome at Rhodes, Israeli Diplomat and Academic Shabtai Rosenne focused on Bunche's personal qualities like 'his unrivalled skill as a draftsman and his

[140] General Assembly Resolution A/RES/194(III), 11 December 1948, UNDL; Eban, *Abba Eban*, 134–43.
[141] Arsalan, *Memoirs 1948*, 188–239.
[142] *UN Yearbook 1949*, 184.

inventiveness producing many a solution'. Rosenne also lauded the professional habits of the acting mediator, like his casual games of snooker with the delegates, which were according to Rosenne 'one of the keys to Bunche's success' as they helped to break the ice.[143] Walter Eytan, who headed the Israeli delegation to Rhodes, similarly commended Bunche and wrote that he was 'gifted, some thought almost a genius, at drafting; sooner or later, he was able to contrive a formula to defeat almost any problem'.[144]

Conversely, this chapter situates itself more with works such as those of Pappé[145] and Shakib,[146] who observe the signing of the armistices more critically. It is argued here that the most significant factor that allowed for the signing of the armistice in Rhodes was the fortuitous timing of the talks, and Bunche's acknowledgement of this timing. Ben-Dror provided the most accurate analysis in this respect: Israel wanted to consolidate its territory and fortify its victory, whereas Egypt wanted to exit the war but could not vocally admit it at its own initiative. Bunche was wise enough to compromise on the quality of the agreement in order to ensure that at least some formula succeeded, in accordance with the needs and demands of both parties.[147] While Bunche did skilfully chair the negotiations in Rhodes, his main contribution was not to convince the parties to sign an agreement, but to provide them with the necessary venue to conclude the agreement that they were both already prepared to make. While Bunche's contribution might sound more technical than substantive, it is by no means insignificant. The Arab League's refusal to even recognise Israel meant that the Egyptian government could not initiate direct talks with the Jewish state without breaking away from the Arab world's norms and jeopardizing its popularity with the Egyptian public. But with a UN acting mediator leading the process and urging the countries to reach a settlement, Egypt could paint itself as a party required to conform to international norms, rather than one deviating from Arab ones. In sum, Bunche was the right man at the right place and time, and he was also shrewd enough to harness this potential for the sake of a beneficial outcome.

With the Egyptian precedent set, other Arab countries followed suit, and Israeli negotiations with Transjordan and Lebanon were scheduled to begin in late February.[148] Transjordan signed a truce agreement on behalf of itself and of the Iraqi forces on 11 March,[149] although Israel immediately

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[143] Rosenne, 'Bunche', 178–81.
[144] Walter Eytan, *The First Ten Years* (Simon and Schuster, 1958), 32.
[145] Pappé, *The Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict 1947-1951*, 193–94.
[146] Shakib, *The 1948 War*, 513–16.
[147] Ben-Dror, *Ralph Bunche and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 305–9.
[148] Israeli government meeting 27 February 1949, 2-10, ISA.
[149] Mousa, *days*, 531–39.

violated it to capture the Transjordanian-held Gulf of Aqaba, securing for itself access to the Red Sea while benefitting from the fact that Egyptian forces no longer stood in its way.[150] A final armistice agreement with Transjordan was signed in Rhodes on 3 April 1949. Lebanon signed a similar agreement with Israel on 23 March 1949. With Syria the agreement took longer, both because of Damascus's particularly hardline stance against Israel and the coup d'état that it underwent, which slowed down the process. This Syrian-Israeli agreement was signed in 20 July 1949, effectively ending the war.[151]

The same fortuitous timing that enabled the success of the armistice agreements also obstructed the Palestine Conciliation Commission's (PCC) fulfilment of its mission under Resolution 194 (III) to bring about a more permanent peace settlement between Israel and the Arabs. Very much like the preceding moment of the Security Council's truce and Bernadotte's First Plan, in 1949 the parties wanted to resolve the war for pragmatic reasons but did not feel obliged to seek further-reaching agreements. Noticeable works that deal with the PCC, such as those of Bailey, Caplan, and Gazit, discussed in length its failure in 1949, particularly in contrast to the successful armistice negotiations. The main explanations revolved around the overly ambitious goal of the PCC; its structural and procedural flaws; lack of support from the sending countries and the UN to the PCC; and the reduced Arab-Israeli incentive to compromise for the sake of a peace agreement following the signing of the armistices.[152] But these writings often focused on Western and sometimes Israeli sources, with the Arab materials at a secondary place at best. Therefore, the remainder of this section seeks to offer additional insight into the Arab perspective by providing an answer to one specific question relating to the PCC: how desirable did the individual Arab governments find the PCC peace proposals in 1949? This will be evaluated through three Arab examples quite different from one another: Transjordan, Egypt, and Syria. Transjordan – and later in the period, Jordan – is probably the easiest country to account for, due to the fact that works like those of Bar-Joseph and Shlaim already analysed the unique Jordanian position regarding peace with Israel at that point in time.[153] Shlaim offered a reasonable answer as to why this unique connection did not mature into peace: even though King Abdallah genuinely wanted peace with Israel, the nascent Jewish state became euphorically confident following its victories in the

[150] Israeli government meetings 10 March 1949, 2-6; 14 March 1949, 4, ISA.
[151] Mousa, *days*, 552–55.
[152] For example: Bailey, *Four Wars*, 399–401; Caplan, *The Lausanne Conference*; Mordechai Gazit, *Israeli Diplomacy and the Quest for Peace* (Frank Cass, 2002), 10–11.
[153] For example: Uri Bar-Joseph, *The Best of Enemies* (Frank Cass, 1987); Avi Shlaim, *Collusion across the Jordan* (Oxford University Press, 1988); al-Tel, *The Disaster*.

1948 War, and therefore demanded unrealistic concessions from Jordan in exchange for peace, far beyond what the latter could afford to spare.[154]

As for Egypt, its dedication to the Palestine cause was limited from the onset. Egyptian primary and secondary literature speculated that King Farouk and his government were eager to enter the war mainly for self-help: to portray Egypt as a leading force in the Arab world as well as to divert the public attention away from the Egyptian domestic problems over to the foreign sphere. Politician Isama'il Sidqi spoke against the Egyptian intervention in Palestine on the eve of the invasion, arguing that Israel was supported by major powers and that the Egyptian army was in no shape to succeed. But his warnings were not heeded. As the war went badly for Egypt, it became increasingly inclined to sign an armistice with Israel, albeit without recognising the Jewish state. Israel seemingly found it desirable to make peace with Egypt and approached it through several direct and indirect channels, but Egypt profusely rejected these contacts. As 1949 progressed, the ripples of the war stirred a domestic Egyptian political crisis, making it even less likely for Cairo to seek any far-reaching and unpopular peace settlement with its enemy.[155]

Regarding Syria, for most of the period it was probably the least enthusiastic to reach any kind of understanding with Israel. It was initially reluctant to even sign an armistice agreement, let alone conclude a peace settlement. As Morris pointed out, circumstances temporarily changed in March 1949, following Colonel Husni Za'im's coup d'état. After his rise to power, Za'im made a surprisingly generous peace offer to Israel, including the resettlement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians in Syria. But like the Jordanian case, Israel responded by making demands that were beyond what Zai'm could provide. The Israelis were retrospectively lucky to reject Zai'ms offer; he was ousted and executed in a second coup, only five months after his accession.[156]

These examples demonstrate how each Arab country had unique relations with Israel. But in all cases, one or more of the parties involved either rejected peace as a concept or was only willing to propose less than the minimal concessions necessary to make an agreement work. Very much like the Palestine Commission and Bernadotte experiences, before any structural flaw or methodological mistake, the PCC failed in 1949 chiefly because it led a process that the parties were not enthusiastic

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[154] Shlaim, *Collusion*, 621–22.
[155] Israeli government meetings 23 February 1949, 11-12; 17 September 1949, 8-17, ISA; Heikal, *Memoirs*, 2: 331–32, 366; Heikal, *Memoirs*, 3: 49–56; Shakib, *The 1948 War*, 513–16; Mohamed Hasaneen Heikal, *Crisis of the Thrones, Trauma of the Armies* [أزمة العروش صدمة الجيوش] (Dar al-Shuruq, 2002), 41–44, 191–206.
[156] Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims* (Knopf, 1999), 263–65.

about to begin with. Either the parties preferred to leave things as they were, or at the very most to accept peace under unrealistically favourable terms.

Conclusions: The 1948 War

The scope of the UN peacekeeping goals and actions changed three times throughout the 1948 War, thus demonstrating the UN's dynamic nature. The first period saw the grand Resolution 181, followed by a general UN reticence to act. While the Palestine Commission and Lie pushed for a proactive approach, they lacked the means to execute it alone. The second phase was characterised by the focus and centralisation of UN policy for the sake of the cessation of the war. Truces were accomplished but did not last, and a permanent political solution could not be secured. The third stage saw greater aspirations for a permanent solution, along with greater pressure exerted by the UN organs and envoys on the belligerents. Peace was still nowhere to be found, but armistice agreements were signed and ended the war.

The attitude of the belligerents toward the UN policies remained somewhat consistent throughout the period. At any given time, at least one of the two parties rejected full peace, and this disinclination is what failed Resolution 181, the Palestine Commission efforts, the Bernadotte Plans, and the PCC dialogue. The Arabs sought to eliminate the Zionist state in historical Palestine since they considered it illegitimate, whereas Israel gradually grew reluctant to accept any peace that would entail major territorial concessions or the repatriation of the Palestinian refugees. Nevertheless, the belligerents' resistance to formal peace did not render peacekeeping altogether impossible. Both parties were pragmatic enough to consider minimal arrangements that would curb hostilities whenever it suited their interests. Additionally, they were mostly careful not to overly antagonise the UN and responded to the organisation's threats of sanctions when these were made. The UN envoys successfully utilised these openings to advance several important peacekeeping goals, such as the Security Council's truces or Bunche's armistices.

All in all, the UN organs mostly prevailed when they chose between little goals and big actions. The first winning strategy was to promote a modest goal that also aligned with the private interests of the belligerents, like with the case of Bunche's armistices. The second successful approach was to promote a more ambitious solution, and then to ensure the compliance of the belligerents through pressure, such as with the case of the Security Council truces. Most of the time however, the UN organs failed for having chosen a fatal combination of big dreams and little implementation. In the

good case, such initiatives were simply dismissed by the belligerents and eventually faded away, like with the Bernadotte plans or the PCC dialogue. In worse cases, such behaviour served to damage the credibility of the UN and/or to exacerbate the conflict, for example when the adoption of Resolution 181 and subsequent UN passiveness triggered the war to begin with.

Chapter 2 – The 1956 Sinai Campaign: Turning Away

Following the 1949 general armistice agreements, Israel and its Arab neighbours entered a new phase that is often referred to as the 'armistice regime'. As part of this system, the countries were formally bound by armistice agreements, although sporadic violence did erupt on the borders as Israel sought to solidify its position whereas the Arabs readied for a second round of war.[1] The main guardian of the armistice regime was UNTSO, which was divided into four Mixed Armistice Commissions (MACs), one for each Arab-Israeli front. The MACs' function was to reduce the tensions between the parties by creating a military dialogue between them, and to help them resolve incidents in a non-violent way, as is detailed later in this chapter.[2] But despite UNTSO's best intentions, tensions remained high. Israeli Chief of Staff Moshe Dayan listed the three main grievances that Israel still harboured against the Arab states after the 1948 War: first, shortly after signing the armistice agreements many Arab leaders announced their desire to relaunch attacks against Israel. Second, Arab infiltrators, named 'Fedayun' in Arabic, entered Israel and attacked Israeli soldiers and civilians. The Fedayun were often directed by Arab governments, and primarily by Egypt. Third, Cairo denied passage to ships bound to/from Israel through the Egyptian-controlled Suez Canal and the Straits of Tiran, thus crippling Israel's foreign trade.[3] Meanwhile, the Egyptians accused Israel of anti-Arab aggression and expansionism, as well as of the violation of UN resolutions concerning the national, territorial, and refugee rights of the Palestinians.[4] This tenson ultimately fuelled the Sinai Campaign, an Israeli attack on Egypt beside Britain and France as part of the greater Suez Crisis.

As explained in the literature review, existing scholarship has mostly consisted of international histories dedicated to the Anglo-French-Egyptian component of the Suez Crisis, and relatively little was written in terms of UN histories and national histories about the diplomacy surrounding the Sinai Campaign and its buildup. Therefore, this chapter focuses on the academic 'underdogs' of the Suez Crisis: the UN organs, Egypt, and Israel. It is divided into three sections, each depicting one stage in UN attitude toward the Egyptian-Israeli front in the years 1952-1957. The first phase (1952 – November 1955) was a phase of marginalisation; following the 1948 War and the failed peace process of the PCC, the UN organs grew tired of dealing with the Arab-Israeli conflict, despite potential dovish trends in

[1] Theobald, 'Watching the War', 30.
[2] Israeli reports from EIMAC, file 717-1338/1979, The Israeli Defence Forces Archive (IDFA); Elmo H. Hutchison, *Violent Truce* (The Devin-Adair Company, 1958), 6.
[3] Moshe Dayan, *Diary of the Sinai Campaign* (Da Capo Press, 1966), 3–10.
[4] For example: 'Al-Arsh's Speech' [Arabic], *al-Ahram*, 17 January 1950, 1; 'If Israel Implemented' [Hebrew], *Davar*, 15 June 1953, 1; 'Decisive Conversation' [Arabic], *al-Ahram*, 23 May 1955, 1.

Egypt and Israel. The second stage (November 1955 – October 1956) saw the Westernisation of the conflict; Egypt's nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company created an international crisis that redirected global attention back to Egypt, albeit Egyptian-Israeli relations remained secondary in relation to the Suez Canal affair. The UN was also sidelined, as most of the significant diplomacy surrounding the crisis took place outside New York. The third period (October 1956 – March 1957) was a time of 'UN-isation'; the Anglo-French-Israeli attack on Egypt led to a temporary convergence of the Suez Crisis with the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the UN was finally brought in to secure a ceasefire and arrange for the evacuation of the foreign armies from Egypt and for the reopening of the Suez Canal. However, little was done to prevent future Egyptian-Israeli hostilities.

On a broader scale, this chapter demonstrates that the dynamic goals of the UN organs shrunk considerably in 1956 compared to those sought in the late stages of the 1948 War, from comprehensive peacemaking to the tactical remedy of short-term hostilities. This minimalistic approach, led by UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, successfully secured a quick foreign military evacuation from Egypt but did little to improve Arab-Israeli security in the longer run. Meanwhile, Egypt and Israel again tended to cooperate with UN initiatives mostly when it served their private interests and were both partially successful in utilising the international organisation to their ends. New York's selective distance from the Middle East in 1956 would ultimately contribute to its involuntary dysfunctionality in later periods.

Marginalisation of the Conflict (1952 – November 1955)

The armistice regime was simply not enough to prevent an Egyptian-Israeli war in the 1950s. To understand why, it is noteworthy to begin by explaining how it worked. The Egyptian-Israeli MAC (EIMAC), like the other MACs, featured a team of UN observers and a panel of Arab and Israeli delegates, chaired by a UN peacekeeper.[5] The panel meetings allowed for the parties to warn each other of close-border manoeuvres, coordinate activities such as prisoner exchanges, and most often discuss Israeli and Egyptian complaints filed to EIMAC. Both delegations could file such complaints when they felt that the other party violated the armistice agreement. When a complaint was submitted, the MAC could decide to dispatch observers to investigate the violation, and if necessary to vote to

[5] Israeli reports from EIMAC, file 717-1338/1979, The Israeli Defence Forces Archive (IDFA); Hutchison, *Violent Truce*, 6.

condemn the responsible party, with the UN chairman acting as a tiebreaker between the delegations.[6] When an incident was perceived as severe, it was sometimes taken beyond the EIMAC and discussed directly at the Security Council. However, resolutions were seldom adopted. And when they were, they were absent of remedial steps or threats against noncompliance. For example, in 1950 the Security Council condemned Israel for the illegal expulsion of thousands of Palestinians from the Egyptian-Israeli border but took no steps to reverse the Israeli action.[7] Similarly, in 1951 the Security Council deemed the Egyptian naval blockade against Israel inconsistent with the armistice agreement and called for its abandonment, but did not enforce this.[8] In March 1954 the New Zealand delegation proposed to recall the 1951 resolution and urge Egypt once more to renounce the blockade, but the Soviet Union vetoed the draft in protection of Cairo.[9]

Apart from UNTSO's peacekeeping and occasional Security Council interventions, the UN's efforts to proactively resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict gradually faded away. The PCC that had been appointed to promote a peaceful settlement was reduced to what Forsythe defined as 'quasi-functionalism'; it shelved its project for a full Arab-Israeli peace for the sake of smaller and technical objectives like the unfreezing of blocked Arab bank accounts in Israel or the evaluation of the Arab refugee property left behind.[10] No avail came from other UN organs either. An examination of the Secretary-General annual reports and the General Assembly resolutions from 1950 to 1955 reveals that they were both mostly preoccupied with other international matters: decolonisation and new UN member states, proliferation of armament, and political crises in East Asia, most notably the Korean War. The issue of Palestine received minuscule attention in the form of the consideration of PCC and UNTSO reports, and some General Assembly resolutions directed at assisting the Palestinian refugees.[11] This in part reflected the shift in the priorities of the Superpowers: by now the Cold War had entered full swing, with Truman committing American troops to the fight against communism in Korea. Iran, South America, Asia –all became battlegrounds for the East-West confrontation, while attention to the Arab-Israeli conflict subsided.[12]

UNTSO itself was unfit to substitute the diplomatic work that had been done by the PCC and the former mediators Bernadotte and Bunche. Unlike them, its mandate was to oversee the armistices

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[6] Hutchison, *Violent Truce*, 6.
[7] Security Council Resolution S/RES/89, 17 November 1950, UNDL.
[8] Security Council Resolution S/RES/95, 1 September 1951, UNDL.
[9] Security Council documents S/PV.664, S/3188/Corr.1, 19-29 March 1954, UNDL.
[10] Forsythe, *United Nations Peacemaking*, 104.
[11] General Assembly documents A/1287, A/1844, A/2141, A/2404, A/2663, A/2911, 1949-1955, UNDL; General Assembly regular sessions 4-10, 1950-1956, GAOR.
[12] Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War*, America in Crisis (McGraw-Hill, 1997), 99–168.

rather than to promote positive diplomatic initiatives. As UNTSO Commander E. L. M. Burns put it, the organisation was 'not a peacemaking but at best a peacekeeping organisation'.[13]

Even when putting peace aside, scholars like Pelcovits and Comay, historical figures such as Burns and UNTSO Observer Elmo H. Hutchison, and original EIMAC documents pointed out various obstacles to UNTSO's supervision of the armistice agreements. The temporary and incomplete framework of the armistice agreements allowed for conflicting interpretations by the opposing parties,[14] and the degree of the UN's jurisdiction in the armistice system was equally vague.[15] The arbitration mechanism was manipulated by Israel and the Arab states for their private political gain,[16] and the understaffed observer mechanism struggled to keep up with the overflow of work.[17] The early 1950s were characterised therefore by a marginalisation of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the UN sphere compared to the late 1940s. No major peacemaking efforts were carried out by the organisation, and the reins were placed in the hands of UNTSO, which was unauthorised to pursue peace and underequipped to effectively preserve the armistice.

Ironically, it was precisely then that potentially positive Middle Eastern political changes took place. The first happened in Egypt: in 1952, the Free Officers staged a military coup and ousted King Farouk.[18] Gamal Abd al-Nasser, one of the most powerful Free Officers who would become Egypt's *de facto* president in 1954, remarked in his book that the fundamental purpose of the revolution was 'political and economic freedom'.[19] Sami Sharaf, who would become Nasser's undersecretary for intelligence affairs, elaborated that the Free Officers assumed control with four main goals in mind: liberating Egypt from foreign control; building strong Egyptian armed forces, to defend the revolution; promoting a plan for internal economic and social development; and building a united Arab front to support the Egyptian revolution, Arab security, and liberation movements everywhere.[20]

On 15 September 1952, Nasser scribbled down a few bullet points concerning Egypt's future foreign policy goals. The first two items on Nasser's list were the competition with Britain for regional influence, and the 'study on the situation of the Arab countries'.[21] Only third came the issue of Israel,

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[13] E. L. M. Burns, *Between Arab and Israeli* (Clarke, Irwin & Company Limited, 1962), 22.
[14] Pelcovits, *Armistice*, 44–45; Burns, *Between*, 6.
[15] Comay, *U.N. Peace-Keeping*, 23.
[16] Pelcovits, *Armistice*, 2–3; Burns, *Between*, 27–28.
[17] Israeli EIMAC reports, file 717-1338/1979, 30, IDFA; Hutchison, *Violent Truce*, 11.
[18] Oren, *Origins*, 13.
[19] Gamal Abd al-Nasser, *Egypt's Liberation* (Public Affairs Press, 1955), 71.
[20] Sami Sharaf, *Years and Days with Gamal Abd Al-Nasser [سنوات وأيام مع جمال عبد الناصر]* (The New Egyptian Office, 2014), 1: 175–76.
[21] Gamal Abd al-Nasser, *Gamal Abd Al-Nasser [جمال عبد الناصر]*, ed. Hoda Gamal Abd al-Nasser (The Egyptian General Organization for Books, 2015), 2: 87–90.

under which Nasser listed three bullet points. The first two seemed ominous: 'foreign colonialism', and 'the global Zionism'. But the third point was a curious question: '[what would be the] effect of a conciliation with Israel on Egypt's position and its goals?'. Hoda Gamal Abd al-Nasser, Nasser's daughter and biographer, dismissed this remark as being the result of British pressures on Egypt to reconcile with Israel in October 1952.[22] Regardless, these bullet points, along with the proposed goals of the revolution, indicate that the Free Officers prioritised other domestic and foreign goals over conflict with Israel. Furthermore, Nasser was willing to at least entertain the thought of an Egyptian-Israeli rapprochement. Another speech written by Nasser around 1955-1956 demonstrated that he retained his conviction that Britain, and not Israel, was the 'first enemy of the Arabs'.[23] And indeed, declassified Israeli and American information showed that Nasser's regime was engaged in direct and indirect negotiations with Israel until 1956 on the questions of borders, territory, and the Palestinian refugees.[24]

As Nasser consolidated his power, another political drama took place, this time in Israel. Ben-Gurion, who had led the country since its inception, decided in 1953 to resign from all his formal capacities due to fatigue.[25] Sharett, still the foreign minister, succeeded Ben-Gurion as head of the Mapai party and later as prime minister.[26] Much has been written about the different approaches of Sharett and his predecessor. Ben-Gurion, who was both prime minister and defence minister, favoured military reprisals as a means of discouraging the Arab states from allowing or supporting the Fedayun attacks. Sharett, a diplomat at heart, preferred international and UN pressure over armed actions.[27] Scholars have cast this as a debate between the 'activist' versus 'moderate' approaches. Shlaim, for example, discussed Ben-Gurion and Sharett's clash of schools broadly,[28] whereas Morris focused on its manifestation during the bloody 1953 reprisal against the Jordanian village of Qibya, strongly opposed by Sharett and advocated by Ben-Gurion and his supporters.[29] Caplan clarified that Sharett's moderation did not mean that he downplayed Israeli defence considerations, but rather saw the resort to

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[22] Abd al-Nasser, *Gamal Abd Al-Nasser*, 2: 87–94.
[23] Gamal Abd al-Nasser, *Gamal Abd Al-Nasser [جمال عبد الناصر]*, ed. Hoda Gamal Abd al-Nasser (The Egyptian General Organization for Books, 2015), 3: 71.
[24] Zaki Shalom, 'Conversations and Contacts [שיחות ומגעים]', *Rise of Israel Review* 10 *[עיונים בתקומת ישראל]* 83–753 : (2000).
[25] 'Mapai Calls' [Hebrew], *Haboker*, 5 November 1953, 1-2; David Ben-Gurion, *Israel: Years of Challenge* (Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1963), 66–67; Golda Meir, *My Life* (G.P. Putnam's sons, 1975), 283; Moshe Dayan, *Milestones [אבני דרך]* (Idanim, 1976), 137–38.
[26] 'Sharett' [Hebrew], *Zmanim*, 24 November 1953, 1; 'M. Sharett' [Hebrew], *Al Hamishmar*, 26 January 1954, 1.
[27] Meir, *My Life*, 285.
[28] Avi Shlaim, 'Conflicting Approaches to Israel's Relations with the Arabs', *Middle East Journal* 37, no. 2 (1983): 180–201.
[29] Morris, *Israel's Border Wars*, 227–62.

force as acceptable only at times when it was the lesser of two evils, the other one being diplomacy.[30] It can be therefore surmised that while neither Nasser nor Sharett were pacifists, neither one of them was particularly interested in an Egyptian-Israeli war when they entered office. Nasser prioritised his foreign policy vis-à-vis Britain and the Arab world, as well as socioeconomic buildup; meanwhile, Sharett favoured a diplomatic approach over military actions. Regardless, the situation would escalate in 1954 and 1955 beyond their control, with the UN neglecting to respond to the challenge. The uncontrollable violence coupled with international apathy would set the stage for Israel's participation in the tripartite attack on Egypt in the 1956 Suez Crisis.

Providing an exhaustive list of the Arab-Israeli incidents throughout 1954-1955 would be impossible within the confines of this chapter, and has already been attempted by others like Oren and Morris.[31] Instead, it is important here to highlight the inaction of the UN in response to the escalation of Egyptian-Israeli border incidents between February and November 1955. A good starting point is the February 1955 Gaza Raid, arguably the most important watershed in Egyptian-Israeli relations in the early 1950s. The affair began on 26 February 1955, when Fedayun ambushed and killed a bicyclist near Rehovot. This action was particularly painful for Israel, as the infiltrators struck deep inside Israeli territory. Additionally, the Egyptian authorities refused to search for the perpetrators even though footprints from the scene clearly led back to Gaza. Sharett became worried: surely, Ben-Gurion, who had meanwhile returned to politics as defence minister, would demand a reprisal against Egypt. On the following day, Ben-Gurion and Dayan came into Sharett's office. First, they presented Sharett with evidence that suggested that the attackers in Rehovot were collaborators of the Egyptian intelligence. Then, they suggested a retaliatory attack on an Egyptian camp on the outskirts of Gaza City. The plan was not meant to involve any major casualties – only the destruction of buildings. Sharett approved the plan, hoping thus to satisfy the public's hunger for revenge. Operation 'Black Arrow', known as the Gaza Raid, took place on the night of 28 February 1955. It turned out to be very different from what had been presented to Sharett – according to Dayan, owing to bad intelligence. A bloody battle erupted, in which 36 Egyptian soldiers and two civilians were killed; 29 soldiers and two civilians were also wounded. On the Israeli side, eight soldiers died and 13 sustained injuries. Sharett noted in his diary with fear that what had happened was possibly his greatest failure as prime minister.[32]

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[30] Neil Caplan, 'Israel v. Oom-Shmoom, Sharett v. Ben-Gurion', *Israel Studies* 25, no. 1 (2020): 31.
[31] Oren, *Origins*; Morris, *Israel's Border Wars*.
[32] Security Council document S/3373, 17 March 1955, 1, UNDL; Dayan, *Milestones*, 142; Morris, *Israel's Border Wars*, 324–27.

Nasser did not immediately make a public announcement on the Gaza Raid. But on 6 July 1955 he gave a speech at Fayum and promised: 'after Israel's treacherous attack on Gaza on 28 February, we shall never again be deceived by statements or calls for peace. We shall defend ourselves, our dignity, our wives, our children, to the last drop of blood'.[33] The incident was a major turning point under the surface as well. Mahmoud Riad, then the Egyptian ambassador in Damascus, claimed that until the Gaza Raid, Nasser heavily prioritised domestic development. But when he saw what Ben-Gurion had orchestrated, he became convinced that Israel was headed for war, and therefore was compelled to invest more into military buildup.[34] Sharaf added that Nasser was concerned that the Gaza Raid was only an Israeli probe, preceding a wider military offensive, possibly to topple the Egyptian regime.[35] Mohamed Hasaneen Heikal, Nasser's confidante and editor of the Egyptian newspaper 'al-Ahram', recounted that after the raid, Nasser promised the Egyptian army that Egypt would retaliate against Israel both politically and militarily.[36]

As for the UN response to the dramatic Gaza Raid, EIMAC condemned Israel for the action. Burns also produced a report summarising information on Egyptian-Israeli clashes and sent it to New York on 17 March 1955. He proposed four measures that could assist in preventing the recurrence of such incidents: joint Egyptian-Israeli patrols along sensitive sections of the demarcation line; the negotiation of a local commanders' agreement; the placing of barbed wire obstacles along certain points of the border; and the manning of all outposts and patrols by regular Egyptian troops,[37] instead of irregular Palestinian guerrilla fighters who were less disciplined than the Egyptian troops.[38] On 29 March 1955 the Security Council joined EIMAC in condemning Israel for the attack,[39] and on the following day adopted a second resolution calling upon the parties to cooperate with Burns with regards to his four proposals.[40] But again, apart from condemnations, neither sanctions nor practical steps forward were advanced.

The inadequate international reaction prompted the Egyptian government to take unilateral steps that contributed to the regional tensions. First, Nasser sought to speedily acquire weapons;[41] having failed to secure Western supplies, he appealed to the Soviet Union through the Chinese Premier

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[33] 'The President's Speech' [Arabic], *al-Ahram*, 7 July 1955, 8; Abd al-Nasser, *Gamal Abd Al-Nasser*, 2:480.
[34] Mahmoud Riad, *Memoirs of Mahmoud Riad [مذكرات محمود رياض]* (Dar al-Mustaqbal al-Arabi, 1985), 27.
[35] Sharaf, *Years and Days*, 1:180–81.
[36] Mohamed Hasaneen Heikal, *Cutting the Lion's Tail* (Arbor House, 1987), 67.
[37] Security Council document S/3373, 17 March 1955, 9, UNDL.
[38] Burns, *Between*, 70–72.
[39] Security Council Resolution S/RES/106, 29 March 1955, UNDL.
[40] Security Council Resolution S/RES/107, 30 March 1955, UNDL.
[41] Abd al-Nasser, *Gamal Abd Al-Nasser*, 3:278.

Zhou Enlai at the Bandung Conference in April 1955.[42] The Soviets agreed to help and shipped to Egypt through Czechoslovakia large quantities of cutting-edge weapons. Israeli officials claimed that the Czech arms deal placed Israel at a significant military disadvantage and convinced them that Cairo was preparing to attack.[43] It is noteworthy that scholars are divided as to the actual impact of the Czech arms deal on Israeli-Egyptian relations. Some, like Bar-On and Tal, believe that it was a significant accelerant in the bilateral escalation,[44] while others such as Golani and Laron are more sceptical of its practical importance.[45] Egypt's second reaction was to intensify its blockade in the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Aqaba. For example, on 10 April 1955, Egyptian authorities prevented the arrival of a British ship crossing the Gulf of Aqaba to Israel. Two other ships were blacklisted for their frequent journeys to the Haifa Port.[46] The third reaction was the Egyptian 20 October 1955 defence pact signed with Syria, which established a joint military command for the two countries.[47] The Israelis viewed this agreement as an aggressive alliance against Israel.[48]

The most immediate ramification of the Gaza Raid however, was that Egypt let the Fedayun loose on the border, which led to more frequent and painful incursions into Israel. These attacks induced Ben-Gurion to challenge Sharett's diplomatic approach. In the night between 24 and 25 March, infiltrators attacked a wedding at Moshav Patish, killing one civilian and wounding 22 others.[49] Sharett preferred to appeal to the Security Council; Ben-Gurion proposed to militarily occupy Gaza.[50] The two came head-to-head in three government meetings in late March to early April. Sharett prevailed; Ben-Gurion's proposal failed with five votes in favour and nine votes against. Sharett concluded in his diary: 'Thus, we were saved from a disaster, the end of which no one could tell'.[51] But Sharett's triumph was temporary. To his displeasure, the Security Council's condemnation of the Gaza Raid lacked any mention of the Kfar Patish attack, which he felt was biased[52] and left him little to work with. Shortly thereafter, on 3 April, an Egyptian military outpost attacked an Israeli border patrol and shelled the Israeli settlement of Nahal Oz. Two Israeli soldiers were killed and 15 sustained injuries. At the 4

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[42] Sharaf, *Years and Days*, 1:183; Heikal, *Cutting*, 69; Riad, *Memoirs*, 27.
[43] Dayan, *Diary*, 4–5; Ben-Gurion, *Years*, 4–5.
[44] Mordechai Bar-On, *The Gates of Gaza* (St. Martin's Press, 1995), 1–13; David Tal, 'Introduction', in *The 1956 War: Collusion and Rivalry in the Middle East*, ed. David Tal (Routledge, 2013).
[45] Motti Golani, 'The Historical Place of the Czech-Egyptian Arms Deal, Fall 1955', *Middle East Studies* 31, no. 4 (1995): 803–27; Guy Laron, '"Logic Dictates That They May Attack When They Feel They Can Win:"', *The Middle East Journal* 63, no. 1 (2009): 69–84.
[46] Sharaf, *Years and Days*, 1:192.
[47] Riad, *Memoirs*, 28–29; Sharaf, *Years and Days*, 1:181; Heikal, *Cutting*, 66–67.
[48] Ben-Gurion, *Years*, 78.
[49] Morris, *Israel's Border Wars*, 331–32.
[50] Sharett's Diary, entries 25, 27 March 1955.
[51] Sharett's Diary, entry 3 April 1955; Morris, *Israel's Border Wars*, 332.
[52] Sharett's Diary, entry 3 April 1955.

April government meeting, Sharett again suggested to appeal to the Security Council. Ben-Gurion questioned this proposal, saying that even if a resolution was to be adopted, it would probably be insufficient. He contended that due to frequent Egyptian armistice violations, Israel had to force Egypt to renegotiate their mutual arrangements. Otherwise, Israel would have to occupy Gaza. While Sharett once more was able to push back against Ben-Gurion, the latter's proposal only barely failed with six votes in favour and six against.[53] Sharett lamented in his diary: 'I saw myself as surviving the danger by the skin of my teeth. This government was one step away from inflicting an international calamity upon the state. I was one step away from announcing my resignation this morning'.[54]

The Israeli complaint was discussed in the Security Council on 6 and 19 April, with Eban listing the March-April border incidents. The Egyptian Representative Omar Loutfi on the other hand reminded the Security Council of the savagery of the Gaza Raid, which had sparked the current wave of violence. The Security Council decided to adjourn its debate without adopting any resolution, with the Security Council president simply asking the parties 'to do everything in their power' to respect former resolutions.[55] Throughout this local drama and international indifference, Burns tried to placate the Egyptian and Israeli governments with his limited means. Armed with the Security Council's 30 March resolution encouraging his mediation efforts, he tried to bring the Egyptians to repress the cross-border firing and the road mining, and the Israelis to stop patrolling provocatively and unnecessarily close to the border.[56] Burns met Dayan on 11 April and the main topic discussed was Burns's proposal to conduct joint Israeli-Egyptian patrols; Dayan's reaction was lukewarm, but he promised to transmit the offer to Ben-Gurion.[57] The UNTSO commander also met on 11 April with Major General Ahmed Salem, commander of the Egyptian forces in the Gaza Strip. The Egyptians requested to place UN observers in positions on the Egyptian side of the demarcation line, which was an encouraging sign. Burns felt that the problem was with the Palestinian irregulars, who were holding part of the line and did not necessarily respect the Egyptian rules of engagement.[58]

On 30 May 1955, another major Egyptian attack commenced, similar in pattern to the Nahal Oz incident. Egyptian forces fired on an Israeli patrol close to the border and bombarded the Israeli settlements of Nirim and Ein Hashlosha. Two Israelis were killed and eight were injured – four of them

[53] Israeli government meeting 4 April 1955, 13-24, ISA; Morris, *Israel's Border Wars*, 333.
[54] Sharett's Diary, entry 4 April 1955.
[55] Security Council meetings S/PV.697-698, 6-19 April 1955, UNDL.
[56] Burns, *Between*, 75.
[57] Burns-Dayan meeting, 11 April 1955, file 56-637/1956, 164-169, IDFA.
[58] Burns, *Between*, 75.

civilians. On the Egyptian side, one soldier was killed and three were wounded.[59] UN observers happened to witness the incident and reported that it was instigated by the Egyptians.[60] EIMAC Chairman F. X. Giacomaggi, warned Burns that he was convinced that the Egyptian officers were misinforming Cairo regarding the developments on the border.[61] On Sharett's orders, the Israeli Foreign Ministry Director-General Walter Eytan met with Burns on 31 May and told him that Israel was taking a most serious view on the events of the previous day. The two agreed that Burns should go to Cairo urgently and warn Nasser of the dangers that lay in further escalations. Simultaneously, the foreign ministry would write a telegram to Hammarskjöld, who was staying in Paris at the time.[62]

Burns's meeting with Nasser took place on 4 June 1955. Burns found that Giacomaggi was right: the Egyptian prime minister had factually incorrect information regarding how the 30 May incident had transpired. Burns felt that he successfully convinced Nasser that he had been given false reports. He also warned Nasser of the dangerous mood of the Israelis and suggested to him practical steps to alleviate the border situation, such as the removal of the Palestinian irregulars from the local garrison or the marking of the demarcation line.[63] Nasser's reply was that after the Gaza Raid, he could no longer rely on the good intentions of the Israelis, and his men had to look to their own protection. He proposed to have both parties withdraw their posts and patrols one kilometre away from the demarcation line, but was unwilling to issue drastic orders imposing passivity on his men in Gaza.[64] It was also possible to arrange the 'Kilo 95 talks', Egyptian-Israeli negotiations on Burns's four proposals from March. The discussions, however, proved disappointing. Burns describes that the 'very frustrating' process took place sporadically over two months, starting from 28 June. There were numerous procedural and substantive disagreements and very little progress was achieved. The talks ended abruptly when Israel raided Gaza again, in late August.[65]

The situation politically and emotionally destabilised Sharett. On 31 July he noted in his diary that he had become isolated on security issues and had to rely on coalition partners beyond his own party to suppress Ben-Gurion and his followers. He was anxious to resign. A few days earlier elections had taken place in Israel, and it was becoming clear that Ben-Gurion was going to reassume the premiership and lead the next coalition. Sharett acquiesced to stay a little longer, to protect Israeli

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[59] 'Two Killed' [Hebrew], *Zmanim*, 31 May 1955, 1; Morris, *Israel's Border Wars*, 336.
[60] Burns, *Between*, 78.
[61] Burns, *Between*, 79.
[62] Sharett's Diary, entry 31 May 1955; Burns, *Between*, 78–79.
[63] Burns, *Between*, 79–80.
[64] Burns, *Between*, 79–80.
[65] Sharett's Diary, entry 6 July 1955; Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, 136; Burns, *Between*, 80–84.

politics and his foreign ministry.[66] Regardless, it was clear that his era was ending. The last months of Sharett's premiership went poorly in terms of border frictions with Egypt. The Kilo 95 talks fell apart, and on 25 August a new series of organised Egyptian attacks against Israeli forces and civilians took place. On 28 August, UNTSO observers found a wounded Arab man, who admitted to having been released from the Egyptian jail to lead an infiltration into Israel. On 30 August Burns appealed to the parties to enter a ceasefire. Egypt agreed, but Israel demanded that Cairo should assume responsibility for the latest Fedayun attacks – which the Egyptians were naturally disinclined to do. On 31 August Israel launched a major reprisal in Khan Yunis; the Egyptians counted more than 20 dead, with a like number wounded. Domestic pressure mounted for Cairo to take revenge.[67]

Between 29 August and 4 September, the Israeli UN delegation submitted several letters for review by the Security Council. These reiterated Egypt's withdrawal from the Kilo 95 talks and the acts of aggression on the border. The last letter even conveyed official statements made by foreign ministry officials, who indirectly threatened that Israel might take military action if Egyptian attacks were to resume.[68] But the Security Council did not rush to convene, and its agenda remained unchanged.[69] On 4 September, and without Security Council intervention, the parties finally accepted Burns's 31 August ceasefire proposal. However, Burns's 5 September report regretted the failure of the Kilo 95 talks. It also concluded that the only way to prevent further violence was if the parties were effectively separated by a physical obstacle along the demarcation line, and if in addition defensive positions and patrols were kept at least 500 metres from the line.[70] Only after this, on 8 September, did the Security Council convene. It is somewhat ironic that one of the first comments made in the session was that of the British Representative Pierson Dixon, who stated that 'It must, of course, be our first aim to say and do nothing to disturb the prevailing conditions of calm or to upset the ceasefire which is fortunately now in operation'.[71] And indeed they did not: the Security Council adopted a lean resolution, only noting with approval the acceptance of the unconditional ceasefire and calling for the parties to collaborate with UNTSO.[72] Once again there were no constructive instructions, no threats of sanctions and not even a direct reference to the steps recommended by Burns.

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[66] Sharett's Diary, entries 28, 31 July 1955; 09, 13 August 1955; 'Election Results' [Hebrew], *Zmanim*, 27 July 1955, 2; Burns, *Between*, 82.
[67] Israeli government meetings 28 August 1955, 22-36; 30 August 1955, 2-5, ISA; Burns, *Between*, 86–90; Heikal, *Cutting*, 74; Morris, *Israel's Border Wars*, 349–51.
[68] Security Council documents S/3426-3428, 30 August-2 September 1955, UNDL.
[69] Security Council documents S/3424, S/3429, 29 August-6 September 1955, UNDL.
[70] Security Council document S/3430, 5 September 1955, UNDL.
[71] Security Council meeting S/PV.700, 8 September 1955, 3, UNDL.
[72] Security Council Resolution S/RES/108, 8 September 1955, UNDL.

From September to November 1955, the Israeli and Egyptian armies occupied and competed for control over the al-Auja Demilitarised Zone (DMZ); the Egyptian-Czech arms deal was announced, and the blockade was tightened; border incidents persisted; the joint Egypt-Syria military command was established; and on 22 October 1955, Dayan was recalled from a vacation by Ben-Gurion, soon to be prime minister, to prepare for the capture of the Straits of Tiran in order to ensure the freedom of Israeli shipping through the Gulf of Aqaba.[73] Ben-Gurion finally reassumed the premiership on 2 November 1955. In his inaugural speech, he said that the new government's priority was going to be security. He denounced the Egyptian-Czech arms deal and Cairo's bellicose rhetoric, declaring that 'Nazi theory resounded on the banks of the Nile'. He added that the Israeli government was willing to implement the armistice agreement in full, but the same responsibility lay with the Egyptians. And if the border was to be open for terrorists and murderers – it would no longer be closed before defenders and gatekeepers. If Israel's rights should be violated on land or in sea, then Israel would retain its freedom of action.[74]

Sharett remained foreign minister for a while longer.[75] In early June 1956 Ben-Gurion removed him from this office as well.[76] Golda Meir, the labour minister who had supported Ben-Gurion in his calls to occupy Gaza in March-April 1955, replaced Sharett as foreign minister. In mid-September 1956 Sharett was made an ambassador of goodwill and was sent to Southeast Asia for a diplomatic tour.[77] By 29 October, when the Israeli invasion into Sinai commenced, Sharett was in Delhi; he had no idea that war was about to start.[78]

Westernisation of the Conflict (November 1955 – October 1956)

While Ben-Gurion's reinauguration increased the likelihood of an Egyptian-Israeli collision, it was not enough to tip the scale. Although in December 1955 and January 1956 Israeli decision-makers continued to contemplate bellicose action against Egypt, and Ben-Gurion was convinced that Israel would prevail if such a clash took place, the government still hesitated. The ministers primarily dreaded that such a war could damage Israel's relations with the Superpowers and pit Israel militarily

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[73] Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, 136; Heikal, *Cutting*, 75; Dayan, *Diary*, 5, 11–12; Oren, *Origins*, 31; Burns, *Between*, 44, 94–97, 123–25; Eliahu Elath, *Beyond the Fog of the Days [מבעד לערפל הימים]* (Yad Yitzhak Ben Zvi, 1989), 70; Hutchison, *Violent Truce*, 114.
[74] 'Ben-Gurion' [Hebrew], *Hazofe*, 3 November 1955, 1-3.
[75] Sharett's Diary, 1 November 1955.
[76] Sharett's Diary, entry 3 June 1956; 'Diplomatic Enquiries' [Hebrew], *Al Hamishmar*, 25 June 1956, 1; Eban, *Abba Eban*, 202.
[77] 'M. Sharett' [Hebrew], *Davar*, 17 September 1956.
[78] Sharett's Diary, entries 29, 30 October 1956.

against a third party, be it other Arab states or even Britain.[79] This section will discuss the second stage of the prelude to the 1956 Suez Crisis, when Israel finally decided to attack Egypt. After a time of marginalisation, global attention was again focused on the Middle East. However, this did not stem from renewed interest in the Arab-Israeli conflict, but rather from the deterioration of Western-Egyptian relations. This would later culminate in the Anglo-French attack on Egypt, which Israel joined. Both of Israel's cardinal problems would thus be solved; not only would it have the chance to face off solely against Egypt, but also to do so accompanied by two Western goliaths. As for the UN, the renewed global attention did not yet translate into a meaningful UN role; in fact, most of the important international dealings between the West and Egypt took place outside the forums of the organisation.

Until sometime in 1955, the 'Tripartite Powers' – the United States, Britain, and France – sought friendly relations with Nasser's Egypt. Similarly, Nasser hoped to place himself somewhere between East and West, and to rely on at least some Western assistance for his projects. But gradually, these relations eroded.[80] In brief, among the main factors of deterioration were Egypt's inability to acquire arms from the West following the Gaza Raid and the subsequent Czech arms deal, which raised Western fears of Soviet penetration of the Middle East;[81] Egypt's refusal to join the Western-led regional alliance, the Baghdad Pact, and Cairo's establishment of a competing, all-Arab alliance with Syria, Saudi Arabia and Yemen;[82] the dismissal of British General John Bagot Glubb from the command of the Jordanian army, which Britain blamed on Nasser;[83] and French suspicion that Egypt was aiding the Algerian revolution against French rule.[84] Of particular importance was the Aswan Dam, an ambitious high dam that Egypt had decided to build around May 1955 and would later cause an explosion between Egypt and the West. The massive project was meant to provide Egypt with substantial irrigation and electricity resources and, according to some, to contest the Sudanese control

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[79] Israeli government meetings 8 January 1956, 36-87; 15 January 1956, 6-7, ISA; Dayan, *Milestones*, 174–75.
[80] Selwyn Lloyd, *Suez 1956: A Personal Account* (Coronet Books, 1980), 26, 59–60; Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, 136; Abd al-Nasser, *Gamal Abd Al-Nasser*, 3:111; Dwight Eisenhower, *Waging Peace, 1956-1961* (Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1960), 23.
[81] The Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1955-1957, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1955, vol. XIV, document 226; British cabinet meeting, 4 October 1955, file CAB/128/29, 9-10, TNA; Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, 136; Lloyd, *Suez 1956*, 28–29; Anthony Eden, *Full Circle* (Cassell & Company, 1960), 329–30; Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 24–25; Sharaf, *Years and Days*, 1:185; Heikal, *Cutting*, 66; Riad, *Memoirs*, 37; Abd al-Nasser, *Gamal Abd Al-Nasser*, 2:481–88.
[82] Nigel J. Ashton, *Eisenhower, Macmillan, and the Problem of Nasser*, Studies in Military and Strategic History (MacMillan Press, 1996), 47–53; Sharaf, *Years and Days*, 1:180–82; Riad, *Memoirs*, 38; Heikal, *Cutting*, 61–62; Abd al-Nasser, *Gamal Abd Al-Nasser*, 2:477–79.
[83] Ashton, *Eisenhower, Macmillan, and Nasser*, 61,72; Eden, *Full Circle*, 348; Sharaf, *Years and Days*, 1:193; Heikal, *Cutting*, 94–97.
[84] Christian Pineau, *1956 Suez* (Robert Laffont, 1976), 40–47; Eden, *Full Circle*, 435; Heikal, *Cutting*, 99; Riad, *Memoirs*, 28.

over the Nile River.[85] It was going to be costly: Cairo estimated that its construction would necessitate around 200 million Egyptian pounds, and therefore sought external funding.[86] Toward the end of 1955 the United States, Britain and the World Bank negotiated with Egypt the terms of a loan for the implementation of the project.[87] While London and Washington questioned the prudence of such a grandiose financial enterprise,[88] they eventually acquiesced, partially due to their fear that without Western patronage, the Egyptians would again seek the help of Moscow.[89]

During that time, the UN's activity vis-à-vis the Arab-Israeli conflict remained limited. Despite warnings by UNTSO that the situation was volatile, the Superpowers were unenthusiastic to take any significant action to remedy the Egyptian-Israeli tension.[90] Burns was busy implementing three measures that Hammarskjöld had suggested to relieve the tensions in the al-Auja DMZ.[91] In December 1955, Eban complained that Egyptian aggression against Israel continued unabated.[92] In January 1956, Hammarskjöld visited Cairo and Jerusalem himself, to persuade both governments to accept his three points; Israel first accepted his proposals but retracted its agreement later that month. Border incidents meanwhile continued uninterrupted.[93] Also in January, the Security Council adopted Resolution 111, which condemned an Israeli attack on Syria on 11 December 1955, but again did little beyond that; it only called for the parties to cooperate with Burns and UNTSO.[94]

In March 1956, however, it seemed as though the Western countries finally decided to refer the Arab-Israeli dispute to the UN. The first reason had nothing to do with the Arab-Israeli conflict: growing Western concerns about Egypt. British Prime Minister Anthony Eden and his Secretary of Foreign Affairs Selwyn Lloyd became convinced around March that Nasser was unwilling to cooperate with the West, and that he favoured collaboration with Moscow in a bid for Middle Eastern dominance. Their prescribed response was to tackle Nasser with the help of Washington. They also contemplated deterring Nasser from moving forward with his plans by arming Israel,[95] an indication that strengthening Israel was perceived as a means to counter Egyptian influence. American

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[85] 'Cairo Submitted' [Hebrew], *Lamerchav*, 23 May 1955, 2.
[86] 'Cairo Submitted' [Hebrew], *Lamerchav*, 23 May 1955, 2; Abd al-Nasser, *Gamal Abd Al-Nasser*, 3: 111.
[87] Abd al-Nasser, *Gamal Abd Al-Nasser*, 3: 155–56.
[88] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 30–31; Lloyd, *Suez 1956*, 41.
[89] British cabinet meeting, 22 February 1956, file CAB/128/30, 4, TNA; FRUS, 1955-1957, Arab-Israeli Dispute, vol. XIV, document 433; FRUS, 1955-1957, Arab-Israeli Dispute, January 1-July 26, 1956, vol. XV, document 123.
[90] Burns, *Between*, 97–98.
[91] Burns, *Between*, 98, 104–6.
[92] Security Council document S/3482, 8 December 1955, UNDL.
[93] Burns, *Between*, 134–35; Oren, *Origins*, 33.
[94] Security Council Resolution S/RES/111, 19 January 1956, UNDL.
[95] British cabinet meeting, 21 March 1956, file CAB/128/30, 4-6, TNA; Ashton, *Eisenhower, Macmillan, and Nasser*, 70–74.

Undersecretary of State Herbert Hoover had conveyed similar ideas about Nasser to President Dwight Eisenhower on 16 March.[96] As time would tell, this was the primary reason for UN action. The second, lesser reason to address the Arab-Israeli issue was that another spike was registered in Arab-Israeli violence. Specifically on the Egyptian front, in March a total of 150 complaints were filed to EIMAC, as opposed to 63 in February.[97] On 14 March Eban submitted another letter to the president of the Security Council, warning of the 'grave situation' in the Gaza Strip,[98] and two days later Ben-Gurion wrote personally to Eisenhower, beseeching him to help prevent war.[99] Bar-On noted that by that time the Americans and the British became concerned that an Egyptian-Israeli war was imminent, and could serve to invite Communist influence into the Middle East.[100] All this combined finally led the American delegation to request on 21 March a Security Council discussion on the state of compliance with the general armistice agreements in Palestine.[101] Washington's original intention was to have the UN appoint a new Arab-Israeli mediator under the title of 'Agent General for the Near East', but they soon learned that Hammarskjöld preferred to conduct another round of mediation himself.[102]

In a series of Security Council sessions from 26 March to 4 April, to which the representatives of Israel and its Arab neighbours were also invited, the armistice agreements were discussed. There seemed to be a consensus among the members on the proposed American draft.[103] It was adopted unanimously on 4 April 1956 to become Resolution 113. Recalling Burns's unimplemented proposals, Resolution 113 requested the Secretary-General to survey the current state of compliance with the four armistice agreements and to arrange with the parties for the adoption of tension-reducing measures. This time the Resolution specifically named three such measures: withdrawal of the parties' forces from the demarcation lines, full freedom for the UN observers, and the establishment of local arrangements for the defusal of incidents.[104] Accordingly, Hammarskjöld returned to the Middle East on 6 April 1956.[105] Unlike his January visit, this time he mediated under the explicit auspices of the Security Council. In his preliminary report to the Security Council from 2 May, he stated that he had attempted to establish a general ceasefire between Israel and the Arab states, as the first step toward full compliance with the general armistice agreements. He proposed specific arrangements, to which

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[96] FRUS, 1955-1957, Arab-Israeli Dispute, January 1-July 26, 1956, vol. XV, Document 200.
[97] Israeli reports from EIMAC, File 717-1338/1979, 16-23, IDFA.
[98] Security Council document S/3559, 13 March 1956, UNDL.
[99] FRUS, 1955-1957, Arab-Israeli Dispute, January 1-July 26, 1956, vol. XV, document 201.
[100] Bar-On, *The Gates*, 115.
[101] Security Council document S/3561, 20 March 1956, UNDL.
[102] FRUS, 1955-1957, Arab-Israeli Dispute, January 1-July 26, 1956, vol. XV, document 192.
[103] Security Council meetings S/PV.717-722, 26 March-4 April 1956, UNDL.
[104] Security Council Resolution S/RES/113, 4 April 1956, UNDL.
[105] Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, 140.

both Egypt and Israel had agreed in an early stage. The other three Arab states had provided assurances as well, with some reservations.[106] On 9 May the Secretary-General released his full report. He highlighted four measures that had been proposed both by him and Burns: the erection of physical obstacles of separation on the demarcation lines, the marking of the demarcation lines and international frontiers, the formulation of local commanders' agreements, and joint patrols.[107] It is worthwhile to pause for a moment and ponder the framework that Hammarskjöld had chosen for himself. He narrowly sought to secure a ceasefire on the path back to the armistices, and noted in his report that he 'stayed strictly within the scope set by the Security Council resolution'.[108] He had no dreams of a diplomatic mission in the spirit of the PCC or Bernadotte. This was Hammarskjöld; a pragmatic tactician, very different from his visionary predecessor Lie, who dreamed of a UN that would be no less than an 'influential force for peaceful settlement, collective security, and meaningful international law'.[109]

Hammarskjöld's mission could at best be described as partially successful. With respects to Egypt and Israel, the Secretary-General was able to secure guarantees from both governments to uphold their armistice obligations, but these promises did not mature into major policy changes. In fact, even while Hammarskjöld was still present in the Middle East, breaches of the general armistice agreements persisted.[110] Regardless, his mission carried a symbolic importance: it signalled renewed Security Council interest in the Middle East. The backing that the Security Council members gave Hammarskjöld was further demonstrated in their meetings from 29 May to 4 June to discuss his mission.[111] They unanimously adopted Resolution 114. Its seven clauses commended the Secretary-General's work, called for the Middle Eastern countries to adhere to the arrangements already agreed upon and/or recommended by Burns and Hammarskjöld, and requested that the Secretary-General should continue his efforts toward the full implementation of Resolution 113 and the armistice agreements.[112]

But anticlimactically, this is where the UN momentum ended. Its main catalyst, the Western-Egyptian tensions, was also its terminator. Back in April the American and British governments had concluded that Nasser was, in the words of the American Secretary of State John Foster Dulles,

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[106] Security Council document S/3594, 2 May 1956, UNDL.
[107] Security Council document S/3596, 9 May 1956, UNDL.
[108] Security Council document S/3594, 2 May 1956, 1, UNDL
[109] Lie, *In the Cause*, 174.
[110] Burns, *Between*, 141–43, 148; Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, 142–45; Oren, *Origins*, 35; Dayan, *Diary*, 18; Ben-Gurion, *Years*, 100–101; Dayan, *Milestones*, 188.
[111] Security Council meetings S/PV.723-728, 29 May-4 June 1956, UNDL.
[112] Security Council Resolution S/RES/114, 4 June 1956, UNDL.

'irrevocably committed to the Soviets', and therefore decided to suspend various types of aid to Egypt, including the funds for the construction of the Aswan Dam.[113] In July, a month after the Security Council debates on Hammarskjöld's mediation, Dulles summoned the Egyptian Ambassador in Washington, Ahmad Hussein, to formally let him know that there were difficulties in delivering on the finance scheme of the dam.[114] Hussein reported to his government that Dulles's official excuse was economic: the Egyptian economy could not bear such a huge financial undertaking. However, Dulles also hinted at the real reason behind the divestment, noting that it would be especially difficult for Egypt to finance the dam given its latest major procurement of arms – alluding to the Czech arms deal.[115] The British government followed suit; on 20 July London also withdrew from the project, employing similar economic considerations as its pretext.[116] The divestment from the Aswan Dam immediately led Nasser to contemplate the nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company,[117] which was until then mainly under Anglo-French control. On 20 July, Nasser consulted this option with his colleagues, making sure that they understood that this action could mean war. Nasser's confidants said that they were ready, and later in the day the Egyptian cabinet unanimously approved the nationalisation.[118]

On 26 July the Egyptian government proclaimed the nationalisation and assumed control of the canal traffic.[119] In his historic speech after the nationalisation, Nasser provided several justifications for this demarche, the main ones being the protection of Egypt's national dignity, the release of Egypt from economic dependence and colonialism, and symbolic support for liberation movements everywhere.[120] Bassiouni and Naggar claimed that the nationalisation served to liberate Egypt from foreign political and economic control and fulfil the goals of the 1952 Revolution, while also dealing a blow to the prestige of France and Britain, which were the main shareholders of the Suez Canal Company.[121] Another significant advantage was economic: Arthur Lall, an Indian diplomat who worked closely with the Egyptians at that time, argued that Cairo first and foremost wanted to control the Suez Canal in order to enjoy the material benefits that such a central passageway provided, in the

[113] FRUS, 1955-1957, Arab-Israeli Dispute, January 1-July 26, 1956, vol. XV, documents 232, 243.
[114] Mahmoud Fawzi, *Suez 1956: An Egyptian Perspective* (Shorouk International, 1987), 31.
[115] Sharaf, *Years and Days*, 1: 212–13.
[116] Lloyd, *Suez 1956*, 71; Eden, *Full Circle*, 421.
[117] Sharaf, *Years and Days*, 1: 196.
[118] Sharaf, *Years and Days*, 1: 219–20.
[119] *Yearbook of the United Nations (1956)* (UN Department of Public Information, 1957), 19.
[120] 'The President Announces' [Arabic], *al-Ahram*, 27 July 1956, 1, 5, 8-9.
[121] Bassiouni, *Egypt*, 31–32; al-Naggar, 'The Suez Crisis'.

form of foreign exchange.[122] To this Naggar added that the Suez revenues could assist Egypt in financing the Aswan Dam despite the Western divestment.[123]

These developments, seemingly unrelated to peacekeeping between Israel and its neighbours, led the Tripartite Powers to freeze all UN diplomacy vis-à-vis Egypt, including the treatment of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Instead, they sought to apply international pressure on Cairo outside of the UN so that Nasser would capitulate and relinquish control of the Suez Canal. As a result, while Egypt suddenly became internationally interesting, the UN arbitration on both the Arab-Israeli and the Suez Canal questions was marginalised. Israel was equally sidelined and was largely left outside of any proposed international settlement regarding Suez, even though it had been subjected to an Egyptian naval blockade for years. The first symptoms of this new trend manifested themselves after the third visit of Hammarskjöld to the Middle East, late in July and shortly before the nationalisation. Hammarskjöld's Chief Assistant Brian Urquhart claimed that this trip demonstrated how much the Secretary-General's influence had waned since April.[124] He met Ben-Gurion, who was furious about what he considered to be the reduction of the armistice agreements to a mere ceasefire. Israel still refused to evacuate the al-Auja DMZ, which it had occupied, and prevented the free movement of UN observers there. In Egypt, the Secretary-General found Nasser bitter about the divestment from the Aswan Dam, and in no mood to reconsider the Egyptian standing with Israel. Frustrated with the result, Hammarskjöld told Burns that if Israel failed to provide a favourable response on the evacuation of al-Auja within 10 days, the matter should be referred to the Security Council.[125]

But this time, the Security Council was not coming to his aid. Instead, the Tripartite Powers embarked on their non-UN, international campaign against Egypt.[126] They first organised a conference of 24 countries in London to discuss the Suez Canal, the 'First London Conference'. Israel was not invited, as it was decided to separate the Suez issue from the Arab-Israeli dispute.[127] Egypt was invited but decided not to attend, as Cairo viewed the conference as a colonial attempt to meddle with its internal affairs. Furthermore, it questioned the legality of a supposedly international conference that took place outside the UN framework and hosted only a handful of countries.[128] Similar arguments

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[122] Arthur S. Lall, 'Arthur Lall', interview by Jean Krasno, 27 June 1990, 8, Yale - United Nations Oral History Project.
[123] Bassiouni, *Egypt*, 31; al-Naggar, 'The Suez Crisis', 316–17.
[124] Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, 153.
[125] Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, 153–54; Burns, *Between*, 159–63; Oren, *Origins*, 36–37.
[126] *UN Yearbook 1956*, 19; Pineau, *1956 Suez*, 101–3; Lloyd, *Suez 1956*, 107, 116; Eden, *Full Circle*, 449; Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 46–47.
[127] Eden, *Full Circle*, 436; Lloyd, *Suez 1956*, 107; Pineau, *1956 Suez*, 96.
[128] Abd al-Nasser, *Gamal Abd Al-Nasser*, 3: 205–7; Fawzi, *Suez 1956*, 52–54.

were later sounded at the conference by Soviet Foreign Minister Dmitri Shepilov.[129] The First London Conference began on 16 August, with 18 of its members supporting the proposal advanced by Dulles, which stipulated that while the Suez Canal was indisputably owned by Egypt, it should be managed by an international company.[130] The 18-Power Proposal, as it was now known, was presented to Nasser in Cairo by a subcommittee headed by Australian Prime Minister Robert Menzies.[131] Menzies arrived in Cairo on 3 September, but only three days later his mission fell apart.[132] The Egyptians felt that he was less of a negotiator and more of a Western agent who came to impose foreign conditions on Egypt.[133]

When this plan failed, the Tripartite Powers attempted another non-UN project: the formation of an association that would represent the principal users of the Suez Canal.[134] Dulles was the architect of the new initiative; he suggested that the association would hire its own pilots, manage navigation and ensure the consistent quality performance of the Suez Canal by itself.[135] This proposal was discussed in another conference, the Second London Conference, which started on 19 September and consisted of the 18 powers that had adopted the 18-Power Proposal.[136] While the conference agreed to form the proposed Users' Club, both Eden and French Foreign Minister Christian Pineau were frustrated with the slow diplomatic process and felt that the United States was moving tardily while time was on Nasser's side.[137]

The decision to hold two international conferences outside of the UN framework was not incidental. Eden explained that the precedents at the Security Council were unpromising, since Egypt had disregarded the UN resolutions guaranteeing Israel's naval passage through the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Aqaba. Furthermore, the possibility of a Soviet veto in the Security Council could potentially nullify any Western draft. The three Western allies thus agreed that referral to the Security Council was going to be a mistake.[138] Eden and Lloyd primarily pinned the blame on Washington; they claimed that their American colleagues refused to refer the matter of Suez to the Security Council during the First London Conference because they feared that the Security Council might sanction military action against Egypt, a course of action that Washington disapproved of.[139] However, it would appear that the

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[129] Dmitri Shepilov, *The Suez Problem* (Foreign Languages Publication House, 1956), 11, 18–33.
[130] Pineau, *1956 Suez*, 104.
[131] British cabinet meeting, 23 August 1956, file CAB/128/30, 3, TNA.
[132] Ellen Gray, 'Blind Loyalty?', *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 32, no. 1 (2021): 94; *UN Yearbook 1956*, 19.
[133] Fawzi, *Suez 1956*, 57–60; Heikal, *Cutting*, 150.
[134] British cabinet meeting, 11 September 1956, file CAB/128/30, 5-8, TNA.
[135] Eden, *Full Circle*, 462; Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 50–51.
[136] *UN Yearbook 1956*, 20; Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, 161; Lloyd, *Suez 1956*, 70, 144, 150.
[137] Eden, *Full Circle*, 491; Pineau, *1956 Suez*, 110; Dayan, *Diary*, 25.
[138] Eden, *Full Circle*, 426.
[139] Eden, *Full Circle*, 459; Lloyd, *Suez 1956*, 122–23.

responsibility lay primarily with the British and French leaderships, and even more so with Eden personally. Pogany rightfully explained that Britain and France were not necessary after what was 'right' or 'legal'; their main goal was to take revenge and humiliate Nasser due to his policy. These objectives naturally could not be pursued through the Security Council, which is why the two superpowers did not resort to UN action.[140] Contemporaries also mostly pointed their fingers at Eden. Eisenhower noted that his British counterpart insisted that recourse to the UN would take too long and imply global acceptance of Egypt's nationalisation. Eisenhower also commented that Eden's pessimism vis-à-vis a diplomatic approach to the problem was 'disturbing'.[141] Anthony Nutting, who was the British minister of state for foreign affairs and who would resign after the attack on Egypt commenced, recalled that when he suggested that the Suez question should be referred to the UN, Eden replied that the organisation 'proved to be a dead loss', and that a compromise with Nasser 'would only serve to whet his appetite and that I [Nutting] had to get into my head that this man [Nasser] must be destroyed before he destroyed all of us'.[142] Piers and Corrina Dixon, children and biographers of Pierson Dixon, agreed that during the First London Conference Eden felt that the UN would rule against Britain and France, 'and there are some who believe that as early as 13th September he was considering the immediate use of force'.[143]

And what of the Egyptians? Why did Cairo not raise the Suez question to the Security Council at that time? It could be argued that in doing so, it would have deflated the tilted international forums devised by the Tripartite Powers. Bassiouni hypothesised that it was a matter of timing; before addressing the UN, Egypt preferred to first consider its alternatives, defeat the international initiatives of its rivals, and clarify its position vis-à-vis Suez to other countries. Only after the two London conferences failed, and Egypt's international position was strengthened, the time was ripe for Cairo to seek UN counsel.[144] However, Bassioni's explanation does not account for the fact that France and Britain would ultimately be the ones to appeal to the UN, and not Egypt. Instead, it seems more likely that Cairo never intended to initiate a UN discussion on Suez whatsoever. By inviting such an international discussion, Egypt would have bound itself to an international verdict on the Suez Canal; Cairo found it more convenient to wholly reject any kind of international interference. As articulated by Nasser to Yugoslav President Josip Tito in a letter dated August 1956, 'the principle of international

[140] Pogany, *The Security Council*, 58–59.
[141] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 35–36.
[142] Anthony Nutting, *No End of a Lesson* (Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1967), 57–59.
[143] Pierson Dixon et al., *Double Diploma: The Life of Sir Pierson Dixon, Don and Diplomat* (Hutchison of London, 1968), 261.
[144] Bassiouni, *Egypt*, 130–31.

supervision over an indivisible part of our land contradicts our sovereignty… we are determined to resist any form of foreign control or protection'.[145]

The Egyptian activity in New York certainly reflected this viewpoint. On 25 September 1956, Loutfi spoke to the Soviet Representative Arkady Sobolev and they agreed that the Anglo-French complaints to the Security Council regarding Suez should be resisted under the argument that this topic was not within the Security Council's jurisdiction, but an internal Egyptian affair.[146] Similarly, when Egyptian Foreign Minister Mahmoud Fawzi came to New York, Hammarskjöld proposed to him that Cairo should request the formation of Security Council committee that would consider the Suez question, with Egypt included as a member. But later that day, Fawzi stressed to Shepilov that the Security Council was unqualified to discuss the administration of the canal, as its competence was limited to international peace and security, namely the prevention and stoppage of wars.[147] Still on the same day, Fawzi intimated to Jalal Abdu, the Iranian UN representative who was also the president of the Security Council, that Cairo was adamant not to accept any sort of international administration, participation, or observation of the Suez Canal, after it had only just rid itself of colonialism.[148] Cairo may have also been dissuaded by friendly statements made to Egyptians in New York. Shepilov for example told Fawzi that he objected to any referral of the Suez question to the Security Council, because the results could be unpredictable.[149] Fawzi may have also been reassured by Hammarskjöld's repeated and wrong assessments that the Western powers would not resort to force,[150] encouraging the Egyptians to simply bide their time and wait for the post-nationalisation shock to die out without any compromise on their part. Either way, all parties refrained from involving the UN until a late stage, and this fact dissatisfied Hammarskjöld. Before the First London Conference he wrote to Lloyd that it was wrong of the conference to make no reference to the UN.[151] In his conversations with Loutfi in mid-August, he expressed his scepticism about the conference and his confidence that the matter would eventually be referred to the organisation.[152]

Only after the conclusion of the Second London Conference and due to the Anglo-French frustration, on 23 September 1956 the Secretary-General's wish was granted: Britain and France

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[145] Mohamed Hasaneen Heikal, *The Suez Files [ملفات السويس]* (Dar al-Shuruq, 2004), 894–95.
[146] Heikal, *Suez*, 919.
[147] *Summary of the Important Documents on the Nationalisation of the Suez Canal and the Tripartite Aggression [موجز وثائق خاصة بتأميم قناة السويس والعدوان الثالث]* (Egyptian Deputy Prime Minister for Foreign Affairs, n.d.), 13–15.
[148] *Summary*, 14–15.
[149] *Summary*, 13–14.
[150] *Summary*, 7–8, 13.
[151] Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, 160.
[152] *Summary*, 4–7.

formally requested a Security Council debate on Suez.[153] And even then, Ashton and Pogany pointed out that the demarche did not stem from genuine belief in the UN's capacity to resolve the crisis. London and Paris hoped that if they initiated a Security Council debate, they could do what was legally and diplomatically necessary to precipitate a military action; deny initiative from all hostile powers, like Egypt or the Soviets, who could initiate such a debate on their own terms and in their own timing; and push the United States into seeing the Suez Crisis in Cold War terms – possibly creating a pretext for war.[154] In the Security Council sessions, which lasted until 13 October, the British and French delegations accused the Egyptian government of breaching international laws through the nationalisation of an international company, and of foiling the international efforts to peacefully resolve the crisis. They also proposed a draft that listed requirements that were to be met in any future settlement on the Suez Canal, considered the 18-Power Proposal fitting of those requirements, and called for Anglo-French-Egyptian talks to develop a plan no less effective than the 18-Power Proposal. Fawzi was allowed to speak and argued that it was within Egypt's rights to nationalise a company operating in its territory. He further reminded that the Egyptian government had done nothing to restrict or disrupt the foreign passage of ships through the Suez Canal since the nationalisation. The American delegation supported the Anglo-French draft and invited the governments involved to create a system that would defend the interests of the Suez Canal users. The Soviet delegation defended the Egyptian viewpoint, denounced the Anglo-French draft for imposing on Egypt 'conditions amounting to an ultimatum', and warned of the ominous Anglo-French military preparations.[155] These Superpower quarrels led the Security Council to vote separately on the preamble and operative clauses of the Anglo-French draft. The former was adopted unanimously, but the latter was vetoed by the Soviet Union.[156] The resulting dismembered resolution, Resolution 118, only agreed on general and nebulous six principles, such as respect for Egypt's sovereignty and the need to insulate the operation of the Canal from the politics of any country.[157]

In the meantime, Hammarskjöld brought Fawzi, Pineau and Lloyd together for private consultations, hoping that agreements could be reached in a more private and casual atmosphere. Several such meetings were held from 9 to 12 October but failed to yield meaningful results. Lloyd and Pineau blamed Fawzi for making vague proposals;[158] Fawzi accused them of trying again to impose

[153] Security Council document S/3654, 24 September 1956, UNDL; Eden, *Full Circle*, 492–93.
[154] Pogany, *The Security Council*, 60; Ashton, *Eisenhower, Macmillan, and Nasser*, 91–92.
[155] Security Council documents S/PV.734-743, S/3671, 26 September-13 October 1956, UNDL.
[156] Security Council meeting S/PV.743, 13 October 1956, 17-18, UNDL.
[157] Security Council Resolution S/RES/118 (1956), 13 October 1956, UNDL.
[158] Eden, *Full Circle*, 157, 503; Pineau, *1956 Suez*, 117–18.

their London Conference demands;[159] and the Secretary-General was bitter about Pineau's negative attitude.[160] The three ministers could only agree on the vague six principles that would constitute Resolution 118.[161] Another effort by both Hammarskjöld and Burns was to encourage the Security Council to incorporate the Arab-Israeli subject into its discussions. At that specific point in time, the main flashpoint was the Jordanian-Israeli front. The Secretary-General and the UNTSO Commander wrote several times to the Security Council in late November, describing the situation on that border and reiterating the failed measures that had been proposed in April.[162] Hammarskjöld concluded one of his documents with the statement that he put that report together 'in order to emphasise my concern for the lack of positive initiative… The possibilities are still there, and the UN must continue to impress on the governments in the region their serious duty to use them'.[163] But their efforts were useless; the debate remained exclusively focused on Suez.

After the discussions were over, Lloyd returned to London bitter with the Security Council's six principles. He likened himself to Neville Chamberlain returning home after signing the Munich Agreement with Adolf Hitler.[164] On 16 October Eden, Lloyd, Pineau and French Prime Minister Guy Mollet all met in Paris and contemplated their next move. The Security Council proved unhelpful; progress on the Users' Club was slow; and Washington was reluctant to exact further pressures on Egypt. Meanwhile, the situation was becoming increasingly volatile between Israel and its Arab neighbours. Eden and Lloyd, who were aware that the French had contacted Israel about the prospect of a joint attack against Egypt, told Mollet and Pineau that while an Israeli strike on Jordan would be intolerable, since London and Amman had signed a joint defence pact, an Israeli attack on Egypt 'was a different matter'. In fact, under such circumstances Britain and France could intervene to safeguard the Suez Canal and limit hostilities.[165] And thus the idea of a joint attack on Egypt was coming together. Shortly after, on 21-24 October, the infamous Sèvres Protocol was drafted and then signed by the leaders of Britain, France, and Israel.[166] The seven-point Protocol stipulated that Israel should launch an attack on Egypt on 29 October 1956, with the aim of reaching the Suez Canal the following day. Then, France and Britain would appeal to the warring parties to halt all acts of war and withdraw from the canal zone, under the threat that noncompliance would result in their military intervention to protect

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[159] Fawzi, *Suez 1956*, 68.
[160] Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, 166–67; *Summary*, 26.
[161] Fawzi, *Suez 1956*, 68.
[162] Security Council documents S/3658-3660, 26-27 September 1956, UNDL.
[163] Security Council document S/3659, 27 September 1956, UNDL.
[164] Lloyd, *Suez 1956*, 169.
[165] Eden, *Full Circle*, 510–13; Lloyd, *Suez 1956*, 173–75; Pineau, *1956 Suez*, 124.
[166] British cabinet meeting, 25 October 1956, file CAB/128/30, TNA; Pineau, *1956 Suez*, 129–54; Lloyd, *Suez 1956*, 181–93; Dayan, *Milestones*, 252–66.

the Canal. Egypt's failure to comply would then justify an Anglo-French military strike, in addition to the Israeli offensive.[167]

Meanwhile, a handwritten note by the seemingly unsuspecting Nasser reveals that he still contemplated an Anglo-Egyptian arrangement on the Suez Canal as late as 26 October.[168] An equally unaware Security Council finally acquiesced to the appeals of Hammarskjöld and Burns and held two meetings on 19 and 25 October on the escalating Jordan-Israel border situation. The Security Council sessions did little more than allow the invited Israeli and Jordanian representatives to exchange diplomatic blows. The president of the Security Council closed the second meeting by saying that 'during the next few days, the members of the Security Council should devote all their thoughts and efforts to the practical means' of restoring peace.[169] But by 28 October the Security Council left the issue of the Middle East to deal with the Hungarian anti-communist revolution,[170] and by 29 October it was already too late; Israeli tanks rolled into Sinai.

UN-isation of the Conflict (October 1956 – March 1957)

On 29 October 1956, Israeli forces began their onslaught.[171] As planned, on the following day the French and British governments issued an ultimatum to both belligerents. Within 12 hours, the warring parties were to stop all warlike actions, withdraw 16km away from the Suez Canal and allow for Anglo-French forces to temporarily occupy key positions around Suez.[172] Since the Israeli forces were nowhere near the Suez Canal, it was very easy for Israel's government to accept.[173] However, the Egyptian cabinet agreed unanimously – except for Salah Salem, who had left the room before the vote – to reject it.[174] By 31 October, Anglo-French forces began bombarding the Egyptian airfields in the canal zone.[175] The Egyptians were dismayed; Sharaf recounted that Nasser came to believe that the offensive was not only meant to reverse the nationalisation of the Suez Canal, but to overthrow his regime entirely and undo the 1952 Revolution.[176] Nasser also concluded that the Egyptian armed forces were powerless to stop the invasion, and decided to redeploy the army's units in Sinai and the Suez

[167] Avi Shlaim, 'The Protocol of Sèvres, 1956', *International Affairs* 73, no. 3 (1997): 530.
[168] Abd al-Nasser, *Gamal Abd Al-Nasser*, 3: 306.
[169] Security Council meetings S/PV.744-745, 19-25 October 1956, UNDL.
[170] Security Council meeting S/PV.746, 28 October 1956, UNDL.
[171] *UN Yearbook 1956*, 11.
[172] Dayan, *Diary*, 97.
[173] Dayan, *Diary*, 97–99; Ben-Gurion, *Years*, 126; Fawzi, *Suez 1956*, 81–82.
[174] Sharaf, *Years and Days*, 1: 239–40.
[175] Dayan, *Diary*, 99.
[176] Sharaf, *Years and Days*, 1: 341–42.

canal zone to Cairo in order to protect the capital.[177] The Soviets were asked to militarily intervene, but they were too reticent to clash directly with the West and too busy with the simultaneous anti-Communist revolution in Hungary.[178] In a dystopian bid to defend Egypt with every means available, Cairo distributed weapons to the civilian population so that it could at least inflict casualties upon the advancing invaders.[179] The outbreak of hostilities set the stage for the final episode of the UN involvement in the Suez Crisis. The intensification of violence, Washington's drift away from London and Paris, and the fact that most of the UN members disapproved of the attack – all these combined would allow for the UN to finally take the reins in resolving the international crisis that had evolved. The first actions of the UN focused on securing a ceasefire, and its subsequent efforts concentrated on the withdrawal of the invading armies from Egypt.

The American leadership had no prior knowledge of the attack on Egypt. On 28 October, noting the Israeli mobilisation, Eisenhower urged Ben-Gurion not to take any forcible action against the Arab states.[180] After the offensive had already started, the American delegation reported it to the Security Council, and requested the consideration of immediate steps for the cessation of the hostilities.[181] American UN Representative Henry Cabot Lodge tried to get his British and French colleagues to co-sign this appeal, but they declined.[182] After the issuing of the Anglo-French ultimatum, Eisenhower wrote to Eden and Mollet that he had just learned the news 'from the press' and urged them to adhere to a peaceful process on the issue of the Suez Canal.[183] The United States opposed the operation in Egypt for several reasons. Ideologically, both Eisenhower and Dulles were vehemently anti-colonialist, and viewed the Anglo-French attack on Egypt as a case of imperialist encroachment.[184] Moreover, the Americans felt that resorting to force was legally dubious, detrimental to the UN,[185] and unreasonable considering the American critique of the simultaneous and similar Soviet military intervention in Hungary.[186] Washington also resisted the invasion for reasons of domestic politics: the American presidential elections were due in November, and Eisenhower could not afford to deal with a

[177] Sharaf, *Years and Days*, 1: 341–42; Heikal, *Cutting*, 180–84.
[178] Golan, *Soviet Policies*, 48–50.
[179] Sharaf, *Years and Days*, 1: 341–42.
[180] FRUS, 1955-1957, Suez Crisis, July 26-December 31, 1956, vol. XVI, document 394.
[181] Security Council document S/3706, 29 October 1956, UNDL.
[182] FRUS, 1955-1957, Suez Crisis, July 26-December 31, 1956, vol. XVI, document 423; Dixon et al., *Double Diploma*, 264.
[183] FRUS, 1955-1957, Suez Crisis, July 26-December 31, 1956, vol. XVI, document 430.
[184] Roger Louis, 'Dulles, Suez, and the British', in *John Foster Dulles and the Diplomacy of the Cold War*, ed. Richard H. Immerman (Princeton University Press, 1990), 135.
[185] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 39.
[186] al-Naggar, 'The Suez Crisis', 322.

war at that time.[187] And lastly, there was the personal offence to Eisenhower and his cabinet: three friendly countries, two of them formal allies of the United States, decided to wage war behind Washington's back and against its will.[188] Eisenhower and his subordinates even suspected that the attackers deliberately timed their offensive so close to the American elections, to render Washington helpless to respond to the crisis.[189] For all these reasons, the American administration resented the attack and took it upon itself to be among its chief opponents.[190]

The Security Council convened twice on 30 October 1956. Hammarskjöld informed it that Burns had tried but failed to facilitate a ceasefire and that Israel expelled UNTSO from the al-Auja DMZ. In a rare East-West consensus, most of the members welcomed the American initiative and criticised the Israeli offensive. The American delegation proposed a draft calling for an Israeli withdrawal from Egypt, as well as the refrainment of all Security Council members, alluding of course to Britain and France, from using force in the area. Later, it proposed a softer draft, calling for all parties to cease fire and for Israel to withdraw. Both drafts gained the support of 7 out of the 11 Council members but were vetoed by France and Britain.[191] Egypt's partners conjured a workaround to the veto obstacle: to pass the matter over to the General Assembly. on the 31 October Security Council session, the Yugoslav delegation submitted another draft, which would soon become Resolution 119. In light of the deadlock, the Resolution called for the invocation of a special General Assembly session to make appropriate recommendations.[192] The fact that this resolution dealt with a procedural rather than a substantive matter meant that Britain and France were powerless to veto it.[193] Lloyd claimed that this 'device of doubtful legality' was originally devised by Dulles to circumvent the Soviet veto.[194] The Yugoslav manoeuvre was concocted with the Indian delegation, and coordinated with the Soviets and Americans.[195] This international collaboration goes to show how isolated the attackers were.

Unlike the Security Council, the General Assembly immediately took decisive action in addressing the deterioration in the Middle East. On 1 November, just a day after the referral from the Security Council,[196] the first-ever General Assembly Emergency Special Session began, dedicated to

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[187] Schulze, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 31–32; Robert Murphy, *Diplomat among Warriors* (Pyramid Books, 1965), 436–37.
[188] Murphy, *Diplomat*, 436–37; Dixon et al., *Double Diploma*, 260.
[189] FRUS, 1955-1957, Suez Crisis, July 26-December 31, 1956, vol. XVI, Document 411.
[190] Lucas W. Scott, 'Divided We Stand' (PhD diss., London School of Economics, 1991), 355–56.
[191] Security Council documents S/PV.749-751, S/3710, S/3713/Rev.1, 30-31 October 1956, UNDL.
[192] Security Council Resolution S/RES/119, 31 October 1956, UNDL.
[193] Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, 175.
[194] Lloyd, *Suez 1956*, 199.
[195] Lall, 'Arthur Lall', 13–14.
[196] General Assembly document A/3213, 1 November 1956, UNDL.

the matter of Suez and the war in Egypt. It was clear that most of the delegations disapproved of Israel's attack and the independent Anglo-French diplomacy.[197] On the following day, the General Assembly adopted an American draft as Resolution 997 (ES-I), urging all parties involved to accept a ceasefire and withdraw behind the armistice lines. External parties were called to refrain from delivering military goods to the area. It was also requested that the Suez Canal should be reopened after the ceasefire was to enter force.[198] Meanwhile, the Anglo-French operation was delayed due to second thoughts.[199] Conversely, the Israelis realised that international pressure was mounting, and accordingly stepped up the pace of their offensive.[200] By 3 November Israel had completed the conquest of the Gaza Strip and essentially fulfilled its military objectives without much help from London and Paris.[201] The Egyptians announced their acceptance of Resolution 997 (ES-I) to Hammarskjöld on the same day,[202] because they wanted the fighting to stop; the Israelis took another day but also gave their assent.[203]

The Israeli-Egyptian ceasefire meant that London and Paris lost their pretext of militarily intervening to protect the Suez Canal. The disgruntled French and British delegations communicated to the Secretary-General their feeling that UN police action was still necessary to defend the Suez Canal and to prevent the resumption of Arab-Israeli hostilities. Until this force could be constituted, Anglo-French forces would be stationed as a buffer between the combatants.[204] This demand for a UN force heralded the imminent creation of the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF). The Egyptian government retaliated with diplomatic manoeuvres of its own: after signalling Hammarskjöld that Cairo was open to continue the negotiations over the Suez Canal,[205] the Egyptian delegation notified the Secretary-General on 4 November 1956 that Britain and France, 'in utmost disregard for world opinion' continued their military operations against Egypt, in violation of the General Assembly resolutions.[206] Meanwhile, the General Assembly continued its work. On 3-4 November it adopted two resolutions. The first was a Canadian draft that became Resolution 998 (ES-I): This resolution, bearing in mind the necessity to facilitate compliance with Resolution 997 (ES-I), requested Hammarskjöld to submit within 48 hours a plan for the setting up, with the consent of the parties involved, a UN force 'to secure and supervise the cessation of hostilities' in accordance with the abovementioned resolution.

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[197] General Assembly meeting A/PV.562, 1 November 1956, UNDL.
[198] General Assembly Resolution A/RES/997 (ES-I), 30 October 1956, UNDL.
[199] Pineau, *1956 Suez*, 151, 157–58; Dayan, *Diary*, 60–63, 96; Eden, *Full Circle*, 534–35.
[200] Dayan, *Diary*, 115.
[201] Eban, *Abba Eban*, 226; Dayan, *Diary*, 153–54; Pineau, *1956 Suez*, 165–66.
[202] General Assembly document A/3266, 2 November 1956, UNDL.
[203] General Assembly document A/3279, 3 November 1956, UNDL.
[204] General Assembly document A/3267, 2 November 1956, UNDL.
[205] Security Council document S/3728, 24 October – 3 November 1956, UNDL.
[206] General Assembly document A/3288, 4 November 1956, UNDL.

The second was a draft proposed by the Afro-Asian bloc that became Resolution 999 (ES-I), reaffirming the call for the parties to comply with Resolution 997 (ES-I) and authorising Hammarskjöld and Burns to arrange for the implementation of a ceasefire and the withdrawal of forces behind the armistice lines.[207]

As all of this was unfolding, the French and British ministers were contemplating how to proceed. An Egyptian-Israeli ceasefire was already in place, the international pressure was massive, and the Anglo-French landing in Egypt had not even begun. The British cabinet considered its options, eventually choosing to land forces in Port Said anyway, while presenting this as a necessary policing action and offering to later replace their units with a UN force.[208] Lloyd recounted that this decision would have 'dreadful' consequences.[209] On 5 November, Anglo-French paratroopers landed in Suez and began the conquest of the canal zone.[210] The two Western Powers were denounced by both Washington and Moscow. Eisenhower wrote to Eden, urging him to keep the Anglo-French troops at bay for several days until a more mutually acceptable solution could be adopted.[211] Meanwhile, Shepilov requested a Security Council meeting on the tripartite attack against Egypt. He also proposed a draft resolution, demanding that the three aggressors should cease their attack on Egypt within 12 hours, and withdraw within three days. The letter even suggested that Moscow could send air and naval forces to Egypt to 'contribute to the cause of curbing the aggressors'.[212] Simultaneously, Soviet Chairman of the Council of Ministers Nikolai Bulganin sent letters to the United States, Britain, France and Israel, warning that the three attackers must stop their offensives.[213] The Security Council meeting requested by the Soviets took place on 5 November, and although the discussion was cut short as the Soviet agenda item was voted down,[214] it certainly served as a warning. Moscow's actions in turn generated additional American pressure on Britain and France to cease their hostilities, lest the Soviets utilise the unfolding crisis to exert greater influence over the Middle East.[215] The diplomatic pressure, coupled with British fear that the continuation of the war could destabilise the Pound Sterling, took its toll, and a ceasefire was finally reached. On 6 November the Anglo-French commander was ordered to

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[207] General Assembly documents A/PV.563, A/RES/998 (ES-I), A/RES/999 (ES-I), 3-4 November 1956, UNDL.
[208] British cabinet meeting, 4 November 1956, file CAB/128/30, 2-4, TNA.
[209] Lloyd, *Suez 1956*, 205.
[210] 'Paratroopers Landed' [Hebrew], *Ma'ariv*, 5 November 1956, 1.
[211] FRUS, 1955-1957, Suez Crisis, July 26-December 31, 1956, vol. XVI, document 502.
[212] Security Council document S/3736, 5 November 1956, UNDL.
[213] Nikita S. Khrushchev, *Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev*, ed. Sergeĭ Khrushchev (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), 3: 815; Fawzi, *Suez 1956*, 93–94; Pineau, *1956 Suez*, 170; Dayan, *Diary*, 184–85; Ben-Gurion, *Years*, 136–38; Oles M. Smolansky, 'Moscow and the Suez Crisis, 1956', *Political Science Quarterly* 80, no. 4 (1965): 589–93.
[214] Security Council meeting S/PV.755, 5 November 1956, UNDL.
[215] LaFeber, *Cold War*, 186.

suspend combat at midnight, and the French and British delegations communicated their cessation of hostilities to the UN.[216] On 5 November, Israel also reiterated to Hammarskjöld its agreement to an unconditional ceasefire and reported that all was quiet on the Egyptian-Israeli front.[217]

The period between the ceasefire entering force and the completion of the Israeli withdrawal from Egypt saw the UN's finest hour in the Suez Crisis. The different UN organs, headed by Hammarskjöld, led a diplomatic effort with three main aims in mind: the evacuation of foreign troops from Egypt; the establishment of UNEF; and the clearance and reopening of the Suez Canal, which had been obstructed during the Anglo-French attack. Immediately after the adoption of the 4 November General Assembly resolutions, in what Eban considered 'remarkable staff work',[218] Hammarskjöld began to arrange for the creation of UNEF. He wanted to set it up quickly, both to ensure an effective ceasefire and to provide for the evacuation of foreign troops from Egypt.[219] He, therefore, consulted with representatives of several states to see if they could assist and contribute to the force. Hammarskjöld also requested the General Assembly to formally establish UNEF and to have Burns and other UNTSO personnel set it up.[220] These requests were granted by the General Assembly on the following day, under Resolution 1000 (ES-I).[221]

The next stage was to formulate guiding principles for the operation of UNEF. Hammarskjöld consulted with Burns on this, and the latter envisaged a strong military force, which could not be shoved aside by the belligerents as was the case with UNTSO.[222] On 6 November the Secretary-General published his second report on UNEF, outlining the guidelines for its mission. UNEF's staff would be appointed by the UN and its functions would be determined by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council, independent of the policies of any one nation. Its manpower was to be recruited from the pool of the UN member states, excluding the Security Council members. A key point was that the force's operation within the territory of a given country required that country's consent.[223] On 8 November 1956, Burns, who had already been officially appointed as the first UNEF commander,[224] arrived in Cairo for preliminary negotiations on the placement of the force there.[225] The Egyptian

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[216] General Assembly documents A/3294, A/3299, 5 November 1956, UNDL; Eden, *Full Circle*, 554–56; Lloyd, *Suez 1956*, 210–11.
[217] General Assembly document A/3301, 5 November 1956, UNDL.
[218] Eban, *Abba Eban*, 226.
[219] Burns, *Between*, 187; Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, 184.
[220] General Assembly document A/3289, 4 November 1956, UNDL.
[221] General Assembly Resolution A/RES/1000 (ES-I), 5 November 1956, UNDL.
[222] Burns, *Between*, 188–90.
[223] General Assembly document A/3302, 6 November 1956, UNDL.
[224] General Assembly document A/3317, 8 November 1956, UNDL.
[225] Burns, *Between*, 198–204; Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, 185–87.

government gave its principled approval of hosting UNEF on 11 November 1956, with the first units due to arrive two or three days later.[226] Cairo's reluctant agreement was aimed at speeding up the Anglo-French withdrawal.[227]

When the first UNEF forces were flown to Egypt on 15 November, Hammarskjöld joined them to continue the negotiations with Cairo.[228] He summarised the understandings reached in his 20 November report: the Egyptians accepted the General Assembly resolutions and the arrival of UNEF to Egypt; UNEF would adhere to the task assigned to it; and both parties would explore together concrete aspects of the functioning of UNEF. However, Hammarskjöld admitted that his visit to Cairo 'did not permit a detailed study of the various legal, technical, and administrative arrangements which would have to be made and the exchange of views was therefore related only to questions of principle'.[229] And indeed, still very little was determined as to UNEF's mission in practice. On 19 November Hammarskjöld told the UNEF Advisory Board, consisting of the contributing countries, that the arrangements were becoming 'almost metaphysic', but he was not complaining; if matters had become too specific, there would have been no operation at all.[230] On the same day, Burns left New York for Cairo, and recounted that he was not able to receive the customary instructions on how to operate as UNEF's commander, since so many matters concerning the force were improvised and depended on political conditions.[231] Here Hammarskjöld's tactical approach again came into play. His main goal was to quickly establish UNEF, because UNEF was a precondition for the Anglo-French and Israeli withdrawals. It was less important for him to devise any grand strategy or to finalise the 'hows and whys', than it was to rapidly dispatch UN troops to Egypt and extinguish the crisis. And indeed, as 'metaphysic' as it may have been, the progress with UNEF did bring the Anglo-French forces closer to withdrawal. The time was generally ripe for them to evacuate; their expedition had lost its purpose, UNEF was going to satisfy Israel's security guarantees, and their main priority now was to allow for the quick restoration of the Suez Canal for trade purposes.[232] On the issue of the canal's clearance, they proposed to contribute their salvage fleets to the UN for the sake of the operation,[233] but Hammarskjöld

[226] Burns, *Between*, 203; *Summary*, 99.
[227] Abd al-Nasser, *Gamal Abd Al-Nasser*, 3:400.
[228] Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, 191–92; *UN Yearbook 1956*, 41; Burns, *Between*, 214–15.
[229] General Assembly document A/3375, 20 November 1956, UNDL.
[230] Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, 192.
[231] Burns, *Between*, 218.
[232] Pineau, *1956 Suez*, 206; Lloyd, *Suez 1956*, 233–34.
[233] General Assembly documents A/3306-3307, 6 November 1956, UNDL.

replied that he was exploring the possibility of leading the clearance under UN auspices by parties not involved in the conflict.[234]

Meanwhile, the General Assembly reconvened, this time as part of its 11th Regular Session. The Secretary-General must have been delighted to see it reinforce his work with a quick succession of resolutions, most of them proposed by Egypt and its partners from the Afro-Asian bloc. Resolution 1120 (XI) reiterated the call for the withdrawal of the three aggressors from Egypt;[235] Resolution 1121 (XI) approved of Hammarskjöld's progress with relation to UNEF as well as the clearance preparations and empowered him to proceed;[236] and Resolution 1122 (XI) authorised various financial steps proposed by the Secretary-General for the creation and funding of UNEF.[237] In late November, Hammarskjöld achieved a breakthrough with Lloyd and Fawzi. It was agreed that the Anglo-French force would strive to evacuate within around 15 days. Meanwhile, UNEF would continue to build up and the desk work for the clearance of the canal, such as surveys and plannings, could take place. A day after the evacuation, the clearance work itself would begin.[238] Fawzi also assured the Secretary-General that British and French ships would be allowed through the Suez Canal after the evacuation, leaving Israeli vessels unmentioned.[239] On 3 December, the French and British governments formally informed Hammarskjöld that they had instructed the Anglo-French commander to seek an agreement with Burns on a timetable for the withdrawal of their troops.[240] Their evacuation was completed on 22 December 1956.[241] Simultaneously with Hammarskjöld's efforts, Burns and his UNEF dealt with peacekeeping in the city of Port Said, which had been carved up between the Egyptian army and the Anglo-French forces. UNEF interposed between the warring parties; patrolled with the local Egyptian police; and helped the Egyptian authorities suppress local armed elements who sought to attack the Anglo-French forces upon their retreat, thus disrupting the withdrawal.[242] After the evacuation, it was possible to redeploy UNEF in Sinai and commence the clearance of the Suez Canal.[243]

The Israeli front required more time and effort to deal with.[244] Different testimonies and communications indicated that the Israeli position around November 1956 could be summarised as

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[234] General Assembly document A/3313, 7 November 1956, UNDL.
[235] General Assembly Resolution A/RES/1120 (XI), 24 November 1956, UNDL.
[236] General Assembly Resolution A/RES/1121 (XI), 24 November 1956, UNDL.
[237] General Assembly Resolution A/RES/1122 (XI), 26 November 1956, UNDL.
[238] Lloyd, *Suez 1956*, 228.
[239] Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, 197.
[240] General Assembly document A/3415, 3 December 1956, UNDL.
[241] *UN Yearbook 1956*, 54.
[242] Burns, *Between*, 216–32.
[243] Burns, *Between*, 230–39; Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, 198.
[244] Lash, *Dag Hammarskjold*, 101.

follows: Israel could not accept a mere return to the *status quo ante*, which entailed a naval blockade and Fedayun attacks from Sinai and Gaza. The Israelis therefore intended to withdraw only after receiving sufficient guarantees for the stoppage of all such hostile actions. These guarantees could involve 'satisfactory arrangements', in Meir's terminology, between Israel and UNEF.[245] The Egyptian view, on the other hand, was that Israel must withdraw quickly and unconditionally.[246] Fawzi privately explained this position to an Indian colleague using two arguments: from a principled standpoint, it would be unwise for both Egypt and the UN to reward an aggressor by granting their wishes. And practically, Egyptian concessions to the Israelis could serve as a detrimental precedent, allowing UNEF to also make demands on Cairo in the future.[247]

In late November, two Israeli infantry brigades withdrew from Egypt.[248] On 1 December, Eban informed Hammarskjöld that the rest of the Israeli army was going to gradually redeploy, starting from 3 December. The Israeli government also agreed to coordinate with Burns the deployment of UNEF forces in the cleared areas.[249] By the next day, Burns had already begun the placement of his troops.[250] However, the process was going to take time; Dayan informed Burns over several meetings in early December that the Israelis could withdraw no faster than 20-25km a week. He also noted that they only intended to withdraw about five kilometres west of al-Arish and refused to discuss further withdrawal.[251] The Israelis had hoped that delaying the withdrawal could give them the necessary time to secure American support for their desired guarantees.[252] Unfortunately for the Israelis, the international opinion leaned toward the Egyptian view. Throughout December 1956 and January 1957 Hammarskjöld emphasised to Fawzi, with whom he worked closely during this period, that he shared Cairo's belief that Israel should not reap any rewards from its aggression.[253] He also threatened the Israelis in January that failure to speedily complete their evacuation would prompt him to report their noncompliance to the General Assembly and urge international action.[254] And on 19 January the General Assembly passed Resolution 1123 (XI), noting with regret Israel's failure to comply with

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[245] 'Singing "Hatikva"' [Hebrew], *Lamerchav*, 8 November 1956, 1; General Assembly document A/3320, 8 November 1956, UNDL; Ben-Gurion, *Years*, 139–41; Eban, *Abba Eban*, 232; Dayan, *Diary*, 202.
[246] Fawzi, *Suez 1956*, 100; *Summary*, 132.
[247] *Summary*, 201.
[248] General Assembly documents A/3389, A/3389/Add.1, 24 November 1956, UNDL.
[249] General Assembly document A/3410, 1 December 1956, UNDL.
[250] Burns, *Between*, 240.
[251] Burns-Dayan meetings, 6-26 December 1956, file 288-1034/1965, 10-13, IDFA; Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, 202–3.
[252] Eban, *Abba Eban*, 235; Dayan, *Milestones*, 322–23.
[253] *Summary*, 124–25, 138.
[254] *Summary*, 151, 167.

previous resolutions, and requesting Hammarskjöld to continue his efforts to secure complete withdrawal.[255]

The Israelis responded by maintaining their slow pace of withdrawal, while employing subterfuge. Israeli forces planted mines along the roads covering their retreat, and the Yugoslav UNEF detachment had to carefully disarm them.[256] They also destroyed military and civilian infrastructure.[257] For example, on 17 January 1957, Nasser informed Fawzi that the land roads and railways in Sinai had all been destroyed. In al-Arish, the military complex was demolished, as well as the airport. In Sidr, Israel blew up oil wells and stole the attached equipment. And all over, civilian and military vehicles were confiscated.[258] On another occasion, Nasser notified Fawzi that in the liberated town of Nekhel, all the buildings had been destroyed, including the telephone buildings. Some of the water installations had been stolen and others vandalised. The new well and its machinery were in good order, possibly because these escaped the eyes of the Israelis.[259] The Israelis also formally adopted directives that contradicted the course of action demanded by the UN. On 23 January, the Israeli Knesset approved the following policy: Israel would retain control of the Gaza Strip; Israeli forces would remain in the Straits of Tiran until the Israeli freedom of navigation through the Gulf of Aqaba was ensured; the Sinai Peninsula would be demilitarised; an appeal would be made to the UN to resolve the issue of the Palestinian refugees; and Israel would insist that any settlement of the Suez Canal question would provide for equal navigation rights for Israel.[260]

Hammarskjöld's response came in the following day, in the form of a report submitted to the General Assembly. He noted that he had tried unsuccessfully to negotiate the Israeli withdrawal. He also emphasised that Israel could not retain its conquests and that UNEF and UNTSO should in the future be the ones to prevent incursions and raids across the armistice demarcation line. On the other hand, he did remind of the Security Council's 1951 Resolution advocating for Israeli free transit in Suez.[261] As for the fate of the Gaza Strip, the Secretary-General contended on a separate occasion that it had been placed under Egypt's control by the armistice agreement, and any modification to this arrangement would necessitate Cairo's assent.[262] On 28 January the General Assembly convened again

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[255] General Assembly Resolution A/RES/1123 (XI) (1957), 19 January 1957, UNDL.
[256] Burns, *Between*, 239–42; *Summary*, 124; Heikal, *Suez*, 984.
[257] Dayan, *Milestones*, 322–23.
[258] *Summary*, 189–90.
[259] *Summary*, 195.
[260] 'Israel will Hold' [Hebrew], *Hazofe*, 24 January 1957, 1.
[261] General Assembly document A/3512, 24 January 1957, UNDL.
[262] Burns, *Between*, 246–47.

to discuss Israel's withdrawal from Sinai.[263] The Israeli diplomatic inferiority was indisputable; while Eban tried to reiterate Israel's willingness to withdraw in exchange for international assurances, the vast majority of the General Assembly speakers unequivocally urged its unconditional and speedy evacuation. Lodge even hinted that further Israeli noncompliance may result in sanctions.[264] The international pressure probably stemmed from ideological support for Egypt's case as well as trade considerations, since Cairo refused to discuss the reopening of the canal and its future administration until the Israeli withdrawal was complete.[265] On 2 February two resolutions were adopted: Resolution 1124 (XI) deplored Israel's reluctance to complete its evacuation, while Resolution 1125 (XI) commended Hammarskjöld's attempt to secure the withdrawal and authorised his proposed peacekeeping measures.[266] On the first resolution, only France submitted a negative vote alongside Israel; on the second, even the Israelis did not bother voting against.[267] On the next day Eisenhower wrote to Ben-Gurion, warning him that failure to comply might lead to 'further UN procedures which could seriously disturb the relations between Israel and other member nations including the United States'.[268]

But Ben-Gurion's leadership stood its ground. On 3 February the Israeli cabinet held a meeting and reached two decisions: the first was to hold the east coast of Sinai until Israel's freedom of navigation through the Straits of Tiran was ensured. The second was to retain the Gaza Strip.[269] On 8 February Ben-Gurion replied to Eisenhower's letter and reiterated Israel's willingness to withdraw once satisfactory arrangements were reached with UNEF and guarantees were granted against anti-Israeli acts of aggression. He complained about how the UN had ignored the Egyptian naval blockade for years, but now forced Israel to accept the reintroduction of the *status quo ante*. He also expressed his displeasure with Hammarskjöld's UNEF scheme, according to which the Egyptians could request the removal of the force from their territory at any given moment.[270]

By late February, the pressure on Israel reached its peak. The Afro-Asian bloc submitted a draft resolution condemning Israel for its noncompliance and calling upon all states to deny any kind of

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[263] *UN Yearbook 1956*, 48–49.
[264] General Assembly meetings A/PV.645-646, A/PV.649-652, 28 January-2 February 1957, UNDL.
[265] *Summary*, 172–73; Heikal, *Suez*, 963.
[266] General Assembly resolutions A/RES/1124 (XI), A/RES/1125 (XI), 2 February 1957, UNDL.
[267] Security Council meeting S/PV.652, 2 February 1957, UNDL.
[268] FRUS, 1955-9157, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1957, vol. XVII, document 54.
[269] The Israeli Cabinet meeting protocol from this day remains unpublished, but this information was reported to Washington by the American Embassy in Israel: FRUS, 1955-1957, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1957, vol. XVII, document 57.
[270] FRUS, 1955-1957, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1957, vol. XVII, document 68.

assistance to Israel in view of its defiance.[271] The Canadian delegation proposed a more even-handed formula: both Israel and Egypt should comply with the armistice agreement; UNEF would be deployed on the armistice line and in the Gaza; there would be no interference with the innocent passage of ships through the Straits of Tiran; and after Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, it would be internationalised and remain under the civil administration of UNEF.[272] A compromise was eventually reached that Israel's rights would be safeguarded 'within' the UN, instead of 'by' it. This meant that influential nations would make public declarations in the General Assembly, affirming Israel's freedom of passage through the Straits of Tiran as well as Israel's right to self-defence. Realising that it had to climb down from its tree somehow, the Israeli government was forced to accept this minimal formula.[273] In late February Dulles also privately gave Eban assurances that the United States would support sailing rights for ships bound to and from Eilat.[274]

UNEF took over in Gaza and Sharm al-Sheikh in mid-March. The Secretary-General kept up with his policy of obscurity. When Burns asked Hammarskjöld what to say to Dayan on the possibility that an Egyptian administration would be reinstated in Gaza, the Secretary-General responded that Israel's withdrawal was to be considered unconditional and warned Burns not to discuss with Dayan anything beyond UNEF's takeover.[275] As Hammarskjöld put it to UNEF's Advisory Board: 'we have had to indulge very much in a somewhat extraordinary policy; that is, the policy of taking step after step in an atmosphere of great ambiguity'.[276] Despite the guarantees received by Israel, Meir considered this outcome a diplomatic defeat.[277] She lamented that in spite of her speech on 5 December 1956, proposing to promote peace between Israel and the Arabs, no delegation in the hall proposed to take her up on her suggestion.[278] Riad surprisingly agreed with Meir on the matter of peace by stating in his memoirs: 'Eisenhower had before him a major chance after the cessation of the aggression to achieve a permanent peace in the area, which did not necessitate the same significant efforts that were required of him to pressure Britain, France, and Israel [to cease fire and evacuate from Egypt]; however, the American administration missed the greatest opportunity to facilitate peace since the beginning of the Arab-Israeli conflict when it stopped at the end of the tripartite aggression'.[279]

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[271] General Assembly document A/3557, 22 February 1957, UNDL.
[272] *UN Yearbook 1956*, 52; Lester B. Pearson, *Mike* (University of Toronto Press, 1972), 2: 272–73; Burns, *Between*, 253–54.
[273] Ben-Gurion's Diary, entries 27, 28 February 1957; Ben-Gurion, *Years*, 175–76.
[274] Eban, *Abba Eban*, 246–47.
[275] Burns, *Between*, 256–57.
[276] Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, 212.
[277] Meir, *My Life*, 301.
[278] Meir, *My Life*, 302–6.
[279] Riad, *Memoirs*, 32.

On 8 March 1957, the Suez Crisis was officially over. The Israelis completed their withdrawal from the Egyptian territory, with UNEF taking over in Gaza and Sharm al-Sheikh.[280] Shortly after, the Egyptian civil administration was restored in Gaza but UNEF remained the only military force present there.[281] The clearance of the Suez Canal was reported complete by mid-April.[282] Israelis could rejoice in the fact that Israeli ships now sailed freely in the Gulf of Aqaba,[283] and the armed attacks that had been launched from Gaza to Israel ceased.[284] However, the Suez Canal remained closed to Israeli shipping.[285] The question of the Suez Canal administration was raised again in the Security Council between 26 April and 21 May, but no resolution was adopted and the forum was satisfied with basic principles for the operation of the canal presented by Egypt.[286]

Conclusions: The 1956 Sinai Campaign

Unlike the 1948 War's three stages, the UN organs' attitude toward the Arab-Israeli conflict was fairly consistent between 1949 and 1957. New York's determination to solve the conflict subsided, and its vision was reduced from peacemaking to merely holding the armistice regime together. In the lack of a political program a bloody routine emerged, leaving no place for the more moderate trends in Egypt and Israel. It took a major international earthquake in the form of the nationalisation of the Suez Canal and the tripartite attack on Egypt to bring the UN attention back to the Middle East. And even then, UN strategy focused exclusively on stopping the war and restoring the naval traffic in Suez, not on resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict. UNEF was established, but mainly as a short-term means to expedite the foreign withdrawals from Egypt. It was later deployed on the border, but its function was obscure. Equally unclear were the brittle guarantees providing for Israel's naval transit through the Gulf of Aqaba, which were not even granted by the UN but by individual states. The Sinai Campaign was thus seen as a mere footnote in the greater drama of the Suez Crisis.

In terms of UN practices and efficacy, a common method employed by the MACs and the Security Council before the war was condemnations. This tool had little impact beyond aggravating the condemned party and increasing tensions in the area. Instead of discouraging the parties from taking hostile actions, as Burns put it encouraged 'securing a condemnation of the other party in the strongest

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[280] Burns, *Between*, 260; *UN Yearbook 1956*, 42, 55.
[281] *UN Yearbook 1956*, 56; Lash, *Dag Hammarskjold*, 108–9.
[282] *UN Yearbook 1956*, 55.
[283] Ben-Gurion, *Years*, 188–89; Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 98.
[284] Eban, *Abba Eban*, 257; Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 98.
[285] Heikal, *Cutting*, 207.
[286] Security Council documents S/PV.776-779, S/3818, 24 April-21 May 1957, UNDL.

terms for subsequent political and propaganda use'.[287] On the other hand, Hammarskjöld employed a surprisingly useful technique: obscurity. Unlike in the era of his predecessor Lie, when missions like that of the Palestine Commission and the PCC accounted for every detail but failed due to their cumbersomeness, Hammarskjöld's mediation relied on ambiguity to promptly resolve short-term crises. And indeed, the ambivalent mandate of UNEF earned both Egyptian consent for its deployment and the satisfaction of the invaders' demands. However, the price of that vagueness was that Hammarskjöld's diplomatic process served little to facilitate a more peaceful future for the Middle East. Furthermore, as will be shown in the next chapters, Hammarskjöld's legacy of peacekeeping obscurity would serve to complicate the work of UN forces that would face major crises, like UNEF in 1967 and UNIFIL in 1982.

As for the attitudes of the Israelis and Egyptians in the face of the UN actions, both parties reluctantly collaborated with the organisation under duress. Cairo agreed to host UNEF because it saw it as a necessary evil to expedite the foreign withdrawal from Egypt. The Israelis were forced to withdraw from Sinai and Gaza under threats of sanctions and without receiving UN security and navigation guarantees, instead having to rely on the informal promises from individual states. However, this forced compliance did eventually pay off for both parties; the Egyptians were able to hold on to the Suez Canal Company, whereas the Israelis earned a respite from the Fedayun and sailing rights through the Straits of Tiran. As for the attitudes of Israeli and Egyptian officials toward Hammarskjöld, they stand in stark contrast to each other. Ben-Gurion, Meir, and Eban denounced the Secretary-General as anti-Israeli, weak-charactered, and/or even antisemitic;[288] meanwhile, Nasser, Fawzi, and Heikal commended him for being even-handed and/or righteous.[289] It is hard to determine which of the two sides is more correct. On the one hand, it is true that Hammarskjöld had some pro-Egyptian proclivity; first, throughout the period, the Secretary-General consulted and coordinated very often, sometimes even daily, with Fawzi[290] and did not maintain such a close relationship with Eban.[291] Second, Hammarskjöld seems to have fully adopted the Egyptian perspective in demanding a swift and unconditional Israeli withdrawal. On the other hand, the Secretary-General's motivations remain a mystery. Maybe he supported Egypt's viewpoint because he had a weak character, and it was the

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[287] Burns, *Between*, 27–28.
[288] Ben-Gurion's Diary, entry 24 February 1957; Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee meeting, 12 March 1957, 6, ISA; Eban, *Abba Eban*, 238.
[289] 'Imperialism Imposed on Us' [Arabic], *al-Ahram*, 10 November 1956, 4; Mohamed Hasaneen Heikal, *Nasser: The Cairo Documents* (The New English Library, 1972), 155; Fawzi, *Suez 1956*, 128–29.
[290] For the volume and nature of the many meetings between Fawzi and Hammarskjöld from July 1956 to March 1957, see: *Summary*; Heikal, *Suez*.
[291] Lash, *Dag Hammarskjold*, 106.

internationally popular thing to do; maybe he was anti-Israeli, or even antisemitic as Meir claimed;[292] or maybe he simply adhered to what he considered to be legally and morally right.[293]

[292] Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee meeting, 12 March 1957, 6, ISA.
[293] I further developed the question of Hammarskjöld's partiality here: Jonathan Franco, 'The Suez Crisis and Dag Hammarskjöld's Mediation', *The International History Review* 46, no. 5 (2023): 673–86.

Chapter 3 – The 1967 War: Breaking Down

Since the post-1956 arrangements were not meant to resolve Arab-Israeli hostilities, it is no surprise that the late 1950s and early 1960s were characterised by the continuation of local violence. First, while UNEF remained in Gaza and Sinai and this border became relatively calm,[1] Fedayun incursions into Israel persisted from Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon.[2] The years 1964-1965 also saw the consolidation of independent Palestinian political organisations in the forms of Fatah and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), which coordinated and centralised the Palestinian attacks against Israel with the support of some Arab states.[3] Israel meanwhile maintained its harsh reprisal policy, carrying out powerful retaliatory strikes against any Arab state from whose territory the infiltrators had entered.[4] Second, skirmishes directly between the regular Israeli and Arab armies occasionally took place, with the most active border being the Syrian-Israeli border. Israel and Syria struggled for dominance in the DMZs between them, as well as cultivation and fishing rights in the borderland.[5] Third, Israel and the Arabs entered a dispute over water resources: since the 1950s Israel sought to divert the Jordan River for its use, and the Arabs responded by formulating their own diversion schemes in Syria and Lebanon. After the failure of the American mediator Eric Johnston to implement a water settlement plan, the water battle intensified and culminated in Israeli strikes on Syrian diversion sites in 1965 and 1966.[6] The Arab-Israeli tensions were left largely untreated by the international community, and despite a general reluctance to go to war, the local hostilities exacerbated gradually and uncontrollably.

After Egypt, Syria, and Jordan had struck a defensive alliance, the Israelis became convinced that the only means left for them to safeguard Israel's security was to attack the Arab states pre-emptively. On 5 June 1967, Israel launched a surprise airstrike on the Egyptian, Syrian, and Jordanian airfields, destroying most of the Arab planes still on the ground. By the end of the first day, the Arab air forces were largely wiped out.[7] An Israeli land invasion followed and went equally well for the Israelis; as Schulze pointed out, without air coverage, the Arab land forces were 'easy prey'.[8] In

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[1] Abd al-Hamid Siyam, 'Was War Inevitable? [هل كانت الحرب حتمية؟]', in *The June 1967 War [حرب حزيران/يونيو ١٩٦٧]*, ed. Ahmed Q. Hussein (Arab Center for Research & Policy Studies, 2020), 300.
[2] Bailey, *Four Wars*, 187.
[3] Indar J. Rikhye, *The Sinai Blunder* (Frank Cass, 1980), 157; Kamal Dib, *Modern History of Syria [تأريخ سورية المعاصر]* (Dar al-Nahar, 2012), 288–89; Siyam, 'Was War Inevitable?', 300.
[4] On this, see: Shimon Shamir, 'The Origins of the May 1967 Escalation [מקורה של ההסלמה במאי 1967]', in *Six Days - Thirty Years [ששה ימים - שלושים שנה]*, ed. Asher Susser (Am Oved, 1999).
[5] Pelcovits, *Armistice*, 201–2.
[6] On this, see: Moshe Shemesh, 'Prelude to the Six-Day War', *Israel Studies* 9, no. 3 (2004): 1–45; Sa'ed Jum'a, *The Conspiracy and the Battle of Fate [المؤامرة ومعركة المصير]* (al-Ahliya Publication, 2006), 33–34.
[7] Shlaim, *The Iron Wall*, 257.
[8] Schulze, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 38.

addition to the strategic surprise and the aerial failure, the Arab armies also lacked coordination, which enabled Israel to defeat each of them separately. By 10 June all three Arab states agreed to a ceasefire. Israel tripled its territory over the course of the war, having occupied Jordan's West Bank and East Jerusalem, Egypt's Sinai and Gaza, and Syria's Golan Heights.[9]

This chapter examines the prelude, conflict, and aftermath of the 1967 War. A key characteristic of this period was the fragmentation of the UN system; whenever one UN organ was trying to act, the others were either unable or unwilling to come to its aid. Accordingly, each of the stages described in this chapter is characterised by the activity of one UN organ in Arab-Israeli peacemaking and peacekeeping, and the absence of others. In the first stage (1960 – May 1967), the state of the Middle East remained as it was at the aftermath of the Suez Crisis: Arab-Israeli tensions generated violence, but New York distanced itself from the Middle East, leaving matters at the hands of UNTSO. In the second phase (13 May – 4 June 1967), a Middle Eastern crisis prompted the Egyptians to request the evacuation of UNEF. UN Secretary-General Pantanaw U Thant was quick to accede to the request while the other UN organs did not involve themselves in the affair; the removal of the buffer force set Egypt and Israel on a path of collision. The third period (5-10 June 1967) was that of the war itself, during which the Security Council finally sprung to action, but having lost UNTSO and UNEF, New York lacked boots on the ground and thus struggled to keep up with the developments. In the fourth and last stage (11 June – 22 November 1967), the short-lived vigour in New York surrounding the Middle East gradually waned, and the Security Council adopted the ambiguously-worded Resolution 242, which ignored Arab and Israeli opinions and more than anything signified New York's desire to disengage from the Middle Eastern question.

Addressing the broader thesis, this chapter demonstrates that the 1967 War episode was a critical juncture in UN peacemaking and peacekeeping in the Arab-Israeli conflict. The UN system connecting the Middle East and New York completely collapsed mid-crisis. As a result, the UN intervention in the 1967 War was arguably the least effective of all the wars examined in this thesis. The inability to prevent the war, the weak response to its outbreak, and the inconclusive deliberations in its aftermath significantly damaged the credibility of the UN in the Middle East, and not only paved the way for another war in 1973, but also encouraged the belligerents and Superpowers to start seeking peacemaking and peacekeeping solutions outside the UN framework.

[9] Schulze, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 38–39.

UNTSO Stands Alone (1960 – May 1967)

Despite the ongoing Arab-Israeli violence, as of the early 1960s neither side was interested in an all-out war. As with the 1956 prelude, this was not due to ideological pacifism but to pragmatic considerations. In Israel, Prime Minister and Defence Minister Levi Eshkol, who entered office in 1963, was primarily concerned with non-security issues such as internal Israeli politics, the socioeconomic situation, and diplomatic ties with the West.[10] Furthermore, Israeli military plans before 1967 were centred around armament and deterrence and did not entail a widescale Arab-Israeli conflict.[11] On the Arab side, most countries involved were generally busier with intra-Arab struggles than with Israel. The Progressive countries, led by Egypt and Syria, faced off with the Monarchies, mainly Jordan and Saudi Arabia. The two blocs waged a propaganda war against each other, and aided rival parties in the Yemen civil war. Kerr labelled this period the 'Arab Cold War'.[12]

A closer look at Egypt reveals that Nasser served as a moderating Arab factor, since he was too busy elsewhere to even consider a war with Israel. Egypt's political union with Syria collapsed shortly before, and the early 1960s brought a decrease in Nasser's popularity throughout the Arab world; tens of thousands of crack Egyptian troops were fighting in Yemen as part of Egypt's military intervention; and serious socioeconomic problems and inflation plagued the country.[13] When he spoke to fellow Arab officials around 1964-1966, Nasser urged them to exercise caution not to aggravate Israel and expressed the opinion that the Arab armies must undergo long preparations before they could launch another Arab-Israeli war.[14] In 1966 Cairo did sign a joint defence treaty with Syria, but this agreement was strictly defensive. In fact, Heikal as well as the works of Seale, Zisser, and Dib suggest that this was not an act of aggression, but in fact of moderation: through an alliance, Nasser hoped to increase his influence over Damascus and prevent it from unilaterally generating Arab-Israeli tension.[15]

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[10] Levi Eshkol, *Levi Eshkol [לוי אשכול]*, ed. Yemima Rosenthal (The Israeli State Archives, 2002), 389–487; Arnon Lamprum, *Levi Eshkol [לוי אשכול]* (Resling, 2014), 315–476.

[11] Shlaim, *The Iron Wall*, 232–42; Ami Gluska, *The Israeli Military and the Origins of the 1967 War* (Routledge, 2007), 14–39.

[12] Malcolm H. Kerr, *The Arab Cold War, 1958-1967* (Oxford University Press, 1967). For the perspectives of Cairo and Amman on the Arab Cold War, see respectively: Peter Woodward, *Nasser* (Longman, 1992), 70–102; Nigel J. Ashton, *King Hussein of Jordan* (Yale University Press, 2008), 89–104.

[13] Rif'at S. Ahmed, *The Revolution of General Gamal Abd Al-Nasser [ثورة الجنرال جمال عبد الناصر]* (Dar al-Huda, 1993), 894–96.

[14] Mohamed Hasaneen Heikal, *1967 - the Explosion [١٩٦٧ - الانفجار]* (al-Ahram Centre for Translation and Publication, 1990), 199–212; Adnan Pachachi, *Voice of Iraq in the United Nations, 1959-1969 [صوت العراق في الأمم المتحدة ١٩٥٩ - ١٩٦٩]* (The Arab Institute for Studies and Publication, 2002), 60; Ahmed al-Shuqayri, *From the Summit to the Defeat [من القمة الى الهزيمة]*, first electronic issue (Dar al-Awda, 2005), 66.

[15] Patrick Seale, *Asad* (University of California Press, 1989), 126; Heikal, *1967*, 362–67; Eyal Zisser, 'Between Israel and Syria [בין ישראל לסוריה]', *Rise of Israel Review* 17–216 : (1998) 8 *[עיונים בתקומת ישראל]*; Dib, *Modern History*, 295–96.

Syria was the main Arab country to publicly call for war against Israel in the period of 1963-1965, embarrassing the reluctant Nasser.[16] Damascus attempted to outbid Cairo on the issue of Palestine;[17] this suited the Ba'ath party's leftist ideology,[18] increased the domestic popularity of the Ba'ath party by turning internal dissent outward to Israel,[19] and allowed Syria to earn Arab prestige and leadership at the expense of Egypt.[20] While Ma'oz and Dib believed that the Ba'ath genuinely sought an Arab showdown with Israel,[21] Zisser argued that Damascus played a controlled game of brinkmanship without seeking a full-scale war.[22] Either way, in the absence of any substantial Arab military support, Damascus did not in practice go beyond its bellicose rhetoric, support for the Palestinian factions, and the instigation of limited border hostilities.[23]

Jordan's efforts at that time focused on suppressing Palestinian separatism in the West Bank, fuelled by Egypt and Syria. Amman had annexed the West Bank in 1950 and had since sought to integrate the West Bank into Jordan and to 'Jordanianise' the local population. While outwardly sympathetic to the cause of the Palestinian factions based in its territory, the Jordanian state defended its authority by curtailing their efforts to establish a military presence.[24] Amman was unhappy with, and sometimes tried to prevent, the Palestinian rogue attacks on Israel from Jordanian territory, as these attacks exposed Jordan to Israeli reprisals. Nevertheless, Amman was often powerless to prevent these infiltrations, fearing that cracking down too hard on the Palestinian factions could inhibit the Jordanisation efforts and tear Jordanian society apart beyond repair.[25]

Some efforts were made in 1964 and 1965 to organise an Arab front to assist Palestine and counter the Israeli diversion projects in the Jordan River. These efforts came in the form of three Arab summits in Cairo, Alexandria, and Casablanca. Nevertheless, these yielded few results and mostly showed how disunited and unwilling the Arab states were. Syria, Algeria, and the PLO proposed to go to war with Israel, but other Arab countries saw this as too extreme. Nasser was the one to organise

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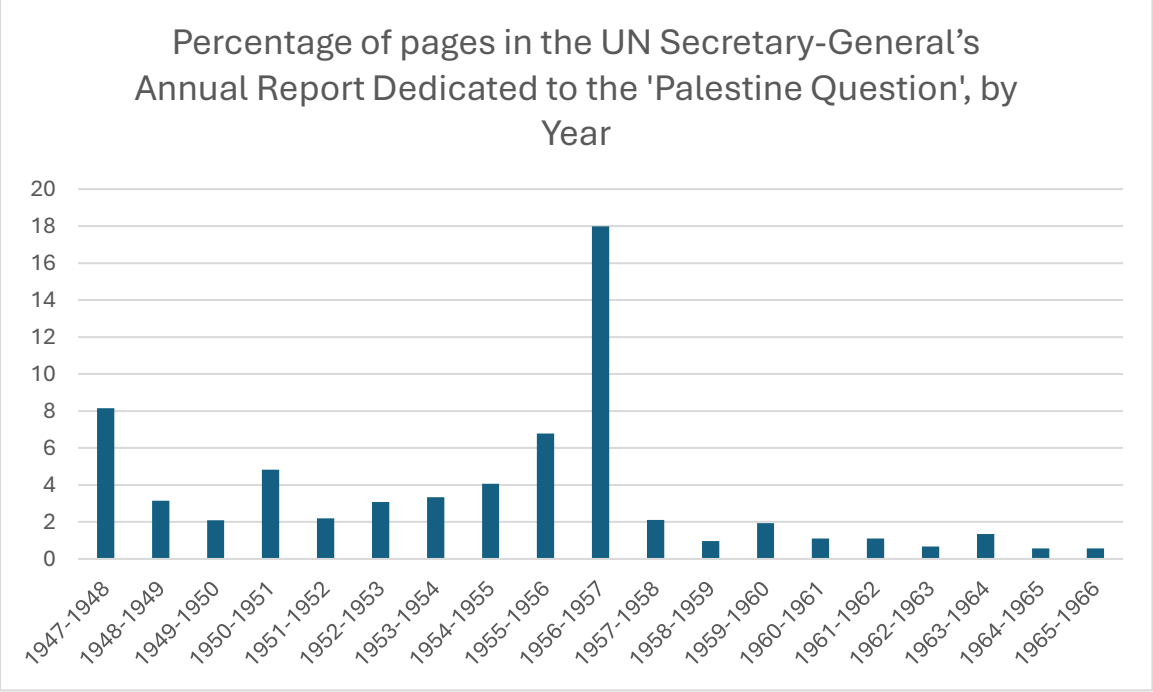
[16] Dib, *Modern History*, 289–90.
[17] Mustafa Talas, *Mirror of My Life [مرآة حياتي]* (Dar Talas, 2006), 2: 754–55.
[18] Seale, *Asad*, 106.
[19] Moshe Ma'oz, *Syria and Israel: From War to Peace-Making [ישראל-סוריה: סוף הסכסוך]* (Ma'ariv, 1996), 78.
[20] Talas, *Mirror*, 2: 754–55.
[21] Ma'oz, *Syria and Israel*, 74–80; Dib, *Modern History*, 288.
[22] Zisser, 'Between Israel and Syria', 222.
[23] Ma'oz, *Syria and Israel*, 74–80.
[24] Shaul Mishal, *West Bank/East Bank* (Yale University Press, 1978), 17, 74–76; Suleiman Mousa, *The History of Jordan in the 20th Century, 1958-1995 [تاريخ الأردن في القرن العشرين، ١٩٥٨ - ١٩٩٥]* (al-Muhtasab Library, 1996), 50–106.
[25] Hussein Bin Talal, *My Conduct as King [مهنتي كملك]* (The Arab Company for Print and Publication, 1975), 204–7; Mousa, *Jordan 1958-1995*, 106–10.

these summits but was accused by more militant forces of exploiting the meetings to muzzle Syria's aggressive intentions and to sabotage the prospects of an Arab-Israeli war.[26]

The general Arab-Israeli disinclination to go to war until 1967 might have allowed for effective UN peacemaking and peacekeeping initiatives. However, the UN organs did little to reduce the existing regional tensions. In fact, New York was more aloof from the Arab-Israeli conflict in the early 1960s than ever before. This becomes clear by looking at the graph below, calculating the percentage of pages dedicated to the 'Palestine Question' in each Secretary-General annual report between 1947 and 1966. Unsurprisingly, peaks of UN preoccupation with the Middle East were spotted around wartimes, namely 1947-1948 and 1956-1957. However, starting from 1958, UN engagement with the issue plummeted to an all-time low, and steadily remained as such until 1966, just before the Six Day War. The raw data, as well as detailed methodology and findings, can be found in Annex 1.



It is likely that the main reason for the UN detachment from the Arab-Israeli question was the prevailing global dynamics. The United States and the Soviet Union, each with their respective allies, continued waging their Cold War across the globe, and engaging in severe confrontations such as the

[26] Seale, *Asad*, 121; al-Shuqayri, *From the Summit*, 57–58; Dib, *Modern History*, 288–90; Siyam, 'Was War Inevitable?', 300.

Cuban Missile Crisis, the Vietnam war, the Congo war etc.[27] Most Security Council meetings between 1960 and 1966 were dedicated to conflicts that were intertwined with the East-West struggle, mostly outside of the Middle East.[28] With so many other zones of conflict, part of them in a state of active war, the Middle East was the least of the Superpowers' problems. This is apparent in the striking recount of American Secretary of State Dean Rusk: 'During the Kennedy years [1961-1963] and up until 1967 the Middle East presented few major problems for me as secretary of state. Relations between Israel and its Arab neighbours were relatively quiet, still coasting along on the *modus vivendi* reached after the Suez Crisis of 1956…'.[29] As will be shown throughout this chapter, this is certainly not how Israelis and Arabs perceived their situation at that time.

The Security Council did occasionally consider complaints about armistice violations submitted by Israel or Syria but typically chose to either do nothing or to resort to mere condemnations. The Syrians were able to secure one condemnation of an Israeli attack on Syrian villages in April 1962,[30] but failed to reproduce this outcome after Israel struck at its Jordan River diversion sites in July 1966.[31] According to Seale, the inability to condemn Israeli belligerence on this occasion pushed Syria further toward adopting a policy of military reprisals against Israel and increasing its support for the 'people's liberation war', namely the Palestinian guerilla attacks against Israeli targets.[32] For Israel, the Security Council experience was even worse. Whenever it resorted to the Security Council to complain about Arab infiltrations into Israel from Syria or about direct attacks of the Syrian army against Israeli targets, the same pattern always followed: long deliberations produced some draft to condemn Syria, which in turn was vetoed by the Soviets in defence of Damascus. This happened in August 1963,[33] November-December 1964,[34] and October-November 1966.[35] Israeli UN Representative Gideon Rafael lamented that the Soviet veto gave Syria and Fatah free rein to carry out attacks against Israel.[36]

Since New York was largely absent from the Middle East, it was again up to the local UN observers to deal with conflagrations. As noted in previous chapters, UNTSO observers monitored the

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[27] Ralph B. Levering, *The Cold War, 1945-1987*, The American History Series (H. Davidson, 1988), 71–116; LaFeber, *Cold War*, 192–251; Quandt, *Peace Process*, 5, 23–24.
[28] Security Council meetings S/PV.850-1340, 1960-1966, UNDL.
[29] Dean Rusk and Richard Rusk, *As I Saw It*, ed. Daniel S. Papp (W. W. Norton & Company, 1990), 378.
[30] Security Council meeting S/PV.1006, 9 April 1962, UNDL.
[31] Security Council documents S/7412, S/7419, S/PV.1288-1295, 18 July-3 August 1966, UNDL.
[32] Seale, *Asad*, 120.
[33] Security Council documents S/5394, S/PV.1057-1063, 20 August-3 September 1963, UNDL.
[34] Security Council documents S/6046, S/PV.1162, S/PV.1164-1169, S/PV.1182, 15 November-21 December 1964, UNDL.
[35] Security Council documents S/7540, S/PV.1305, S/PV.1307-1310, S/PV.1312-1314, S/PV.1316-1317, S/PV.1319, 12 October-4 November 1966, UNDL; Eban, *Abba Eban*, 313; Rikhye, *Sinai*, 6–7.
[36] Gideon Rafael, *Destination Peace* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1981), 131.

status of the armistice and operated the MACs, which enabled low-level military Arab-Israeli meetings under UN chairmanship to peacefully resolve day-to-day outbreaks.[37] However, from 1951 the Israelis grew resentful of what they perceived as an unfair treatment by the different MACs. Israel thus gradually disbanded these forums, and barring the Lebanese MAC their work was largely nullified by the 1960s.[38] As the Israeli-Syrian border was plagued with the most severe and frequent incidents, the Israeli-Syrian MAC (ISMAC) was arguably the most missed. Its dire situation was highlighted by U Thant in a report from November 1966. Clearly hoping to revitalise this apparatus, U Thant alerted that ISMAC was unable to hold regular meetings since 1951, with a total of no less than 66,085 Israeli and Syrian complaints pending its review. Additionally, it only held 17 emergency sessions since 1951, with Israel failing to attend two of them. From 1960 ISMAC had not convened at all, and neither party requested any meetings.[39] Nonetheless, U Thant's report failed to elicit an international response to ISMAC's paralysis.

The case of the Israeli raid in al-Samu illustrates well how the collapse of the MAC system and New York's lack of adequate response to local incidents frustrated the belligerents and incentivised them to take forceful action. In November 1966 Israeli forces carried out an attack on the Jordanian-held, West Bank village of al-Samu near Hebron, in response to infiltrators who had entered and planted mines that blew up an Israeli command car in the same area. The grave Israeli reprisal claimed the lives of 20 and injured 40 more soldiers and civilians on the Jordanian side. Additionally, 93 houses were destroyed. Apart from the physical damage, Amman also faced political backlash as Palestinians revolted throughout the West Bank against what they perceived as a governmental negligence of their safety.[40] After the Samu raid, Eshkol justified the attack and criticised the UN inaction in a long transmission to American President Lyndon Johnson. According to Eshkol, the 'Hebron mines' were only the last link in a long chain of attacks against Israeli military and civilian targets, perpetrated from Syrian and Jordanian territory over several months. He reminded that until this attack Israel refrained from retaliations but could hold back no longer. Eshkol also complained that the Security Council did nothing to address the assaults on Israel, and as it was still deliberating Jordanian and Syrian officials publicly expressed their support for the 'people's liberation war'. He accused that over the course of 15 years 'of Arab belligerence against Israel on all fronts, the UN institutions have not adopted a single

[37] Pelcovits, *Armistice*, 38–40.
[38] Comay, *U.N. Peace-Keeping*, 24.
[39] Security Council document S/7572, 1 November 1967, UNDL.
[40] On this, see: Moshe Shemesh, 'The IDF Raid on Samu'', *Israel Studies* 7, no. 1 (2002): 151–59.

resolution to directly condemn the bellicose Arab policy'.[41] In another correspondence, this time with Historian Yitzhak Ba'ar, Eshkol again defended the Samu raid, writing: 'In the last two years [until January 1967], starting from January 1965, 44 acts or attempted acts of terrorism took place with the terrorists infiltrating our lands from Jordanian territory… We restrain ourselves once, and twice, and thrice, and seven times; are we to allow ourselves to be worn out and killed bit by bit?'.[42] However, even the magnitude of the Samu raid failed to adequately rattle the Security Council out of its usual pattern. It convened immediately after the raid and on 25 November adopted Resolution 228. It condemned Israel for the action and emphasised that military reprisals could no longer be tolerated and, if repeated, would force the Security Council to take steps against them.[43] But beyond the harsh censure to further antagonise Israel, few steps were taken to fundamentally remedy the Middle Eastern tensions.

Another example of the UN's inability to act can be found in the Syrian-Israeli escalation of early 1967. In a series of letters from January 1967, Israel complained that Syrian forces shelled and fired at Israelis, whereas the Syrians complained that Israel was illegally occupying the DMZs. Both disputants warned of the bellicose intentions of the other party.[44] UNTSO Commander Odd Bull and U Thant publicly appealed for the reactivation of ISMAC. Syria acceded to the proposal on the very next day; Israel took a little longer but also agreed. ISMAC was thus briefly reawakened from its coma.[45] The agenda for the ISMAC meetings was to reach an understanding regarding cultivation rights in the DMZs, but the item was never discussed because both parties insisted on first raising broader issues. Furthermore, disagreements as to the steps to be taken led to a deadlock. The meetings stagnated before ceasing entirely in April, owing to major border skirmishes between the two countries.[46] The years leading up to the Six Day War were thus characterised by continued hostilities. With New York immersing itself in other international affairs, UNTSO was left alone between Israel and the Arab states. With its MACs inactive, the UN observers could do little more than to report incidents and advise the parties to practice restraint. This stagnation frustrated the belligerents and encouraged them to further their interests by force. The result was a volatile Middle East, ripe for a crisis that would spiral out of control.

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[41] Eshkol, *Eshkol*, 523–25.
[42] Eshkol, *Eshkol*, 525.
[43] Security Council documents S/PV.1320-1328, S/RES/228, 16-25 November 1966, UNDL.
[44] Security Council documents S/7668, S/7671, S/7673, S/7675, S/7680, S/7684, 8-15 January 1967, UNDL; Rikhye, *Sinai*, 9.
[45] Security Council documents S/7683, S/7685, S/7690, 15-18 January 1967, UNDL; Bailey, *Four Wars*, 189.
[46] Security Council documents S/7877, 8 May 1967; General Assembly document A/6701, 1967, 1, UNDL; Odd Bull, *War and Peace in the Middle East* (Leo Cooper, 1976), 102–4.

The Secretary-General Stands Alone (13 May – 4 June 1967)

If the period preceding May 1967 created an atmosphere conducive to a crisis, May 1967 brought the crisis itself. And if until now the main casualties of the prolonged UN disengagement were Arabs and Israelis, this time its victim would be UNEF.

The May crisis began with the now infamous Soviet intelligence report: on 13 May, Moscow passed retrospectively incorrect information to Cairo and Damascus, according to which Israel was concentrating forces on the Syrian border for the sake of a major aggression.[47] The impact of the Soviet reports was amplified by Israeli threats made on 10-12 May, to the effect that Israel might take serious action against Syria if Damascus-backed border clashes and infiltrations persisted.[48] To date, the puzzle of the Soviet motivations in sending the false report remains unsolved and different scholars proposed different theories on the matter. Parker interviewed former Soviet officials in 1990 and according to them, Moscow genuinely passed this information thinking it was correct and had no intention to cause any Arab-Israeli escalation.[49] Golan and Laron each suggested that Moscow intentionally exaggerated the Israeli threat, but not for bellicose intentions; it hoped to push Cairo into defending Damascus in the event of war and thus to ensure that both Arabs and Israelis were deterred enough not to attack each other.[50] Naumakin and Ginor proposed a third view, according to which the Soviets deliberately passed the inaccurate information with the hope to spark Arab-Israeli hostilities and thus to internationally portray Israel as an aggressor.[51]

Equally puzzling was the Arab reaction to the Soviet report. Despite its militant rhetoric in the past, upon receipt of the Soviet warning the Syrian response was relatively mild, thus supporting the assertion that Damascus did not seek to confront Israel – at lea`st not alone. The Syrian foreign ministry issued a statement warning against Israeli intentions to topple the Syrian regime and argued that Damascus could neither be held accountable for the Palestinian struggle against Israel, nor be

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[47] Heikal, *1967*, 445; Galia Golan, 'The Soviet Union and the Outbreak of the June 1967 Six-Day War', *Journal of Cold War Studies* 8, no. 1 (2006): 6–8.
[48] 'Eban' [Hebrew], *Al Hamishmar*, 10 May 1967, 1; 'Eshkol' [Hebrew], *Al Hamishmar*, 12 May 1967, 1; Security Council document S/7880, 11 May 1967, 3, UNDL; Richard B. Parker, ed., *The Six-Day War: A Retrospective* (University Press of Florida, 1996), 6-7,29-33.
[49] Richard B. Parker, 'The June 1967 War: Some Mysteries Explored', *Middle East Journal* 46, no. 2 (1992): 177–97; Richard B. Parker, *The Politics of Miscalculation in the Middle East*, Indiana Series in Arab and Islamic Studies (Indiana university press, 1993), 3–26.
[50] Golan, 'Soviet Union', 6–8; Guy Laron, 'Playing with Fire', *Cold War History* 10, no. 2 (2010): 163–84.
[51] Parker, *October War*, 35–41; Isabella Ginor, 'The Cold War's Longest Cover-Up', *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 7, no. 3 (2003): 34–59.

expected to suppress it.[52] A similar formula was submitted by the Syrian UN Representative George Tomeh to the Security Council.[53] It was in fact the Egyptians who took a more active approach in response to the Soviet warning. Defence Minister Abd al-Hakim Amer raised the preparedness of the Egyptian armed forces to full alert.[54] He also sent Chief of Staff Mohammed Fawzy to Syria on 14 May to assess the situation. But Fawzy's 15 May report to Amer found no Israeli concentration of forces.[55] UNTSO came to a similar conclusion, and UN elements communicated this to the Arabs.[56] The Israelis also reassured Tomeh and the Egyptian UN Representative Mohamed al-Kony through UN Undersecretary-General Ralph Bunche.[57] In Israel, Eshkol invited the Soviet Ambassador for a tour on the Syrian border to disprove the allegations, although the Ambassador declined the offer.[58] Yet, ostensibly without good reason, all these reassurances fell on deaf ears. On 16 May, UNEF Commander Indar Jit Rikhye received a letter from Fawzy. The chief of staff wrote that he had been instructed to prepare for an aggressive Israeli action in Sinai, and therefore concentrated his troops on Egypt's eastern border. The badly-worded letter stated, 'for the sake of complete secure of all UN troops which install OPs [observation posts] along our borders, I request that you issue your orders to withdraw all these troops immediately'.[59]

Scholars such as Bailey wondered 'what were Nasser's motives in asking for the withdrawal of UNEF'.[60] To provide some examples, Mutawi claimed that the Soviet warning gave Nasser 'an ideal opportunity to come to the defence of his ally [Syria]…'.[61] Similarly, Golan argued that 'Nasser knew that the Soviets' information was false… [But] have interpreted the report to mean Soviet encouragement of an Egyptian move against Israel'.[62] Ahmed suggested that 'Nasser had assumed that the UN would refuse, that is to withdraw UNEF, and thus [Nasser] would achieve the goal of deterrence without creating a *casus belli*…'.[63] However, this thesis relies mainly on Egyptian sources to proposes a different explanation altogether: that Nasser himself had nothing to do with Fawzy's letter, and it was sent at Amer's sole discretion. Egyptian politics were characterised in the early 1960s by a rivalry between Nasser's political leadership and the increasingly dominant military establishment headed by

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[52] 'Syria Announces' [Arabic], *al-Thawra*, 14 May 1967, 1, 3.
[53] Security Council document S/7885, 15 May 1967, UNDL.
[54] Bailey, *Four Wars*, 190.
[55] Mohammed Fawzy, *The Three-Year War: 1967-1970* [حرب الثلاث سنوات ١٩٦٧ - ١٩٧٠] (al-Karama, 2016), 53–55.
[56] Security Council document S/7896, 19 May 1967, 2, UNDL; Parker, *Six-Day War*, xvii.
[57] Eban, *Abba Eban*, 319; Rafael, *Destination*, 136–37.
[58] Eban, *Abba Eban*, 318–19.
[59] General Assembly document A/6669, 18 May 1967, 4, UNDL.
[60] Bailey, *Four Wars*, 191.
[61] Samir A. Mutawi, *Jordan in the 1967 War* (Cambridge University Press, 1987), 93.
[62] Golan, *Soviet Policies*, 58–59.
[63] Ahmed, *The Revolution*, 897.

Amer.[64] While Nasser urged Arab caution versus Israel, Amer was more eager to enter war and more confident in Egypt's military capabilities. As late as 29-30 May 1967, Amer confidently told colleagues that a war with Israel should be easy and last no more than a few days.[65] Not unlike Sharett in the 1950s, Nasser found himself dealing with a powerful defence minister who could potentially undermine his more dovish security policy. There are various indications that Amer misled Nasser and requested UNEF's evacuation at his own discretion. First, Amer was the one to instruct Fawzy to send the letter.[66] Second, the letter only narrowly requested UNEF's removal from the border, although Nasser was well aware of such request's wider diplomatic implications.[67] In fact, in 1965-1966 Nasser considered the possibility of withdrawing UNEF on multiple occasions, sometimes at Amer's request, and decided against it.[68] Third, Fawzy's letter was communicated directly between him and Rikhye, and the Egyptian foreign ministry was not even made aware of its content.[69] Fourth, despite Fawzy's reassurances on 15 May, Amer issued orders stating that 'intelligence from various sources indicates that Israel had begun amassing forces on the Syrian front',[70] and Nasser would later insist that 'We examined this information [the Soviet report], and it became clear to us that Israel concentrated no less than 13 brigades facing Syria'.[71] Once the letter had already been sent, Nasser was probably forced to play along with its content, to not appear as if he had lost control over his cabinet at the height of a sensitive crisis.

Either way, the letter was handed to Rikhye. He replied that he was unauthorised to remove UNEF from its posts and would have to seek instructions from U Thant,[72] thus heralding the Secretary-General's entry into the crisis. U Thant began by asking Kony about the Egyptian request and learned that the ambassador was equally uninformed about its content.[73] The former therefore asked the latter to enquire what was it exactly that Cairo wanted; if it sought a temporary removal of UNEF from the border to initiate hostilities, this would be impossible because UNEF was there to prevent violence to begin with and could not entertain such a request. If it sought to entirely retract its consent for UNEF's presence in Egypt, it was entitled to do so but had to pass a formal request directly to U Thant and not

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[64] On this, see: Anwar al-Sadat, *In Search of Identity* (Harper & Row, 1978), 156-161,167-169; Riad, *Memoirs*, 43–55; Hamadeh Husni, *Shams Badran* [شمس بدران] (Beirut Bookshop, 2008); Fawzy, *Three-Year War*, 24–43.
[65] Riad, *Memoirs*, 53; Jum'a, *The Conspiracy*, 144.
[66] Fawzy, *Three-Year War*, 57.
[67] Heikal, *1967*, 204–5.
[68] Heikal, *1967*, 369–70; Fawzy, *Three-Year War*, 56–57.
[69] Rikhye, *Sinai*, 165; Ramses Nassif, *U Thant in New York* (St. Martin's Press, 1988), 73; Parker, *Six-Day War*, 18, 43–44.
[70] Heikal, *1967*, 1005–6.
[71] 'The President's Speech' [Arabic], *al-Ahram*, 24 July 1967, 3.
[72] Rikhye, *Sinai*, 16–19.
[73] Rikhye, *Sinai*, 51; Ramses Nassif, 'Ramses Nassif', interview by Jean Krasno, 9 March 1998, 44, Yale - United Nations Oral History Project.

to Rikhye.[74] Thus, U Thant inadvertently forced Cairo into escalation. Mahmoud Riad, by now the Egyptian foreign minister, recounted that Fawzy's letter was limited in scope, seeking only to remove UNEF from the Egyptian-Israeli border, and not from Sharm al-Sheikh or Gaza. By insisting on a formal appeal, U Thant left the Egyptians with no option but to seek UNEF's full removal.[75] A discreet and direct appeal to either Riad or Nasser, rather than a formal appeal to Kony, might have led to a more moderate outcome. This is especially true if Nasser and Riad really were uninvolved in drafting Fawzy's letter to Rikhye, although U Thant had no way of knowing about this possibility at the time.

A discreet diplomacy such as the one that U Thant could have attempted was applied by his predecessor Hammarskjöld during the less famous 1960 crisis, codenamed 'Rotem' in Israel. Rotem started strikingly similar to the May 1967 crisis: a Soviet warning that Israel was about to attack Syria spurred an Egyptian concentration of forces in Sinai. However, unlike 1967, Rotem ended with the dispersal of the Egyptian forces and war was ultimately averted.[76] Hammarskjöld did not press the demilitarisation of Sinai even after Egyptian forces entered the peninsula and focused instead on quiet mediation between Israelis and Egyptians. He also made sure to downplay the gravity of the situation when speaking to his Middle Eastern colleagues, even when in fact he was quite disturbed.[77] A similar, subtle approach by U Thant may have allowed Nasser and Riad to quietly disentangle the situation. But having received U Thant's official and public query, their hands were tied. Only on 18 May, two whole days after Fawzy's letter was delivered, Riad formally requested from U Thant UNEF's full withdrawal.[78]

After the Egyptian decision came in, U Thant made a second fatal mistake: he immediately and singlehandedly accepted Cairo's request. Pogany pointed out some of the good reasons the Secretary-General had to do so: from a legal standpoint, UNEF's mandate and presence relied on the consent of Egypt. Additionally, some contributing countries had already informed U Thant that they would withdraw their contingents from UNEF in accordance with Egypt's request. And lastly, Egyptian forces had already occupied several UNEF posts and taken positions along the armistice line, which rendered UNEF already irrelevant as a buffer force.[79] UN Political Officer F. T. Liu added another critical reason: by that point the Egyptian advance toward the border led to clashes between

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[74] General Assembly document A/6669, 18 May 1967, 4-5.
[75] Riad, *Memoirs*, 46–47; Heikal, *1967*, 475.
[76] On this, see: Uri Bar-Joseph, 'Rotem', *Journal of Contemporary History* 31, no. 3 (1996): 547–66; Yigal Sheffi, *Early Warning Countdown [התרעה במבחן]* (Ma'arachot, 2008).
[77] On this, see: Eitan Barak, 'Caught in the Middle', *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 17, no. 2 (2006): 393–414.
[78] Brian Urquhart, *A Life in Peace and War* (Harper & Row, 1987), 210.
[79] Pogany, *The Security Council*, 85–86.

UNEF and Egyptian forces, and stalling withdrawal any further could have cost UN soldiers' lives.[80] These arguments notwithstanding, U Thant could have also considered alternative courses of action. He knew that both the Security Council and the UNEF Advisory Board were not unanimous in the opinion that UNEF should be evacuated at Egypt's request.[81] Additionally, when UNEF was originally created, it was envisaged that issues concerning UNEF should be brought before the General Assembly.[82] Brian Urquhart, by now a member of the UN Secretariat, defended U Thant's decision not to refer the question to the international forums, claiming that the Secretary-General knew that the '[Security] Council's proceedings would decline into an undignified brawl along East-West lines…'.[83] But even then, the deliberations could have bought U Thant some time for consultations and planning before withdrawal commenced. Instead, the Secretary-General quickly instructed Rikhye to begin UNEF's evacuation on 19 May.[84] Thus, the buffer that had prevented Egyptian-Israeli hostilities for 11 years was abruptly removed.

After the removal of UNEF, little was done to save the Middle East from the brink. U Thant did travel to Cairo in late May to try and prevent further escalation.[85] However, while he was *en route* to Egypt, Nasser reinstated the blockade of ships to and from Israel through the Straits of Tiran. The Israelis responded by warning that this blockade was considered an attack on Israel.[86] While in Cairo, U Thant proposed a moratorium, which Nasser accepted.[87] Nasser had sought to reverse the detrimental effects of the Suez Crisis, namely to remove UNEF and to reestablish full Egyptian control over Sinai and the adjacent waterways,[88] and now preferred to retain his successes without escalating to full war with Israel. However, the Israelis flatly rejected the moratorium, as well as U Thant's proposal to appoint a UN representative to the area.[89] They simply could not afford a moratorium, given the sense of an impending apocalypse that had pervaded Israel by now: mobilisation was extensive, civilians were digging trenches, and military officials warned that an Arab attack could begin any minute.[90] U Thant was criticised for not having visited Jerusalem in addition to Cairo;[91] according to the Secretary-

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[80] Parker, *Six-Day War*, 114–15.
[81] Pantanaw U Thant, *View from the UN* (Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1978), 221; Parker, *Six-Day War*, 78–79; Siyam, 'Was War Inevitable?', 302–3.
[82] Lall, *The UN*, 14–16.
[83] Urquhart, *A Life*, 212.
[84] Rikhye, *Sinai*, 41–42.
[85] *Yearbook of the United Nations (1967)* (UN Department of Public Information, 1968), 165; Rikhye, *Sinai*, 63; Nassif, 'Ramses Nassif', 43.
[86] *UN Yearbook 1967*, 166.
[87] U Thant, *View*, 237–38; Rikhye, *Sinai*, 71–76; Riad, *Memoirs*, 52; Heikal, *1967*, 545–57; Nassif, 'Ramses Nassif', 40.
[88] Fawzy, *Three-Year War*, 53.
[89] U Thant, *View*, 239; Nassif, 'Ramses Nassif', 80.
[90] Eshkol, *Eshkol*, 532–33.
[91] Nassif, 'Ramses Nassif', 80.

General, he felt that visiting Israel could have compromised his contact with the Egyptians.[92] Perhaps if he had, he could have developed a more mutually acceptable formula to stop the escalation.

If U Thant mismanaged the UNEF crisis, the Security Council and General Assembly did not deal with it at all. They could have chosen to discuss UNEF's situation without the Secretary-General's referral but never did. Starting with the General Assembly, its Fifth Special Session in mid-late May concerned the situation in South-West Africa and, ironically, peacekeeping operations in general – but refrained from addressing the ongoing UNEF crisis.[93] This is even though the General Assembly was the one to create the force in 1956, as described in the second chapter. As for the Security Council, after the Samu raid in November 1966 it shelved Arab-Israeli matters, only to return to them on 24 May 1967,[94] after UNEF had already been disbanded. This was even though throughout April and May appeals were made by Syria,[95] Israel,[96] and U Thant[97] for Security Council consideration of the Arab-Israeli situation. Lall and Bailey offered the following explanations for the late response: the Superpowers disagreed on the steps to be taken; no other delegation requested a Security Council session; the Security Council lacked regular meetings that could have elucidated the gravity of the situation earlier; at least until 25 May some members preferred to wait until U Thant submitted his report on the Cairo visit; and the president of the Security Council at the time was unable to initiate private negotiations effectively because he represented the Republic of China, a country only recognised by a minority of the Security Council members.[98] When the Security Council finally convened between 24 May and 3 June, it still appeared uninterested in seeking remedial action. At first, some delegates claimed that Security Council action was not even necessary; others used their speeches to raise the question of the Chinese representation in the Security Council instead of Arab-Israeli matters. Afterwards a deadlock ensued. The Western countries proposed drafts expressing support for U Thant's efforts; the Egyptian delegation suggested a draft to reaffirm that the Israeli-Egyptian armistice agreement was still in place. East-West disagreements caused the abandonment of both drafts.[99]

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[92] FRUS, 1964-1968, vol. XIX, Arab-Israeli Crisis and War, 1967, Document 26.
[93] General Assembly meetings A/PV.1516-1522, 18-23 May 1967, UNDL.
[94] Bailey, *Four Wars*, 202.
[95] Security Council documents S/7845, S/7849, S/7863, S/7885, 9 April-15 May 1967, UNDL.
[96] Security Council documents S/7843, S/7853, S/7880, S/7901, 7 April-22 May 1967, UNDL.
[97] Security Council documents S/7877, S/7896, S/7906, 8-26 May 1967, UNDL.
[98] Lall, *The UN*, 3–9; Bailey, *Four Wars*, 202–4.
[99] Security Council documents S/PV.1341-1346, S/7919, 24 May-3 June 1967, UNDL; Lall, *The UN*, 29–30; Bailey, *Four Wars*, 203–4, 220.

Meanwhile in the Middle East, events were progressing considerably faster. In Israel, the government was increasingly leaning toward military pre-emptive action and sent now-Foreign Minister Abba Eban and Head of Mossad Meir Amit abroad to seek Western assistance. As it became clear that there were no meaningful international efforts to reopen the Straits of Tiran or to disperse the Egyptian forces in Sinai, and once a tacit American understanding for an Israeli attack was secured, it was decided to land the first strike.[100] On the Arab side, equally dramatic developments were taking place. Iraq and Saudi Arabia warned that they would cut off oil supplies to the West if war broke out with Israel.[101] On 30 May, a worried King Hussein reluctantly joined the Egyptian-Syrian defence treaty, feeling that he had to stand by the other Arab states and protect his own country.[102] Damascus meanwhile signed a similar defensive treaty with Baghdad.[103]

All in all, almost three full weeks passed from Fawzy's letter to Rikhye on 16 May until Israel launched its offensive on 5 June. Facing the situation almost alone, U Thant accidentally exacerbated the crisis by forcing an Egyptian request to fully evacuate UNEF, rushing to withdraw the force, and proposing an unrealistic moratorium. Meanwhile, the Security Council was reluctant to convene, and later to act. The General Assembly did not even discuss the escalating situation. And so, by 5 June, the Israelis were convinced that the use of force was the only option left.

The Security Council Stands Alone (5 – 10 June 1967)

The Israeli offensive began with a surprise airstrike on Arab airfields on 5 June, wiping out the Egyptian air force on the ground within hours.[104] This finally spurred the Security Council to convene and debate the conflict with great attention. However, by now, it was too late to operate based on reliable information from the field: both Israelis and Egyptians blamed each other for initiating hostilities, and since UNEF had already evacuated from its Sinai positions there was no way to determine which party was telling the truth. After some unfruitful deliberations and private consultations, the Security Council adjourned until the following day.[105]

The confusion as to the instigator of the war and the situation on the front was the fruit of a deliberate Israeli ruse to conceal their aggression. On 6 June, Israeli Director-General of the Foreign

[100] Bailey, *Four Wars*, 200–219; Shlaim, *The Iron Wall*, 253–57; Eshkol, *Eshkol*, 531–51.
[101] U Thant, *View*, 247.
[102] Bin Talal, *My Conduct*, 208–10.
[103] Siyam, 'Was War Inevitable?', 306.
[104] Shlaim, *The Iron Wall*, 257.
[105] Security Council meeting S/PV.1347, 5 June, UNDL.

Ministry Arye Levavi recapped for the cabinet that 'we attempted to delay Soviet action, particularly by creating obscurity about the battles. Here we stressed not only the issue of the Egyptian initiative, but also attempted to create the impression that there were no clear Israeli victories, so as not to encourage them to take early diplomatic action'.[106] Defence Minister Moshe Dayan also noted in his diary that he asked those responsible for the circulation of information not to announce Israeli victories, because 'We must show our actions as a response to the Arab attacks, and "play poor" on the first 24 hours'.[107] The Israeli ploy was inadvertently boosted by Arab self-disinformation. Riad and Egyptian Speaker of Parliament Anwar al-Sadat both admitted that Cairo was being fed false and encouraging reports from the front,[108] which subsequently also confused Egypt's allies.[109] Additionally, Radio Damascus reported that Syrian forces were valiantly and successfully repelling Israeli offensives, even though the Syrian front was largely static.[110] Consequently, the Arab UN delegations believed that the Arab states were faring well, and did not press for a swift Security Council ceasefire on the first day.[111] Dayan gloated: '…this time, the Arab cockiness and exaggerations served us well'.[112]

Only several hours later the real military situation was unveiled, and the Arabs and their partners sought an immediate UN resolution to ensure a ceasefire and an Israeli withdrawal to the armistice lines.[113] As expected, the Israeli leadership envisioned the exact opposite; Eban was sent to New York to personally lead the Israeli delegation and to stall the debate for as long as possible.[114] Rafael recalled that the Israelis were adamant not to repeat the diplomatic failures of 1956. The army had to be allowed sufficient time to fulfil its offensive; any resolution to demand a premature Israeli withdrawal or a mere restoration of the failing armistice regime was going to be resisted; close Israeli-American coordination would be maintained to prevent another Washington-Moscow collaboration against Israel; and any UN resolution would have to directly support a just and lasting peace between the parties.[115]

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[106] Israeli cabinet meeting, 6 June 1967, 15, ISA.
[107] Dayan, *Milestones*, 436.
[108] al-Sadat, *In Search* (Harper & Row, 1978), 174–76; Riad, *Memoirs*, 67–68.
[109] Hussein Bin Talal, *My 'War' with Israel*, ed. Vick Vance and Pierre Lauer, trans. June P. Wilson and Walter B. Michaels (William Morrow and Company, 1969), 65–66, 92–93; Pachachi, *Voice of Iraq*, 112; Wasfi al-Tel, *Facing the Zionist Invasion [في مجابهة الغزو الصهيوني]* (Arab Diffusion, 2008), 148–49, 169–70.
[110] Jum'a, *The Conspiracy*, 97.
[111] Mutawi, *Jordan*, 158; Pachachi, *Voice of Iraq*, 112.
[112] Dayan, *Milestones*, 436.
[113] Pachachi, *Voice of Iraq*, 112.
[114] Eshkol, *Eshkol*, 556.
[115] Rafael, *Destination*, 157–69.

On the first day, the Soviets – still believing that time was not pressing – insisted that Israel must be condemned as the aggressor and withdraw from the territories occupied. But by 6 June, having understood the gravity of the Arab position, Moscow was more inclined to forego these demands for a simple ceasefire.[116] Accordingly, the Security Council was able to unanimously agree on a minimal draft:[117] Resolution 233 called upon the governments to takes steps for an immediate ceasefire, and requested U Thant to keep the Security Council informed.[118] The Israelis hoped to race toward military victory without directly violating the Security Council's decision. On 7 June the cabinet decided that, because only Jordan had communicated its acceptance of Resolution 233, and because Israel had already fulfilled its military objectives on the Jordanian front – the Israeli UN delegation could accept the ceasefire, provided that the Arab states do the same. Until the governments of Egypt and Syria formally announced their acceptance, the Israeli offensive could continue as planned.[119] Simultaneously, Israeli forces were instructed to rush toward the Suez Canal area.[120] Cairo played into the Israeli plans, and as of late 7 June still rejected Soviet appeals to accept the ceasefire.[121].

Later in the day a worried Moscow submitted to the Security Council a second draft, adopted as Resolution 234. It was almost identical to 233: it demanded that all parties should discontinue all military activity and requested U Thant to keep the Security Council informed.[122] The Canadians suggested another draft empowering the Security Council and U Thant to 'take the necessary measures to bring about full and effective compliance' with resolutions 233 and 234.[123] However, the Bulgarian representative motioned to adjourn the debate because 'It is not really urgent at this point to give the [Security Council] president powers such as are described here'.[124] Perhaps the Eastern countries were concerned that the Danish Security Council president, Hans Tabor, would exploit such powers to help Israel and/or the West. Either way, this reluctance also ultimately assisted the Israeli goal of allowing the war to continue uninterrupted. In the absence of UN efforts to enforce the ceasefire, Israeli forces successfully occupied Sinai by late 8 June.[125] Only after that,[126] Nasser confided in Riad that the army had collapsed, and Kony was instructed to communicate Egyptian acceptance of the ceasefire.[127]

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[116] Bull, *War and Peace*, 118; Golan, 'Soviet Union', 12.
[117] Lall, *The UN*, 52; U Thant, *View*, 258; Bailey, *Four Wars*, 230–31.
[118] Security Council Resolution S/RES/233, 6 June 1967, UNDL.
[119] Israeli cabinet meeting, 7 June 1967, 2-38, ISA.
[120] Dayan, *Milestones*, 466.
[121] Riad, *Memoirs*, 71–72.
[122] Security Council Resolution S/RES/234, 7 June 1967, UNDL.
[123] Security Council document S/7941, 7 June 1967, UNDL.
[124] Security Council meeting S/PV.1350, 7 June 1967, 2-9, UNDL.
[125] Dayan, *Milestones*, 470.
[126] Nassif, *U Thant*, 81.
[127] Riad, *Memoirs*, 73–74.

With the Egyptian front won, the Israeli cabinet could consider a major offensive against Syria.[128] On 8 June, it contemplated whether to occupy the Golan Heights, and agreed to wait two or three days before making a final decision.[129] Dayan was the main opponent to a premature attack on the Golan, as he feared potential diplomatic backlash, and chiefly the possibility of a Soviet retaliation.[130] Strangely enough, the same reluctant Dayan bypassed Chief of Staff Yitzhak Rabin and instructed the Northern Command to occupy the Golan in the early morning of 9 June, against the cabinet's decision to wait.[131] Dayan explained that he did so because circumstances had changed: the Soviets moderated their tone; Egypt had agreed to a ceasefire, and the Syrians were on the verge of doing the same; and the military position was propitious.[132] Unlike with the Egyptians, however, the Syrians accepted the ceasefire before the Israelis could finalise their attack. Damascus requested an urgent Security Council meeting and simultaneously complained to the ISMAC chairman that, even though Syria was observing the ceasefire, Israel was continuing hostilities.[133] The Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 235, which was stronger than its predecessors in that it included clear timeframes. It demanded that hostilities should cease forthwith, and that U Thant should arrange an immediate ceasefire and report back to the Security Council no more than two hours from its time of adoption.[134] The Israelis repeated the same strategy that had worked well for them over the last few days: they continued their onslaught into the Golan Heights, arguing that the Syrians were the first to violate the ceasefire.[135] As there were still no UNTSO observers on the ground, it was again impossible to provide New York with accurate reports.[136]

From this point until 10 June, the Security Council would meet four times but without adopting any resolution. Most of the time was spent on a Soviet-Arab and Israeli exchange of accusations, and on waiting around for reliable UNTSO information about the course of the war. On 10 June both parties finally communicated their final acceptance of the ceasefire, and the war was officially over, although violations of the ceasefire persisted.[137] On the whole, the Israelis were allowed to continue the fighting uninterrupted until a satisfactory territorial position was secured. In the evening of 10 June, Dayan

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[128] Zisser, 'Between Israel and Syria', 232–35.
[129] Eshkol, *Eshkol*, 559.
[130] Israeli cabinet meeting, 8 June 1967, 3-27, ISA.
[131] Bailey, *Four Wars*, 235; Yitzhak Rabin, *The Rabin Memoirs*, trans. Dov Goldstein (University of California Press, 1996), 115–17.
[132] Dayan, *Milestones*, 475.
[133] Security Council meeting S/PV.1352, 9 June 1967, 1-2, UNDL.
[134] Security Council Resolution S/RES/235, 9 June, UNDL.
[135] Israeli cabinet meeting, 9 June 1967 (evening), 1-4, ISA.
[136] Bull, *War and Peace*, 119.
[137] Security Council meetings S/PV.1353-1356, 9-10 June 1967, UNDL.

concluded: 'We never dreamed that we could complete all the [plans on all the front] lines'.[138] Like UNTSO, UNEF and U Thant before it, over the six days of war the Security Council tasted the bitter taste of UN isolation; it had lost its eyes and ears in the Middle East, and thus lacked necessary information to make decisions. Had the Security Council become more seriously involved with the Arab-Israeli question before 5 June 1967, it could have benefitted from a more intact UN framework to support and inform its efforts.

The Middle East Stands Alone (11 June – 22 November 1967)

Once the war ended, the main issue that came under discussion was the fate of the territories occupied by Israel. The Israelis hoped to break away from their diplomatic failure in 1956 by preventing the adoption of any UN resolution that prescribed an unconditional Israeli withdrawal.[139] Instead, they repeatedly announced over the next few months that territories would only be returned to the Arabs under bilateral or multilateral Arab-Israeli peace agreements. These would involve Arab recognition of Israel, as well as certain security guarantees such as free Israeli shipping through the Straits of Tiran and the Suez Canal. The agreements also had to be formulated through direct Arab-Israeli negotiations, because according to Eshkol's 22 June speech a mediator would be used as a smokescreen through which the Arab states could continue not to recognise Israel and to assault it.[140] As already noted by both Shlaim and Gelber, in late June the Israeli government approved a diplomatic program for peace settlements with Egypt and Syria based on the international borders. This plan was communicated to the Americans, but seemingly was a general declaration of intent rather than an actual peace offer to be passed on to the Arab states. As for the West Bank, opinions in the government were more varied and its political future was even less clear.[141] East Jerusalem meanwhile was annexed and united with the Western part of the city.[142]

The Arab leaders were meanwhile divided on how to proceed. On one side was King Hussein, who sought to diplomatically reclaim the territories lost through collaboration with the West and the Soviets.[143] On the opposite side stood the leaders of Syria, Algeria, and Iraq, who preferred to adhere to the military path. Nasser assumed a pragmatic middle approach: he believed that rebuilding the Arab

[138] Israeli cabinet meeting, 10 June 1967 (evening), 6, ISA.
[139] Eban, *Abba Eban*, 410–11.
[140] 'The Full Text' [Hebrew], *Davar*, 13 June 1967, 2; 'Eshkol' [Hebrew], *Hazofe*, 22 June 1967, 1; 'Eshkol' [Hebrew], *Davar*, 28 June 1967, 1; 'Y. Allon' [Hebrew], *Davar*, 9 July 1967, 2.
[141] Shlaim, *The Iron Wall*, 267–74; Gelber, 'The Road', 434–40.
[142] Eshkol, *Eshkol*, 573.
[143] Bin Talal, *My 'War'*, 114–15; Bin Talal, *My Conduct*, 228; Mutawi, *Jordan*, 174–75.

armies would require time, at least until 1970, and up to the point when fighting could resume the Arab states could accommodate a limited agreement with Israel to return the lands without ending the state of war.[144] Despite the divergence of views between the Arab leaders, one thing was clear: none of them felt even remotely ready to conclude peace with Israel at that time. This unanimity was formalised in the famous Khartoum Conference which lasted from 29 August until 1 September. Its resolutions determined that an international and diplomatic solution to eliminate the effects of the aggression must be sought, based on the famous 'Three Nos': no peace, no recognition, and no negotiations with Israel.[145] Mutwai and Shlaim have argued that this outcome was in fact a victory for the moderates, as it validated the use of political means to restore the lost territories.[146] This, however, was not the Israeli interpretation. As Eban estimated, 'clearly, this outcome is unhelpful to the various compromise seekers…'.[147] Rosenthal claimed that the Khartoum Conference led to a hardening in the Israeli positions, and to the authorisation to build Israeli settlement in the newly occupied territories.[148]

In the aftermath of the war therefore, the belligerents held almost perfectly polar views. The Arabs asserted that the Israeli withdrawal must be unconditional, whereas the Israelis insisted on linking it to an agreement; the Arabs wanted a limited arrangement at best, and the Israelis sought full peace; the Arabs refused recognition or contact with Israel, while the Israelis demanded direct Arab-Israeli negotiations. To sum up, the Arabs refused to progress into peace with Israel, whereas the Israelis rejected a regression back to the prewar *status quo ante*. These disagreements translated into a widescale UN deadlock. The Communist, Nonaligned, and Arab delegations generally worked toward an Israeli unconditional withdrawal. On the opposite side were some Western countries and the Latin American bloc, which promoted a comprehensive settlement for the Arab-Israeli question.[149] The United States was a key factor in the UN's paralysis around this time. As noted in the second chapter, in 1956 Washington decided to break away from its traditional partners of Britain, France, and Israel, instead joining forces with the Soviets to enforce an unconditional withdrawal from Egypt. Conversely, the Lyndon Johnson administration was more willing to protect Israel in the UN from potentially detrimental resolutions.[150] Riad wrote that toward November the 'American position was the main Israeli asset in the Security Council and in the UN in general…';[151] Jordanian UN

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[144] Riad, *Memoirs*, 109–25; Abdel Magid Farid, *Nasser: The Final Years* (Ithaca Press, 1996), 1–40.
[145] Bailey, *Four Wars*, 262.
[146] Mutawi, *Jordan*, 176; Shlaim, *The Iron Wall*, 276.
[147] Israeli government meeting 3 September 1967, 21, ISA.
[148] Eshkol, *Eshkol*, 576.
[149] Lall, *The UN*, 123–68.
[150] Quandt, *Peace Process*, 44–45.
[151] Riad, *Memoirs*, 150.

Representative Muhammad al-Farra claimed that '… the United States was Israel's strategic partner';[152] and even Eban admitted that around late June, 'Some of the burden of our defence was now taken off my shoulders by the addresses of [American] Ambassador [Arthur] Goldberg, acting with President Johnson's authority'.[153] This policy prevented the formation of another Superpower consensus, and by extension another UN front in favour of an Arab-Israeli compromise. It is hard to criticise Washington too harshly for this stance, however; it was only doing for Israel now what Moscow had been doing for the Arabs since 1956.

The Arab-Israeli and Soviet-American confrontations meant that between June and November, the UN institutions were able to do very little to mollify the situation in the Middle East. Literature like that produced by Lall, Bailey, and Gelber has already outlined the diplomatic work done in New York at this time, and thus there is no need to survey this subject thoroughly. Suffice it to say that very little was done in terms of peacemaking or peacekeeping. The Security Council met 17 times to discuss the occasional ceasefire violations perpetrated by both sides, mostly on the Egyptian-Israeli front. The General Assembly dedicated its Fifth Emergency Special Session to the Arab-Israeli question, and debated it some more in its 22nd Regular Session. Despite all these deliberations, the two organs were only able to produce resolutions calling for the upholding of humanitarian standards in the treatment of civilians in the occupied territories and prisoners of war, plus one General Assembly resolution calling for the reversal of the Israeli annexation of East Jerusalem.[154]

There were however two occasions on which Moscow and Washington were able to rise above their differences and propose potential compromises, only to be turned down by both Arabs and Israelis. The first instance was around 19 June, when the two Superpowers produced a formula based on Arab recognition of Israel in exchange for an Israeli withdrawal. The Egyptians refused to recognise Israel,[155] whereas the Israelis pressured the Americans to terminate the General Assembly's Emergency Session without adopting any compromise at all.[156] The second attempt came in late July, when Washington and Moscow amended a pre-existing Latin American draft into a mutually agreeable document. On the one hand it satisfied Arab demands by affirming the inadmissibility of acquiring land through war and calling for an Israeli withdrawal, and on the other catered to the Israeli interests by upholding the right of all states in the region for political sovereignty and territorial integrity and

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[152] Muhammad H. al-Farra, *Years of No Decision* [سنوات بلا قرار] (al-Ahram Centre for Translation and Publication, 1999), 67.
[153] Eban, *Abba Eban*, 436.
[154] Lall, *The UN*, 77–270; Bailey, *Four Wars*, 244–78; Gelber, 'The Road', 432–58.
[155] Anatoly F. Dobrynin, *In Confidence* (University of Washington Press, 2001), 161.
[156] Eban, *Abba Eban*, 435–36; Rafael, *Destination*, 177–78.

calling for the termination of the state of war.[157] Despite Soviet pressure, the Arab delegations rejected the draft.[158] While it is unclear what precisely bothered the Arabs about the particular Soviet-American variant, it is known that some Arab delegations – most notably Syria and Algeria – rejected the original Latin American formula because they refused to end the state of war with Israel and to accept its shipping through Egyptian territorial waters.[159] The Israelis also objected to the American-Soviet draft, as they felt that it was too abstract on Arab concessions and too direct on Israeli compromises.[160]

Eventually, on 22 November 1967 the Security Council adopted Resolution 242, approved by the Security Council after tireless work by the British and American delegations.[161] Among other things, the resolution emphasised the inadmissibility of the acquisition of land through war, the need for a just and lasting peace, and the importance of implementing the values of the UN Charter. It also called for peace based on Israeli withdrawal; termination of the state of war and mutual acknowledgement of sovereignty; free shipping through the international waterways; a solution for the refugee problem; the territorial inviolability and political independence of all local states; and the appointment of a special representative to mediate 'a peaceful and accepted settlement' in the spirit of the resolution.[162] Impressive as it may be that a resolution dealing with all the contentious topics could be passed without any party vetoing it, Resolution 242 was of little practical value. Many scholars like Bailey, Shlaim, and Gelber noted its problematic ambiguity: it was worded vaguely to allow all parties to interpret it as they saw fit.[163] Those involved in the formation and adoption of Resolution 242 saw it at the time as a case of 'constructive ambiguity', that is: an instance when ambiguous language is intentionally employed to satisfy both parties in their own way and thus create foundations of understanding that could facilitate a more concrete agreement later on.[164] However, Dajani found that it served to prolong the conflict by leaving key disputes unsettled and even encouraged harder bargaining on behalf of the parties.[165] Regardless, the ambiguity of Resolution 242 was only the symptom of a more cardinal problem, which is not adequately highlighted in itself in existing literature: it was simply

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[157] Bailey, *Four Wars*, 258–59.
[158] Lall, *The UN*, 212.
[159] Ahmed E. Abd al-Meguid, *Time of Collapse and Victory* [زمن الانكسار والانتصار] (Dar al-Shuruq, 1999), 94–95; Pachachi, *Voice of Iraq*, 125.
[160] Rafael, *Destination*, 180–81.
[161] On this, see: Ashton, 'Searching'.
[162] Security Council Resolution S/RES/242, 22 November 1967, UNDL.
[163] Bailey, *Four Wars*, 277; Shlaim, *The Iron Wall*, 278; Gelber, 'The Road', 259.
[164] For contemporaries' comments on the ambiguity of Resolution 242, see: Lord Caradon et al., *U.N. Security Council Resolution 242* (Georgetown University, 1981). For an overview of constructive ambiguity throughout the Arab-Israeli conflict, including Resolution 242, see: Joel Singer, 'The Case of Constructive Ambiguity in Israel-Arab Peace Negotiations', in *Israel Yearbook on Human Rights*, ed. Yoram Dinstein and Jeff Lahav, vol. 50 (Brill, 2020).
[165] Omar M. Dajani, 'Forty Years without Resolve', *Journal of Palestine Studies* 37, no. 1 (2007): 24–38.

out of touch with the Arab and Israeli positions that had been clearly communicated over the preceding months. It prescribed peace and acknowledgement, which the Arabs rejected; and it sought to do so through mediation, which the Israelis rejected. Given that it was ambiguously worded, dismissive of Arab and Israeli demands, and was not accompanied by any practical Security Council steps to ensure Arab and Israeli cooperation with its formula, Resolution 242 seemed more like an excuse for the UN institutions to finalise their preoccupation with the Middle Eastern conundrum by adopting a loosely-defined formula after many stagnant months than a genuine effort to resolve the conflict. Gunnar Jarring was chosen to serve as U Thant's special representative for the Middle East and embarked on a mission to mediate a peaceful solution between two parties, one of which rejected mediation while the other rejected peace.

Conclusions: The 1967 War

In theory, the UN's *modus operandi* in the Middle East, as well as elsewhere, depended on a reciprocal relationship between the New York organs and the Middle East organs. The first group, consisting mainly of the Secretariat, Security Council, and General Assembly, was meant to dictate the organisational policy, while local agencies and primarily UNTSO and UNEF were tasked with implementing this policy and feeding information back to New York for future decision making. Long before the 1967 War, however, this system was broken. New York left the local branches to deal largely alone with the continuing violence; and when it finally returned to Middle Eastern affairs, the Middle Eastern organs had already been removed from their posts and were thus inoperable. A main culprit in this UN disharmony was the growing East-West rift and the Cold War tensions, which resulted in UN preoccupation outside the Middle East while also preventing American-Soviet consensus such as the ones formed around Resolution 181 in 1947, the armistice agreements in 1949, or the tripartite withdrawal from Egypt in 1956. This time around, the Soviets preferred to automatically defend their Arab partners in the international forums, while the Americans did the same for the Israelis. Consequently, the Six Day War was launched, carried out, and concluded almost without meaningful UN involvement.

Before the war, peacekeeping was maintained mainly by UNTSO and UNEF, which had the power to report incidents and resolve them locally but not to lead any kind of broader settlement process. The Security Council occasionally adopted condemnations, but not positive peacemaking steps. After the war, the Jarring mission was established, but in many ways, this marked the end of the

UN efforts in 1967 rather than a new beginning. It ignored the demands of both Israelis and Arabs by prescribing a mediation process aimed at peace. The Six Day War itself elucidated the importance of reliable information for the sake of effective UN decision-making. In part, the inability of the Security Council to act in a timely manner resulted from the unavailability of up-to-date accurate reports from the front. This shortage of data was the result of UNEF's withdrawal, UNTSO's lack of access to the frontline, Israeli obfuscation of the military position, and overly positive Arab reports.

Overall, the prelude to the 1967 war was a continuation of 1956 in that the UN agenda still lacked a long-term Arab-Israeli policy. Between the two wars, UN passivity encouraged the belligerents to favour armed action over reliance on international organisations. Since the 1950s the Syrians progressively increased their support for Palestinian attacks against Israel; the Israelis dismantled the MACs; and the Egyptians, or at least some of them, eventually concluded that the time was right to seek UNEF's departure. However, 1956 and 1967 differ significantly in how the war and its aftermath played out: in 1956, when the uninterested UN finally sprang into action, it ended the Suez Crisis and the Sinai Campaign effectively and ensured the restoration of the *status quo ante*. Conversely, in 1967 the UN organs could not even operate in unison throughout. As a result, the UN played a marginal role throughout the entire 1967 saga. Israel retained control of the territories occupied in the war, a fact that would lead to a further deterioration in Arab-Israeli relations, and eventually to the 1973 War.

Chapter 4 – The 1973 War: From Mediation to Facilitation

After the 1967 War, Arab-Israeli relations were more tense than ever before, mainly due to the vast territories occupied by Israel. The Arab states' resounding defeat and the Israeli seizure of the principal Palestinian territories of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip encouraged the Palestinian guerillas to consolidate and to escalate their war against Israel, with the aim to liberate whatever Palestinian lands possible.[1] Israel's relations with the three losing Arab states – Egypt, Syria, and Jordan – were also exacerbated, due to the fact that for the first time ever, the Jewish state was able to hold on to their core territories even after war had ended. Meanwhile in Israel, a new government formed in 1969 under Golda Meir adopted a diplomatic doctrine that Shlaim called 'immobilism': to maintain the *status quo* and avoid diplomatic risks. Meir and most officials around her rejected a return to the prewar borders, emphasised the military-strategic benefits of holding on to the occupied territories, and could only accept a renegotiation of the borders under a contractual peace agreement.[2]

Between 1968 and 1973 internal pressure mounted in the Arab states to restore the lost territories, and a diplomatic impasse eventually convinced Egypt and Syria to launch a surprise attack against Israel. The attack commenced on 6 October 1973, and the Israelis were completely surprised due to their belief that the Arab armies were too weak, and their political leaderships too timid, to start another war. In the first few days, the Israeli army was forced into several retreats and the Arab victories were unparalleled. However, a massive American airlift to Israel combined with an Israeli counterattack eventually turned the tide. By 11 October the Syrian attack in the Golan Heights had been repelled, and Israeli forces returned to the Suez Canal by the 18th. At that stage, the Superpowers imposed a ceasefire. Ultimately, both sides could claim some sort of victory: the Israelis were caught completely off-guard and suffered relatively high casualties, thus earning the Arabs a major psychological and political success; however, in the later stages of the war Israel was able to turn the tide of battle and win the war in the military sense.[3]

This chapter examines the period revolving around the 1973 War, and most notably the period that preceded it. As will be shown, Arab threats of war and demands to restore the territorial *status quo ante* were made throughout but were ignored by Israel and the international community. It is argued that the UN organs faced three major chances to attempt a new approach to peace but failed to rise to

[1] Helena Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organisation*, Cambridge Middle East Library (Cambridge University Press, 1984), 36–45.
[2] Shlaim, *The Iron Wall*, 285–329.
[3] Schulze, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 43–49.

the occasion. The first three sections therefore discuss the three missed opportunities for UN action, with some chronological overlap: the Jarring mission (November 1967 – September 1970), the ascension of Anwar al-Sadat to the Egyptian presidency (October 1970 – February 1972), and the last discussions in the UN forums (October 1971 – 5 October 1973). The last section (6 October 1973 – 1974) reveals how these developments ultimately culminated in the 1973 War, and in the Superpowers removing New York from its historical position as the principal mediator in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

In relations to the broader arguments of this thesis, the long-lasting disengagement from the Middle East continued and even worsened in the 1973 period. Jarring was pursuing Arab-Israeli peace but was met with the belligerents' unrealistic bargaining positions, alongside a lack of support from New York. After his failure, the UN organs did not continue their pursuit of Arab-Israeli peace. This long-lasting stagnation would not only set the 1973 War into motion, but also ultimately convinced the Superpowers that the UN is too ineffective to maintain its position as the chief mediator of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Missed Opportunity I: Jarring (November 1967 – September 1970)

The biggest practical change that Resolution 242 brought about was the designation of a new UN mediator under the title of Secretary-General's Special Representative to the Middle East. Resolution 242 defined his role as to 'promote agreement and assist efforts to achieve a peaceful and accepted settlement' in accordance with the resolution.[4] One day after the adoption of Resolution 242, U Thant appointed the Swedish diplomat Jarring for this role and expressed hope that he could benefit from the cooperation of the belligerents.[5] But between 1967 and October 1970, Jarring's mission was hardly taken seriously by the parties involved. He faced insurmountable and systemic difficulties, and more than anything served as an excuse for the local and international disengagement from Arab-Israeli peace efforts. The first indication that the Jarring mission was not deemed vastly important was its very setup. Unlike Folke Bernadotte or Ralph Bunche who were full-time mediators, Jarring only dealt with the Middle East part-time, with his main capacity still being his position as the Swedish ambassador to Moscow.[6] Furthermore, Jarring's peacemaking team consisted of no more than five people,[7] as

[4] Security Council Resolution S/RES/242, 22 September 1967, UNDL.
[5] Security Council document S/8259, 23 November 1967, UNDL.
[6] On his Moscow assignment, see: Gunnar Jarring, *Without Glasnost and Perestroika [Utan Glasnost Och Perestrojka]* (Bonniers, 1989).
[7] Waage and Mørk, 'Mission Impossible', 831; Gunnar Jarring, 'Gunnar Jarring', interview by Jean Krasno, 7 November 1999, 15–16, Yale - United Nations Oral History Project.

opposed to Bernadotte's 18.[8] Arguably the worst problem in the mission's setup was its timing: if other UN mediators throughout the years were appointed at a moment of crisis and could use the sense of international urgency as leverage to see their plans through, Jarring was a peacetime mediator. In fact, he was appointed only after the UN organs had already exhausted their postwar discussions on the Arab-Israeli question and so well past the expiry of the diplomatic momentum.

The second problem was the attitude of the belligerents to Jarring. Starting with Israel, officials made clear already in December 1967 that they saw Jarring's mission in narrow terms: to facilitate direct Arab-Israeli peace talks, rather than to formulate peace proposals of his own.[9] Lacking belief in the UN and domestically constrained by a diverse parliamentary coalition, the Israelis hoped to avoid international criticism and ensure the flow of American arms by keeping the Jarring mission alive, albeit without making any substantive concessions.[10] For a long while the Israelis refused to accept Resolution 242 as the basis for discussion,[11] and reiterated that Israel would only agree to return territory as part of Arab-Israeli peace agreements, to be achieved through direct negotiations.[12] Meanwhile, Israeli institutional and non-institutional efforts had already begun to strengthen Israel's hold over the newly occupied territories.[13]

Moving on to Syria, hours before the adoption of Resolution 242, Syrian President Nur al-Din al-Atasi proclaimed that 'there is before us… but only one path… it is the path of armed struggle…'.[14] Syria would be one of seven Arab states that flatly rejected the resolution,[15] because Damascus felt it rewarded Israel's aggression and ignored the national rights of the Palestinians.[16] Throughout the years covered in this chapter, Syria insisted that Israel had to withdraw from all the occupied territories and restore the Palestinian national rights before any other contacts took place, and felt no rush to accept any international formula that would somehow concede on these two points – including the ambiguous Resolution 242.[17] Since Jarring's entire mission relied on Resolution 242, Damascus saw no need to host the mediator at all.[18]

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[8] 'Bernadotte is Pleased' [Hebrew], *Hamashkif*, 31 May 1948, 1.
[9] 'Abba Eban' [Hebrew], *Ma'ariv*, 1 December 1967, 20.
[10] Shlaim, *The Iron Wall*, 279–311.
[11] Waage and Mørk, 'Mission Impossible', 832–33.
[12] Touval, *Peace Brokers*, 143–44.
[13] On this, see: Morris, *Righteous*, 329–46.
[14] 'A Grand Reception' [Arabic], *al-Ba'ath*, 23 November 1967, 1, 7.
[15] George Tomeh, 'George Tomeh', interview by Jean Krasno, 16 March 1998, 35, Yale - United Nations Oral History Project.
[16] Haissam al-Kelani, *Military Strategies of the Arab-Israeli Wars, 1948-1988* [الاستراتيجيات العسكرية للحروب العربية-الاسرائيلية ١٩٤٨ - ١٩٨٨] (Centre for Studies on Arab Unity, 1991), 352.
[17] Mustafa Talas, *Mirror of My Life* [مرآة حياتي] (Dar Talas, 2006), 3: 578–80.
[18] 'Jarring has Arrived' [Arabic], *al-Dustur*, 13 December 1967, 5.

As for Egypt, scholars like Khouri and Touval argued that between late 1967 and 1969 Cairo's position softened: the Egyptians accepted Resolution 242, dropped the demand that Israeli withdrawal must precede the discussion of other parts of the resolution, and acquiesced to indirect Arab-Israeli mediation.[19] This assertion, no doubt relying on Cairo's exchanges with Western diplomats, overlooks domestic Egyptian discourse which was consistently sceptical and suspicious of both Israel and the Jarring mission. This is not necessarily to say that Nasser opposed an agreement; it appears he simply thought such an arrangement was realistically impossible. This disbelief first appeared in Nasser's speech immediately after the adoption of Resolution 242: he commented that its formula was insufficient to resolve the problems at hand; that an Israeli withdrawal was a precondition for any further step; that the Khartoum Conference's Three Nos were still in place; and that Egypt was rebuilding its army to take military action in case diplomacy failed. His most ominous comment was that 'What is taken by force cannot be recovered without force'.[20] Nasser's basic standpoint was that the Israeli government was not genuinely interested in reaching a settlement; thus, Cairo focused on military reconstruction to eventually liberate the occupied lands, coupled with diplomacy to expose Israel's true intentions and to counter Israeli efforts to impose a separate peace deal on Egypt.[21] Nasser also believed that the UN was unable to make any useful intervention in this case. Within weeks of Jarring's appointment he was already disillusioned with his mission,[22] and on 18 February 1968 said to his council of ministers: 'Speaking frankly, I can assure you, and I repeat my conviction, that Israel will not withdraw from our lands as the result of the United States applying pressure on it, nor will it withdraw as a result of the efforts of the UN. But it will withdraw when we become capable of carrying out military action to drive it out of the occupied land'.[23] His scepticism of both Israel and the UN led him and those around him to repeat the following messages in the years 1967-1969: Egypt remained committed to the Three Nos; Israel's expansionism and rejection of Resolution 242 made the Jarring mission impossible; and Egypt only cooperated with the Jarring mission to avoid international critique and to gain time for military preparations to culminate in the forceful liberation of the occupied territories.[24] In 1969 a frustrated Cairo repudiated the UN-imposed ceasefire and launched the War of

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[19] Fred J. Khouri, 'United Nations Peace Efforts', in *The Elusive Peace in the Middle East*, ed. Malcolm H. Kerr (State University of New York Press, 1975), 71; Touval, *Peace Brokers*, 145–46.
[20] 'Talk from the Heart' [Arabic], *al-Ahram*, 24 November 1967, 1-9.
[21] Riad, *Memoirs*, 173; Sami Sharaf, *Years and Days with Gamal Abd Al-Nasser [سنوات وأيام مع جمال عبد الناصر]* (The New Egyptian Office, 2014), 2: 393.
[22] Mohamed Hasaneen Heikal, *The Road to Ramadan* (Times Newspapers, 1975), 56; Riad, *Memoirs*, 181, 229; Mohamed Hasaneen Heikal, *October '73: Weapons and Politics [اكتوبر ٧٣ : السلاح والسياسة]* (al-Ahram Centre for Translation and Publication, 1993), 80; Sharaf, *Years and Days*, 2: 393–94.
[23] Farid, *Nasser*, 93.
[24] For example: 'Gunnar Jarring's Mission' [Arabic], *al-Ahram*, 15 December 1967, 1, 3; 'The UN Envoy's Contacts' [Arabic], *al-Ahram*, 21 December 1967, 1, 7; 'Abd al-Nasser's Talks' [Arabic], *al-Ahram*, 13 March

Attrition, as part of which Egyptian forces bombed and raided across the east bank of the Suez Canal in the hope of exhausting Israel's occupation and spurring a Superpower diplomatic initiative.[25]

Although scholars like Khouri, Touval, Waage, and Mørk bundle Jordan together with Egypt when discussing the 'Arab position' on the Jarring mission,[26] Amman's stance was quite different from Cairo's. In fact, among the belligerents, Jordan's leadership was arguably the only one truly committed to and publicly supportive of the Jarring peace process. On the eve of Jarring's first arrival to Amman, King Hussein said to French media that 'in the near future we could get on the path of peace' if the international community could facilitate the process.[27] Soon after, it was reported that in exchange for an Israeli withdrawal, the monarch would agree to make concessions such as to demilitarise the West Bank, to relinquish control of Arab Jerusalem, or to readjust the border with Israel.[28] Furthermore, the king held private negotiations with the Israelis, expressing willingness to meet under the auspices of Jarring's mediation or even to strike a bilateral agreement, while Nasser, given his aforementioned reservations, could barely stomach even just the first option.[29] The agreeable Jordanian approach to Jarring's mission could be attributed to the long and unique history of Jordanian contacts with Israel, since the days of the Yishuv,[30] as well as to the specific circumstances that prevailed around the time of Jarring's mediation. The Jordanian leadership retrospectively regretted its embroilment in the 1967 War and saw urgency in securing an Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories;[31] relying on UN resolutions allowed Amman to pressure Israel into evacuating the lost lands without jeopardising the kingdom's international relations, especially with the West. Nevertheless, despite good intentions, Jordan could not reach an agreement with Israel due to three main obstacles. First, the Israelis initially demanded unrealistically high concessions from Amman and later wholly lost their appetite for an agreement that would necessitate any relinquishment of the occupied territories.[32] Second, Arab public opinion bound King Hussein to remain committed to the Khartoum Conference resolutions and insist on an Israeli withdrawal from all the Arab occupied territories – not just the West Bank – before accepting peace.[33] Third, as the years progressed, Amman's capacity for peace decreased as it found

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1968, 1, 3, 5; 'The Military Front' [Arabic], *al-Ahram*, 21 January 1969, 1, 3-5; 'Abd al-Nasser's Talk' [Arabic], *al-Ahram*, 23 April 1969, 3, 6; al-Sadat, *In Search* (Harper & Row, 1978), 198.

[25] 'Egypt Terms 1967 Cease-Fire Plan Void', *The New York Times*, 24 April 1969, 3; Bailey, *Four Wars*, 288; Waage and Mørk, 'Mission Impossible', 838.

[26] For example: Khouri, 'United Nations', 71; Touval, *Peace Brokers*, 145; Waage and Mørk, 'Mission Impossible', 832.

[27] 'Hussein' [Hebrew], *Hazofe*, 12 December 1967, 1.

[28] 'West Bank Plan', *The New York Times*, 15 December 1967, 3.

[29] Farid, *Nasser*, 117–22; Avi Shlaim, *Lion of Jordan* (Alfred A. Knopf, 2008), 281–314.

[30] On this, see: Shlaim, *Collusion*; Shlaim, *Lion*.

[31] General Assembly meeting A/PV.1575, 2 October 1967, 4-5, UNDL; Bin Talal, *My Conduct*, 222–25.

[32] Shlaim, *The Iron Wall*, 279–300.

[33] 'Hussein' [Hebrew], *Hayom*, 14 April 1969, 1; Shlaim, *Lion*, 287.

itself caught between Palestinian attacks and Israeli reprisals, as well as an internal struggle between the Jordanian leadership and the Palestinian factions that culminated in the latter's expulsion from Jordan in 1970.[34]

In addition to a problematic setup and unforthcoming belligerents, Jarring also lacked adequate support from the international community. While both Washington and Moscow would have theoretically welcomed a fruitful peace process, neither was committed enough to press the belligerents into cooperation. The American administration was too busy with the Vietnam war, and President Richard Nixon hoped to defend Israel from pressures to withdraw on unfavourable terms. The State Department did hope to initiate a peace process, but it was interrupted by the Egyptian launch of the War of Attrition in 1969.[35] The Soviets meanwhile tried to convince the Arabs, mainly Cairo, to accept some peace formula soon after the 1967 War, but when these efforts proved fruitless Moscow's focus shifted back to Arab rearmament.[36] Moscow had little incentive to destabilise the Middle Eastern *status quo*, preferring to maintain Détente with Washington and focus on theatres higher on its list of priorities, like Europe.[37] The Big Four – the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, and France – did hold consultations on the Middle East in 1969, but Nixon believed that the time was not ripe for action, and they confined themselves to a declaration that they were aware of the grave situation and supportive of Resolution 242 and Jarring's efforts.[38] Nixon's Adviser Henry Kissinger recounted the main American reservations about the Big Four consultations: the Soviet Union and France were perceived as pro-Arab, the gaps between the belligerents seemed at the time too significant, the Israelis profusely resisted any imposed settlement, and some American officials such as Kissinger himself believed that the stalemate and Israeli occupation would serve to frustrate and subsequently relax Arab demands in later negotiations.[39] The UN organs also failed to help Jarring. Between 1968 and October 1970 the General Assembly deferred its discussion on the Middle East question on several occasions,[40] and the remaining sessions were mostly confined to Arab-Israeli accusations over who was responsible for the deadlock.[41] The Security Council meanwhile regressed to

[34] Bin Talal, *My Conduct*, 229–48; Mousa, *Jordan 1958-1995*, 249–376.
[35] Mørk, 'The Jarring Mission', 79–81, 90–92.
[36] Golan, *Soviet Policies*, 68–77.
[37] Galia Golan, *Yom Kippur and After* (Cambridge University Press, 1977), 11–20.
[38] Bailey, *Four Wars*, 287; Mousa, *Jordan 1958-1995*, 297.
[39] Henry Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval* (Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 1982), 196; Henry Kissinger, *White House Years* (Simon & Schuster, 2011), 349–79.
[40] General Assembly documents A/7201, 9; A/7601, 1; A/8001, 3, 1968-1970, UNDL.
[41] *Yearbook of the United Nations (1968)* (UN Department of Public Information, 1971), 271–74.

its pre-1967 behaviour, occasionally considering Arab-Israeli cross-border violence, but limiting its resolutions to expressions of concern and short-termed condemnations.[42]

Lastly, Jarring's efforts for comprehensive peace were overshadowed by parallel American efforts to strike partial agreements. The mediator distinguished early on between two types of questions he had to deal with: the first was difficult and fundamental questions revolving around Resolution 242 and its interpretations. The second were simpler, technical matters such as the release of stranded ships in the Suez Canal and the exchange of prisoners. Jarring hoped that by resolving the more practical issues he could facilitate a better atmosphere to deal with the cardinal disagreements.[43] However, this holistic approach was disturbed by American Secretary of State William P. Rogers, who formulated in 1969-1970 the Rogers plans, the second of which was adopted by Israel, Egypt, and Jordan. It prescribed a three-month ceasefire between the former two countries; a statement by the three that they accepted Resolution 242 and specifically the call for withdrawal from occupied territories; and an Israeli undertaking to negotiate with Egypt and Jordan under Jarring's auspices during the ceasefire.[44] King Hussein wholeheartedly accepted the plan,[45] whereas Nasser adopted it only to gain time and complete Egypt's 'Rocket Wall' west of the Suez Canal.[46] Once more Cairo's assessment was that another set of negotiations under Jarring would inevitably fail, but nevertheless Egypt was internationally obliged to allow its existence.[47] The Israelis initially wanted to reject the plan, fearing that it would force them later to make territorial concessions, but eventually succumbed to Nixon's pressure.[48] The Rogers II plan effectively ended the War of Attrition.[49] Even those who appreciated the Rogers II plan and its reactivation of the Jarring mission had to admit that it somewhat curtailed Jarring's parallel attempts to tie smaller arrangements to his more general framework of peace.[50]

His problematic terms of appointment, the lack of support from local and international powers, and the competing American initiatives left Jarring little chance for success between 1967 and October

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[42] *UN Yearbook 1968*, 191–237; *Yearbook of the United Nations (1969)* (UN Department of Public Information, 1972), 185–205; *Yearbook of the United Nations (1970)* (UN Department of Public Information, 1972), 223–42.
[43] Security Council document S/8309/Add.1, 17 January 1968, UNDL.
[44] Shlaim, *The Iron Wall*, 298–99; Quandt, *Peace Process*, 67–75.
[45] Mousa, *Jordan 1958-1995*, 315.
[46] Heikal, *The Road*, 97; Riad, *Memoirs*, 259–60; Mousa, *Jordan 1958-1995*, 315; Murad Ghaleb, *With Abd Al-Nasser and al-Sadat [مع عبد الناصر والسادات]* (al-Ahram Centre for Translation and Publication, 2001), 147–48; Sharaf, *Years and Days*, 2:404–5, 412.
[47] Riad, *Memoirs*, 259.
[48] Bailey, *Four Wars*, 289; Shlaim, *The Iron Wall*, 298–99.
[49] Mousa, *Jordan 1958-1995*, 317.
[50] Stein, *Heroic Diplomacy*, 56.

1970. Just like Resolution 242 that gave the Jarring mission life, his assignment was a lip-service that allowed for continued global disengagement from the Middle Eastern peace efforts.

Missed Opportunity II: Sadat (October 1970 – February 1972)

Nasser died on 29 September 1970 and was succeeded by his deputy Anwar Sadat.[51] The new president lamented in hindsight that when he entered office, 'There was no real foreign ministry, no studied or properly planned policy; only the president himself'.[52]

Sadat's attitude toward Israel before the 1973 War remains a contested topic among scholars. This debate was recently reawakened by two prominent Israeli historians. Kipnis republished his book in which he argued that Sadat made genuine peace overtures toward Israel before the 1973 War, and when these were denied Egypt was forced to launch an attack.[53] In contrast, Gelber asserted that Sadat's peace initiatives were insincere and an Egyptian war against Israel was inevitable from the outset.[54] Both scholars engaged in a public and heated debate on this topic.[55] However, like many others before them, both based their arguments only on those sources available in English and Hebrew. This section, employing the underused Egyptian and UN sources, will demonstrate that Sadat not only reformed Egypt's foreign policy toward Israel, but also toward the UN. If Nasser believed that 'What is taken by force cannot be recovered without force',[56] Sadat was quick to issue a joint Soviet-Egyptian communiqué that agreed on 'eliminating the consequences of Israeli aggression by achieving permanent peace in the area'.[57] Furthermore, while Nasser felt that military pressure alone could drive Israel out of the occupied territories,[58] Sadat's government would prove, at least initially, more trusting in UN diplomacy, and later in American diplomacy as well, as means to pursue what could be described as both offensive and constructive diplomacy.

Offensive diplomacy means that Egypt now decided to use the UN forums to apply international pressure on Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories, while also taking the

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[51] 'Nasser Died' [Hebrew], *Davar*, 29 September 1970, 1; Anthony Nutting, *Nasser* (E. P. Dutton, 1972), 475–76; Mousa, *Jordan 1958-1995*, 340–46.
[52] al-Sadat, *In Search* (Harper & Row, 1978), 212.
[53] Yigal Kipnis, *1973* (Kinneret, Zmora, Dvir Publishing House, 2022).
[54] Gelber, *Hubris*.
[55] Yizhar Be'er, 'Sadat Wanted an Agreement' [Hebrew], *Ha'aretz*, 24 November 2022, https://www-haaretz-co-il.eu1.proxy.openathens.net/blogs/israelimyths/2022-11-24/ty-article-magazine/00000184-95e9-d53f-a5fe-bfeb56260000, accessed 17 October 2024; Yizhar Be'er, 'Yigal Kipnis is a Charlatan' [Hebrew], *Ha'aretz*, 1 December 2022, https://www-haaretz-co-il.eu1.proxy.openathens.net/blogs/israelimyths/2022-12-01/ty-article-magazine/00000184-c903-d82e-a1e5-fd1f0d620000, accessed 17 October 2024.
[56] 'Talk from the Heart' [Arabic], *al-Ahram*, 24 November 1967, 1-9.
[57] 'Egypt and Soviet', *The New York Times*, 4 October 1970, 1, 3.
[58] Farid, *Nasser*, 93, 115.

international initiative out of the hands of Washington, which Cairo increasingly perceived as pro-Israeli.[59] This UN trajectory preceded and later coincided with the bilateral Egyptian-American prewar contacts under Sadat, which received greater scholarly attention.[60] Less than two weeks after Sadat entered office, it was reported in Egyptian media that, because Jarring was unable to accomplish his mission and the Americans were delaying the Big Four deliberations, Egypt was contacting various countries in preparation to raise the peaceful implementation of Resolution 242 in the General Assembly.[61] In his opening speech before the General Assembly, Riad denounced Israeli expansionism and disregard for UN resolutions, as well as American complicity with this behaviour. He then called for UN action to return the occupied territories to the Arab states and to solve the Palestinian question.[62] Riad believed that the Israelis would continue to reject Jarring's efforts if left to their own devices, but UN isolation could force them to reevaluate their policies.[63]

Before the General Assembly session, Eban said that Israel considered the new discussion to be an Arab diplomatic onslaught and would thus oppose the adoption of any new UN resolution on the Middle East beyond Resolution 242.[64] Nevertheless, Cairo scored a major victory in the October-November 1970 session. An Afro-Asian draft, also supported by Egypt, was presented; even though the Israelis hoped to vote it down[65] and even though Syria and some other Arab states refused to participate in the vote because they claimed the draft failed to adequately affirm Palestinian rights,[66] the draft passed as Resolution 2628 (XXV). It gained 57 positive votes, and only 16 countries, including Israel and the United States, voted against it.[67] The resolution reaffirmed some of the principles prescribed by Resolution 242 and reactivated the Jarring talks.[68] This Egyptian success was only the beginning; from that moment and until 1972, Cairo and its partners passed in the formerly-silent General Assembly a series of resolutions that condemned Israel's occupation of the Arab territories and its treatment of the occupied population, affirmed the national rights of the Palestinians, and commended efforts by Jarring

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[59] Ismail Fahmy, *Negotiating for Peace in the Middle East [التفاوض من أجل السلام في الشرق الاوسط]* (Madbouly Library, 1985), 57; Riad, *Memoirs*, 180, 204, 284, 313–15, 410–11; Heikal, *October '73*, 68–69, 93–106; Mohammed H. al-Zayyat, *Quotes from the Memoirs of Mohammed Hasan Al-Zayyat [قطوف من مذكرات محمد حسن الزيات]*, ed. Samir Faraj (Dar al-Fikr al-Hadith, 1993), 175–76; Abd al-Meguid, *Time*, 125–26; Ghaleb, *With Abd Al-Nasser*, 145.
[60] On this, see: Quandt, *Peace Process*, 84–104.
[61] 'Comment of the Foreign Ministry' [Arabic], *al-Ahram*, 8 October 1970, 1, 7.
[62] General Assembly meeting A/PV.1884, 26 October 1970.
[63] Riad, *Memoirs*, 323–24.
[64] 'Eban' [Hebrew], *Davar*, 13 October 1970, 1.
[65] Israeli government meeting 1 November 1970, 3-4, ISA.
[66] Khouri, 'United Nations', 74.
[67] *UN Yearbook 1970*, 261.
[68] General Assembly Resolution A/RES/2628 (XXV), 4 November 1970, UNDL.

and other UN agents to facilitate the implementation of Resolution 242.[69] Nevertheless, the Israelis were unmoved by their 1970 defeat in the General Assembly; they regarded the international forum as inherently anti-Israeli, and felt that its resolutions weighed little in practice.[70]

Apart from offensive diplomacy, Sadat's Egypt also pursued constructive diplomacy in the UN: Cairo joined Amman in efforts to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict through the Jarring mission. In February 1971 Jarring requested that the belligerents commit themselves to several obligations on the path to reconciliation. In its response of 15 February 1971, Egypt not only agreed to make peace with Israel, but also to prevent Palestinian infiltrations into Israel from its territory, to guarantee Israeli freedom of shipping in the Straits of Tiran and the Suez Canal, and to establish a DMZ and a UN peacekeeping force in the Sharm al-Sheikh area.[71] Egyptian UN Representative Ahmed Esmat Abd al-Meguid noted that this response reflected Egypt's genuine attempt to reach a peace agreement with Israel.[72] However, the Israelis reacted negatively to the initiatives, due to long-standing Israeli reservations. First, the Israelis refused to return to the pre-1967 lines, as these were considered indefensible and insecure for Israel; instead, they argued that new, mutually agreed borders had to be drawn by the parties. Second, Israel wanted to negotiate directly with the Arabs and saw Jarring's mediation as a nuisance. Third, there were those Israelis who doubted Cairo's intentions; according to them, the guarantees to Jarring were a tactical manoeuvre to improve the international image of Egypt, more than a genuine attempt to engage in a fruitful dialogue with Israel.[73] As a result, Israel's response to Jarring was that Israel would not withdraw to the 1949 Israeli armistice lines. The Israeli counteroffer was to enter into direct and unconditional Israeli-Egyptian negotiations. This governmental response was internally criticised by both Eban and the Israeli Ambassador in Washington Yitzhak Rabin.[74] It also frustrated Jarring, who –feeling he had reached a dead end – returned to Moscow in March.[75]

Cairo preferred UN diplomacy over American mediation, and this fact is apparent in the timeline. It was only after the initial General Assembly efforts in late 1970 and in the wake of the Jarring mission around early 1971 that Cairo seriously turned to bilateral contacts with Washington. And even then, these Egyptian-American contacts were not a substitute for UN diplomacy, but a

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[69] General Assembly resolutions A/RES/2649(XXV), A/RES/2727(XXV), A/RES/2787(XXVI), A/RES/2792(XXVI)[D], A/RES/2799(XXVI), A/RES/2851(XXVI), A/RES/2799(XXVI), A/RES/2963(XXVII)[E], A/RES/3005(XXVII), 30 November 1970-15 December 1972, UNDL.
[70] Gelber, *Hubris*, 87–88.
[71] Security Council document S/10929, Annexes I-II, UNDL.
[72] Abd al-Meguid, *Time*, 112.
[73] Eban, *Abba Eban*, 473; Gelber, *Hubris*, 94–96.
[74] Bailey, *Four Wars*, 291; Shlaim, *The Iron Wall*, 303–4; Waage and Mørk, 'Mission Impossible', 844.
[75] Waage and Mørk, 'Mission Impossible', 844.

supplement. Despite some earlier Egyptian-American exploratory exchanges,[76] it was only very late into the Jarring mission that Sadat's government seriously advanced the American-led interim agreement initiative, partially as a means to resuscitate the dying Jarring mission and reach a settlement based on Resolution 242. In early 1971 Cairo agreed to prolong the ceasefire prescribed by Rogers II and sought an Egyptian-Israeli scheme to reopen the Suez Canal, including an Israeli withdrawal to the east bank of the canal as part of the implementation of Resolution 242. However, the Israelis again reacted in a reserved manner; Prime Minister Golda Meir rejected the prospect of an Israeli withdrawal without peace. The Israelis then submitted a counterproposal that was so one-sided that Kissinger refused to present it to the Egyptians. Unfruitful negotiations between American and Israeli officials surrounding the Suez Canal reopening continued well into 1972.[77] While interim agreements were far from ideal in Sadat's view, he felt compelled to prove Egypt's willingness for peace. In his speech on 4 February 1971, he emphasised that Cairo did not forsake its goal to liberate all the occupied Arab lands, but would agree to another 30 days of ceasefire because doing so would reinforce Jarring's efforts to implement Resolution 242 and possibly allow for further agreements.[78] Riad discouraged Sadat from that course of action, arguing that allowing for interim agreements of this sort deviated from the insistence on a comprehensive solution. Nevertheless, Sadat defended his position by saying that the countries that would benefit from the Suez Canal reopening would be swayed in favour of Egypt, whereas an Israeli refusal to reciprocate would further isolate Israel internationally.[79]

Unfortunately for Sadat, despite his intention to increase UN pressure on Israel to reach a settlement with the Arab states, he found himself powerless to achieve this result. The Israelis had left the Jarring talks in September 1970 and returned in December of that year, only under American pressure and guarantees to provide Israel with diplomatic and military assistance.[80] After rejecting Jarring's 1971 peace proposal, Israel refused to continue cooperating with him unless he promised to scrap his memorandums and only act in accordance with Resolution 242.[81] Meanwhile, the Israeli leaders publicly hardened their diplomatic position vis-à-vis the Arabs, seemingly convinced by the many years of conflict that holding on to the occupied territories, and not making peace with the Arabs, was the most reliable method to ensure Israeli security. Meir noted that Israel would refuse to return the Golan Heights, Sharm al-Sheikh, and East Jerusalem under any future Arab-Israeli settlement.[82]

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[76] Quandt, *Peace Process*, 88–89.
[77] Bailey, *Four Wars*, 292; Shlaim, *The Iron Wall*, 305–13.
[78] 'President al-Sadat's Statement' [Arabic], *al-Ahram*, 5 February 1971, 9.
[79] Riad, *Memoirs*, 343.
[80] Waage and Mørk, 'Mission Impossible', 839–40.
[81] Touval, *Peace Brokers*, 158–60.
[82] 'The Prime Minister' [Hebrew], *Davar*, 4 October 1970, 2.

Defence Minister Moshe Dayan made his famous statement: 'Better Sharm [al-Sheikh] without peace, than peace without Sharm'.[83] Like the Israelis, the Americans were becoming increasingly complacent and did not sense any urgency to promote a Middle Eastern settlement given Israel's good military position. Quandt called this 'standstill diplomacy': while repeatedly resuscitating the Jarring mission, the Americans did not overly pressure Israel to cooperate with it and continued to supply the Jewish state with arms. Kissinger continued to focus on interim agreements and ceasefires instead of on a comprehensive peace agreement.[84] In September 1971 a frustrated Riad told Rogers and Kissinger that Egypt was concerned that the proposed interim agreement on the Suez Canal was meant to prolong the *status quo* instead of advancing peace. Kissinger replied that the Americans saw the formula as a temporary measure that could lead to peace later and made the point that 'unfortunately at this time, in our judgement, it is impossible to get [an] agreement between the parties on terms of [a] final peace settlement'.[85]

One very revealing General Assembly discussion that underlined the complete absence of consensus regarding the way forward was held in December 1971. The Egyptians blamed Israel for denying any peace initiative thus far, particularly Jarring's; the Israelis made similar accusations against the Egyptians and called for direct and unconditional Arab-Israeli talks; the Americans favoured their interim agreement approach to reopen the Suez Canal and build greater Arab-Israeli confidence in peace; the British echoed the interim agreement approach but also wanted to restore the Jarring mission; the Soviets sought a process governed by the General Assembly resolutions and the Big Four consultations; the French wanted a comprehensive peace through a combination of General Assembly efforts and the Jarring mission; and many of the Arab delegations wanted to limit the session's decision to only forcing Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories. The Afro-Asian draft finally adopted was Resolution 2799 (XXVI), which – while gaining a good majority of 79 in favour and 7 against – did little to resolve the differences in opinions. It reaffirmed various principles enshrined in Resolution 242 and decided to reactivate the Jarring mission again with the support of the Secretary-General and the Security Council.[86]

As for Jarring, he attempted once more to rekindle his efforts but in early 1972 was forced to concede defeat for the last time. The Israelis still refused to accept his mediation under any conditions beyond what was stated in Resolution 242, ergo denying his memorandums and suggestions. On the

[83] 'Dayan' [Hebrew], *Ma'ariv*, 10 March 1971, 3.
[84] Quandt, *Peace Process*, 85–94.
[85] FRUS, 1969-1976, Volume XXIII, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1969-1972, Document 253.
[86] *Yearbook of the United Nations (1971)* (UN Department of Public Information, 1974), 170–75.

other hand, the Egyptians demanded that the Israelis must guarantee to completely withdraw from all the occupied Arab territories before negotiations resumed.[87] Jarring's frustration mounted as he felt personally attacked by the Israelis for his February 1971 peace plan; it no longer seemed to him that the Americans were supporting his efforts; and the Big Four consultations had stopped.[88] Therefore, the special representative and new UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim came together in September 1972 to the conclusion that 'an agreed basis for discussions under Ambassador Jarring's auspices does not seem to exist at the present time'.[89]

Missed Opportunity III: The Last UN Discussions (October 1971 – 5 October 1973)

The diplomatic deadlock and the failure of the Jarring mission led Sadat to rethink Cairo's policy vis-à-vis Israel. Scholars like Bailey, Mousa, Parker, and Schulze, who contended that Sadat was initially interested in peace but later was convinced that war was necessary, usually date his shift to mid or late 1972.[90] However, as will be shown throughout this section, the journey to war was much longer, and more complex than a binary 'yes or no'. Since at least October 1971 Cairo was seriously considering war, and it was mainly delayed due to military preparations alongside continuing hopes that diplomacy might yet work. Arab sources substantiated observations like those made by Stein and Kipnis, according to which Cairo launched a two-pronged program, constantly weighing the desirability of war versus the feasibility of diplomacy.[91] The new conception was that, while a settlement in the spirit of Resolution 242 was still the target, a limited offensive might be necessary to obtain Israeli cooperation with such a scheme.[92] Or as Nasser's and Sadat's confidante Mohamed Hasaneen Heikal put it: 'through a solution if possible, through war if necessary'.[93] As the diplomatic impasse persisted and Egypt completed its war preparations, the benefits of an attack eventually outweighed the drawbacks.

Already in mid-late 1971, the diplomatic deadlock convinced officials in Cairo that the use of force might have become inevitable.[94] This sentiment was made public in October 1971, when Sadat and other Egyptian officials warned that 1971 was going to be the 'year of decision', when it would be

[87] Security Council document S/10929, 36-37, UNDL.
[88] FRUS, 1969-1976, Volume XXIII, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1969-1972, Document 274.
[89] Security Council document S/10792, 15 September 1972, UNDL.
[90] Bailey, *Four Wars*, 295–96; Mousa, *Jordan 1958-1995*, 395; Parker, *October War*, 4–5, 79; Schulze, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 45.
[91] Stein, *Heroic Diplomacy*, 62; Kipnis, *1973*, 17.
[92] Mohammed H. Ismail, *Egypt's National Security in the Age of Challenges* [أمن مصر القومي في عصر التحديات] (al-Ahram Centre for Translation and Publication, 1982), 200–201; Parker, *October War*, 37.
[93] Heikal, *October '73*, 293.
[94] Riad, *Memoirs*, 378–84.

determined whether the occupied territories would be liberated peacefully or forcefully.[95] Over the next few months, Sadat would state in a series of speeches that he had done all in his power to bring about a peaceful solution in 1971. As these efforts had failed despite his good intentions, he had irreversibly decided to go to a war in October 1971.[96] Sadat offered two reasons for this decision: first, the Israelis proved intransigent, showed unwillingness to cooperate with Jarring's 1971 peace initiatives, and instead were solidifying their hold over the occupied territories. Second, the Americans demonstrated bias toward Israel by stalling the peace process, selling weapons to the Jewish state, and pushing for a standalone Suez Canal reopening agreement instead of a comprehensive solution that would also entail Israeli withdrawal from all the Arab territories.[97]

Despite Sadat's clear message however, he did not immediately launch war against Israel. One cause for the delay, also publicly announced by him, was that the Indo-Pakistani War that erupted in December 1971 destabilised the international system and forced him to postpone operations.[98] He also made vague mentions of the need to precede war with 'internal preparations' to fortify the Egyptian civilian and military readiness;[99] he may have alluded here to what he identified as suboptimal military preparations that he had only noticed at a late stage,[100] and/or the difficult socioeconomic situation that generated political dissatisfaction with his presidency.[101] Another likely argument against conflict at this stage was that Cairo wanted to first see if the December 1971 General Assembly meetings, and the subsequent reactivation of the Jarring mission, might somehow lead to progress. When this did not happen, the Egyptians received another affirmation that war might be the only way to restore their land.

Arguably the most pivotal deterrent at this stage for Cairo was the need to secure Soviet support before embarking on the warpath. After the 1967 War the Egyptians were forced to turn to diplomacy after their arsenal had been depleted,[102] and since early 1971, Sadat emphasised the dire Egyptian need of weaponry to the Soviets in the hope that Moscow would expedite its arms shipments.[103] In early October 1971, just before Sadat's declaration on the 'year of decision', he headed

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[95] 'The President Presents' [Arabic], *al-Ahram*, 16 October 1971, 1; 'Shafa'i' [Hebrew], *Davar*, 21 October 1971, 2; 'Cairo Will Decide' [Hebrew], *Al Hamishmar*, 27 October 1971, 1; al-Sadat, *In Search* (Harper & Row, 1978), 226–27.
[96] 'Sadat Announces' [Arabic], *al-Ahram*, 21 November 1971, 1, 9; '"The Stage"' [Arabic], *al-Ahram*, 14 January 1972, 1, 7, 8; '"We will Manufacture"' [Arabic], *al-Ahram*, 31 March 1972, 1, 12.
[97] 'An Extremely Important Position' [Arabic], *al-Ahram*, 12 November 1971, 1, 5, 9; '"The Stage"' [Arabic], *al-Ahram*, 14 January 1972, 1, 7, 9; '"We will Manufacture"' [Arabic], *al-Ahram*, 31 March 1972, 1, 12.
[98] '"The Stage"' [Arabic], *al-Ahram*, 14 January 1972, 1, 7, 8; Ismail, *Egypt's National Security*, 183, 193–94.
[99] 'Sadat' [Arabic], *al-Ahram*, 29 December 1971, 1, 6.
[100] Mousa Sabri, *Documents of the October War* [وثائق حرب أكتوبر] (The New Egyptian Office, 1975), 17–18; al-Sadat, *In Search* (Harper & Row, 1978), 235–37; Ismail, *Egypt's National Security*, 193, 233.
[101] Fahmy, *Negotiating*, 19.
[102] Heikal, *October '73*, 73.
[103] Anwar al-Sadat, *In Search of Identity* [البحث عن الذات] (The New Egyptian Office, 1978), 300–302.

a ministerial delegation to Moscow to secure both military and political assistance.[104] While Moscow agreed to provide Egypt with greater military aid, the Soviets hinted that they preferred a peaceful solution by extolling Cairo's 'constructive position' and desire for a political settlement.[105] The Soviet dual strategy at that time was on the one hand to provide the Arabs with the means to wage war if necessary, and on the other to encourage them and the United States to favour joint diplomatic recourse, in the spirit of Détente.[106] For the Egyptians, liberating the lost lands was a matter of life or death, but it was not as urgent for the Soviets; this gap generated bilateral tensions.[107] The feeling that the Americans were supplying Israel with advanced weapons whereas the Soviets were not doing the same for Egypt prompted Mahmoud Riad, by then Sadat's political adviser, to seek military supplies from the Chinese.[108]

Another step in the preparation for war was Cairo's visible rapprochement with the more militant Syria. In the aftermath of the 1967 war, Egypt and Syria had drifted apart as Nasser chose to accept Resolution 242 and adopt a flexible policy toward the Superpowers, while the Syrians rejected it.[109] However, around the October 1971's proclamation of the 'year of decision', the Syrian President Hafez al-Assad visited Cairo for the establishment of the Union of Arab States with Egypt and Libya. Part of the discussion was dedicated to the military and political situation vis-à-vis Israel, and the three leaderships agreed to coordinate their efforts against the Jewish state.[110] Among other things, Assad and Sadat agreed to appoint a joint army commander and together reverse the outcome of the 1967 War.[111] A month later, Sadat visited the frontline and announced his decision to go to war, while Assad also toured Syrian forward bases and spoke about an imminent conflict between the Union of Arab Republics and Zionism.[112] In March 1972, Sadat outright said that there was complete coordination between Egypt and Syria, that he had informed Assad of his decision to attack Israel, and that the coming war would be waged on two fronts: a Western front held by Egypt and a northern front held by Syria.[113]

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[104] 'Sadat's Future', *Financial Times*, 11 October 1971, 5.
[105] 'Sadat and Soviet', *The New York Times*, 14 October 1971, 12; Ismail, *Egypt's National Security*, 188–90.
[106] Golan, *Soviet Policies*, 84–85; Viktor L. Israelyan, *Inside the Kremlin during the Yom Kippur War* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 16–18; Dobrynin, *In Confidence*, 288.
[107] Heikal, *October '73*, 79; Ghaleb, *With Abd Al-Nasser*, 181–82.
[108] Riad, *Memoirs*, 412–14.
[109] Abd al-Halim Khadam, *The Contemporary Arab System* [النظام العربي المعاصر] (al-Markaz al-Thaqafi al-Arabi, 2003), 215–16.
[110] 'Cairo is the Capital' [Arabic], *al-Ahram*, 6 October 1971, 1; 'Sadat, Assad, and Qaddafi' [Hebrew], *Ma'ariv*, 7 October 1971, 2; Khadam, *The Contemporary Arab System*, 218–19; Dib, *Modern History*, 445–46.
[111] Khadam, *The Contemporary Arab System*, 218–19.
[112] 'The Commander Comrade' [Arabic], *al-Ba'ath*, 20 November 1971; 'Sadat Announces' [Arabic], *al-Ahram*, 21 November 1971, 1.
[113] '"We will Manufacture"' [Arabic], *al-Ahram*, 31 March 1972, 1, 12.

It is within this context that one should consider Assad's seemingly surprising change of attitude toward Resolution 242. After having reiterated his predecessors' rejection of Resolution 242 and committed his country fully to the Palestinian struggle,[114] Assad suddenly announced in March 1972 that Syria was willing to accept Resolution 242 in its Egyptian interpretation, namely so long as it included an Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories and a restoration of the Palestinian rights. He also emphasised that in doing so, Syria aligned itself fully with Egypt.[115] By now, Assad knew that the Jarring mission had already failed, a peaceful settlement seemed far away, and Sadat was considering war increasingly seriously. He thus felt it safe enough to pay a meaningless lip-service to the idea of political settlement for the sake of strengthening his ties with Sadat, in preparation for a military showdown with Israel. This is supported by the fact that around the same time Assad visited Moscow, and categorically stressed to his hosts that an Egyptian-Syrian liberation war against Israel was likely to follow the diplomatic failures of Jarring and Rogers.[116]

In parallel to the buildup for war, the diplomatic efforts continued. In May 1972 a Soviet-American summit was held in Moscow, where Kissinger and Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko agreed on a set of eight principles to govern a settlement, corresponding roughly to Resolution 242. This frustrated Sadat as he felt that the Soviets were withholding arms from Egypt while accepting the vague American principles for an agreement.[117] Meanwhile, a secret American-Egyptian backchannel had been created when Sadat's National Security Adviser Mohammed Hafez Ismail came to negotiate with Kissinger in Washington.[118] Given the former Egyptian complaints about American bias, this was an indication that Sadat's diplomatic options were running thin.

In July 1972 Sadat decided to expel the Soviet advisers from Egypt. Various explanations were offered for this action in primary and secondary sources. Golan's explanation is the one also backed by Sadat's personal recounts: the president wanted to protest what he identified as continued Soviet delays in supplying arms and political support for Egypt,[119] and to increase Egypt's military autonomy, allowing itself to attack Israel later without accusation of being under foreign pressure to do so.[120] Alternative analyses like those of Ginor and Remez, Mousa, or Parker suggested that the expulsion was

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[114] 'Comrade Hafez al-Assad' [Arabic], *al-Ba'ath*, 10 December 1970, 1, 7; Ma'oz, *Syria and Israel*, 106–7.
[115] 'The Comrade Commander' [Arabic], *al-Ba'ath*, 9 March 1972, 1-5. Interestingly, al-Ba'ath redacted the specific part that accepts Resolution 242, but it was mentioned elsewhere: 'The Ruler of Syria' [Hebrew], *Davar*, 9 March 1972, 1; 'Syria Announces its Acceptance' [Arabic], *al-Ahram*, 10 March 1972, 1, 15; Khouri, 'United Nations', 79.
[116] Khadam, *The Contemporary Arab System*, 220–21.
[117] Fahmy, *Negotiating*, 212–13; Bailey, *Four Wars*, 293–94.
[118] Bailey, *Four Wars*, 293–94.
[119] al-Sadat, *In Search* (Harper & Row, 1978), 419–35; Golan, *Soviet Policies*, 79–81.
[120] Sabri, *Documents*, 15; Abd al-Meguid, *Time*, 120–21.

a coordinated Soviet-Egyptian ruse designed to confuse the United States and Israel about Egypt's intentions,[121] and/or that it was Cairo's way to appease Washington to boost the backchannel with the Americans.[122] Egyptian sources also propose domestic reasons for the expulsion: it was Sadat's way to counteract what he saw as Soviet political support for his rivals at home,[123] and to outflank Minister of War Mohammed Sadeq, who had solidified his personal political position by criticising the 'Sovietisation' of Egypt under Sadat.[124]

Starting from late 1972, the final signs of war were looming large. Assad told a foreign reporter that if a political settlement was not achieved within six months, a conflict would become inevitable;[125] Syria reopened its border with Jordan and announced that this was meant not only to help Jordanian citizens but also to allow the kingdom to deploy its forces against the Israeli enemy;[126] and the Arab Joint Defence Council met in Cairo and introduced a war budget, assigned Egypt the principal role in coordinating the campaign against Israel, and demanded a Security Council discussion on the situation.[127] Also behind the scenes and after expelling the Soviets, Cairo entered intensive preparations for war.[128] On 24 October, Sadat convened the supreme council of the armed forces and reminded his senior officials of everything that had happened until that point: the decision not to go to war in December 1971, due to the outbreak of Indo-Pakistani war; his disappointment with Moscow's failure to supply Egypt with adequate arms in a timely manner; his disillusionment with the peace process, in light of the stagnation and Superpower inaction; and his final conclusion that Egypt would have to fight with what it had, alongside Syria. After his recount, Sadat reviewed with his commanders the state of the Egyptian army. Following this meeting, Sadat discharged some of the officers who questioned his analysis and war plans.[129]

Meanwhile, the UN forums did little to revitalise the diplomatic process. Throughout 1972, the Security Council discussed Lebanese and Syrian complaints against Israeli cross-border incidents and adopted resolutions on these local topics. However, the more cardinal problems of the peace impasse as well as the military situation on the Egyptian-Israeli front were not debated, since neither Egypt nor Israel tabled requests for such deliberations.[130] While Waldheim and UNTSO Commander Ensio

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[121] Isabella Ginor and Gideon Remez, *The Soviet-Israeli War, 1967-1973* (Oxford University Press, 2017), 263–99.
[122] Mousa, *Jordan 1958-1995*, 395; Parker, *October War*, 3–4.
[123] al-Sadat, *In Search* (The New Egyptian Office, 1978), 205; Fahmy, *Negotiating*, 24.
[124] Ismail, *Egypt's National Security*, 206–9, 220; Heikal, *October '73*, 251–52.
[125] Ma'oz, *Syria and Israel*, 115.
[126] Mousa, *Jordan 1958-1995*, 396.
[127] Kurt Waldheim, *In the Eye of the Storm* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1985), 56–57; Ma'oz, *Syria and Israel*, 115.
[128] Sabri, *Documents*, 18–20.
[129] Sabri, *Documents*, 35–88.
[130] *UN Yearbook 1970*, 157–72.

Siilasvuo kept circulating information about Egyptian-Israeli truce violations on the border, Waldheim described the military situation in the Suez Canal in August 1972 and again in August 1973 as 'calm' and 'quiet' with only a 'few minor incidents' on the ground.[131] Siilasvuo also retrospectively called the years preceding the 1973 War the 'Quiet Days', during which his main concerns were smuggling, love affairs between UNTSO observers and locals, and general reports of the situation.[132]

In December 1972 the General Assembly again debated the Middle East question, and the speeches conveyed almost nothing new in comparison with the discussions of late 1971.[133] What was different is that Cairo, in line with its growing proclivity toward war, seemed to have lost its appetite for constructive diplomacy. This was reflected in another Afro-Asian draft that became Resolution 2949 (XXVII). It reaffirmed Resolution 2799 (XXVI) and expressed support for efforts by Waldheim and Jarring, but unlike its predecessor did not prescribe any new peace process or reactivation of the Jarring mission. Instead, it denounced Israel's inability to cooperate with past resolutions and its illegal attempts to change the status of the occupied territories.[134] Two further resolutions were adopted, reaffirming the Palestinian right to self-determination and calling for Israel to cooperate with a committee set up by the General Assembly to investigate Israel's violations of human rights in the occupied territories.[135] Egypt and its partners could rejoice in the fact that compared to the 1971 session, the majority in favour of their resolutions was greater, although some Arab countries – Syria included – still did not participate in the vote.[136]

In February 1973, Ismail met Kissinger in Washington, but there was no progress – yet further proof for Sadat that nothing was going to change without military recourse.[137] Kissinger retrospectively proposed that Ismail's mission in Washington was merely a masquerade to hide Egypt's preparations for war,[138] but Ismail recounted the opposite: he believed that Kissinger's unhelpful stance pushed Sadat further to choose war over peace.[139] Ismail's argument was supported by the fact that since at least December 1971 Nixon and Kissinger had agreed not to press the Israelis into any diplomatic settlement with the Arabs, at least not until after the Israeli elections scheduled for October 1973.[140]

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[131] General Assembly documents A/8701, 11; A/9001, 5, 1972-1973, UNDL.
[132] Ensio Siilasvuo, *In the Service of Peace* (C. Hurst & Co., 1992), 104–9.
[133] *UN Yearbook 1970*, 175–78.
[134] General Assembly Resolution A/RES/2949 (XXVII), 8 December 1972, UNDL.
[135] General Assembly resolutions A/RES/2963-E (XXVII), A/RES/3005 (XXVII), 13-15 December 1972, UNDL.
[136] Khouri, 'United Nations', 79.
[137] al-Sadat, *In Search* (The New Egyptian Office, 1978), 323.
[138] Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 212–13.
[139] Ismail, *Egypt's National Security*, 265–66.
[140] Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 211; Kipnis, *1973*, 10–13, 33, 60–61.

Despite Kissinger's urges for the Israelis to reconsider their position, they refused to engage in any meaningful political process until the 1973 War.[141]

In April 1973, an Israeli incursion into Lebanon took place to retaliate against Palestinian guerillas.[142] Cairo took this opportunity to call one last Security Council discussion on the wider Arab-Israeli issue. After Sadat urged the Lebanese to submit a complaint and call for a Security Council debate on the incident,[143] Cairo tabled drafts that became resolutions 331 and 332. The latter condemned Israel's violence, whereas the former required Waldheim to prepare a comprehensive report on the situation in the Middle East and invited comments from Jarring.[144] However, this time Sadat was no longer seeking a diplomatic breakthrough; he had made up his mind on war.[145] Instead, he sought a *casus belli* against Israel. He instructed Meguid and new Foreign Minister Mohammed Hassan al-Zayyat to submit a widely agreeable draft to the Security Council, which the United States would have to veto to stop. Such veto would pin international blame for the impasse on the Americans and Israelis, and subsequently justify an Egyptian offensive.[146] During the same month, Sadat and Assad agreed in principle to go to war,[147] and two potential war dates were selected: the last week of May and the first week of October.[148] It is not entirely clear why May was eventually abandoned. Sadat himself provided conflicting accounts: once he said that he had preferred to attack Israel in May, but delayed the offensive when the Soviets and Americans chose May for their summit meeting;[149] on another occasion Sadat stated he never meant to go to war in May, but wanted simply to spread false rumours that war was imminent to relax Israeli alertness later on.[150] Heikal recounted that war was postponed because the Saudi King Faisal called for additional preparation time.[151] Syrian Foreign Minister Abd al-Halim Khadam remembered that the original plan was to attack in May, but when this plan was relayed to the Soviets they were shocked and Assad agreed to consider a postponement of war in exchange for greater Soviet military support.[152]

The report Waldheim put together in response to Resolution 331 was submitted to the Security Council on 18 May 1973 – maybe its submission after the first week of May was what eventually

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[141] Kipnis, *1973*, 10–13.
[142] General Assembly document A/9001, 1973, 5, UNDL.
[143] al-Sadat, *In Search* (The New Egyptian Office, 1978), 324–25; Ismail, *Egypt's National Security*, 286.
[144] Security Council resolutions S/RES/331, S/RES/332, 20-21 April 1973, UNDL.
[145] Ismail, *Egypt's National Security*, 267–68; Fahmy, *Negotiating*, 29–30; Heikal, *October '73*, 280.
[146] al-Sadat, *In Search* (Harper & Row, 1978), 240; Abd al-Meguid, *Time*, 122–24.
[147] al-Sadat, *In Search* (The New Egyptian Office, 1978), 326.
[148] Heikal, *October '73*, 282.
[149] Sabri, *Documents*, 24.
[150] al-Sadat, *In Search* (Harper & Row, 1978), 241–42.
[151] Heikal, *October '73*, 301.
[152] Khadam, *The Contemporary Arab System*, 221–23, 233.

postponed the Arab attack on Israel. The 63-page long document surveyed the status of the ceasefires, the occupied territories and Jerusalem, as well as the refugee problem. It then went on to outline various attempts to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict, primarily the Jarring mission. Although Waldheim noted that the problem at hand was complex, he hoped that the Security Council could make some helpful intervention to promote a peaceful settlement.[153] In the ensuing debate and according to Sadat's plan, Zayyat made three main points: Egypt wanted to resolve the conflict through ending the Israeli occupation of Arab lands and fulfilling Palestinian national rights; Israel's intransigence and reliance on force foiled the Jarring mission; and the Security Council permanent members were responsible for upholding the UN Charter and norms.[154] The Egyptians had several friendly delegations submit their proposed draft. In general terms it regretted the lack of major progress in the fulfilment of Resolution 242, deplored Israel's occupation and attempts to change the *status quo* in the Arab territories taken in 1967, and called for all parties involved to cooperate with Waldheim and others to pursue peace.[155] Sadat's plan came to fruition: the Egyptian draft was debated from May to July and gained much support but was eventually vetoed by the Americans. The discussion was terminated without any resolution.[156] On 26 July 1973, a day after the Security Council vote, Sadat delivered a speech in which he said that the American veto was aimed to frustrate the Arab political initiatives while American military support for Israel continued. He added that Egypt must now turn to 'real force' to accomplish its goals.[157] Both the Egyptian president and his foreign minister felt that the international community had been successfully convinced that Israel and the United States prevented the peaceful resolution of the conflict; the burden to change the *status quo* now fell upon the shoulders of the Arab states.[158] In August 1973, Sadat and Assad finalised the attack dates in October 1973.[159] Afterwards they announced the full restoration of normal relations with Jordan, in the hope that King Hussein would join their attack.[160] But mutual mistrust between Assad and Sadat on the one hand and King Hussein on the other led to the eventual exclusion of Jordan from the war plans. Hussein even secretly hinted to the Israelis that the Syrians and Egyptians might take offensive action, but his warning was not heeded.[161]

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[153] Security Council document S/10929, 18 May 1973, UNDL.
[154] al-Zayyat, *Quotes*, 170.
[155] Security Council document S/10974, 24 July 1973, UNDL; Abd al-Meguid, *Time*, 124.
[156] Bailey, *Four Wars*, 299–301; Abd al-Meguid, *Time*, 81–82.
[157] 'Our Will Today' [Arabic], *al-Ahram*, 27 July 1973, 1, 6.
[158] al-Sadat, *In Search* (The New Egyptian Office, 1978), 325; al-Zayyat, *Quotes*, 149–50.
[159] Dib, *Modern History*, 456–57; Hashem Othman, *A History of Modern Syria* [تاريخ سورية الحديث] (Riad al-Rayyes Books, 2014), 2: 69.
[160] Mousa, *Jordan 1958-1995*, 398.
[161] Shlaim, *Lion*, 363–70.

In the meantime, diplomacy remained unfruitful. In August and after conferring with Jarring in Geneva, Waldheim embarked on an 80-day visit to the Middle East with the hope to revitalise the long-dead peace process. He reported back that he found 'a strong desire for peace' everywhere, although there were deep divisions as to the nature of the wanted peace as well as the path to reach it.[162] Waldheim was 'particularly disturbed' by Meir's inflexible approach, which he also conveyed to Sadat and Zayyat in their conversations.[163] Around 1973 the Israelis felt ever more complacent, deeming the Arabs to be too weak, and the Superpowers too devoted to Détente, for any major conflagration to occur; they felt it best to hold off negotiations until the Arab position softened.[164] On 3 October, just days before the Arab attack, Eban delivered a speech in the General Assembly and demonstrated the same state of mind that had dominated Israeli diplomacy since 1967: the main cause for regional tension was Arab refusal to respect Israel's sovereignty; Israel remained committed to direct negotiations for peace, which the Arabs denied; and Israel would agree to withdraw from the occupied territories, but only under the agreement on new, secure boundaries and certainly not as a precondition for negotiations.[165] Meguid gloated that this would be Eban's last opportunity to make a speech of this sort.[166] During his Middle East visit, Waldheim also found little cooperation in Egypt; Zayyat presented stricter terms for negotiations than before, and Sadat expressed frustration that Israel ignored the Egyptian commitment to Jarring in 1971 to make peace with Israel.[167] The UN personnel would only later understand Sadat's reticence from further negotiations at this stage: war was imminent.[168]

The Superpowers meanwhile remained aloof. A calm Kissinger, now the secretary of state, was in New York for the General Assembly in early October. In his conversations with both Israelis and Egyptians, he expressed readiness to continue negotiations, albeit without any sense of urgency; he still wanted to wait until after the Israeli elections due later in the month.[169] Meanwhile, Nixon spent most of the weeks preceding the war on the Watergate scandal that would eventually lead to his resignation. His attention to the Middle East would remain divided for the full duration of the conflict.[170] The Soviets, probably due to their former objections to war, were kept in the dark about the Arab plans to the very end – although they were generally aware that the Arabs were considering

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[162] Khouri, 'United Nations', 82.
[163] Waldheim, *In the Eye*, 58–59; Urquhart, *A Life*, 234–35; al-Zayyat, *Quotes*, 153–62.
[164] Eban, *Abba Eban*, 486–88.
[165] General Assembly meeting A/PV.2139, 3 October 1973, 5-10.
[166] Abd al-Meguid, *Time*, 126.
[167] al-Zayyat, *Quotes*, 153–60.
[168] Kurt Waldheim, *The Challenge of Peace* (Rawson, Wade Publishers, 1980), 81–82; Urquhart, *A Life*, 236.
[169] Eban, *Abba Eban*, 497–98; Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 195–96; Abd al-Meguid, *Time*, 126–28.
[170] Richard Nixon, *RN* (Book Club Associates, 1978), 890–922; Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 470.

recourse to war. Only in early October did the Soviets realise that the attack would commence within days.[171]

On 2 and 5 October 1973, Sadat summarised all that had transpired in two letters addressed to his commander in chief. He wrote that for over six years Israel, supported by the United States, had been occupying Arab lands and jeopardizing Arab security. Egypt had made every attempt since the adoption of Resolution 242 to resolve the crisis: it accepted the resolution itself, it welcomed Jarring's efforts, then the Big Four consultations, and even Rogers's scheme to reopen the Suez Canal. But none of these efforts yielded any positive results. Limited hostilities were also tried but failed in the War of Attrition. Now that Israel had been isolated in the Security Council and the General Assembly, it became possible to launch a military offensive to shake it out of its complacency and change the *status quo*.[172]

From Mediation to Facilitation (6 October 1973 – 1974)

The Israeli leadership and security agencies were taken aback by the Arab offensive that started in the early hours of 6 October 1973.[173] As with 1967, while UNTSO reported the outbreak of hostilities, it was unclear which side fired the first shot.[174] Siilasvuo recalled that contact with the Egyptian liaison officers and the observers in the Suez Canal was lost; astonishingly, the 'only reliable source of information' at UNTSO's disposal was the BBC English news broadcast.[175] Syria and Egypt followed the Israeli example from the last war, and obfuscated their offensive by blaming Israel for attacking Egyptian and Syrian positions.[176] The dazed Israelis only disputed this claim the following day and counterargued that they were the ones subjected to aggression.[177] During the first day, Eban was busy disproving to Kissinger and to himself an Egyptian fabrication that Israel had attacked naval positions in its territory.[178] Even Zayyat and Meguid, both in New York, were not forewarned about the attack, because Cairo wanted their diplomatic behaviour to remain normal.[179] The belligerents exchanged

[171] Golan, *Yom Kippur*, 63–73; Israelyan, *Inside the Kremlin*, 1–2.
[172] al-Sadat, *In Search* (The New Egyptian Office, 1978), 436–43.
[173] Schulze, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 46–47.
[174] Bailey, *Four Wars*, 308; Siilasvuo, *In the Service*, 114–16, 122.
[175] Siilasvuo, *In the Service*, 114.
[176] Security Council document S/11009; General Assembly document A/9190, 6 October 1973, UNDL,
[177] Security Council document S/11011, 7 October 1973.
[178] Heikal, *The Road*, 29; Eban, *Abba Eban*, 502–3; Parker, *October War*, 148–49.
[179] Heikal, *The Road*, 39; Abd al-Meguid, *Time*, 128–30.

accusations in the General Assembly on 8 October, although the rest of the discussion on the Middle East was halted in light of the continuing battles.[180]

At first, the Security Council did not convene to discuss the war due to internal disagreements. As a result, its president could not even appeal to the belligerents to accept a ceasefire.[181] But after two days of American-Soviet coordination efforts,[182] the Security Council convened starting from 8 October. There was a general agreement on a sequence of three steps: immediate ceasefire, withdrawal of forces, and negotiations for a long-term settlement in accordance with Resolution 242 and other UN decisions.[183] But there were problems complicating almost every aspect of this scheme. First was the fact that in the early days of the war, both the Israelis and the Egyptians wanted to avoid a ceasefire until their military position could be improved.[184] Syria's stance on this is less clear: the Soviet Ambassador in Damascus reported to Moscow that Assad had asked for an early ceasefire due to Syria's precarious military position,[185] but Syrian officials denied this both in real time and retrospectively.[186] It is possible that the Soviets were using the Syrians as their own excuse to elicit an early ceasefire to prevent escalation,[187] or that Assad was setting the stage for a ceasefire resolution right after the Arab offensive had succeeded, to deny any Israeli chance of a counterattack.[188] A second contentious issue was withdrawal: would the ceasefire involve a standstill or an immediate withdrawal? And when withdrawal did take place, would it be to the prewar lines of the 1967 or 1973 wars? Predicably the Israelis and Americans preferred a minimal pullback, whereas the Soviets and Arabs favoured maximal withdrawal.[189]

Over the next few days, the Israelis turned the tide of battle, repelled the Syrian forces and crossed the Suez Canal.[190] The Israeli successes helped generate an American-Soviet consensus for a ceasefire; the Americans could now provide the Israelis a ceasefire on superior terms, whereas the Soviets felt greater urgency to use diplomacy to minimise Arab military losses.[191] On 20 October,

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[180] *Yearbook of the United Nations (1973)* (UN Department of Public Information, 1976), 210–11; Bailey, *Four Wars*, 313.
[181] Pogany, *The Security Council*, 116.
[182] Dobrynin, *In Confidence*, 290–91.
[183] Bailey, *Four Wars*, 314.
[184] Israeli prime minister office logs, 11 October 1973, 6, The Centre for the Yom Kippur War (CYKW); Eban, *Abba Eban*, 506, 513; Ismail, *Egypt's National Security*, 319–21, 326; Bailey, *Four Wars*, 309, 318; Heikal, *October '73*, 444–45.
[185] Bailey, *Four Wars*, 309; Israelyan, *Inside the Kremlin*, 44–47.
[186] al-Sadat, *In Search* (The New Egyptian Office, 1978), 338–39; Bailey, *Four Wars*, 318; Khadam, *The Contemporary Arab System*, 237.
[187] Golan, *Soviet Policies*, 86.
[188] Parker, *October War*, 120.
[189] Khouri, 'United Nations', 83; Eban, *Abba Eban*, 514–17; Bailey, *Four Wars*, 321.
[190] Schulze, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 48.
[191] Golan, *Yom Kippur*, 91–114; Quandt, *Peace Process*, 111–18.

Kissinger came to Moscow for consultations, and he and Gromyko agreed on a draft that would become Security Council Resolution 338.[192] Its formula was short and simple; devoid of any preambular clauses, it called upon the parties to terminate military action, and subsequently to implement Resolution 242 and begin negotiations 'under appropriate auspices' aimed at establishing a just and durable peace in the Middle East.[193] Despite some nuanced disagreements, Resolution 338 was adopted with wide support by the early morning of 22 October 1973.[194]

Although Resolution 338 did not introduce any novel concepts into the Arab-Israeli conflict – ceasefire, Israeli withdrawal, and peace negotiations had been on the table for many years – the approach to achieve these prescriptions was new. Unlike 1956 and 1967, the Superpowers wanted to invest serious efforts into finalising an Arab-Israeli agreement. But unlike 1948 and the Jarring mission, they did not want to leave this job to the UN apparatus. In a paper of understanding produced by Gromyko and Kissinger parallel to the drafting of Resolution 338, it was clarified that postwar negotiations 'under appropriate auspices' meant 'active participation' of the United States and the Soviet Union at all stages of the discussions.[195] Why were American-Soviet auspices favoured over UN leadership? Kissinger provided four reasons on several occasions. First, in Moscow the Soviets expressed the view that American-Soviet auspices were required because the UN was 'powerless', and the Americans tended to agree.[196] Second, the secretary of state thought the bilateral and gradual approach to be more effective than the UN and State Department's multilateral and comprehensive approaches. He hoped he could use the unique American position to succeed where his predecessors failed while also limiting the Soviet role.[197] Third, Kissinger regarded the UN as hostile to American interests. He bluntly explained in a luncheon with high-ranking American officials: 'The Secretary-General [Waldheim] is on our ass; the Security Council is loaded against us. So the best auspices is what we got'.[198] And fourth, Kissinger was aware that the Israelis were highly reluctant to negotiate under UN auspices or the framework of Resolution 242, and thus had to curb the UN role from a practical standpoint.[199] Indeed, Meir told her government that she wanted things decided in Washington

[192] Bailey, *Four Wars*, 326.
[193] Security Council Resolution S/RES/338, 22 October 1973, UNDL.
[194] Bailey, *Four Wars*, 327–28.
[195] Israelyan, *Inside the Kremlin*, 114–15.
[196] FRUS, 1969-1976, Volume XXV, Arab-Israeli Crisis and War, 1973, Document 219.
[197] Quandt, *Peace Process*, 131–35.
[198] FRUS, 1969-1976, Volume XXV, Arab-Israeli Crisis and War, 1973, Document 261.
[199] FRUS, 1969-1976, Volume XXV, Arab-Israeli Crisis and War, 1973, Document 230.

rather than in New York; she was suspicious of Waldheim and wanted to limit the Security Council role due to the Soviet and Chinese presence there.[200]

Theoretically, after the adoption of Resolution 338 the war was supposed to end. The Israelis had hoped for a little more time for military advances but acquiesced to the terms of the resolution on the same day, because the military situation was deemed generally good at that time and there was no point in risking further diplomatic and security entanglements.[201] Sadat also agreed to the ceasefire immediately, following menacing American arms shipments sent to Israel, threatening American military manoeuvres, and an Israeli breakthrough at Deversoir, which marked an alarming military turning point for Cairo.[202] Broadly speaking, there was no reason for Sadat not to accede: Resolution 338 contained everything he had striven for since 1971, namely an Israeli withdrawal and a peace process.[203] This is even though some people around the president, such as Heikal and Ismail, protested against the acceptance of Resolution 338; they rejected the attachment of postwar negotiations to the ceasefire and preferred UN mediation over Superpower auspices.[204] The Syrians initially rejected Resolution 338 and hoped to launch another offensive in the Golan; however, Damascus decided to accept the resolution on the following day after realising that Egypt was leaving the war and other Arab states pressured Syria not to continue alone.[205] But despite all the acceptances, the fighting continued. It seems that at least on the first days, both Israelis and Egyptians issued orders to cease fire but neither party wanted to be the first to halt.[206]

Washington and Moscow wanted to use the UN forums to issue another resolution to promote the ceasefire, but in accordance with their mutual agreements surrounding Resolution 338 still did not want to leave it entirely to the UN apparatus to supervise the cessation of hostilities. On 22 October, Cairo complained to Moscow that Israel was still violating the ceasefire; Head of the Department of International Organisations in the Soviet Foreign Ministry Victor Israelyan proposed to Gromyko that UNTSO observers could be deployed in the ceasefire line. According to Israelyan, Gromyko rebuffed him without explanation, probably because he felt it was up to the Superpowers themselves to ensure

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[200] Israeli prime minister office logs, 25 October 1973, CYKW.
[201] Israeli prime minister office logs, 21-22 October 1973, CYKW; Eban, *Abba Eban*, 528–31.
[202] al-Sadat, *In Search* (Harper & Row, 1978), 346–49; Abd al-Meguid, *Time*, 134.
[203] On this, see: FRUS, 1969-1976, Volume XXV, Arab-Israeli Crisis and War, 1973, document 160, 188; Al-Ahram, 17 October 1973, 1, 3-4; Ismail, *Egypt's National Security*, 325, 332; Heikal, *October '73*, 358–59.
[204] Heikal, *October '73*, 523–25.
[205] al-Kelani, *Military Strategies*, 372; Israelyan, *Inside the Kremlin*, 155–56; Ma'oz, *Syria and Israel*, 121; Khadam, *The Contemporary Arab System*, 227–29.
[206] 'Statement' [Arabic], *al-Ahram*, 23 October 1973, 1; Israeli prime minister office logs, 22-23 October 1973, CYKW; Dayan, *Milestones*, 665–67.

the implementation of the ceasefire.[207] On the following day, Waldheim proposed to Kissinger that the UN deploy a peacekeeping force to the field; when talking about this to the Soviets, Kissinger expressed his preference to use only the UN observers already in the Middle East.[208] He feared that a UN peacekeeping force could serve as a gateway for Soviet troops to enter the area.[209] In the end, the American-Soviet draft that was adopted as Resolution 339 only confirmed the immediate cessation of hostilities and requested that Waldheim ensure the observation of the ceasefire through the UNTSO observers already present.[210] Israelyan claimed that Gromyko authorised this despite his original negative attitude toward UN observers, simply because he saw no alternative means to oversee the ceasefire at that time.[211]

The limited prescription of Resolution 339 still did not put an end to the violations of the ceasefire. After further Egyptian complaints, the Soviets announced that they would send 50 of their own observers to Cairo. This was met with American resistance that culminated in a threat to use nuclear weapons if Soviet military intervention took place.[212] Nixon explained to Sadat on 24 October that Washington would veto any Security Council resolution to urge outside forces, including by the United States and the Soviet Union, to be sent to the Middle East. He provided two reasons for this stance: it would be impossible to assemble sufficient outside forces for this purpose, and such deployment could create dangerous tensions between the two Superpowers.[213] Only after this escalation and the earlier failures of resolutions 338 and 339, did the Security Council adopt a new resolution, Resolution 340, on 25 October. Except for reiterating the call for an immediate ceasefire, it requested that Waldheim bolster the amount of UN observers on the frontlines and set up a second UNEF (UNEF II), which would exclude personnel from the Security Council permanent members.[214] Like in the case of the original UNEF, many key questions concerning the force were initially left unanswered, such as its area of deployment, exact purpose, or function. Once more, a UN force was being set up in the Arab-Israeli context more as an immediate means to resolve a short-term crisis, more than to address

[207] Israelyan, *Inside the Kremlin*, 151–52.
[208] FRUS, 1969-1976, Volume XXV, Arab-Israeli Crisis and War, 1973, Document 240; Urquhart, *A Life*, 240.
[209] Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 579–82.
[210] *UN Yearbook 1973*, 198.
[211] Israelyan, *Inside the Kremlin*, 158.
[212] Bailey, *Four Wars*, 330–31; Israelyan, *Inside the Kremlin*, 163–73.
[213] Letter from Kissinger to Ismail, 24 October 1973, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 132, Country Files, Middle East, Egypt/Ismail, Vol. III, October 1–31, 1973.
[214] Security Council Resolution S/RES/340, 25 October 1973, UNDL.

the long-term conflict. Washington and Moscow also agreed that, in addition to UNEF II, each would send 36 observers to the frontline.[215]

On 26 October the war was finally over.[216] With it came a new wave of diplomatic attempts to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict for good, with the architects being still Washington and Moscow, in accordance with their 'understanding' surrounding Resolution 338. While the UN staff would continue to play an important role in peacemaking and peacekeeping, they would do so as support players for the Superpowers and not as a force of their own. Kissinger captured the essence of this new American-Soviet approach when he described Waldheim's role in his memoirs: 'He [Waldheim] would not be able to influence substantive discussions, but he was well disposed and could be helpful on procedural problems'.[217] Waldheim's first 'procedural' mission was to build and station UNEF II, under Security Council guidance; he was able to ensure the deployment of its first contingents in Sinai still in October. By December, UNEF II was a large force that received many compliments from the UN member states, and a resolution endorsing Waldheim's plan for the operation of the force was adopted as Security Council Resolution 341.[218]

While Waldheim was preoccupied with the relatively technical process of establishing UNEF II, Kissinger himself jumpstarted a new channel for Egyptian-Israeli dialogue. The context for this was Cairo's plea to Kissinger to relieve the beleaguered Egyptian Third Army that had been encircled and cut off by Israeli forces, as well as an Israeli desire to strike a prisoner deal. Through Kissinger's mediation, it was arranged to hold what would later be known as the Kilometre 101 talks: a series of meetings between Egyptian and Israeli commanders, supported from afar by parallel meetings between Kissinger and diplomats from the two states, who discussed various military aspects of the ceasefire and Resolution 242. These productive sessions engendered agreements on matters such as the supply of non-military provisions to the Third Army pocket and a prisoner exchange. This successful channel was only discontinued because negotiations moved to other avenues for practical reasons. The UN's role in these negotiations was again more technical than substantive: the new UNEF II Commander Ensio Siilasvuo signed the six-point agreement between the parties as a witness and his organisation was tasked with the implementation of some of the understandings such as delivering the supplies to the Third Army and manning the formerly-Israeli checkpoints on the Cairo-Suez road. Regardless, the

[215] Bailey, *Four Wars*, 332.
[216] Bailey, *Four Wars*, 333.
[217] Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 455.
[218] *UN Yearbook 1973*, 205–7.

UN did not serve as a party to the negotiations, and the Israelis denied the possibility of UN mediation, arguing that only direct Egyptian-Israeli contacts could produce real peace.[219]

In December 1973, Kissinger's famous 'shuttle diplomacy' continued to overshadow UN peacemaking. His plan was to secure a phased disengagement and separation of forces, both linked to a broader progress toward peace. In line with Resolution 338, Washington and Moscow teamed up to organise a peace conference in Geneva, attended by the two Superpowers and the belligerents.[220] In line with the Soviet-American 'understanding' to lead the peace process themselves, Waldheim's ambiguous role in the Geneva conference was loosely defined by Security Council Resolution 344: it stated that he was meant to play 'a full and effective role' by presiding over the proceedings and reporting them to the Security Council.[221] The French delegation chose to abstain rather than to vote in favour of Resolution 344, expressing dissatisfaction that the Geneva peace initiative was not carried out within the UN framework and that Waldheim's place in it was not clearly defined.[222] On 18 December Washington and Moscow issued a letter of invitation to the conference for Waldheim, which outlined a clear hierarchy with them on top: they stated that the conference would proceed under joint American-Soviet chairmanship. Waldheim's active participation throughout the conference was not requested; instead, he was only asked 'to act as convenor at the conference and to preside at its opening'. Once the opening was over, the letter added, a representative could keep him informed of the rest of the proceedings. Another request by the Superpowers was that the 'UN could provide the necessary facilities for the work of the conference'.[223] The work of Undersecretary-General Brian Urquhart focused on formulating procedures and preparing the agenda of the conference, including the delicate seating arrangement with some delegations refusing to sit next to others.[224]

The Geneva conference convened on 21 December 1973. It included representatives from Egypt, Israel, Jordan, the Soviet Union, and the United States.[225] Syria refused to attend as it rejected the conference's gradual approach and proposed again to work immediately toward a full Israeli withdrawal from all Arab lands and the fulfilment of the Palestinian national rights.[226] The conference lasted until the following day and consisted of two public sessions, a closed session, and informal

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[219] On this, see: Stein, *Heroic Diplomacy*, 97–116; Parker, *October War*, 361–73; Yinon Shlomo, 'The Israeli–Egyptian Talks at Kilometer 101', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 44, no. 3 (2017): 447–63.
[220] Bailey, *Four Wars*, 339–40.
[221] Security Council Resolution S/RES/344, 15 December 1973, UNDL.
[222] Security Council meeting S/PV.1760, 15 December 1973, 2, UNDL.
[223] Security Council document S/11161, 18 December 1973, UNDL.
[224] Urquhart, *A Life*, 243–46.
[225] Security Council document S/11169, 24 December 1973, 1, UNDL.
[226] 'Letters' [Arabic], *al-Ba'ath*, 21 December 1973, 1; 'Khadam Returns' [Arabic], *al-Ba'ath*, 23 December 1973, 1.

consultations. The attendees agreed to set up a military working group that would deal with the disengagement of forces, and to hold meetings at the ambassadorial level, and if necessary, between foreign ministers.[227] Waldheim conformed to the American-Soviet leadership in the conference;[228] in his opening speech at the conference he stated: 'I want to assure all the parties here present that I and my staff… stand ready to be of assistance in any way that may seem useful to them'.[229] Kissinger found Waldheim's description of the UN role in the conference 'entirely acceptable'.[230] Eban reported to the Israeli government that the conference declared itself independent and unaffiliated with the UN, and that while Waldheim was pronounced as the chairman of the first sitting, 'this was the only mention of the UN in all the titles and all the documents, even though the UN is providing its services'.[231] In his chapter about the Geneva conference, Stein revealed through interviews that many of the attendees either preferred or did not mind that the UN was assigned a minor role: the United States saw the 'auspices' as a means to take over the negotiations from both the UN and Moscow; the Israelis saw Waldheim's attendance as a lesser evil that excluded the participation of additional Security Council members; Sadat had undergone a change of heart, having found UN participation important for the sake of international legitimacy but by now saw the organisation as too cumbersome to make a tangible contribution; and the UN Secretariat appeared content with the mission it was assigned, leaving the substantive mediatory capacity to Kissinger.[232]

Over the next few months, Kissinger's shuttle diplomacy and the belligerents' new cooperative spirit led to disengagement agreements. The first was the Egyptian-Israeli agreement, signed in January 1974. The parties committed themselves to observe the Security Council ceasefire, separated their forces according to an agreed-upon map, and established disengagement zones between them where UNEF II would be stationed. It was noted that this agreement was a first step toward final peace, along the lines of Resolution 338. UNEF II's commander was also present at the signing of the agreement.[233] A similar agreement was signed between Israel and Syria in May of that year; as part of this agreement a new peacekeeping force was created to maintain disengagement on the Syrian-Israeli front, the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF).[234]

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[227] Security Council document S/11169, 24 December 1973, 1, UNDL.
[228] Waldheim, *In the Eye*, 69–70.
[229] Security Council document S/11169, 24 December 1973, 3, UNDL.
[230] FRUS, 1969-1976, Volume XXV, Arab-Israeli Crisis and War, 1973, Document 415.
[231] Israeli government meeting 25 December 1973, 9-10, ISA.
[232] Stein, *Heroic Diplomacy*, 117–45.
[233] Khouri, 'United Nations', 84–85; *UN Yearbook 1973*, 190–91.
[234] Khouri, 'United Nations', 84–85; *Yearbook of the United Nations (1974)* (UN Department of Public Information, 1977), 198–99.

Conclusions: The 1973 War

The UN disengagement from the Middle East, which began as early as 1949 and worsened after the Suez Crisis, was arguably most apparent in the 1973 War period. This is because the years between 1967 and 1973 created several visible opportunities to assume a more active role in promoting an Arab-Israeli settlement, which the various UN organs did not adequately explore. The first was the Jarring mission, which would prove in hindsight to have been the last chance given to a UN-appointed mediator to resolve the conflict. The indications that Cairo was considering war since as early as 1971, as well as the numerous Egyptian referrals to Jarring's failure as a turning point, propose that the Jarring mission may have contributed to the long-term buildup of the 1973 War more than previously understood. The second missed opportunity came when Sadat ascended to the presidency and took both declarative and practical actions to increase UN engagement with the conflict, but to no avail. Even after Sadat was becoming convinced that war was necessary in October 1971, there was still ample time for action to be taken and the international forums had several chances to make conducive interventions. However, these chances did not materialise. Thus, to return to the Gelber-Kipnis debate, historians like Stein and Kipnis were correct to argue that a disillusioned Sadat oscillated for a while between the military and diplomatic options;[235] however, they and others dated this oscillation to late 1972 or early 1973, whereas Egyptian sources suggested that the dilemma existed since late 1971.

There are several factors that contributed to the UN inaction in this period. Starting with the belligerents, several Arab leaders as well as the Israelis preferred either to steer clear of any peace dialogue or make unrealistically high demands in their bargaining. Meanwhile, the Americans competed with UN peace initiatives instead of reinforcing them. Additionally, unlike Trygve Lie who pushed for his Secretariat's involvement in the partition plan or Dag Hammarskjöld who relentlessly maintained his proactiveness throughout various stages of the Suez Crisis, Waldheim's Secretariat proved less dominant in dealing with the Middle East and did not challenge the centrality of non-UN actors in the peace process after the war. Nevertheless, the UN did not completely depart from the conflict; instead, its function changed from mediation to facilitation. For example, during the war the Security Council – as in many cases before – offered a useful platform for American-Soviet dialogue and cooperation to bring about a ceasefire. The UN Secretariat helped with organising the Geneva

[235] Stein, *Heroic Diplomacy*, 62; Kipnis, *1973*, 17–18.

conference that set the stage for the postwar diplomacy. UNEF II and UNDOF played important roles in assisting the implementation of the Israeli-Arab disengagement plans.

Seen more broadly, the 1973 War was a major turning point in terms of the UN role in the Arab-Israeli conflict. After a long period of peripheral attention paid to the Middle East by the UN organs, the 1973 War provided the chance for the sceptical American administration to strip the UN of its title as the chief mediator in the Arab-Israeli conflict, in the hope that Washington could do better itself. This process of a UN weakening in favour of American leadership would continue in 1982.

Chapter 5 – The 1982 War: From Facilitation to Nothingness

Generally speaking, until the 1970s Lebanon played a relatively marginal role in the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Israelis were mainly concerned with the bigger and stronger Arab states, and the Lebanese governments were more preoccupied with domestic affairs and internal struggles than with Israel.[1] However, since 1967, the Lebanese-Israeli border became increasingly active, due to two interrelated factors: the Palestinian presence and the weakness of the Lebanese state. The 1967 War brought hundreds of thousands of new Palestinian refugees to Lebanon. Furthermore, after the 1970 expulsion of the PLO from Jordan, it established its headquarters in Beirut. As a result of these two developments, the PLO effectively created a state within a state in Southern Lebanon and used it as a launching pad for attacks against Israel. The Israelis in turn retaliated against targets also on Lebanese soil. Meanwhile, the increasing dominance of the Palestinians inside Lebanon as well as the Israeli threat divided the Lebanese native population and exacerbated long-lasting, inter-Lebanese sectarian cleavages. Christian politicians wanted to restrain the Palestinian activity to protect Lebanon, whereas the Muslims, particularly Sunnis, were more sympathetic to the Palestinian presence and struggle from within the country. This public debate escalated into violence; militias multiplied and became the masters of the land, as the central Lebanese authority disintegrated along with its army. Lebanese soldiers either fled back to their homes or defected to the militias. This internal Lebanese tension resulted in the outbreak of the second Lebanese civil war in 1975; it would last throughout the entire period covered in this chapter, and beyond.[2]

Against the backdrop of the civil war and the collapse of Lebanese authority, the Christian and to a lesser extent the Shia villages near the Israeli border became isolated from their kinsmen in Beirut and vulnerable to attacks by the largely-Sunni Lebanese left and the PLO. In response to this situation, Army Major Sa'ad Haddad from Marjeyoun deserted and formed a local militia to protect the Christian villages in the area, gradually consolidating independent enclaves near the Israeli border. Haddad reached out to Israel for help, given its military prowess and the two parties' shared hostility toward the PLO and Syria, which was also increasingly involved in Lebanese affairs. Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin who entered office in 1974 and his government developed the 'Good Fence' policy, which included two main components: the public provision of humanitarian services to the affected

[1] Itamar Rabinovich, *The War for Lebanon, 1970-1985* (Cornell University Press, 1989), 9–10, 105; Charles Winslow, *Lebanon* (Routledge, 1996), 92–93, 145, 149–50.
[2] Fouad Boutros, *Fouad Boutros: The Memoirs* [فؤاد بطرس: المذكرات] (Dar al-Nahar, 2009), 205–13; Kirsten E. Schulze, *The Jews of Lebanon* (Sussex Academic Press, 2022), 119–58.

Lebanese population across the border, and a secret military assistance to Haddad's militia as well as to Christian factions in Beirut.[3] Thus, in the aftermath of the 1973 War, the dominant factor in the Arab-Israeli conflict became its Palestinian-Israeli aspect, with Lebanon serving as the battlefield. Lebanese President Elias Sarkis and his cabinet, for their part, were unable to effectively govern the country, devoid of an army to execute their will and caught between Christian militias on the one hand and leftist and Palestinian militias on the other. Beirut was gripped with chronic fear that any statement or action on its part would earn the ire of the different Lebanese factions, the PLO, and/or Israel.[4]

Meanwhile, on the broader international level, between 1967 and the early 1970s the balance of power in New York was shifting against Israel and in favour of the Palestinians. Humadi and Di Mauro each demonstrated this shift by looking at quantitative factors such as the voting patterns in the General Assembly and proposed several explanations for the trend. First, Israel's Middle Eastern policy made it internationally unpopular; it *inter alia* rejected peace initiatives such as the Jarring mission and preferred to hold on to the occupied territories to safeguard its security. Second, there were additional Israeli policies which were highly unpopular worldwide, such as the Jewish state's ties to the Apartheid regime in South Africa which damaged its relations with many African countries. Third, Israel's takeover of the Palestinian territories from Jordan and Egypt highlighted the Palestinian plight for independence in a time when the concept of self-determination was increasingly embraced worldwide, generating empathy for the Palestinian national claims. And fourth, around these years the UN underwent significant structural changes such as the admission of many new and pro-Palestinian developing countries as member states.[5] This culminated in the PLO's admission into the UN. In November 1974, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat was invited to speak on Palestine in the General Assembly, and still on that month the PLO was formally granted an observer status in the international forum.[6] Another manifestation of the shift was the adoption of General Assembly 3379 in 1975, which determined that 'Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination', adopted with a majority of 72 votes in favour, 35 votes against, and 32 abstentions.[7]

On the backdrop of these local and international developments, the Lebanese crisis continuously escalated. The tension between Israel and the Christians on the one hand and the PLO and

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[3] Beate Hamizrachi, *The Emergence of the South Lebanon Security Belt* (Praeger, 1988); Kirsten E. Schulze, *Israel's Covert Diplomacy in Lebanon*, St. Antony's Series (St. Martin's Press, 1998), 81–92.
[4] Boutros, *Fouad Boutros*, 507.
[5] Zuhair Abdul-Ghani Humadi, 'An Analysis of the Shift in Policy by the United Nations General Assembly toward the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1967-1975' (Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, 1978); Danilo Di Mauro, *The UN and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, Routledge Studies in Middle Eastern Politics 42 (Routledge, 2011).
[6] *UN Yearbook 1974*, 220–25.
[7] *Yearbook of the United Nations (1975)* (UN Department of Public Information, 1978), 590–91.

the Lebanese left on the other escalated and resulted in two faceoffs over the course of four years and during the tenure of Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin, who held office as head of the Likud party from 1977 to 1983. The first was the 1978 Operation Litani, an Israeli military operation designed to punish the PLO for its attacks against Israel and to force the Palestinian organisation north of the Litani River. The removal of most of the PLO from the border area also subsequently allowed for the consolidation of Haddad's Christian enclave near the Israeli border. But violence continued, eventually culminating in another Israeli operation in 1982, codenamed Peace for Galilee. This operation was far more ambitious and broader than Operation Litani; it aimed to entirely remove the PLO from Lebanon and to help Israel's Christian allies assume power in the country. The Israeli forces advanced swiftly and laid siege to Beirut. After a long and complex process of multilateral negotiations, the PLO acquiesced to evacuate Lebanon under international supervision. Despite the PLO's departure, however, Peace for Galilee could hardly be considered an Israeli success. Israel's Christian ally in Beirut, Bashir al-Gemayel, was elected president as intended but was assassinated immediately after. Bashir's brother Amin, who succeeded him as Lebanon's president, was not as forthcoming toward the Jewish state. Moreover, the Christian militias avenged Bashir's murder by committing a massacre in the Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila under Israel's nose, and the Jewish state was denounced internationally for having not prevented it. Given the complications of the war and the large number of Israeli casualties, Begin eventually resigned from politics and spent the remainder of his life as a recluse. An Israeli commission of enquiry was set up to investigate the circumstances of the Sabra-Shatila massacre, and the Likud lost the following elections.[8]

This chapter analyses the UN's activity in the context of the PLO-Israeli showdown in Lebanon between 1977 and 1982, namely from the rise of the Likud until the 1982 Operation Peace for Galilee and the PLO's evacuation from Beirut. It focuses mainly on the question of peacekeeping forces in the Middle East and the UN's place within them, a question that preoccupied many of the relevant contemporaries but was hardly emphasised in existing research beyond just UNIFIL. Therefore, each of the sections dissects one stage in the international debate over UN peacekeeping in Lebanon, and by extension in the entire Middle East. In the first period (1977 – March 1978), the Lebanese government embarked on a quest to set up a UN force in Southern Lebanon, long before the actual creation of UNIFIL. This demarche was supported by Lebanese Christians, the Americans, and initially even by the Israelis. Operation Litani in March 1978 provided Beirut and Washington with the

[8] Ze'ev Schiff and Ehud Ya'ari, *War of Deception [מלחמת שולל]* (Shoken, 1984), 284–388; Shlaim, *The Iron Wall*, 418–36; Schulze, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 59–65.

opportunity to establish the long-sought force. In the second stage (April 1978 – May 1982), after having been created, UNIFIL assumed its peacekeeping responsibilities in Southern Lebanon but struggled with a myriad of structural and circumstantial difficulties that prevented its success. In the third phase (June – August 1982), renewed tensions culminated in the 1982 Israeli invasion into Lebanon, and a subsequent international debate on whether to set up a peacekeeping force for Beirut within or without the UN framework, with the latter option ultimately preferred.

In the broader sense, this chapter demonstrates that developments throughout the period of the 1982 War served as a continuation of earlier trends. After the United States and some belligerents had lost faith in New York's mediatory capacities in the 1973 era, the 1982 period convinced them that even in the field of peacekeeping, non-UN solutions might preferable. As a result, this period saw the creation of a non-UN multinational force in Beirut, and the downfall of the last UN monopoly in the Arab-Israeli conflict: peacekeeping operations.

In Search of a UN Force (1977 – March 1978)

The international discussion that led to the creation of UNIFIL is hardly ever discussed in academic literature. Most of the national and international histories that dealt with the Arab-Israeli conflict period prior to March 1978, like the works of Stein, Shlaim, and Quandt, devoted themselves to other affairs, especially the American-brokered Egyptian-Israeli peace process.[9] Books specifically dedicated to Lebanese history, like those of Rabinovich and Schulze, focused more on the countries and factions involved in the Lebanese civil war, as well as the PLO-Israeli factor – barely covering the public debate on a UN force.[10] Conversely, works on UNIFIL by authors such as Skogmo, Heiberg and Holst, or Murphy typically began their discussion in March 1978, because their main focuses were to evaluate UNIFIL's efficacy from the time it was already in place.[11] All this suggests that past scholarship did not thoroughly investigate the realities and processes that eventually led to the creation of UNIFIL. James, whose work also focused almost exclusively on UNIFIL's performance, briefly listed why the deployment of a UN force in Southern Lebanon seemed unfeasible until 1978: Israel preferred to take care of its own security than to host or rely on an international force; the PLO wanted

[9] Stein, *Heroic Diplomacy*; Shlaim, *The Iron Wall*, 330–93; Quandt, *Peace Process*, 177–242.
[10] Rabinovich, *The War*, 34–120; Schulze, *The Jews*, 119–58.
[11] Marianne Heiberg and Johan J. Holst, 'Comparing UNIFIL and the MNF', *Global Politics and Strategy* 28 (1986): 399–422; Skogmo, *UNIFIL*; Ray Murphy, 'The Political and Diplomatic Background to the Establishment of UNIFIL in Lebanon and the UNITAF and UNOSOM Missions in Somalia', *Journal of Conflict Studies* 22, no. 2 (2002): 26–56.

to maintain its operational freedom in the area; only few countries in the UN would have agreed to press for such a force against the wishes of the increasingly popular Palestinians; and so long as there was no actual international crisis in Lebanon, as would be the case during Operation Litani in March 1978, there was no strong international incentive to establish a UN force.[12] Nevertheless, James did not develop any of these points. Furthermore, his succinct summary gives the impression that Operation Litani served as a 'big bang' that created UNIFIL out of thin air. In fact, a Lebanese debate about the deployment of a UN force in Southern Lebanon had taken place long before UNIFIL was established. So much so, that Lebanese UN Ambassador Ghassan Tuéni recalled that by the time he entered office in September 1977, 'Putting UN soldiers on the Lebanese border [with Israel] was one of the most important issues in Lebanese politics'.[13] Therefore, this section will delve into the deeper and longer-lasting undercurrents that eventually led to the establishment of UNIFIL, beyond just Operation Litani itself.

Since at least 1965, Lebanese Christian politicians like Raymond Eddé proposed to deploy a UN force in Southern Lebanon. According to them, such a force could not only prevent Palestinian attacks and Israeli reprisals at Lebanon's expense, but also help the weak Lebanese government reassert control over the south.[14] As of 1977, the two architects of Lebanese foreign policy also advocated the deployment of a UN force: the first was Sarkis and the second was Fouad Boutros, his loyal foreign minister and until 1978 also defence minister. As the Lebanese security forces disintegrated and independent militias multiplied against the backdrop of the civil war, Sarkis and Boutros grew increasingly desperate for external help in maintaining security. This is why, despite being fearful for Lebanon's sovereignty, the pair invited the largely-Syrian Arab Deterrent Force (ADF) in 1976 to impose order in the northern and central parts of the country.[15] Nevertheless, the ADF could not operate in Southern Lebanon, due to tacit understandings reached between Israel and Syria regarding the limits of Damascus's intervention in Lebanon, known as 'the Red Line agreement'.[16] Thus, a UN force could fill the Lebanese vacuum in the areas inaccessible to the ADF. Around February-March 1977 Boutros and Sarkis initiated parliamentary discussions on whether such a force

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[12] James, 'Painful', 615–16.
[13] Ghassan Tuéni, 'Ghassan Tuéni', interview by Jean Krasno, 17 March 1998, 4, Yale - United Nations Oral History Project.
[14] For example: 'A Lebanese Leader' [Hebrew], *Hazofe*, 13 January 1965, 1; 'The Debate Continues' [Hebrew], *Davar*, 5 July 1968, 1; 'The Moderate Christians' [Hebrew], *Ma'ariv*, 17 August 1969, 4; 'A Lebanese Leader' [Hebrew], *Ma'ariv*, 8 March 1970, 9; 'After Syria' [Hebrew], *Al Hamishmar*, 7 March 1974, 1; 'Eddé Repeats the Request' [Arabic], *al-Safir*, 25 November 1976, 2.
[15] Karim Pakradouni, *The Missing Peace* [السلام المفقود] (TransOrient Publishing, 1984), 31–33, 69–70; Boutros, *Fouad Boutros*, 149–205.
[16] 'Sarkis' [Arabic], *al-Safir*, 16 March 1978, 2; Ma'oz, *Syria and Israel*, 149; Selim al-Hoss, *The Time of Hope and Disappointment* [زمن الامل والخيبة] (Dar al-Alam lil-Malayyin, 1992), 52–53.

should be called to Lebanon[17] and raised the issue in diplomatic meetings with the Soviets,[18] the Americans,[19] and with Waldheim.[20]

However, publicly, Sarkis and Boutros denied that they were pursuing this project,[21] and they had good reasons to handle the matter with care. First, the government knew that requesting a UN force would give rise to dangerous domestic turmoil.[22] While leaders of the Christian right continued to support the notion of a UN force as of 1977,[23] the left, including Prime Minister Selim al-Hoss, felt that such a force would isolate Lebanon from the Arab world and preferred a strictly Arab solution for the problem of the south. This position was also backed by the PLO.[24] Then there was Syria, which Sarkis saw as pivotal to Lebanon's peace and order.[25] In March 1977, a column published in a semi-official Syrian newspaper advocated the deployment of the ADF in Southern Lebanon, and warned that the alternative of a UN force was an Israeli conspiracy to separate the south from the rest of the country.[26] In July, Khadam was asked how Damascus felt about an international police for Southern Lebanon, and he dismissed the idea with a rhetorical question: 'What can the international police do?'.[27] Nevertheless, as 1977 progressed the Syrians became more receptive to the UN force prospect, not only because they were convinced by American and Lebanese explanations that this force might be necessary but also because they grew irritated with the PLO's failure to fulfil its commitments to Beirut and reduce its presence in the south.[28] Nevertheless, while Assad eventually agreed to defer the matter of a UN force to the Lebanese government, he stressed that it should only be used to prevent Israeli encroachments and not for domestic policing.[29]

In addition to internal-Lebanese and Syrian opposition, Israel was also an obstacle to the possibility of a UN force. When Rabin's government was still in power until June 1977, it opposed the

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[17] 'Lebanon Decides' [Arabic], *al-Nahar*, 1 March 1977, 8.
[18] 'Soldatov' [Arabic], *al-Nahar*, 2 March 1977, 2; 'Lebanon' [Hebrew], *Davar*, 2 March 1977, 1.
[19] Dayan-Lewis meeting, 11 July 1977, File 000bdfo-217828, 1-4, ISA.
[20] Fares Sassin, ed., *Resolution 425: Introductions, Backgrounds, Facts, Dimensions* [القرار ٤٢٥: المقدّمات، الخلفيّات، الوقائع، الأبعاد] (Dar al-Nahar, 1997), 13.
[21] For example: 'Sarkis Reviews' [Arabic], *al-Safir*, 1 March 1977, 1, 6; 'Lebanon' [Hebrew], *Davar*, 2 March 1977, 1; 'Chamoun and Boutros' [Arabic], *al-Safir*, 10 July 1977, 'Boutros' [Arabic], *al-Safir*, 18 September 1977, 14.
[22] Ghassan Tuéni, *Resolution 425: Predicament or Solution?* [القرار 425: مأزق أم حل؟] (Dar al-Nahar, 1998), 14; Boutros, *Fouad Boutros*, 246.
[23] For example: 'al-Gemayel' [Arabic], *al-Nahar*, 1 March 1977, 2; 'Chamoun' [Arabic], *al-Nahar*, 9 July 1977, 3; 'Parliamentary Opinions' [Arabic], *al-Safir*, 29 October 1977, 1.
[24] For example: 'al-Hoss' [Arabic], *al-Nahar*, 1 March 1977, 2; 'The Separatists Seek Internationalisation' [Arabic], *Falastin al-Thawra*, 5 March 1977, 1; 'al-Hoss' [Arabic], *al-Nahar*, 16 July 1977, 1; al-Hoss, *The Time*, 147.
[25] Pakradouni, *Missing Peace*, 22, 31–32, 103.
[26] 'Southern Lebanon and the Arab Deterrent' [Arabic], *al-Thawra*, 2 March 1977, 3.
[27] 'Syrian Initiative' [Arabic], *al-Safir*, 16 July 1977, 8.
[28] Pakradouni, *Missing Peace*, 207; Boutros, *Fouad Boutros*, 243–44.
[29] FRUS, 1977–1980, Volume VIII, Arab-Israeli Dispute, January 1977–August 1978, Document 68.

deployment of a UN force in Lebanon, not only because it felt it would likely be ineffective, but also because it was reluctant to co-host the UN personnel if it were to be a cross-border force.[30] However, after Begin's Likud government took power, the supposedly more hawkish cabinet was initially more receptive to the idea than its predecessor – thanks to the unique approach of Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan. On 11 July Dayan met Israeli Ambassador to the United States Simcha Dinitz and subsequently American Ambassador to Israel Samuel Lewis. In both meetings, Dayan raised the idea of a UN force at his own initiative. According to him, Beirut had to extend its control to Southern Lebanon, both to prevent PLO attacks against Israel and to protect the local population. However, Dayan explained, the Lebanese army was too weak to accomplish this; the Christian militias too preoccupied with other matters; the Syrians too hostile to be allowed near the border; and direct Israeli action in Lebanon could jeopardise Lebanese sovereignty. Dayan's prognosis was that a UN force, accompanied by Lebanese police, should address the problem. Dinitz and Lewis mentioned to Dayan that Sarkis had pitched the idea earlier in the year, but it had been discarded due to everyone's scepticism that such a force could receive enough Lebanese and international support even just to be created.[31]

Later in July Begin flew to the United States, and his American hosts mentioned the proposal Dayan had made to Lewis. While Begin was unfamiliar with Dayan's idea, his initial response was positive.[32] In fact, the prime minister liked it enough to present it to Waldheim shortly after; he said that Israel would not oppose the deployment of a UN force in Southern Lebanon, so long as it comprised countries with whom Israel had diplomatic relations. This force, Begin added, could ensure that the PLO fighters were kept north of the Litani.[33] On early August, while visiting Beirut, American Secretary of State Cyrus Vance raised Begin's proposal with the Lebanese. Despite their reticence, they asked Vance to enquire what force precisely Begin had in mind: was it a border force, or a force to be interposed between the warring Lebanese parties?[34]

But at that point, the short-lived Lebanese-Israeli dialogue about a UN force came to a halt. The beginning of August 1977 saw a drastic escalation in fighting between the PLO and its leftist allies on the one hand, and Haddad's militia on the other.[35] Following the escalation, on 7 August Begin toured the Lebanese border, accompanied by Defence Minister Ezer Weizmann and military officers. He reviewed the villages across the border and spoke to Lebanese inhabitants, emphasising the Israeli

[30] 'The Israeli Position' [Hebrew], *Ma'ariv*, 1 March 1977, 1-2; 'Peres' [Hebrew], *Al Hamishmar*, 2 March 1977, 1.
[31] Dayan-Dinitz meeting; Dayan-Lewis meeting, 11 July 1977, File 000bdfo-217828, ISA.
[32] FRUS, 1977-1980, Volume VIII, Arab-Israeli Dispute, January 1977-August 1978, Document 53.
[33] Waldheim-Begin meeting, 22 July 1977, 4, File S-0899-0008-05-00001, UNARMS.
[34] FRUS, 1977–1980, Volume VIII, Arab-Israeli Dispute, January 1977–August 1978, Document 68.
[35] 'Battles' [Hebrew], *Al Hamishmar*, 7 August 1977, 1; Hamizrachi, *The Emergence*, 107–9.

commitment to help the local Christians.[36] On the following day, Begin publicly and officially revealed for the first time that Israel was militarily aiding Haddad's militia.[37] Dayan's office registered that the tour convinced Begin that the time had come to increase Israeli military activity in Lebanon, and that Dayan was also in favour.[38]

These developments prompted Dayan to contact Lewis on 9 August, and this time he sounded completely different from their 11 July meeting. The foreign minister warned that Israel was considering a major incursion into Southern Lebanon because of the deteriorating security, the PLO's uninterrupted activity, and the difficult state of the Christian enclaves. On the issue of a UN force Dayan was suddenly pessimistic: even if this force could get deployed, it would be too powerless to drive out the Palestinian guerillas. Lewis urged Dayan to reconsider and focus on his UN force proposal instead of on providing military support for the Christians.[39] When Vance came to Israel two days later, he met Begin, the latter accompanied by a wide ensemble of ministers. Although the Israelis varied in their degree of scepticism regarding the success of the would-be UN force, they all had little faith that it could police the south and remove the PLO. The staunchest opponent to a UN force was Agriculture Minister Ariel Sharon, who would serve as Israel's defence minister in the 1982 War. Sharon contended that a UN force would not only prove ineffective but would also curtail Israeli military freedom vis-à-vis the PLO by the virtue of its presence.[40] Given Begin and Dayan's earlier approval of a UN force, it is likely that they were later dissuaded by Weizmann, Sharon, and the military top brass.

On 16 September another escalation took place between Haddad's forces and the PLO around al-Khiyam; Israel went beyond just artillery support, and for the first time sent Israeli units into Lebanon to help Haddad in the battles.[41] Following American mediation, a ceasefire entered force on 29 September.[42] It seems that Beirut was unwilling at this point to further destabilise the fragile Lebanese calm with a UN force initiative. When an enthusiastic Waldheim wanted to follow up his February talks with Beirut on creating a UN force in Southern Lebanon, Tuéni lukewarmly responded

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[36] 'Begin' [Hebrew], *Davar*, 8 August 1977, 3.
[37] 'The Prime Minister' [Hebrew], *Davar*, 9 August 1977, 1; 'Remarks by Prime Minister Begin', 8 August 1977, the Israeli Foreign Ministry, https://www.gov.il/en/pages/29-remarks-by-pm-begin-on-the-situation-in-lebanon-8-august-1977; Naor Dan, 'Did All Roads Lead to Beirut? [האם כל הדרכים הובילו אל בירות?]', *Iyunim* 33 (2020): 16–17.
[38] Dayan's notes, 8 August 1977, File 000bdfo-217828, ISA.
[39] FRUS, 1977–1980, Volume VIII, Arab-Israeli Dispute, January 1977–August 1978, documents 76; 78.
[40] FRUS, 1977–1980, Volume VIII, Arab-Israeli Dispute, January 1977–August 1978, Document 81.
[41] Dan, 'All Roads', 18–19.
[42] 'The IDF's Entry' [Hebrew], *Davar*, 29 September 1977, 2; Boutros, *Fouad Boutros*, 235–36.

that the matter should be raised with Boutros upon his arrival into New York.[43] When the Lebanese foreign minister came on the 30th, he explained to Waldheim that his government was focusing on national reconciliation and the removal of the PLO from the south before anything else, insinuating that no further UN action was necessary at that time.[44]

The already-stagnating discussion about a UN force in Southern Lebanon was halted entirely and probably unintentionally in November 1977 by Egyptian President Anwar al-Sadat, who boldly announced his intention to visit Israel for the sake of peace, a declaration that set into motion the Egyptian-Israeli peace process.[45] From this point on, both Americans and Israelis became almost exclusively preoccupied with Egyptian-Israeli peacemaking and lost sight of Lebanon and the Palestinians. This is strikingly apparent in the memoirs produced by some of them; when discussing this era, they wrote entire pieces about the peace process, and only spared a few pages for Lebanon.[46] For the American Carter administration, Lebanon was perceived as unimportant both in the Arab-Israeli and Cold War contexts, whereas Egyptian-Israeli peace was seen as a great leap forward.[47] This American sentiment clearly did not go unnoticed in Beirut.[48] Pelcovits discussed one noteworthy product of the Egyptian-Israeli peace process: the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO), the American-led buffer force placed in Sinai. It was created in 1981 outside the UN framework, because of fear that the Soviets would veto its establishment in the Security Council. The MFO would later serve as an important precedent for the non-UN multinational force deployed in Beirut in 1982.[49]

Not only did Sadat's peace initiative freeze Beirut's efforts to secure national reconciliation in the midst of the Lebanese civil war,[50] it also aggravated the PLO, feeling sidelined and betrayed by Sadat's abandonment of Palestinian rights and Arab summit resolutions.[51] The Palestinian organisation wanted to forcefully remind the Israelis, Egyptians, and Americans that it was impossible to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict without it; this reminder came in the form of the 11 March 1978 attack.[52] On that

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[43] Sassin, *Resolution 425*, 5–7, 13.
[44] Sassin, *Resolution 425*, 16–19.
[45] On this process, see: Stein, *Heroic Diplomacy*, 221–68.
[46] For example: Ezer Weizmann, *The Battle for Peace [הקרב על השלום]* (Idanim, 1981); Moshe Dayan, *Breakthrough* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1981); Jimmy Carter, *Keeping Faith* (Bantam books, 1982), 273–318; Cyrus R. Vance, *Hard Choices* (Simon and Schuster, 1983), 159–255.
[47] Rabinovich, *The War*, 90–91; Corrin Varady, *US Foreign Policy and the Multinational Force in Lebanon* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 60–68.
[48] Pakradouni, *Missing Peace*, 175, 249–50; Sassin, *Resolution 425*, 29, 38–39; Boutros, *Fouad Boutros*, 375–76.
[49] Pelcovits, *Peacekeeping*, 5–10.
[50] Boutros, *Fouad Boutros*, 252–53.
[51] General Assembly document A/32/411, 6 December 1977, UNDL; 'Text of the Executive Committee' [Arabic], *Shu'un Falastiniya*, February 1978, 251.
[52] Abu Iyad (Salah Khalaf) and Eric Rouleau, *My Home, My Land* (Times Books, 1981), 214; Farouq al-Qaddoumi, *Path of the Revolution and Its National Constants [مسار الثورة و ثوابتها الوطنية]* (Dar Hanine, 2011), 21–23; Talas, *Mirror*, 3: 1208–9.

day, a squad of Palestinian fighters infiltrated Israel by sea and assaulted a bus on the coastal road, killing 35 people and injuring 71.[53] On 14 March, the Israelis responded with Operation Litani, an invasion into Southern Lebanon aimed at destroying the PLO infrastructure south of the Litani River.[54] The Israeli attack redirected American attention to Lebanon and presented Beirut with the opportunity to resurrect the discussion about the deployment of a UN force. After the 11 March attack and still before Operation Litani, Undersecretary of State Philip Habib told Tuéni that if Israel embarked on a major military offensive in Southern Lebanon, Washington considered it might be the chance to force the reluctant Israelis into accepting a UN presence there.[55] Meanwhile, Vance met with Waldheim and expressed the view that the only solution to the Lebanese crisis would be a UN force.[56] The UN Secretariat, for its part, was happy to lend a hand to the Lebanese-American plan; it had already begun drafting contingency plans for a UN force and its mandate, approving it with both the Israelis and Lebanese to ease later efforts.[57]

After Operation Litani was launched, Arab delegations pressed the Lebanese to call for a Security Council meeting, but Tuéni still needed to buy time.[58] Boutros was wary about taking premature UN action; he wanted first to ensure that the Security Council's permanent members were motivated enough to deal with the Lebanese issue seriously, that no Arab force would divert the discussions from Lebanon to Palestine, and – most pertinently to the issue of a UN force – he wanted to hold off the convening of a Security Council session until a more in-depth resolution was considered than a mere condemnation of Israel or a demand for its withdrawal. Instead, Beirut wanted an operative resolution to deal with the root problem of Palestinian attacks and Israeli retaliations.[59] For these reasons, the Lebanese government at first only condemned the Israeli invasion and dissociated itself from the Palestinian attack, albeit without requesting a Security Council session.[60]

Between 15 and 17 March, Beirut finally began to feel the desired change in the air. Waldheim sensed a positive consensus was forming about a UN force; the Americans and French were advancing an initiative that addressed all of Beirut's concerns; and the Soviets agreed not to veto, and even helped with the wording.[61] With the groundwork complete, Boutros finally instructed Tuéni to request the

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[53] Menachem Begin, *Menachem Begin [מנחם בגין]*, ed. Aryeh Naor and Arnon Lamprum (The Israeli State Archives, 2014), 351.
[54] Begin, *Begin*, 351–52.
[55] Sassin, *Resolution 425*, 62.
[56] Urquhart, *A Life*, 289.
[57] Urquhart, *A Life*, 289.
[58] Sassin, *Resolution 425*, 64–69.
[59] Tuéni, 'Tuéni', 12–13; Boutros, *Fouad Boutros*, 276–80.
[60] Security Council documents S/12600; S/12602, 15 March 1978, UNDL.
[61] Sassin, *Resolution 425*, 67–73; Tuéni, 'Tuéni', 14–15; Boutros, *Fouad Boutros*, 279–80.

convening of the Security Council. As intended, the forum adopted two resolutions: Resolution 425 called for respect for Lebanese sovereignty and an Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, and Resolution 426 decided to establish a UN force in Lebanon, the force that would later be called UNIFIL.[62] While UN officials and subsequently scholars attributed this outcome to the Americans,[63] Tuéni and Boutros portrayed these resolutions as the product of Lebanese policy. Boutros even hailed them as some of his greatest personal achievements as foreign minister.[64] Israel and the PLO were less positive. Neither had been consulted before the adoption of Resolution 425 and thus denounced it as being inadequate; the PLO wanted it to deal with Palestinian statehood, and the Israelis wanted it to deal with Israel's security problem. Some in the UN Secretariat already resented the inevitable and major operational difficulties that this force would have to face.[65] Nevertheless, UNIFIL was finally underway.

The UN Force that Failed (April 1978 – May 1982)

Resolution 426 defined UNIFIL's three main tasks as follows: confirming the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon, restoring international peace and security, and assisting the Lebanese government in reestablishing effective authority in Southern Lebanon.[66] Overseeing the Israeli withdrawal was the easier mission, because it was generally in everyone's interest: the Israelis were willing to leave Lebanese territory provided that no security vacuum was left there;[67] the PLO hoped to see UNIFIL's quick deployment to expedite the departure of the Israelis;[68] and of course, Sarkis and Boutros were happy to receive the UN force that they had sought for more than a year. Nevertheless, all the parties involved made matters extremely difficult for UNIFIL in completing its first task seamlessly, and even more so in fulfilling its other two objectives. As explained in the literature review, existing scholarship on UNIFIL already discussed in length the obstacles that faced the force; however, it did so mostly by employing UN sources, somewhat neglecting local repositories and perspectives. Additionally, while scholarship did thoroughly acknowledge UNIFIL's relations with the PLO, Israel, and Haddad's militia, it did not sufficiently highlight the dynamic between the force and

[62] *Yearbook of the United Nations (1978)* (UN Department of Public Information, 1981), 297–301; Sassin, *Resolution 425*, 74–85.
[63] Waldheim, *The Challenge*, 93; James, 'Painful'; Pelcovits, *Peacekeeping*, 26; Urquhart, *A Life*, 288–90.
[64] Ghassan Tuéni, *A War for Others [Une Guerre Pour Les Autres]* (JC Lattès, 1985), 201–2; Boutros, *Fouad Boutros*, 18.
[65] Skogmo, *UNIFIL*, 9–12.
[66] Security Council Resolution S/RES/426, 19 March, 1978, UNDL.
[67] Letter from Israel, 7 April 1978, File S-0899-0008-06-00001, UNARMS.
[68] Waldheim-Terzi meeting, 29 March 1978, File S-0899-0013-07-00001, UNARMS.

the Sarkis government. Therefore, this thesis will now scrutinise the topic of UNIFIL's constraints, while addressing these two lacunas.

Starting with the PLO, while the organisation was eager to have UNIFIL deploy in Southern Lebanon for the specific purpose of ensuring a prompt Israeli withdrawal, its leadership rejected resolutions 425 and 426, claiming that they were the product of American policies; wanted to confine UNIFIL only to those specific areas formerly held by Israel; and claimed it was within its rights to operate freely in Southern Lebanon on the basis of the 1969 Cairo Agreement. Under this agreement, the PLO recognised Lebanon's sovereignty, and in return was allowed by Beirut to maintain its presence in the area.[69] Sometimes, PLO forces attacked UNIFIL positions and/or personnel. Such attacks included hijackings, firing at vehicles and patrols, laying ambushes, and infiltrating UNIFIL positions. In the beginning, these actions mostly concentrated around the PLO enclave of Tyre.[70] Clashes between the PLO and UNIFIL sometimes resulted in UN personnel casualties and/or injuries.[71] While PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat reassured the UN officials that he wanted to cooperate with UNIFIL, he also warned them that inside the PLO were extremists that he simply could not restrain.[72]

Most importantly for the Arab-Israeli context, the PLO continued to infiltrate Israel from UNIFIL's zone of operations, expediting the disillusionment of the already-sceptical Israelis with the force. For example, in January 1979 a squad of Palestinian fighters from the Democratic Front entered a guesthouse in Ma'alot and attempted to capture hostages, killing a woman and wounding a soldier in the process. Israeli Northern Commander Avigdor Ben Gal accused UNIFIL of negligence following this incident.[73] On 21 April 1979 a squad of Palestinian fighters entered Israel from Lebanon by sea and killed a father and his two young daughters, as well as an officer in the city of Nahariya.[74] On 9 May 1979, a Popular Front squad arrived at Kibbutz Manara and fired Bazooka shells at the settlement. Following the incident Israel submitted a complaint to UNIFIL, stressing that UNIFIL must be strict in its checkpoint checks, monitoring of weapons in Southern Lebanon, etc.[75] On 7 April 1980, Popular

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[69] Waldheim-Terzi meeting, 29 March 1978, File S-0899-0013-07-00001, UNARMS; 'On the Festival' [Arabic], *al-Safir*, 3 December 1979, 4; Emmanuel A. Erskine, *Mission with UNIFIL* (Hurst, 1989), 25–26; al-Qaddoumi, *Path*, 23–25.
[70] For example: Security Council documents S/12620/Add.2; S/12620/Add.4; S/13026, April 1978-January 1979, UNDL.
[71] For example: Security Council documents S/12620/Add.2, 8 April 1978, 3; S/12620/Add.4, 5 May 1978, 3-4; S/PV.2164, 29 August 1979, 2, UNDL; Israeli government meeting 26 August 1979, 49-50, ISA.
[72] Waldheim, *In the Eye*, 191–92; Urquhart, *A Life*, 292; Timur Göksel, 'Timur Göksel', interview by Jean Krasno, 17 March 1998, 6–8, Yale - United Nations Oral History Project.
[73] 'The Resolve of a Squad Commander' [Hebrew], *Davar*, 14 January 1979, 1-2; 'Getting Better' [Hebrew], *Ma'ariv*, 18 January 1979, 5.
[74] 'Terror Attack in Nahariya' [Hebrew], *Ma'ariv*, 22 April 1979, 1.
[75] 'Israel Filed a Harsh Complaint' [Hebrew], *Ma'ariv*, 10 May 1979, 1.

Front fighters infiltrated the kibbutz of Misgav Am, murdered three people and almost captured four others as hostages. Weizmann proposed to retaliate against Lebanon, but this idea was rejected by the Israeli cabinet.[76] Apart from infiltrations through the UNIFIL zone, the PLO would also fire rocket and artillery barrages at Israel from areas north of the force's zone of operations, in which case UNIFIL lacked the jurisdiction to stop them.[77] Salah Khalaf, Arafat's deputy, concluded in 1981: 'Neither the presence of the UN "Blue Berets" in South Lebanon, nor the right-wing militias in the Christian enclaves… have been able to curtail fedayeen activities in the area'.[78]

The Israelis, sceptical of UNIFIL from the beginning, were easily convinced by the ongoing PLO attacks that the UN force was unreliable in ensuring Israeli security interests in Southern Lebanon.[79] Dayan alleged, despite Waldheim's initial promise that the PLO would not return to Southern Lebanon, that UNIFIL treated the Palestinian organisation 'with indulgence and even cooperate[d] with them'; on another occasion he pointed out that Israel was disappointed to see the UN force become an umbrella shielding terrorists.[80] Weizmann, who would remain defence minister until 1980, expressed the Israeli frustrations vividly when he spoke in the 17 June 1979 government meeting. According to him, he and Dutch Defence Minister Willem Scholten met a Dutch officer serving in UNIFIL. The officer admitted to them that the international force had allowed 250 armed and uniformed PLO men back into its zone of operations. Weizmann expressed his concern that UNIFIL was slowly becoming a negative rather than positive element in Southern Lebanon and repeated Sharon's earlier argument that UNIFIL was not only accommodating the PLO, but also restricting the Israeli manoeuvring space. The defence minister made a grim proposal: 'I do not know whether it was possible, legally and internationally, for the State of Israel to demand the removal of UNIFIL, to let us live in the field with the PLO through the sights of cannons…'.[81] On another occasion, Weizmann commented that in the worst case, if UNIFIL failed, 'We have Haddad, and it would be easier for us [if UNIFIL failed] to deal with Southern Lebanon if we had to'.[82] The Israelis came to see Haddad's militia as the only friendly force protecting the Israeli border, given the untrustworthy UNIFIL and the dysfunctional Lebanese authorities.[83]

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[76] Begin, *Begin*, 448–49.
[77] Pelcovits, *Peacekeeping*, 22–23.
[78] Abu Iyad (Salah Khalaf) and Rouleau, *My Home*, 217.
[79] Skogmo, *UNIFIL*, 54–58.
[80] Letter from Israel, 13 June 1978, File S-0899-0008-06-00001, UNARMS; 'Dayan' [Hebrew], *Davar*, 26 July 1979, 1.
[81] Israeli government meeting 17 June 1979, 5-6, ISA.
[82] Israeli government meeting 24 December 1978, 9, ISA.
[83] Weizmann, *The Battle*, 258; Ghassan Tuéni, *Letters to President Elias Sarkis [رسائل إلى الرئيس الياس سركيس]*, ed. Fares Sassin (Dar al-Nahar, 1995), 75–76.

The Israeli lack of confidence in UNIFIL led to a policy that was highly problematic from the force's standpoint. During the Israeli evacuation, the Israelis handed the territory closest to the border over to Haddad's militia instead of to the UN force.[84] Urquhart lamented that the actions of the Israelis allowed them to confirm their withdrawal from Southern Lebanon while letting their proxies take over land, all the while accusing the UN of allowing the return of the PLO to the area.[85] Moreover, like the PLO in other cases, the Israelis contended that Haddad's zone had not been directly occupied by Israel, and thus UNIFIL had no right to deploy there.[86] Following the Israeli withdrawal and until 1982, Israeli forces would assist the Christian militia and wage their own skirmishes against the PLO in Southern Lebanon, over the heads of the UNIFIL personnel. The most serious of these clashes was the July 1981 fighting, which involved Israeli airstrikes in Lebanon and PLO shelling of Northern Israel.[87] Philip Habib, who had been brought back from retirement originally to deal with a missile crisis between Israel and Syria,[88] was able to negotiate a ceasefire between the PLO and Israel, thus ending the July battles.[89] Regardless, for the Israelis the ceasefire was not the end; in fact, the significant PLO rocket fire in July, also known as 'the Two-Week War', convinced them that a broader military action might be necessary.[90] Over the next months, Begin and Sharon told various foreign officials that Israel was planning to invade Lebanon.[91]

Another concern for UNIFIL was Israel's ally Haddad. Ensio Siilasvuo, who served as the UN's chief coordinator of peacekeeping missions in the Middle East and helped set up UNIFIL, recounted that Haddad's militia 'became UNIFIL's most difficult problem and worst enemy'.[92] If in the case of the PLO there was a discrepancy between Arafat's reassurances and the fighters' hostility toward UNIFIL, in the case of Haddad's militia there was full consistency between the unapologetic statements and actions. The Lebanese major once spoke about UNIFIL to the Israeli press and openly commented: 'I make every effort to keep them [UNIFIL] away from me. Every centimetre I push them north is precious and sacred to me, being part of the Lebanese land liberated from foreigners'.[93]

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[84] James, 'Painful', 620; Skogmo, *UNIFIL*, 21–22.
[85] Urquhart, *A Life*, 295.
[86] Erskine, *Mission*, 36.
[87] On the pre-1982 battles see: Schiff and Ya'ari, *War*, 21–124; Reuven Avi-Ran, *The War of Lebanon: Arab Documents and Sources [מלחמת לבנון : מסמכים ומקורות ערביים]* (Ma'arachot, 1987), 1: 61–71; Yigal Kipnis, *1982* (Kinneret, Zmora, Dvir Publishing House, 2022), 33–254.
[88] Philip C. Habib, 'Philip C. Habib', interview by Edward Mulcahy, 24 May 1984, 62–63, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project; Varady, *US Foreign Policy*, 79.
[89] John Boykin, *Cursed Is the Peacemaker* (Applegate Press, 2002), 41–47.
[90] Schiff and Ya'ari, *War*, 28–32.
[91] Alexander M. Haig, *Caveat* (Macmillan, 1984), 326–27; Kamal H. Ali, *Walks of Life [مشاوير العمر]* (Dar al-Shuruq, 1994), 487; Morris Draper, 'Morris Draper', interview by Charles S. Kennedy, 1998, 82–83, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project.
[92] Siilasvuo, *In the Service*, 348.
[93] 'Haddad' [Hebrew], *Ma'ariv*, 23 January 1981, 28.

Haddad's fighters would prevent UNIFIL's stationing inside their enclave; restrict the movement of the force's units through their territory with roadblocks; fire on UNIFIL forces passing through not authorised by them; organise violent protests against UNIFIL; open fire on UNIFIL positions and patrols; and in mid-1979 also encroach upon the UNIFIL deployment zone, setting up four of their own positions in the force's territory.[94] The militia's clashes with UNIFIL sometimes resulted in UN casualties. For example, on April 1980 the Security Council was informed that Haddad's forces killed two Irish UNIFIL soldiers, and it adopted a resolution condemning the murder. The member states also called upon Israel to discontinue its support for the Christian militias.[95] In another instance on March 1981, Christian forces shelled the village of al-Qantara, killing several Nigerian UNIFIL soldiers in the process.[96] Skogmo labelled the period 1978-1981 in UNIFIL's lifecycle as the 'Harassment Period', owing to Haddad's hostilities against the force in defence of his autonomy.[97]

Then there was the Lebanese government, which was meant to play a role, and even a leading one, in facilitating UNIFIL's mission. On paper, Sarkis and Boutros were eager to reassume control of the south and hoped to extend full support to UNIFIL. The Lebanese government accepted resolutions 425 and 426, stressed to the UN officials that the Cairo Agreement with the PLO was null and void, and unlike the Israelis and the PLO wanted UNIFIL to deploy throughout Southern Lebanon and not confine itself to the areas from which Israel had withdrawn.[98] Nevertheless, beyond the declarations, what UN and American officials really wanted Beirut to do to assist UNIFIL was to dispatch Lebanese army units to help the force in Southern Lebanon, even if just in symbolic numbers – and that, the Lebanese government was reluctant to do.[99] Sarkis told Waldheim that the reason was a shortage of manpower,[100] but the truth was that the Lebanese government was again afraid to escalate the civil war. By sending units to the south, Beirut would have to decide whether to use them against the Christian militias, the leftist forces, and/or the Palestinians, ergo: to pick sides and antagonise others in an already volatile situation.[101] Thus, UNIFIL was deprived of both the physical military assistance and the increase in local legitimacy that the Lebanese army's presence could have provided. Boutros retrospectively accused Hoss and other Sunni ministers of obstructing the stationing of the army in the

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[94] For example: Security Council documents S/12845; S/12929; S/13026; S/13691, September 1978-December 1979, UNDL.
[95] *Yearbook of the United Nations (1980)* (UN Department of Public Information, 1983), 351–52.
[96] Security Council document S/14407, 16 March 1981, UNDL; Urquhart, *A Life*, 302.
[97] Skogmo, *UNIFIL*, 24–28.
[98] Tuéni, 'Tuéni', 25; Boutros, *Fouad Boutros*, 286–87, 293–94, 302.
[99] Waldheim, *In the Eye*, 191; al-Hoss, *The Time*, 215; Boutros, *Fouad Boutros*, 285–86; Richard B. Parker, *Memoirs of a Foreign Service Arabist* (New Academia Publishing, 2013), 240–41.
[100] Waldheim, *The Challenge*, 95.
[101] Boutros, *Fouad Boutros*, 356.

south because they sought to ensure maximum Palestinian operational freedom;[102] Hoss countered that the main culprit was Sarkis, who feared a clash with Haddad.[103] Both claims are probably at least partially true. As usual, there were also the external problems: the PLO and Syria pressed not to send soldiers to the south and initially only agreed to the deployment of the Lebanese gendarmerie,[104] while the Israelis informed Beirut that they rejected the arrival of any soldiers to the south unless they answered to Haddad.[105] The Lebanese government tried to use American help to relax the Israeli opposition, but found that Washington was reluctant to apply such pressure.[106] Boutros concluded in hindsight: 'in reality nobody wanted the army to enter the south'.[107] Given all these obstacles, by April 1978 all that Beirut could dispatch to Southern Lebanon was some police officers, sent to key locations.[108] This situation exasperated Waldheim and Urquhart, the latter also angry that Beirut washed its hands of Southern Lebanon while UNIFIL was taking risks to maintain the peace there.[109] According to a report from the Israeli UN Representative Chaim Herzog to the Israeli government, after Waldheim returned from Beirut he confided in Herzog that 'He [Waldheim] is entirely disappointed with the Lebanese government. In fact, there is no government and there is no one to talk to… The three battalions that they spoke about [for Southern Lebanon] became three squads, and even the three squads disappeared…'.[110]

Beirut eventually succumbed to the foreign pressure, and unsuccessfully tried on three main occasions to deploy its army in Southern Lebanon. The first attempt took place on 31 July 1978 when a combat group was sent there. Haddad, protective of his autonomy, warned that he would not allow the army's deployment, and his forces shelled the task force upon its arrival to the village of Kaoukaba. Some soldiers were injured, and Lebanese indirect appeals to Israel revealed the latter was reluctant to restrain Haddad's militia. Beirut now had to decide whether to have the force turn back or engage Haddad's forces; fearing the dangerous prospect of fighting the Christian militia, the force was ordered to halt its advance.[111] Even so, Haddad's units continued bombarding the stationary unit until 8 August, killing a Lebanese soldier and injuring nine others. Consequently, on 13 August the Lebanese task

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[102] Boutros, *Fouad Boutros*, 285–87, 300.
[103] al-Hoss, *The Time*, 91–92.
[104] Tuéni, *A War*, 211–12; Tuéni, *Letters*, 64.
[105] Pakradouni, *Missing Peace*, 169–71; Erskine, *Mission*, 61–62; Boutros, *Fouad Boutros*, 319.
[106] Pakradouni, *Missing Peace*, 171–72; al-Hoss, *The Time*, 330.
[107] Boutros, *Fouad Boutros*, 261.
[108] Boutros, *Fouad Boutros*, 287.
[109] Waldheim, *The Challenge*, 95–96; Urquhart, *A Life*, 291–92.
[110] Israeli government meeting 30 April 1978, 10, ISA.
[111] 'Soldiers of the Lebanese Battalion' [Hebrew], *Ma'ariv*, 31 July 1978, 1, 15; Urquhart, *A Life*, 296–97; Boutros, *Fouad Boutros*, 319–21.

force was reduced to a rifle company and the rest of it was redeployed elsewhere.[112] Urquhart visited the scene while the situation was unfolding and got the impression that Haddad's firepower was far superior to that of the 'pathetic and clearly terrified' Lebanese soldiers.[113] The second Lebanese gambit was on 17 April 1979; this time Haddad did not stop at shelling the force away, but also proclaimed his separatist state of Free Lebanon.[114] The third occasion was meant to take place on January 1980, when two Lebanese battalions were to be sent to the PLO-occupied Tyre area.[115] An ironic convergence of interests emerged between Haddad and the PLO. The former threatened again to forcefully block the units' path,[116] while the latter successfully pressured the government to drop the idea.[117] Following these events and until 1982, no real Lebanese military deployment in Southern Lebanon took place – and UNIFIL held the line alone.

The last set of problems faced by UNIFIL related to the very mandate assigned to it. Pelcovits and Skogmo already discussed the main structural obstacles that stood before UNIFIL, namely the vague wording of its goals as well as the conflicting interpretations of its mission by the different belligerents.[118] Like UNEF before it, UNIFIL was established quickly to resolve a short-term crisis, namely to stop Operation Litani, and the byproduct of this rushed setup was that some basic points, such as its exact mission or area of deployment, were left obscure.[119] However, one point that has not yet been emphasised enough by scholars is that there was a gap between Beirut and the UN organs in terms of the desired length and scope of UNIFIL's mandate. Concerning the duration of the mission, as already shown, the Lebanese government saw UNIFIL as an apparatus that could complement or maybe even substitute for its army in the war-torn south throughout the long process of Lebanese restoration of authority. By contrast, the Americans who initiated resolutions 425 and 426, the Soviets, and other delegations envisioned a short-term mission: the UN force would oversee the Israeli withdrawal, and as soon as possible be replaced by the Lebanese army.[120] And indeed, Resolution 426 created the force for a period of only six months, with a possible extension if necessary.[121] This temporary nature is what led to the addition of the word 'Interim' into the force's name to begin with.[122]

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[112] Security Council document S/12845, 13 September 1978, 15, UNDL.
[113] Urquhart, *A Life*, 297–98.
[114] Boutros, *Fouad Boutros*, 362.
[115] 'Two Battalions' [Hebrew], *Davar*, 23 January 1980, 2.
[116] 'Haddad' [Hebrew], *Ma'ariv*, 23 January 1980, 3.
[117] Abdullah Y. Bishara, *Two Years in the Security Council [عامان في مجلس الأمن]* (Center for research and studies on Kuwait, 2018), 290–92.
[118] Pelcovits, *Peacekeeping*, 17–24; Skogmo, *UNIFIL*, 12–14.
[119] Skogmo, *UNIFIL*, 12–13.
[120] 'U.S. Seeks Pullout by Israel's Troops', *The New York Times*, 18 March 1978, 1; Skogmo, *UNIFIL*, 9; Bishara, *Two Years*, 58.
[121] Security Council Resolution S/RES/425, 19 March 1978, UNDL.
[122] Bishara, *Two Years*, 60.

UNIFIL Commander Emannuel Erskine and his media officer Timur Göksel also expected a short post in UNIFIL;[123] the first gap in expectations showed when Erskine told Lebanese Head of Military Intelligence Jonny Abdo that he wanted to implement Resolution 425 quickly, so that he could return to Ghana. Abdo laughed and replied that under the circumstances, by the time Erskine went back home his hair would have turned grey.[124] At least one source of confusion was likely the widely diverging goals of UNIFIL, all bundled together; while confirming the Israeli withdrawal could sound like a focused and short-termed task, the missions of restoring peace and security and reestablishing Lebanese authority in the south were considerably broader and vaguer.

After the expiration of UNIFIL's original mandate in September 1978 and until the 1982 War, every few months the Security Council would review a UNIFIL progress report produced by the Secretary-General, in which he would describe the force's conduct and recommend the prolonging of its mandate. The Security Council would then authorise only a short extension of two to six months until the next review. On these occasions different countries, including the United States, France, and Britain expressed displeasure that UNIFIL's mission was still incomplete, and that the Lebanese government did not yet assume control in the south.[125] This generated some crises between Beirut and countries involved; for example, in September 1978 France only agreed to renew UNIFIL's mandate by no more than three months, because it did not want to give the impression that the force was substituting for Beirut's authority in Southern Lebanon. Immense pressure had to be exerted on Paris just to agree to a four-month extension.[126] Tuéni sent several telegrams warning Beirut that its negative stance toward assuming control over Southern Lebanon not only deterred other countries from lending support to Lebanon, but also disheartened Tuéni himself in fulfilling his role as the government's representative in New York.[127]

Another point of contention between Beirut and New York was the nature of UNIFIL. Boutros and Tuéni sought to transform the UN force into what they called a 'deterrent force', meaning a full-fledged military powerhouse with greater fighting capabilities and a bigger zone of operations, like the ADF.[128] However, Waldheim had limited the use of UNIFIL's force to self-defence, and this approach

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[123] Erskine, *Mission*, 24; Göksel, 'Goksel', 4.
[124] Pakradouni, *Missing Peace*, 157.
[125] *UN Yearbook 1978*, 295–311; *Yearbook of the United Nations (1979)* (UN Department of Public Information, 1982), 321–38; *UN Yearbook 1980*, 347–58; *Yearbook of the United Nations (1981)* (UN Department of Public Information, 1985), 283–91; *Yearbook of the United Nations (1982)* (UN Department of Public Information, 1986), 428–33.
[126] Boutros, *Fouad Boutros*, 329; Bishara, *Two Years*, 125–34.
[127] Tuéni, *Letters*, 52–54, 129.
[128] Security Council documents S/13301, 7 May 1979; S/14296, 15 December 1980, UNDL; al-Hoss, *The Time*, 224; Tuéni, *Letters*, 33; Boutros, *Fouad Boutros*, 288; Bishara, *Two Years*, 161.

was, in turn, upheld by the Security Council.[129] As James pointed out, UN peacekeeping operations throughout the years were by virtue not designed for deterrence or enforcement; their effectiveness depended on the cooperation of the parties concerned.[130] Beirut, and sometimes Waldheim, explored whether it would be possible to add new contingents to UNIFIL and/or to transform it into a deterrent force; but their enquiries with the Security Council permanent members, the UN Secretariat and other delegations revealed that these ideas were highly unpopular and unattainable. According to Kuwaiti UN Representative Abdullah Bishara, who sat on the Security Council at the time, a large host of countries, namely UNIFIL's contributing countries, members of the Security Council, and the Arab states – did not want UNIFIL to become embroiled in fighting against Israel, the PLO, and/or Haddad's forces; thus, such a reform was unrealistic.[131] Bishara recalled that in his conversations with Tuéni, the Lebanese ambassador would make such impractical comments about bolstering UNIFIL that Bishara would burst out laughing.[132]

All in all, the harmful attitudes of all the belligerents, the passivity of the Lebanese government and its overreliance on the UN force, and the Security Council's unwillingness to upgrade the force's terms of reference – all these made UNIFIL's work nearly impossible and highly dangerous. With the continuing escalation between the PLO and Israel, as well as between the Lebanese factions, an explosion was seemingly only a matter of time. By 1982, the Israeli leadership, armed with Sharon as the new defence minister, developed a widescale military plan for Lebanon, codenamed 'Oranim' (Pine Trees). Oranim was divided into several possible levels of execution, with the maximal option aiming to eliminate the PLO, force a partial Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon, and create a more favourable political reality in Lebanon by helping Israel's ally Bashir win the presidential elections scheduled for the year.[133] The PLO, the Lebanese government, and the Syrians were all fully aware that Israel was preparing a widescale offensive in the country;[134] in June 1982, their predictions came true.

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[129] Skogmo, *UNIFIL*, 83–89.
[130] James, 'Painful', 614.
[131] Tuéni, 'Tuéni', 27, 36–38; Boutros, *Fouad Boutros*, 288, 293, 325, 381–82; Bishara, *Two Years*, 101, 124, 286–87.
[132] Bishara, *Two Years*, 262–63.
[133] On this, see: Kipnis, *1982*, 155–254.
[134] Yasser Arafat and Salwa Amad, 'Arafat on the Lebanon War', *Journal of Palestine Studies* 12, no. 4 (1983): 159–60; Tuéni, *A War*, 218; Avi-Ran, *The War of Lebanon*, 1: 151–82; Karim Pakradouni, *The Curse of a Nation [لعنة وطن]* (TransOrient Publishing, 1991), 40; Tuéni, *Letters*, 57–58, 140–41, 152–53; Reuven Avi-Ran, *The War of Lebanon: Arab Documents and Sources [מלחמת לבנון : מסמכים ומקורות ערביים]* (Ma'arachot, 1997), 2: 14–19; Boutros, *Fouad Boutros*, 506; Farouq al-Qaddoumi, *Records of the Palestinian Revolution [دفاتر الثورة الفلسطينية]* (Dar Hanine, 2012), 218–19; Hassan al-Balawi, *Hani Al-Hassan* (The Arab Institute for Studies and Publication, 2023), 193–99.

The UN Force that was Never Created (June – August 1982)

The 1981 ceasefire between Israel and the PLO brought temporary quiet to the Lebanese-Israeli border, but complicated the situation in other ways. First, while the Israelis saw it as a comprehensive ceasefire, the PLO – as did Habib who brokered it – claimed it only applied to the Lebanese border. Thus, the PLO continued its operations against Israeli targets elsewhere, which created an unbearable situation for the Jewish state.[135] The Israelis were also concerned that the PLO's adherence to the ceasefire on the Lebanese border would elevate its international legitimacy.[136] Thus, in the aftermath of the July 1981 ceasefire, Begin, Sharon, and Chief of Staff Rafael Eitan bided their time until the opportunity to launch Oranim revealed itself.[137]

On 3 June 1982, three members of the Abu Nidal organisation tried to kill the Israeli ambassador in London, Shlomo Argov, who was badly wounded and was left paralysed. That was the second attempt on an Israeli diplomat abroad that year; in April, the diplomat Ya'acov Bar Siman Tov had been murdered in Paris. Even though Abu Nidal's organisation had broken away from the PLO, the Israeli government saw the Argov attack as a *casus belli*.[138] The Israeli cabinet authorised airstrikes on Beirut, to which the PLO reacted by shelling Israel.[139] Following the PLO's return of fire, on 5 June the Israeli government agreed to a penetration of 40km into Lebanon with the aim to destroy PLO infrastructure in that area. Oranim, slightly modified and renamed as 'Peace for Galilee', was launched on 6 June.[140]

UNIFIL did not play any important roles in the face of the Israeli invasion. UNIFIL Commander William O'Callaghan was warned about the offensive by Eitan only about 30 minutes before it began.[141] There was little that UNIFIL could do in this situation; as Urquhart impressed upon the Head of the PLO's Political Department Farouq al-Qaddoumi in real time, the UN force was by no means equipped to face a large invading army.[142] Perhaps it could have been, had Beirut's calls to turn it into a deterrent force been heeded. Callaghan and the Secretariat, well aware of UNIFIL's limited fighting capacity, had decided earlier that UNIFIL should try and oppose efforts to invade its zone, albeit without seriously jeopardising the safety and security of the UN personnel.[143] In the face of the

[135] Boykin, *Cursed*, 53–54; Begin, *Begin*, 551.
[136] Schulze, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 61.
[137] On this, see: Kipnis, *1982*, 155–254.
[138] Begin, *Begin*, 559.
[139] Shlaim, *The Iron Wall*, 414–16.
[140] Begin, *Begin*, 559–60.
[141] Security Council document S/15194/Add.1, 11 June 1982, 2-3, UNDL; Rafael Eitan, *Rafoul [רפול]* (Ma'ariv, 1985), 233.
[142] Javier P. de Cuéllar, *Pilgrimage for Peace* (St. Martin's Press, 1997), 37; Göksel, 'Goksel', 14–18.
[143] Skogmo, *UNIFIL*, 95–96.

Israeli invasion, Callaghan ordered his units to block advancing roads and to take defensive measures to slow the Israelis down; UNIFIL soldiers used roadblocks, improvised obstacles, and sometimes even their own bodies. However, these local efforts barely had any effect on the greater course of events.[144] Eitan concluded in his memoirs that there were no collisions between the Israeli army and UNIFIL during the advance into Lebanon.[145] From this point on, barring Callaghan who tried to mediate a ceasefire, most of UNIFIL spent the war engaged with provisioning humanitarian assistance to the local population, under UN Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar's instructions and with the blessing of the Security Council.[146]

Meanwhile in New York, the Superpowers quickly agreed that an immediate ceasefire was in order.[147] Accordingly, over the first days of fighting the Security Council passed several resolutions calling for a cessation of hostilities. However, these fell on deaf Israeli ears and Israeli UN Ambassador Yehuda Zvi Blum stressed Israel's right of self-defence. Meanwhile, Tuéni again dissociated Lebanon from the PLO's actions, accused Israel of breaching international law while masquerading as the victim, and called for the Security Council to enforce Israeli compliance with the ceasefire sanctioned by the Security Council.[148] By 13 June, Begin seemingly felt that Operation Peace for Galilee was coming to a successful close, but was embarrassed on 14 June to learn that Sharon and Eitan, in coordination with Bashir, had independently decided to have the army encircle Beirut.[149] As the battle around Beirut raged on, the Israeli government amended the goals of the operation: to remove the PLO from Lebanon.[150] From mid-June until August, the Israelis gradually tightened their siege on the Lebanese capital, eventually forcing the PLO to evacuate under international supervision.[151] The siege stage was characterised by intense multilateral diplomacy, aimed not only at ironing out the specificities of the PLO's departure, but more generally at securing peace in Lebanon and eliminating the presence of all non-governmental military forces. Most pertinently to this chapter, a key question at this stage was whether and how to involve UN peacekeepers in this process.

Two main powers emerged in mid-late June as those advocating for the deployment of UN peacekeepers in Beirut: the PLO and France. On 13 June, extremely anxious with the PLO's military

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[144] *UN Yearbook 1982*, 434–35; Göksel, 'Goksel', 14–18.
[145] Eitan, *Rafoul*, 233–34; Rafael Eitan, *Fourth Parachute Open [מצנח רביעי נפתח]* (Yedioth Ahronot, 2001), 225.
[146] Skogmo, *UNIFIL*, 91–93.
[147] Pogany, *The Security Council*, 151; Golan, *Soviet Policies*, 126–27.
[148] *UN Yearbook 1982*, 435–37.
[149] Schiff and Ya'ari, *War*, 223; Begin, *Begin*, 570.
[150] Begin, *Begin*, 578.
[151] For Israeli and Palestinian perspectives of the siege, respectively, see: Begin, *Begin*, 570–617; Rashid Khalidi, *Under Siege: P.L.O. Decisionmaking during the 1982 War* (Columbia University Press, 2014), 43–166.

collapse in Mount Lebanon and the quick Israeli advances toward Beirut,[152] Arafat asked Cuéllar to deploy UNTSO to the Lebanese capital.[153] In his daily updates to his fighters, Arafat later explained the desirability of UN peacekeepers in Beirut: an international presence could not only halt Israel's advance, but also bring with it guarantees to protect Palestinians in the refugee camps from Israel and the Christian Phalangist militia.[154] As Khalidi explained, securing protection for the Palestinian civilian population in Lebanon during and after the PLO's evacuation would become a central PLO demand in exchange for its departure from Beirut.[155] Arafat's plan suited that of Paris, which was aiming to pursue a policy of even-handedness between Palestinians and Israelis. In the face of the Israeli siege of Beirut, France rushed to the aid of the PLO out of fear that its annihilation might lead to the rise of more extreme Palestinian factions. If the Israelis pressed for an unconditional PLO surrender and evacuation from Lebanon, Paris saw the siege of Beirut and the possible departure of the PLO as an opportunity to renegotiate Palestinian-Israeli relations and maybe even to achieve viable and comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace.[156] On 25 June France submitted a draft to the Security Council. Among other things, it called for an immediate ceasefire, an Israeli withdrawal of several kilometres from the periphery of Beirut alongside a simultaneous PLO pullback to the refugee camps, the deployment of UNTSO to supervise the ceasefire and disengagement, and a call for Cuéllar to study any request by Lebanon's government to install a UN force to interpose itself between the belligerents.[157] On the following day Arafat informed his fighters that the same points were being pursued diplomatically, thus suggesting that the PLO cooperated with France in pushing this ceasefire scheme.[158]

Unfortunately for Paris and the Palestinian organisation, they were virtually alone in supporting this program. Starting with the Israelis, in the week between 13 and 20 June, Begin announced his views regarding future peacekeeping in Lebanon to his government, to Habib, to Cuéllar and Urquhart, and even to the public when he was interviewed for the American television program 'Face the Nation'. His various statements could be summarised as follows: Israel was against further UN peacekeeping in Lebanon. This was because UNIFIL proved ineffective in dealing with PLO violations; because the UN was more broadly biased against Israel, and the Security Council

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[152] Arafat and Amad, 'Arafat', 163.
[153] Urquhart, *A Life*, 344.
[154] Yasser Arafat, *Letters from the Heart of the Siege [رسائل من قلب الحصار]* (Abu Arfeh Agency for Press and Publishing, 1983), 19–22, 116.
[155] Khalidi, *Under Siege*, 65.
[156] Claude Cheysson and Elias Sanbar, 'Claude Cheysson: The Right to Self-Determination', *Journal of Palestine Studies* 16, no. 1 (1986): 5; Pia C. Wood, 'The Diplomacy of Peacekeeping', *International Peacekeeping* 5, no. 2 (1998): 19–23.
[157] Security Council document S/15255/Rev.2, 25 June 1982, UNDL.
[158] Arafat, *Letters*, 11–12.

dominated by anti-Israeli powers such as the Soviet and Chinese delegations; and because Israel was far more pleased with the performance of the non-UN MFO in Sinai than with the UN-sponsored UNIFIL. Begin concluded that another non-UN, American-led multinational force could better ensure Israeli security, both through direct American participation and through pledges to be made by each contributing country to Israel that it would prevent PLO attacks.[159]

Unlike the Israelis, the United States initially preferred a UN force trajectory, and this point has not been adequately emphasised in literature. Pelcovits briefly commented that the Americans 'would have none of the Begin proposal' to set up a non-UN force in Beirut, but neither developed this point nor referenced it to substantiate its veracity.[160] Varady made an argument in the opposite direction; relying on quotes from April and August 1982, he argued that by the time of Peace for Galilee, the past failures of UNIFIL alongside the success of the MFO convinced American President Ronald Reagan and his administration that operating outside the UN would prove more effective and would situate Reagan as an independent 'peacemaker' in the Middle East.[161] However, as of mid-June the American sentiment was in fact pro-UN force. When Begin presented his program to Reagan and his Secretary of State Alexander Haig, their first reaction was that, while they were theoretically open to consider a multinational force, it was much easier to develop the existing UNIFIL than to establish a brand new apparatus – a viewpoint also shared by Habib in the Middle East. Reagan and Haig reminded Begin that setting up the MFO had been very difficult, and added that Congress was strongly opposed to direct American intervention in Lebanon.[162] Washington also had to consider a Soviet warning not to deploy American troops to Beirut,[163] although Moscow's resistance subsided as it became clear that the force to be dispatched to Beirut would be multinational and not strictly-American.[164] Beirut's first instinct was also to augment UNIFIL as previously intended, and not to replace it. Boutros and Habib agreed to extend UNIFIL's mandate by as long as possible despite the difficulties, and this was the policy that Tuéni pursued in New York.[165]

The Reagan administration and the Sarkis government did eventually come to reject UN action, but not due to some principled objection like the Israelis but purely because of circumstances.

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[159] Begin-Habib meetings, 13-14 June 1982, File 0004w2a, 1-2, ISA; Urquhart, *A Life*, 344; Harry Z. Hurwitz, *Begin* (Gefen, 2004), 197–98; Begin, *Begin*, 570.
[160] Pelcovits, *Peacekeeping*, 29.
[161] Varady, *US Foreign Policy*, 88, 94–96.
[162] Begin-Haig meeting, 18 June 1982; Begin-Reagan meeting, 21 June 1982, File 000h6ho, ISA; Boykin, *Cursed*, 133.
[163] Varady, *US Foreign Policy*, 91–92.
[164] Golan, *Soviet Policies*, 132–33.
[165] Fares Sassin, ed., *1982: The Year of Invasion* [١٩٨٢: عام الاجتياح] (Dar al-Nahar, 1998), 150–78; Boutros, *Fouad Boutros*, 519–20, 524–27.

Starting with Washington, it remains disputed whether the Americans gave the Israelis a green light for the invasion of Lebanon. The conventional wisdom, exemplified in the works of Schiff and Shlaim, is that Washington, hoping to retain the ceasefire, warned the Israelis not to invade Lebanon unless any major Palestinian provocation took place. However, the Israelis – especially Sharon – chose to interpret this warning as a tacit agreement that Israel could take military action if attacked by the Palestinians.[166] Regardless, once the Israeli attack commenced, several dominant American officials like Haig and American UN Representative Jeane Kirkpatrick wanted to allow the Israelis to complete their offensive, and were adamant to prevent the adoption of any UN resolution that would interrupt, sanction, or condemn Israel.[167] Then there was the Habib mission; as June progressed, Washington was asked by the envoy to slow down the activity in New York so as to not interfere with his efforts.[168] The Lebanese also preferred to rely on the Habib channel rather than on New York; under American auspices, they had a great degree of control over developments, whereas in the UN forums the Palestinians and their many friends could more easily dominate the discussions.[169] In light of these considerations, both Boutros and Kirkpatrick warned the French in late June not to take any UN initiatives that would sabotage Habib's efforts.[170] Additionally, Boutros directed Tuéni to halt all diplomatic efforts outside the Habib framework for the time being.[171]

Beirut and Washington also had reservations about the specific initiative that encapsulated a UN force, namely the French 25 June draft. It was vetoed by the Americans on 26 June even though it received positive votes from all other 14 Security Council members.[172] Wood and Khalidi attributed the American veto to Israel: it was cast to enable continued Israeli military pressure, and/or to protect Israel from a UN-sponsored force that it rejected.[173] While these considerations undoubtedly played a role in the American veto, and Begin did congratulate Reagan for vetoing the 'detrimental' French draft,[174] Washington was surely also motivated by Lebanese reservations. Having read the French draft, Boutros wrote to Tuéni and commented that it was completely out of touch with the military situation on the ground and with Habib's work. Boutros was furious that Paris had submitted it without consulting either Washington or Beirut and he was made even angrier when France refused to

[166] Ze'ev Schiff, 'The Green Light', *Foreign Policy* 50 (1983): 73–85; Avi Shlaim, 'The Impact of U.S. Policy in the Middle East', *Journal of Palestine Studies* 17, no. 2 (1988): 21; Kipnis, *1982*, 155–211.
[167] Skogmo, *UNIFIL*, 100; Quandt, *Peace Process*, 251–53; Varady, *US Foreign Policy*, 88–89.
[168] Sassin, *1982*, 192.
[169] Sassin, *1982*, 187–91.
[170] Arafat, *Letters*, 36–37, 78; Boutros, *Fouad Boutros*, 537; Khalidi, *Under Siege*, 141.
[171] Boutros, *Fouad Boutros*, 534–35.
[172] Security Council meeting S/PV.2381, 26 June 1982, 2, UNDL.
[173] Wood, 'The Diplomacy', 24; Khalidi, *Under Siege*, 120.
[174] Begin's letter to Reagan, 26 June 1982, file 000b63z-504990, ISA.

incorporate amendments that he proposed. According to the foreign minister, through the draft France was trying to build rapport with the Arab world by saving the PLO's position in Lebanon, all the while sacrificing Lebanese interests and the historic opportunity to remove all foreign powers from the country. A telegram sent on 25 June from Beirut to the Arab League's Lebanese delegation outlined what Sarkis and Boutros had in mind for the PLO at that stage: the organisation had to be disarmed, subjected to Lebanese law, and completely prohibited from ever carrying out another military attack from Lebanese soil.[175] When the American delegate explained his country's veto of the French draft in the Security Council, he provided the Lebanese reasoning, not the Israeli one: the French draft failed to restore Lebanese sovereignty and to ensure the evacuation of armed Palestinian elements from Beirut.[176]

As the days went by, Habib's reports further convinced the United States and Lebanon that a UN solution was unrealistic. Even if the envoy ideally preferred a UN force, he quickly learned that the Israelis simply would not have it. This posed a serious problem; Habib had to find an agreeable solution quickly, lest the military and humanitarian situation in Beirut deteriorate. Meanwhile, the Lebanese government and at first even Arafat told him that they wanted a force boasting American participation. Their assumption was that the Israeli army would never fire on American troops and thus Washington's troops were the most reliable guarantee to ensure the PLO's safe evacuation.[177] Pressed for time and knowing that the American-led force was the only option acceptable to all parties, Habib recommended this course of action to Washington.[178] Arafat, who wrote to the PLO fighters, told a slightly different story: according to him, the PLO advocated for a UN-sponsored force, while the Lebanese government insisted on an American or a multinational force.[179] But regardless of whether Arafat personally supported or opposed American participation, what was clear is that the diplomatic battle lines were drawn: the PLO and France advocated a UN-sponsored force; the United States and Lebanon preferred to send in a multinational force, given the circumstances and Habib's findings; and Israel opposed a UN force by its very nature.

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[175] Sassin, *1982*, 194–96; Boutros, *Fouad Boutros*, 531–34.
[176] Security Council meeting S/PV.2381, 26 June 1982, 2, UNDL.
[177] George W. Ball, *Error and Betrayal in Lebanon* (Foundation for Middle East Peace, 1984), 49–50; *Review of Adequacy of Security Arrangements for Marines in Lebanon*, 98–58 (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1985), 344–45; Tuéni, *A War*, 234; Robert S. Dillon, 'Robert S. Dillon', interview by Charles S. Kennedy, 1998 1990, 106–7, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project; Draper, 'Draper', 86; Boykin, *Cursed*, 133–34.
[178] Boykin, *Cursed*, 133–34.
[179] Arafat, *Letters*, 13–31, 108.

France, assisted by Egypt, made another attempt and submitted a second draft to the Security Council on 2 July.[180] The PLO was also allowed to amend it.[181] The Franco-Egyptian draft developed several of the motifs also featured in the 25 June French draft, and went even further by explicitly linking the PLO's withdrawal from Lebanon to a comprehensive solution for the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the Palestinian problem.[182] Once more, Wood and Khalidi have explained Washington's objection to this draft through its commitment to Israel.[183] However, another source of resistance was Beirut. In addition to its already-familiar argument that the Franco-Egyptian draft conflicted with Habib's parallel efforts, the Sarkis government also disapproved of the new draft's linkage between the Lebanese crisis and the Middle East problem, which was bound to complicate the Israeli withdrawal at that critical moment.[184]

Either way, by now, all parties involved knew that the Franco-Egyptian draft was unlikely to succeed. Even before it was submitted, the PLO began proposing schemes for its withdrawal from Beirut in exchange for some face-saving measures.[185] By 3 July Arafat scribbled a handwritten memorandum to Lebanese Prime Minister Shafik al-Wazzan, promising that the PLO would leave Beirut. By now, the Palestinian organisation was militarily pressured by the Israelis, diplomatically stuck, and denied support from the Lebanese government.[186] Lebanese officials quickly informed Habib of Arafat' commitment to Wazzan, and requested the deployment of a non-UN force in Beirut.[187] On 6 July, Reagan publicised that, in response to a Lebanese informal request, he had agreed in principle to deploy American troops to Lebanon for temporary peacekeeping. Such a force, Reagan noted, would depend on the agreement of the Lebanese government, Israel, and the Palestinians.[188] On 14 July, the Lebanese government held a policy meeting and formally decided to seek out a multinational force that would oversee the PLO's departure.[189]

Seemingly out of line with French policy thus far, immediately after Reagan's announcement Paris proclaimed that it would be willing to join the proposed American force, if the following conditions were met: the force would have to be formally requested by Lebanon; its presence and

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[180] Security Council document S/15315, 2 July 1982, UNDL.
[181] Arafat, *Letters*, 52.
[182] Security Council document S/15317, 28 July 1982, UNDL; Khalidi, *Under Siege*, 136–37.
[183] Wood, 'The Diplomacy', 24; Khalidi, *Under Siege*, 138.
[184] Tuéni, *A War*, 231; Sassin, *1982*, 212–13, 243.
[185] Boykin, *Cursed*, 100.
[186] Shafiq al-Hout, *My Life in the PLO*, ed. Jean S. Makdisi and Martin Asser (Pluto Press, 2011), 151–52; Boykin, *Cursed*, 142; al-Qaddoumi, *Records*, 220–21; Khalidi, *Under Siege*, 115–16.
[187] Haig, *Caveat*, 348–49; George P. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph* (Scribner, 1993), 45–46.
[188] 'Offer by President', *The New York Times*, 7 July 1982, 1.
[189] 'France' [Hebrew], *Davar*, 7 July 1982, 2; 'France' [Hebrew], *Davar*, 11 July 1982, 1; Al-Ahram, 15 July 1982, 1; Letter from Lebanon S/15300, 19 July 1982, UNDL.

mandate would have to be defined and approved with Beirut and the PLO; and it would have to be somehow authorised by the UN.[190] This French willingness to participate in the American force, supposedly in contradiction to its UN efforts, was probably a pragmatic attempt to stay relevant and involved despite the difficult reality. Since Paris recognised that it simply could not pursue its UN initiatives without Washington's approval,[191] it could at least secure some of its demands by bargaining over its potential involvement in the American force. France's insistence on a UN sponsorship was also gradually dropped; as of 11 July, unnamed French diplomats told the press that Paris would be willing to join the force proposed by the United States under Cuéllar's request, even without a formal Security Council resolution. This was while Qaddoumi reiterated that the PLO would only agree to a force under UN auspices;[192] the Palestinian organisation was clearly being left alone in making this demand. In late July and as a last-ditch effort, Egypt and France raised the Franco-Egyptian draft for discussion in the Security Council, no less than 27 days after its original submission. It was discussed but never put to a vote; its sponsors knew it would fail.[193] Eventually, France would decide to participate in the multinational force even without Cuéllar requesting it.

Nevertheless, the UN would be allowed to play at least a symbolic peacekeeping role in Beirut, owing to the disagreements between the Israelis on the one hand and the Americans and Lebanese on the other. In Israel, Begin convinced his government that even UNTSO should not be allowed into Beirut, for three main reasons: the observers would unlikely be effective in supervising the PLO's withdrawal; since Israel would not target them, they would serve as human shields for the PLO and curtail Israel's military initiative; and on the declarative level, if the Security Council enforced a ceasefire by deploying UN observers to Beirut it would effectively signal to the PLO that it was under no international pressure to leave Beirut.[194] On the other hand, Washington and Beirut were in agreement that UN observers could at least be invited to oversee the deployment of the non-UN multinational force, and Boutros refused to allow Israel to determine whether Lebanon could accept military observers to its capital or not.[195] This debate again demonstrated that even though the Israelis, Americans, and Lebanese all agreed that the primary peacekeeping initiative should not be at the hands of the UN, for Begin's government it was a matter of principle whereas for the Americans and

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[190] 'France' [Hebrew], *Davar*, 7 July 1982, 2; 'France' [Hebrew], *Davar*, 11 July 1982, 1.
[191] Khalidi, *Under Siege*, 141.
[192] 'Paris' [Arabic], *al-Safir*, 11 July 1982, 1, 9.
[193] *UN Yearbook 1982*, 448–49; Cheysson and Sanbar, 'Claude', 6.
[194] Israeli government meeting 5 August 1982, 37-63, ISA; Ariel Sharon, *Warrior* (Simon and Schuster, 1989), 488–89.
[195] Sassin, *1982*, 229–34.

Lebanese it was simply a matter of circumstances. Thus, the latter were more inclined to allow the UN to play some role.

On this issue, Sarkis's government emerged triumphant over Begin's. The Israelis were growing increasingly dissatisfied with Habib's mediation and suspected that the PLO was trying to introduce peacekeepers to Beirut only to tie the Israeli army's hands, without really intending to evacuate the besieged capital.[196] Consequently, on 1-2 August Israeli forces launched an attack around the Beirut Airport area, bringing Habib's talks with the PLO to a temporary halt.[197] The angry American envoy was worried that his entire negotiation process was at risk and threatened to resign;[198] the United States was considering sanctions against Israel if the latter invaded West Beirut;[199] and Reagan harshly reprimanded Begin for jeopardising Habib's mission, noting that the relations between the two countries were hanging on the balance.[200] Despite this, over the next few days the Israeli army pressed on and Sharon openly defied both Reagan and Habib.[201] While Reagan eventually did not act on his threats to place sanctions on Israel, Ball and Varady's suggestions that Washington did not penalise Israel at all[202] seem inaccurate. In fact, American anger over the Israeli offensive led the Reagan administration to temporarily abandon its defence of Israel in the Security Council, and to allow the deployment of UNTSO in the Lebanese capital. On 1 August, the Security Council convened at the behest of Lebanon and unanimously adopted Resolution 516, which demanded an immediate ceasefire and authorised Cuéllar to dispatch UN observers to monitor the situation in and around Beirut.[203] Reagan wrote in his diary: 'Israel will scream about the latter [UNTSO's deployment in Beirut] but so be it. The slaughter must stop'.[204] Nevertheless, Israeli forces prevented the UN observers from reaching their allocated positions.[205] Between 4 and 12 August the Security Council responded by censuring Israel and passing resolutions 517 and 518, which reiterated the call for an immediate ceasefire and urged Israel to cooperate with the observers. One Soviet draft was vetoed by the United States because it went as far as to call for sanctions against the Jewish state.[206] However, these efforts to press Israel proved fruitless. On 13 August Cuéllar reported that UNTSO's Observer

[196] Sharon, *Warrior*, 490; Begin, *Begin*, 581.
[197] 'Israeli Armor Hits', *The New York Times*, 1 August 1982, 1; 'Clash at Airport', *The New York Times*, 2 August 1982, 1; Boykin, *Cursed*, 225.
[198] Shultz, *Turmoil*, 42; Boykin, *Cursed*, 142.
[199] 'The United States Threatens' [Hebrew], *Davar*, 1 July 1982, 1; Varady, *US Foreign Policy*, 88–89.
[200] Begin, *Begin*, 597.
[201] Ball, *Error*, 44–45; Schiff and Ya'ari, *War*, 273; Boykin, *Cursed*, 144–46.
[202] Ball, *Error*, 44–45; Varady, *US Foreign Policy*, 89.
[203] *UN Yearbook 1982*, 452.
[204] Ronald Reagan, *The Reagan Diaries*, ed. Douglas Brinkley (HarperCollins, 2007), 95.
[205] 'The IDF Blocked' [Hebrew], *Ma'ariv*, 3 August 1982, 1, 15.
[206] Pogany, *The Security Council*, 174–75; *UN Yearbook 1982*, 454–58.

Group Beirut consisted merely of 10 observers, that they had not been able to adequately establish observation facilities near the front, and that the fighting continued.[207]

Either way, the struggle over UNTSO did not detract from the main effort to set up a multinational force, which was secured by mid-August. On the 12th, Lebanon unofficially requested the United States, France, and Italy to join it.[208] On the 16th, the UN representatives of France and Italy each separately updated Cuéllar that their respective countries would join the force. Both also indicated that their governments would have preferred if it operated under a UN framework, but that this was impossible due to the opposition of 'one of the parties'.[209] Over the next month, the multinational force established itself in Beirut; the PLO was evacuated from Lebanon; and the Israeli military operation spiralled out of control following Bashir's assassination and the subsequent Sabra-Shatila massacre.[210] According to Cuéllar, UNTSO's strength in Beirut remained 10 observers throughout, and its role in the PLO's evacuation was marginal.[211]

As for UNIFIL, despite its failure to serve as an effective buffer force, its mandate was extended again on 17 August. Cuéllar recommended to prolong its mission by two more months, mostly justifying this by pointing out the force's humanitarian and administrative contribution in Southern Lebanon.[212] Following Cuéllar's recommendation, the Security Council adopted Resolution 519, extending UNIFIL's mandate by another two months and authorising it to carry out tasks 'in the humanitarian and administrative fields'. The resolution also vaguely decided to 'consider the situation fully and in all its aspects before 19 October 1982';[213] however, this deadline elapsed without any such consideration taking place. UNIFIL's mandate is still periodically extended to this day, although its credibility and relevance as a peacekeeping force has remained questionable.[214]

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[207] Security Council document S/15362, 13 August 1982, UNDL.
[208] Sassin, *1982*, 264–65.
[209] de Cuéllar, *Pilgrimage*, 41.
[210] Pogany, *The Security Council*, 177; Schulze, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 63–64.
[211] de Cuéllar, *Pilgrimage*, 41.
[212] Security Council document S/15357, 13 August 1982, UNDL.
[213] Security Council Resolution S/RES/519, 17 August 1982, UNDL.
[214] Criticism of UNIFIL recently resurfaced following the 2024 war between Israel and Hizballah, as part of the Israel-Gaza war. Israelis complained that UNIFIL failed to prevent Hizballah's military buildup in Southern Lebanon, while Arab elements were unhappy that UNIFIL did not prevent Israeli attacks against Lebanon. For examples of Arab and Israeli criticisms of UNIFIL, respectively, see: Iman Ali, 'How and Why UNIFIL Failed to "Keep Peace" in Lebanon', *al-Jazeera*, 27 November 2024, https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2024/11/27/how-and-why-unifil-failed-to-keep-peace-in-lebanon, accessed 27 July 2025; Orna Mizrahi and Moran Levanoni, 'Time to End UNIFIL's Mandate in Southern Lebanon?', *iNSS*, 22 May 2025, https://www.inss.org.il/publication/unifil-2025/, accessed 27 July 2025.

Conclusions: The 1982 War

The time before and during the 1982 War was a time of widescale re-evaluation of the UN's peacekeeping role within the Arab-Israeli conflict. Even though Beirut and Washington had been contemplating the creation of a UN force for Southern Lebanon throughout 1977, this idea did not materialise due to opposition inside and outside Lebanon. The 1978 Operation Litani created the atmosphere that finally enabled Lebanon and the United States to set up the long-awaited force, despite Israeli objections, with the main justification being the need to oversee Israeli withdrawal from Lebanese territory.

However, once UNIFIL was created and even more so after Israel left Lebanon, a mixture of problems prevented the force from carrying out its duties, particularly its other two, highly ambitious goals: to reestablish international peace and security, and to restore Lebanese authority in Southern Lebanon. Each belligerent inhibited its work and interpreted its mandate in a different way; the Lebanese government was too cautious to provide it with the assistance it needed; and the Security Council was consistently reluctant to expand or even extend its mandate. More than anything, contemporaries like Erskine and Bishara and scholars such as Pelcovits and Skogmo were seemingly right to identify that UNIFIL was, to begin with, placed in an impossible position; while other UN forces in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict were stationed as a buffer between two consenting powers and under some form of agreement, UNIFIL was forced to operate in the middle of an active warzone with a multitude of belligerents, each with a profoundly different outlook on what UNIFIL should or should not be doing.[215]

When the siege of Beirut in 1982 prompted a call for the creation of another peacekeeping force, the principal architects of UNIFIL – namely the United States and Lebanon – eventually chose a course of action outside the UN. Their resistance to a UN force was not principled, but pragmatic; action through New York was unacceptable to Israel, contradictory to Habib's efforts, and based on the unwanted French scheme. And yet, the very conception of a non-UN peacekeeping force as a viable option was a sign of the continued erosion of the UN's role in the conflict. In denying the UN framework, the United States and Lebanon were joined by Israel, which – despite a brief intermission from Begin and Dayan – had already long opposed UN peacekeeping, which it saw as inefficient, and

[215] Pelcovits, *Peacekeeping*, 14–20; Skogmo, *UNIFIL*, 241–43; Erskine, *Mission*, 37–39; Bishara, *Two Years*, 96–97, 289–90.

sometimes even biased and harmful. Without the support of all three powers, it was unlikely that any UN force could enter the Lebanese scene.

The surprising winner of the 1982 episode, at least in terms of UN diplomacy, appears to be the Sarkis-Boutros wing in the Lebanese government. Past scholarship often underestimated Beirut's role; to name just a few examples, James and Pelcovits attributed the adoption of resolutions 425 and 426 in March 1978 solely to Washington's policymaking,[216] and Khalidi and Wood linked the failure of the French and Franco-Egyptian drafts in June-July 1982 to the American defence of Israel.[217] Ball observed that the American involvement in Lebanon stemmed from Reagan's blind support to 'the policies, decisions, and actions of the Israeli government',[218] and Shlaim concluded that the United States 'only had itself and its ally [Israel] to blame' for its failed Lebanese approach.[219] Meanwhile, the voice of Beirut as Washington's other principal partner was ignored. This historical marginalisation plausibly stems from the non-engagement with Lebanese sources, coupled with the assumption that the Sarkis government lacked military power and was thus politically irrelevant. Nevertheless, as this chapter shows, in the diplomatic sense Beirut was a force to be reckoned with. Its internal heterogeneity rendered it politically ineffective, but also allowed it to engage in dialogue with various partners simultaneously: the PLO, the Arab and Nonaligned states, the Western countries – and by extension, Israel. Its most powerful asset was its proximity to Washington, which often meant it had a seat, and even veto rights, in the Security Council – sometimes more so than Israel. Lebanese Journalist Walid Awdh was clearly right to argue in 1982: 'The Lebanese state is stronger in New York than in Beirut'.[220] Regardless of the many difficulties involved, the Lebanese government was ultimately the one to receive most of what it wanted: the 1978 creation of UNIFIL; the repeated extension of its mandate, despite widescale international resistance; and the 1982 establishment of the non-UN multinational force. This is while the Israelis acquiesced to the deployment of UNIFIL, the Americans and French acquiesced to the deployment of the non-UN multinational force, and the PLO acquiesced to both.

In connection to the broader argument of this thesis, the period of 1977-1982 brought about the continuation of earlier UN trends in the Arab-Israeli conflict. If the 1973 stage saw the UN apparatus lose its hold over Arab-Israeli mediation, the 1982 period saw the downfall of its last monopoly:

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[216] James, 'Painful', 616; Pelcovits, *Peacekeeping*, 26.
[217] Khalidi, *Under Siege*, 106–10, 120, 136–38; Wood, 'The Diplomacy', 24.
[218] Ball, *Error*, 21.
[219] Shlaim, 'The Impact', 21.
[220] Awdh is quoted here: Tuéni, *Letters*, g.

peacekeeping missions. The positive experience of the MFO, the negative experience of UNIFIL, and local circumstances convinced Americans, Israelis, and some Arabs that intervention in 1982 had to be sought in Washington and not in New York. This American prominence remains intrinsic in many ways to the Arab-Israeli conflict today.

Conclusion

UN peacemaking and peacekeeping in the Arab-Israeli conflict between 1947 and 1982 can be best described as a long and gradual fall from grace. That time in 1947 when the General Assembly adopted Resolution 181 must have been a very exciting time to be in New York; the UN was a new organisation, regulating a new post-World War II world. Nobody knew yet what exactly the nascent institution and its organs could do or how, and some clearly thought that the international organisation could redraw borders and liberate countries. This time of big hopes and grandiose rhetoric gave birth to the ambitious partition plan; however, once the Arab parties rejected it and the first Arab-Israeli war ensued, the UN organs were in full retreat. Despite the unresolved state of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the fledgling organisation settled for the brittle armistice agreements concluded in 1949 and moved on to deal with other international affairs; from here on, the UN embarked on a slow yet steady decline in its prominence in the Arab-Israeli conflict. In the 1956 period the UN organs chose to be less involved in Arab-Israeli matters than before, even if they were interested enough to halt the Sinai Campaign as part of the Suez Crisis. By 1967, the limited UN intervention in Arab-Israeli affairs was no longer a matter of choice; the UN apparatus that had connected the Middle East to New York fell apart. In the periods of 1973 and/or 1982, the perceived continued ineffectiveness of the UN eventually led various parties involved such as the United States, Soviet Union, Israel, Egypt, Lebanon, and others to favour peacemaking and peacekeeping actions outside New York. Consequently, in 1973 the UN organs lost their prominence in mediating the Arab Israeli conflict, and in 1981-1982 even their monopoly over peacekeeping missions was broken. By the end of 1982, the tasks of Arab-Israeli peacemaking and peacekeeping were left primarily in the hands of the United States, the architect of historic agreements such as the Syrian-Israeli 1974 disengagement agreement or the 1979 Egyptian-Israeli peace agreement.

Delving more into each period, it is apparent that in 1947-1949 the UN organs formally carried the greatest authority to deal with the Arab-Israeli conflict. Given the Zionist-Palestinian tension, a UN commission in the form of UNSCOP was set up to decide the fate of mandatory Palestine; its formula was adopted by a second UN organ, the General Assembly; and a third organ, the Palestine Commission, was entrusted with its implementation. When the region devolved into war, a UN wartime mediator was appointed both to curb violence and to promote truces and peace agreements, with Bunche eventually mediating the armistice agreements. In the aftermath of the war, the PCC was set up by the UN to promote a longer-term and comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace. Naturally the Superpowers and other nations also intervened unilaterally where they saw fit, but the official

mediation and peacekeeping were largely left at the hands of UN organs and officials. Looking back, the UN would never again receive the chance to play such as central role in Arab-Israeli war and peace. Two cardinal sins gave birth to the Arab-Israeli conflict under the watch of the UN organs: the adoption of Resolution 181 without real intention to see it through; and the international disengagement from the region after the armistice was signed, before any viable and lasting peace could be secured between the belligerents.

In the years following the first Arab-Israeli war, most of the global focus shifted elsewhere as the Cold War entered full swing. The PCC efforts gradually faded away, UNTSO was neither equipped nor intended to do anything beyond reporting ceasefire violations and resolving local incidents, and the conflict was essentially left to unfold on its own. Despite some potentially dovish trends in Egypt and Israel, the lack of any real international mediation and uncontrolled escalations placed them on a course of collision. When opportunity finally revealed itself, Israel teamed up with Britian and France and launched the Sinai Campaign against Egypt in parallel to the Anglo-French operations in Suez. Most of the prelude to the Anglo-Franco-Egyptian Suez Crisis was also handled outside the UN framework, due to the preferences of all parties involved to maintain their national freedom of action. Ultimately, the Suez Crisis did become a major UN matter due to the importance of the international waterway, the international concern about two Superpowers attacking a sovereign postcolonial state, and the lack of American support for the tripartite assault. Regardless, this UN activity did not translate into any meaningful intervention in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Israel was forced to withdraw to Sinai, but otherwise a mere armistice regime again satisfied the international community. One tangible change was the deployment of UNEF, which served first and foremost as a short-term tool to ensure Anglo-French and later Israeli evacuation from Egyptian territory. Its terms of reference were intentionally unclear, in a manner that allowed for its speedy deployment but later complicated its mission and the Arab-Israeli conflict itself.

The indifference that characterised the 1956 period largely resumed in the early 1960s. By now the MACs had been disbanded, border clashes continued, the Palestinians formed independent organisations to wage their guerilla war against Israel, and regional tensions rose. However, the UN treatment of the situation remained largely unchanged due to the continued escalation of the Cold War and the preoccupation with other, more pressing zones of conflict than the Middle East. This lack of attention to the Middle East caused Superpowers and other states to underestimate the difficulties of the belligerents and to offer little support during crises to UNTSO and later to UNEF and U-Thant. Only once war began a sense of urgency led to an international push for a ceasefire, but this time a

return to the *status quo ante* was not secured; Israel held on to the territories occupied in the war, which created an intolerable territorial reality for the Arabs. Many months of UN forum discussions led to little progress, as Resolution 242 was not only intentionally ambiguous but also out of touch with both the Arab refusal to make peace and the Israeli refusal to accept mediation. Jarring's mission was thus inherently incompatible with the demands of the belligerents.

Following the 1967 War and the Israeli occupation of core Arab state land as well as the remainder of Palestinian territory, Arab-Israeli tension rose to a new high. A myriad of problems such as the structural limitations of the Jarring mission, Arab-Israeli scepticism and/or lack of cooperation, and an absence of international support curtailed the mediator's efforts. When Sadat replaced Nasser he was more inclined to utilise the UN and later Washington to secure an agreement with Israel, but this opportunity was not sufficiently seized by the UN officials and member states. Eventually Sadat concluded that war was a necessary step in order to restore control of Sinai, and teamed up with Assad to attack Israel. The long-lasting dissatisfaction with UN mediation in the Arab-Israeli context, coupled with international circumstances like Détente and Kissinger's influence, resulted in an American-Soviet understanding after the 1973 that it was time that the Superpowers themselves resolved the Arab-Israeli conflict, with the UN framework playing a mere support role instead of the role of mediation. Washington then led a process that resulted in disengagement agreements between Israel on the one hand and Egypt and Syria on the other, and later the Egyptian-Israeli peace agreement. The Geneva conference, which served mostly a symbolic purpose, was never reconvened and Jarring would prove to be the last UN mediator assigned to resolve the conflict.

The escalation in Lebanon during the late 1970s and early 1980s drew renewed UN attention to the conflict, primarily in the context of deploying a peacekeeping force that could prevent PLO-Israeli violence across the Lebanese-Israeli border, as well as help the Lebanese government assert its authority in the south amid a civil war and a domestic loss of control. Following Operation Litani in 1978, UNIFIL was deployed; however, it quickly proved unable to carry out its duties due to the hostile treatment it received from local stakeholders, the lack of practical support from Beirut, and the vague definition of its mandate which created conflicting interpretations regarding the nature and length of its mission, its area of activity, and its authority. By the siege of Beirut in 1982, the Israelis were convinced that the UNIFIL model had failed while the non-UN MFO proved to be a positive precedent. Meanwhile, Beirut and Washington felt compelled by circumstances to resist a UN force. Consequently, the PLO and France were alone in supporting another UN peacekeeping force in Beirut; instead, an American-led, non-UN force was deployed. UNIFIL has been left in place but for the most

part its end goal has remained unclear. After losing its mediatory capacities in the Arab-Israeli conflict therefore, by the early 1980s the UN was also no longer the sole authority for peacekeeping missions.

One general conclusion to be drawn from this thesis is both thematic and methodological and plausibly applies to any case of diplomatic history: there is not always a correlation between the military prowess and the historical significance of any certain actor. For example, the Palestine Commission was inconsequential in defining the results of the 1948 War and was therefore sidelined in the recounts of contemporaries and scholars alike; nevertheless, its forgotten episode served as a defining moment in the formation of the Arab-Israeli conflict, as well as the UN's role within it. Similarly, in the years 1977-1982 the Sarkis government was militarily impotent, and thus its role was commonly underestimated in scholarship on the 1982 War and UNIFIL; however, a deeper examination of Lebanese sources revealed that Beirut was more significant in the creation and facilitation of both UNIFIL and the multinational force than what was commonly assumed in the past. Historians would therefore be wise to search beyond only those powers considered strongest or assumed most relevant to unveil fascinating and surprising undercurrents of international intrigue.

To return to the research questions posited in the introduction, UN peacemaking and peacekeeping proved to be dynamic throughout the years, in the sense that each crisis was met with a slightly different UN response. Discourse and action in New York depended on several factors, such as the severity of the Middle Eastern situation, Superpower availability to engage with the region, state membership and composition of the UN, and the opinion of relevant stakeholders as to whether the UN framework was effective and desirable in situations of peacemaking and peacekeeping. Somewhat counterintuitively, it was precisely at these moments when the UN organs were least available to seriously deal with Arab-Israeli matters that the most bombastic and general statements about a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace were made. When real attention was given to the topic, the discussion descended more into the specific practical constrains that inhibited Arab-Israeli agreements. Such was the case for example with Bunche's armistice talks or Kissinger's disengagement agreements, which were maybe less ambitious than their PCC or Geneva conference equivalents but were substantially more productive.

Alongside the dynamism in UN action, there was also a great deal of continuity. The first consistency was that at least in theory, the overarching goal of UN policy was almost always to secure some form of viable Arab-Israeli peace; this was the preference of most relevant actors in New York, namely the Superpowers, the UN Secretariat, and many of the other member states. The second

recuring theme was that this theoretical consensus on peace was framed by two contentious questions: how much each belligerent would have to concede for the sake of that peace, and how far the UN organs were willing to go to see that peace through. These two debates ran along all possible axes and divided the belligerents, the Superpowers, and the UN members and officials, thus preventing any permanent resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

As for the attitudes of Arabs and Israelis to the UN activity, the two parties dealt with the UN somewhat differently. The Arab handling of the UN underwent a major shift in the years examined; if at first the Arab response to the UN partition plan was rejection and boycott, as time went by the Arabs in general and the Palestinians in particular realigned their UN policies and became a dominant force in New York. They would utilise their numerical advantage, the rise of the Third World in international politics, and the global sympathy for concepts such as self-determination and the inadmissibility of the forceful acquisition of land. All these would serve to isolate Israel internationally, to pressure the Jewish state to withdraw from Arab occupied territory, and to present the Palestinian case before the nations.[1] The Israelis took a different and more consistent path in their dealings with the UN: they never expected much from the organisation, which they either saw as ineffective or hostile, and preferred to focus their diplomatic efforts on cultivating relations with the West and primarily with the United States, which often protected Israel in the Security Council. Notwithstanding their differences however, both Arabs and Israelis were similar in that they were often suspicious or disapproving of what the UN organs were trying to do beyond their own manoeuvres and resisted external pressures from the international organisation. They only seamlessly cooperated with the UN organs when the demands of the organisation suited their narrow interests, for example when the Security Council forced a helpful ceasefire upon their unwilling enemy. On some occasions the belligerents openly defied UN authority, but more often rejected UN resolutions indirectly; they would delay, circumvent, promise without delivering, or blame violations on accidents and on renegade extremists.

Arguably the most painful reality in the rift between Arabs and Israelis on the one hand and the UN organs on the other was the fundamental disagreement over the desirability of peace. If the theoretical preference of the UN organs and many member states was usually the euphemistic and obscure 'just and lasting peace', then neither Arabs nor Israelis necessarily saw peace as their priority. On the Arab side, after Israel was created most Arab leaderships at least publicly agreed that it was

[1] For bird's eye quantitative analyses on the gradual shift in favour of the Arabs and against Israel in the General Assembly and more generally in the UN, respectively, see: Humadi, 'An Analysis'; Di Mauro, *The UN*.

simply not a country that should be allowed to exist, despite Resolution 181 and the partition plan. After Israel's existence became a *fait accompli*, many Arab governments and organisations still found it exceedingly difficult even just to negotiate directly with it. Meanwhile, the Israelis accepted Resolution 181 but always harboured a deep distrust of both the Arabs and the UN. Following the 1967 victory, the traditional Israeli suspicion was fused with a new encouragement by military success; Israeli decisionmakers were further convinced that it was safer to rely on military prowess and on the strategic depth provided by the newly occupied territories than to return these territories in exchange for peace. This assertion was particularly potent in the case of the Palestinian West Bank and Gaza, whose occupation was not only justified by security concerns but by the religious-national ethos of 'Greater Israel'. The unpleasant fact that Israelis and Arabs did not necessarily see peace as their priority should have been better recognised by the UN institutions, either by convincing the belligerents that peace was desirable or by imposing it upon them.

When it comes to the efficacy of UN peacemaking and peacekeeping in the Arab-Israeli context, there were several UN activities that became standard practices, even though they clearly never helped. The first was to appoint UN envoys that were too underequipped to fulfil the peacemaking mission entrusted to them. The Palestine Commission, Bernadotte, the PCC, and Jarring were all tasked with seeking a mutually acceptable peace formula, but ultimately ran into the same dead end. On the one hand, one or more of the belligerents always refused to cooperate with the mediators' efforts; on the other hand, New York and the Superpowers were reluctant to force the parties into cooperation. Without either the voluntary or coerced collaboration of the warring parties, the mediators were doomed to fail. This finding resonates with the works of Khouri, Caplan, James, Waage and Mørk who claimed that UN action in the Middle East always necessitated either the belligerents' goodwilled collaboration or external pressure to impose their compliance.[2] A second unhelpful UN method was to condemn violence perpetrated by the belligerents in the Security Council, the General Assembly, and the MACs. Such condemnations antagonised the attacker while doing nothing for the attacked, and even encouraged the belligerents to pursue the strongest condemnation possible against each other as part of their diplomatic struggle. Taken together, both the mediators' weak terms of appointment and the condemnations appeared more to be means to relieve New York of further action than any genuine effort to remedy whatever crisis was at hand; it was easier to move on

[2] Khouri, 'United Nations', 86–88; Caplan, *Futile*, 3: 2; James, 'Painful', 632–33; Waage and Mørk, 'Mission Impossible', 844–46.

to other affairs by issuing ambiguous resolutions or by assigning remaining duties to mediators than it was to finalise a solution that could either be endorsed by all relevant parties or imposed on them.

A third UN inefficiency was peacekeeping forces. Many efforts and resources were invested in setting up these operations, but they always ultimately proved ill-equipped to deal with crises. In 1967, UNEF was promptly evacuated at Cairo's request out of sensitivity to Egyptian sovereignty, instead of standing its ground and ensuring that no war broke out. In 1982, UNIFIL was neither equipped nor expected to stop the Israeli invasion into Lebanon, and its priority was to protect the lives of its peacekeepers. When UNEF was being created, Commander Burns envisioned a force that 'should be so strong that it would be in no danger of being thrust aside, pushed out, or ignored, as the UN Military Observers had been in Palestine';[3] this clearly was never the case in relation to any of the peacekeeping forces trying to prevent an Arab-Israeli war. In the spirit of Hammarskjöld's ambiguity, UN forces like UNEF and UNIFIL were created hastily and vaguely to secure some short-term objective, like the evacuation of one country's army from another's land; while the obscurity allowed for the prompt deployment of the force and the fast resolution of the immediate crisis, it also made the force's purpose unclear in the longer run. Thus, in cases like those of UNEF and UNIFIL, it would have been appropriate if the Security Council and/or the General Assembly reconvened after the initial crisis had been resolved to readjust the mandate of the new force and better prepare it for the next and longer stage of its mission. More broadly, it would have been appropriate for the UN forums to determine what was generally expected of UN peacekeeping operations in the Middle East; if their mission was to forcefully resist any threat to peace, they should have been supplied with the necessary authority and strength to do so even without the consent of the belligerents. And if their purpose was merely to observe and report, it would have been much easier and cheaper to dismantle them entirely and bolster UNTSO, which was better trained and equipped for that mission.

At the same time, there were several UN methods that proved useful. The first was UNTSO; unlike the armed peacekeeping forces, whenever UN observers were allowed to do their work, their contribution was invaluable. They relayed objective and reliable information to New York in real time, helping the UN headquarters keep up with and make better decisions about ongoing crises. In the earlier stages of the conflict, UNTSO also operated the MACs, which – despite their flaws – were a unique platform and one of the few direct Arab-Israeli channels where many border incidents were resolved peacefully. It is thus regrettable that New York did not do more to preserve the MACs in the

[3] Burns, *Between*, 188.

1950s and 1960s. A second successful endeavour was the use of the Security Council for the issuance of ceasefire resolutions; the Superpowers always found it easier to agree on the stoppage of wars than on a program for peace, and were sterner in demanding belligerent compliance with ceasefire resolutions than with peace missions. Therefore, the Security Council was often successful in applying enough pressure to force the belligerents to lay down their arms, even if one or more of them preferred to continue fighting. Such was the case in 1948-1949, 1956, 1973, and to a lesser extent 1982.

It seems fitting to finish with a seemingly basic step that the UN never seriously tried in the examined period: to involve Arabs and Israelis in its efforts to stop the war and bring the peace. In this particular context, the term 'Arabs and Israelis' does not refer to the leaderships; these were too busy waging wars against each other. Instead, this statement refers to those Israelis and Arabs who were sympathetic to the cause of peace and the UN. Even if conventional wisdom in New York was that peacemakers and peacekeepers had to be outsiders to be 'unbiased', there was no reason not to equip these operatives with Arab and Israeli advisers. Such aides could have introduced UN envoys to local figures and concepts, reviewed drafts of peace formulas and improved them before submission to the governments, and spoken to the Arab and Israeli publics in their own languages to make any UN operation seem less alien and more friendly at the local level. More than anything, such advisers could have embodied the UN's ideals through their very existence: a layer of Arab and Israeli bureaucrats working side by side under UN auspices to bring peace to both their peoples, independently from their governments. Their practical as well as representative contribution could have benefitted the organisation that formally created, but could never resolve, the complex Arab-Israeli conflict.

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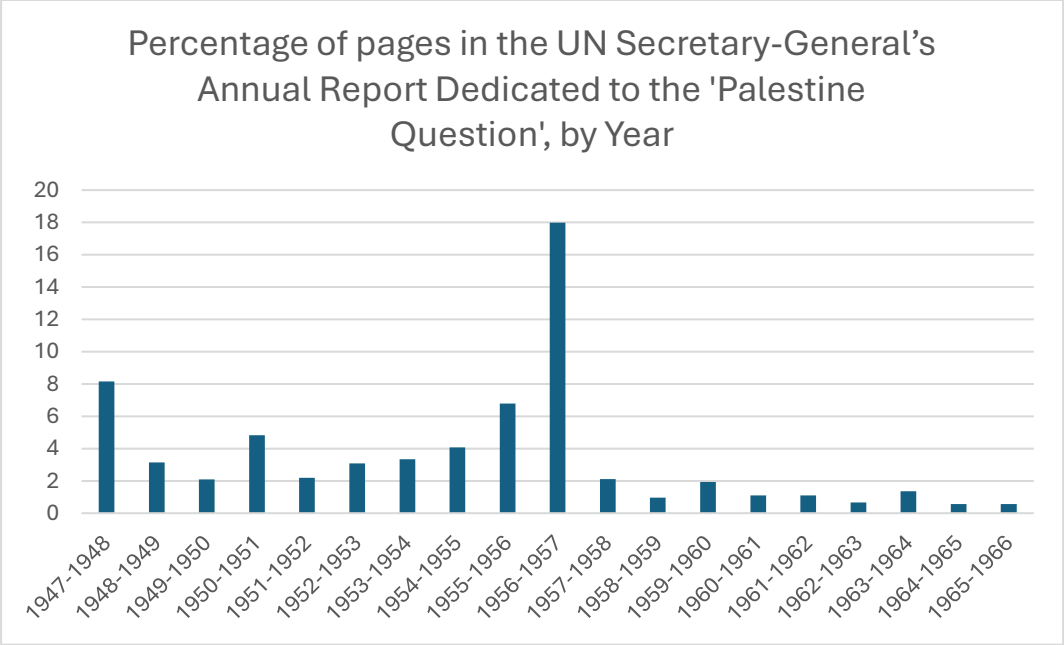
Annexes

Annex 1: Percentage of pages in the UN Secretary-General's Annual Report Dedicated to the 'Palestine Question', by Year, 1947-1966

The following table and graph quantitatively examine the UN's preoccupation with the Arab-Israeli conflict by calculating the percentage of pages that are dedicated to the 'Palestine Question' in the Secretary-General's Annual Report every year from 1948 until 1966. The 'Palestine Question' section typically included peacekeeping and peacemaking matters related to the Arab-Israeli conflict, such as noteworthy violations of the armistice regime, attempts to mediate a ceasefire when hostilities broke out, UN-led peace negotiations etc. The assumption guiding this investigation is that a larger portion of the Annual Report dedicated to the Palestine question reflects a greater engagement with the Arab-Israeli issue.

The table and graph reveal that after a major preoccupation with Palestine during the 1948 War, UN attention decreased in 1950, and steadily rose again until the climax of the international Suez Crisis, which temporarily intertwined with the Arab-Israeli question. Starting from 1958 however, the engagement declined again and remained at unprecedently low level until 1966, a year before the Six Day War. This could be interpreted as a lack of interest in Arab-Israeli affairs on behalf of the UN organs after peaks of engagement in 1948 and 1956.

Note: pages dealing with assistance to the Palestinian refugees were omitted, as these reflect engagement with humanitarian matters rather than peacekeeping or peacemaking.



Raw data:

Report UN Symbol	Year	Pages on the 'Palestine Question'	Total Pages	Percentage of Pages on 'Palestine Question'
A/565	1947-1948	11	135	8.148148148
A/930	1948-1949	5	159	3.144654088
A/1287	1949-1950	3	143	2.097902098
A/1844	1950-1951	10	207	4.830917874
A/2141	1951-1952	4	182	2.197802198
A/2404	1952-1953	5	162	3.086419753
A/2663	1953-1954	4	120	3.333333333
A/2911	1954-1955	5	123	4.06504065
A/3137	1955-1956	8	118	6.779661017
A/3594	1956-1957	25	139	17.98561151
A/3844	1957-1958	2	95	2.105263158
A/4132	1958-1959	1	103	0.970873786
A/4390	1959-1960	2	103	1.941747573
A/4800	1960-1961	2	181	1.104972376
A/5201	1961-1962	2	182	1.098901099
A/5501	1962-1963	1	150	0.666666667
A/5801	1963-1964	2	148	1.351351351
A/6001	1964-1965	1	174	0.574712644
A/6301	1965-1966	1	178	0.561797753