

## The Six-Day War: Lesson for a Bi-Globalized World

*What prompted Israel to take military action against the Arab States at the beginning of the Six-Day War? Did the United States and Soviet Union play a role in influencing the start of this war? Was there a definitive starting point for the 1967 War that gives us an important geopolitical lesson for our emerging multipolar world?*

Much of what is happening in the Middle East today is given bearing by what happened after the Arab-Israeli War of 1948, and decidedly so following the Six-Day War when Israel defeated five Arab States, gaining territorial control over Gaza, the Sinai, the West Bank and much of the Golan Heights—abruptly changing the geopolitical landscape of the Middle East.

This, of course, has had far-reaching consequences for the rest of the world, as it gave Israel a stronger military posture in the region, while also positioning Israel politically outside the UN resolutions directed at the Israelis and the Palestinians. A situation which further challenged the issues of statehood and the lingering problems of territorial integrity for both the Israelis and Palestinians, which are issues that continue to prod the political tensions plaguing the Middle East to this day. (The terrorist incursion of HAMAS into Israel in October of 2024 undoubtedly jeopardized any notion of a two-state solution in the future.)

Revealing then the significance of Israel's earliest wars of independence and national survival, which left the region with a long track record of political finger-pointing, numerous terrorist actions and an atmosphere where the smallest conflict continues to compound the current geopolitical problems that resulted from the Six-Day War. Bringing us then to consider what it was that started this conflict in the first place—the 1967 War—and how this war

continues to cloud the chronic political debate about who has a right to the land—“between the river and the sea”—the Palestinians or the Israelis.

Which is an ongoing debate that unfortunately overshadows a developing future issue—with a lesson for all nations—because this debate is influenced by faulty and reckless arguments that do not lead the way to peace in the Middle East.

Noting, for example, that the Palestinians cannot claim a time immemorial heritage and a territorially substantiated ownership in the Palestine region, and likewise the Israelis cannot reach deep into history from the biblical perspective and claim a God-given right to the land based on a covenant mediated by Moses. And, in regard to this first covenant, which was ratified with all the tribes, it was rejected by means of Israel's disobedience to its stipulations—documented in Scripture, many years ago—and the consequence of this disobedience led to successive punishments and political subjugations until the remnant Commonwealth of Israel was brought to an end by AD 70. (The Jews were expelled from Jerusalem by Emperor Hadrian after the Bar Kokhba Revolt and the Roman province of Judaea was renamed Syria Palaestina.)

Demonstrating that the covenant mediated through Moses was understandably conditional—in the tribal or national sense—as it was based upon the obedience of the people to the law and the will of God. Whereas the Abrahamic covenant was conditional in part—in the individual sense—with the requirement of obedience to the law of God, but unconditional in regard to the promise of a “seed” or descendant of Abraham who would be the foreordained one through whom the world would be blessed.

Thus, as we learn from the Bible, it was Jesus, as the descendant of Abraham, who

was qualified of God to rule all nations in the future with a “rod of iron,” and it is he who will come to possess the “gate of his enemies,” and by righteousness he will bring real and lasting peace and healing to all peoples and nations (Gen. 22:17-18; Ps. 2:6-12).

That is why the disciples of Jesus asked if he would in their time restore the commonwealth back to all the tribes of Israel, and the answer was that such an event would have to wait for the ratification of a “new covenant” at Jesus’ return (Jer. 31:31-33; Acts 1:6; Heb. 8:8, 13).

Leaving us to conclude that “State” solutions and problems in the Middle East—and in all the world—will be mediated and resolved only at the return of the Christ. For it is he who will rule with righteousness as defined by the law of God, which is the solution characteristically inherent in the geopolitical nature of the “gospel” message brought by Jesus regarding a coming kingdom of God.

A message that was entrusted to Jesus’ disciples who took this “good news” into the world.

Understandably to the scattered tribal remnants of Israel first—then to those outside the Commonwealth of Israel.

And this message was expectedly to be upheld by the church of God, and those who have a personal covenant with God through Jesus.

But unfortunately, this message has been misunderstood by the greater part of Christianity, and by consequence it has also been misunderstood by most of the world.

The dimensions of which can be grasped from the geopolitical lesson we can glean by looking back to understand what ignited the Six-Day War.

Therefore, we may reasonably conclude that the conflicting historical and biblical notions put forward by both the Israelis and

Palestinians, sometimes expressed in geographical terms—Israel, Palestine, Samaria, West Bank, Judaea, promised land, occupied territories—not only serve to create a deflection away from the real solution, but they also distract us from seeing how the world is shaping for a much larger conflict that is looming on the horizon.

Or, we might say it this way.

What event or action made the 1967 war certain between the Arab States and Israel, and does such an event become a sign for future conflicts in the world?

Now, some would say with good reason that the beginning of the Six-Day War started on the day Israel launched a preemptive strike on Egypt, Syria and Jordan in June of 1967, while others would say it started when the Syrians took action to divert the tributary waters away from the Sea of Galilee in 1964.

Still, others might claim that it was triggered by the confrontational relationship between two Cold War rivals—the United States and the USSR—that became set in political stone in 1961 when a much-publicized tank standoff took place at Checkpoint Charlie near the Berlin Wall. Or, others might say that it was Nasser’s reaction to Soviet misinformation about an Israeli buildup on the Syrian border, prompted by a misinterpretation of an Israeli press briefing, or perhaps some would point to the military buildup in the Sinai, or the worries over the Dimona nuclear reactor becoming a potential target for the Egyptian military.

All of which are relevant to the story of the times.

However, the most we can say about these events, and several others, such as the Cuban Missile Crisis, is that they set the atmosphere for a political action that was taken in May of 1967. And, it was this action that made war certain in the minds of the Egyptians, and set the Middle East on edge, and to bring this to light we can compare two important viewpoints on the subject,

gleaned from the written works of two notable world Statesmen—former Israeli UN Representative, Abba Eban, and former Egyptian President, Anwar el-Sadat.

Both of whom played notable roles in the critical events that transpired in the Middle East from the end of World War II to the beginning of the political conflicts resulting from Iran's regime change in 1979. A regime change that would move Israel's main geopolitical front away from the Middle East and toward a growing Eurasian sphere that includes not only Iran and other Central Asian countries, but Russia, India and also China.

So, to begin, we have a comment from Abba Eban, who wrote in his book, *The New Diplomacy*: "The crushing defeat inflicted on Egypt, Syria and Jordan by Israel in the Six-Day War marked a turning point in the story of Soviet policy in the Middle East. Every consequence was bleak for Moscow. American influence was strengthened by the very fact that a democracy had defeated a Soviet-supported dictatorship. Israel had proved that it is possible to defy Soviet threats without dire results. And Russia's Arab allies were thoroughly disillusioned. The USSR had rashly exposed Egypt and Syria to Israel's vigorous reaction by encouraging them to provoke Israel beyond the limits of prudence. It was simply not reasonable to assume that Israel would absorb constant terrorist violence, heavy concentrations of troops and tanks within striking distance of its population centers, the dismissal of the United Nations forces stationed in Sinai and Gaza by agreement since 1967, a maritime blockade cutting it off from contact with more than half the world, and a rhetoric threatening 'the destruction of Israel'—all without taking any drastic action in its defense. The Soviet Union and its Arab friends were here committing the most unforgivable of diplomatic errors:...

Continuing, Mr. Eban states: "For a time the Soviet Union hoped to recoup its loss on the battlefield by diplomatic victories in the international arena. Here came a stunning surprise:... the United Nations actually froze

the territorial results of the war! The General Assembly rejected Soviet proposals for Israel's unconditional withdrawal. The Security Council dismissed proposals for linking the ceasefire with an immediate Israeli withdrawal to the previous lines. The Soviet Union was being defeated in the arena of its greatest strength. In the end it had to give its reluctant assent to Security Council Resolution 242, which called on the Arab states to conclude peace agreements with Israel as the condition for liberating their lost territories. Even in that contingency the Security Council's call for withdrawal to "secure and recognized boundaries" was vague enough to enable Israel to hold out for limited but significant territorial changes in the event of peace and withdrawal" (*The New Diplomacy, International Affairs in the Modern Age*, by Abba Eban, Random House, 1983, p. 206).

Essentially, the United Nations Security Council signed off on Resolution 242, which recognized Israel's right to "secure and recognized boundaries," based on "agreements" that the Arab states were to make with the State of Israel. Consequently, as it was interpreted, Israel was not required to make a unilateral withdraw according to the resolution, while some Arab States consistently maintained a non-agreement stance, and so we are brought—again in part—to the situation we have in our modern day.

The exception to this non-agreement situation came when President Anwar Sadat initiated a profound course for reconciliation after the Yom Kippur War, which—through some political difficulties—led to Israel returning the Sinai back to Egypt in 1982. Noting that it was the Camp David Accords of 1978 that led to the famous Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty, which was eventually signed in March of 1979, just a little more than 7 months before pro-Ayatollah students stormed the US Embassy in Tehran, Iran. (President Trump's recent proposal for the United States to lead a redevelopment of Gaza has caused concerns in Cairo where they are considering the suspension of the 1979 Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty, as this

development policy could displace many Palestinians and possibly lead to military confrontations in the Middle East.)

Notably then the Six-Day War was a result of many factors and long-standing issues that existed in the Middle East for many years, particularly from the time Israel declared itself an independent State in 1948.

Nonetheless, it was the 1967 War that gained the upper-hand in influencing Middle East politics because of the geopolitical and boundary changes resulting from that war. And, as Mr. Eban wrote in his book, there was a “maritime blockade” prior to the war that cut Israel off from “more than half the world,” which brings us to an important insight into the beginning of this war from the former President of Egypt, Anwar el-Sadat.

From his book, *In Search of Identity, An Autobiography*, President Sadat candidly reviews the situation in Egypt prior to the war, and he said: “In the early part of 1967 the gloom in Egypt was all-pervasive. The country was bankrupt; the economic development plan was too ambitious and no funds were available to finance it. The deficiencies in public services were getting worse.... But graver than all this were the conflicts which now reached an unprecedented level among both the rulers and their lackeys....”

President Sadat then continued by addressing the issue of how he learned from the Soviets that the Israeli military was building up its forces on the border with Syria. This was later understood to have been a misleading conclusion, but at the time this misconception only aggravated the decisions that set the stage for what took place in June of 1967.

President Sadat continued by stating: “At the time Egypt had a Common Defense Pact with Syria. Furthermore, the Russians were trying to set the Arab leaders by the ears (as they had done during their agent Qasims’ rule in Iraq) and to provoke Nasser by claiming that the Syrian leader was more

progressive. Nasser therefore ordered Field Marshal Amer to concentrate the Egyptian forces in Sinai. Although his real aim was to deter Israel, the situation soon got out of hand....

“At any rate Nasser convened a meeting of what he called a Supreme Executive Committee toward the end of May 1967, which was attended by Amer, Zakaria Mohieddin, Hussein el-Shafei, myself, Ali Sabri, and Sidqi Sulayman—the prime minister at the time. Nasser said: ‘Now with our concentrations in Sinai, the chances of war are fifty-fifty. But if we close the Strait [of Tiran], war will be a one hundred percent certainty’....”

Continuing: “We all knew that our armaments were adequate—indeed, infinitely better than in the October 1973 War. When Nasser asked us our opinion, we were all agreed that the Strait should be closed—except for Sidqi Sulayman, who pleaded with Nasser to show more patience, to take into account our economic situation and the ambitious development projects that were now mostly frozen, particularly after U.S. aid had been cut off, and so on. Nasser paid no attention to Sulayman’s objections. He was eager to close the Strait so as to put an end to the Arab maneuverings and maintain his great prestige within the Arab world. Orders were thus issued for the Tiran Strait to be closed and the United Nations Emergency Forces to be withdrawn....

“The international situation was thrown into confusion as a result. The Soviet Union, so as to avoid getting involved (as is its usual practice) deliberately further confused world public opinion.... With the Tiran Strait closed, war became a certainty” (*In Search of Identity, An Autobiography*, by Anwar el-Sadat, Harper & Row, 1978, pp. 168-173).

Thus, we have from President Sadat an open and forthright admission of what finally ignited the conflict between Israel and the Arab States, and that was the closing of the Strait of Tiran, which was considered an “act of war” by the Israelis.

It was in practical terms, the straw that broke the camel's back in the Middle East in May of 1967, leading to Israel's preemptive strike against the Arab States.

Allowing us to say that what starts or "launches" a war is not always a direct military strike, but it is sometimes a political action by military means, such as the closing of the Strait of Tiran, and this example becomes a timely lesson for us in our political climate today. Because there is little doubt that the straits and canals and sea lanes in use today have gained greater significance, not only for trade, but for setting the bounds for some collective sovereign powers and their political organizations. Turning the sea lanes into geopolitical flash points as they not only represent the major arteries for world trade, but they also set the borders for larger spheres of collective political influence in the world.

Consequently, any interference in these vital sea lanes is like stepping across the sovereign borders of aligned nations and their political organizations, and any attempt to do so is likely to be perceived as an "act of war" given the current political climate in an emerging bi-globalizing world. And, for the sake of this article, we are defining bi-globalization as the existence of two organized and distinct global systems that have a fragile interconnection to each other by means of commerce and political cooperation, but each is distinct in how it functions economically and politically within its respective sphere of influence or global system.

Or, summarily, each sphere is global in influence, each sphere stands alone in its function one from the other, and each challenges the validity and capacity of the other.

With the geographic edge favoring the East instead of the West.

Creating greater consequences for some more so than others as "freedom of navigation" of the seas through the world's

straits not only affects the projection of trade and military actions of the great powers, but it affects even more so the collective political organizations, such as the European Union, BRICS+, the Eurasian Economic Union, the African Union, ASEAN, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the countries of the Indo-Pacific, home to more than half the world's population.

Noting also that the world's sea lanes act as highways for trade in highly commercialized areas such as the South China Sea in East Asia, and in the Indo-Pacific (Malacca Strait), and between Taiwan and China (Taiwan Strait), and in the Near East (the Strait of Hormuz near Iran), and in the MENA region (Suez Canal controlled by Egypt), and in the Black Sea (Bosporus Strait, Kerch Strait), and also between Djibouti and Yemen (Bab el-Mandeb Strait). Not to mention other important sea lanes that predominantly affect the West, such as the Bering Strait, the English Channel, the Strait of Gibraltar and the much-politicized and strategic Panama Canal and Arctic region.

Giving us then a geopolitical impression—from a bird's eye point of view—that in a multipolar world with expanding collective national organizations, many of these water routes are beginning to favor a greater Eurasian sphere, positioned at the edge of a turbulent Middle East. Bringing us to think about the geopolitical picture that could become more apparent in the near future, and that is the conceptual notion of a second "United Nations," which brings into question what we mean by "united" in a bi-globalized world, especially when West tries to shape East.

Noting by analogy that a blind blacksmith who works and shapes the metal doesn't really see what he forges in the fire with every blow of the hammer.

Likewise, the West by its monetizing of foreign policy, and by how it participates in a changing world order, and by sometimes intimating a challenge to the rule of law, and by its long-term use of economic sanctions, and by its unilateral posturing, and by its

increased military spending, and by its use of reciprocal financial reprisals against its own partners and allies, may not see how it is helping to forge a bi-globalized world and a larger political creature that it can neither tame nor ride in the future. And, as these things are perceived as putting a strain on the validity of NATO, the United Nations and also the European Union, while creating an uncertainty about the resiliency of the Transatlantic Alliance, it portends to a time when the United States—as the current leading maritime hegemon—may not always remain the sole guarantor of world trade and the guardian of the strategic sea lanes in a bi-globalized world.   
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