

POLITICS AND SOCIETY IN ISRAEL

IRE215

SPRING 2020

1

Session 5



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On The Agenda For Today

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- **The Sinai war/ Suez Crisis**

- The Suez canal
- The crisis and its results

- **The Six Days War (1967)**

- Events leading to the war
- The war and its aftermath

- **The Yom Kippur War (1973)**

- What is 'Yom Kippur'?
- The war and its aftermath

- **Operation "Peace for Galilee" (1982)**

- Buildup, goals, results

THE SUEZ CRISIS



Egypt

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- Past occupation => Ottoman Empire, Great Britain
- Independence under **King Farouq** (1936-1952)
- 1952: Army Officers' Coup Revolutionary Command Council under **Gamal Abdel Nasser** (-1970)
 - Foreign Policies:
 - Pan Arab Empire from Atlantic to Persian Gulf
 - Supporting the Palestinian Cause
 - Domestic Policies:
 - Economic Development + Military Rearmament



Egypt

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- **Problem** => **Annual flood** of the mighty **river Nile** + **irrigation** during drought
- **Solution** => Building a dam
 - **First Aswan dam** (500 miles south of Cairo), 1902
 - Solved the **irrigation** problem but **could not hold back** the **annual flood**



Egypt

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- 1950s => Egyptian leader **Nasser envisioned** building a **new dam** across the Nile, **large** enough to **end flooding** + bring **electric power** to every corner of Egypt (project **High Dam**)
 - Was promised **financial support** from the **US** and **GB**
- July 1956 => US + GB retract the offer after learning of a **secret Egyptian arms agreement** with the **USSR**
- **Nasser nationalized** the British & French-owned **Suez Canal** (intended to use tolls to pay for his High Dam project) => Precipitated the **Suez Canal Crisis**



The Suez Canal

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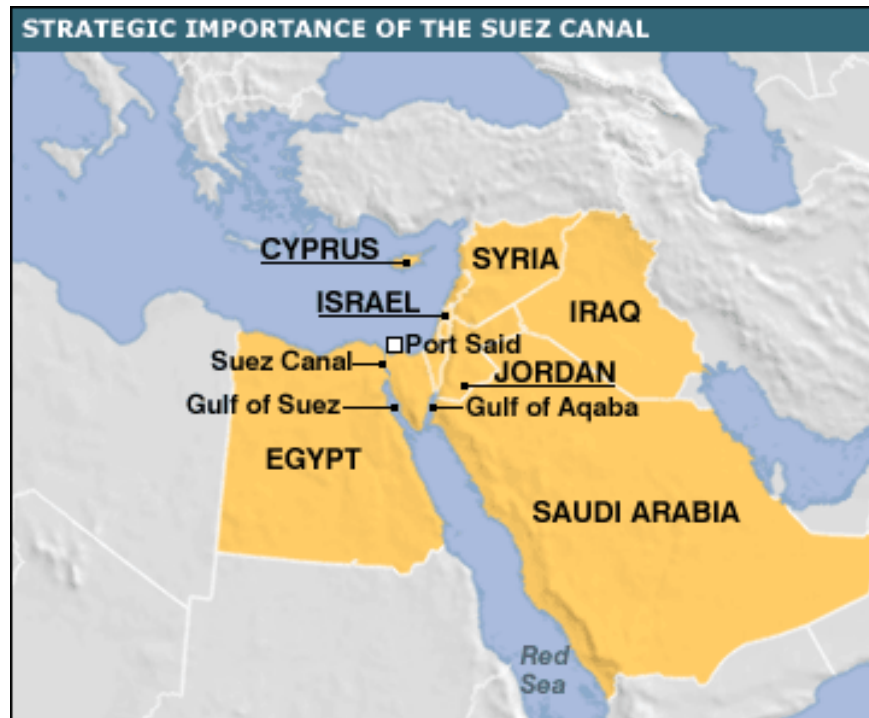
- Built by Ferdinand de Lesseps (French) using Egyptian forced labour
- **Opened to traffic in 1869**
- **192km, connects the Mediterranean to the Red Sea and Indian Ocean**
- **High strategic importance!**
- 300m (984ft) wide at its narrowest point (suitable for big ships)



The Suez Canal

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- By 1955, approximately two-thirds of Europe's oil passed through the canal
- Closed in 1967 due to the Six Day War, reopened in 1975
- About 7.5% of world sea trade is carried via the canal => **Economic importance**



The Sinai War/Suez Canal Crisis

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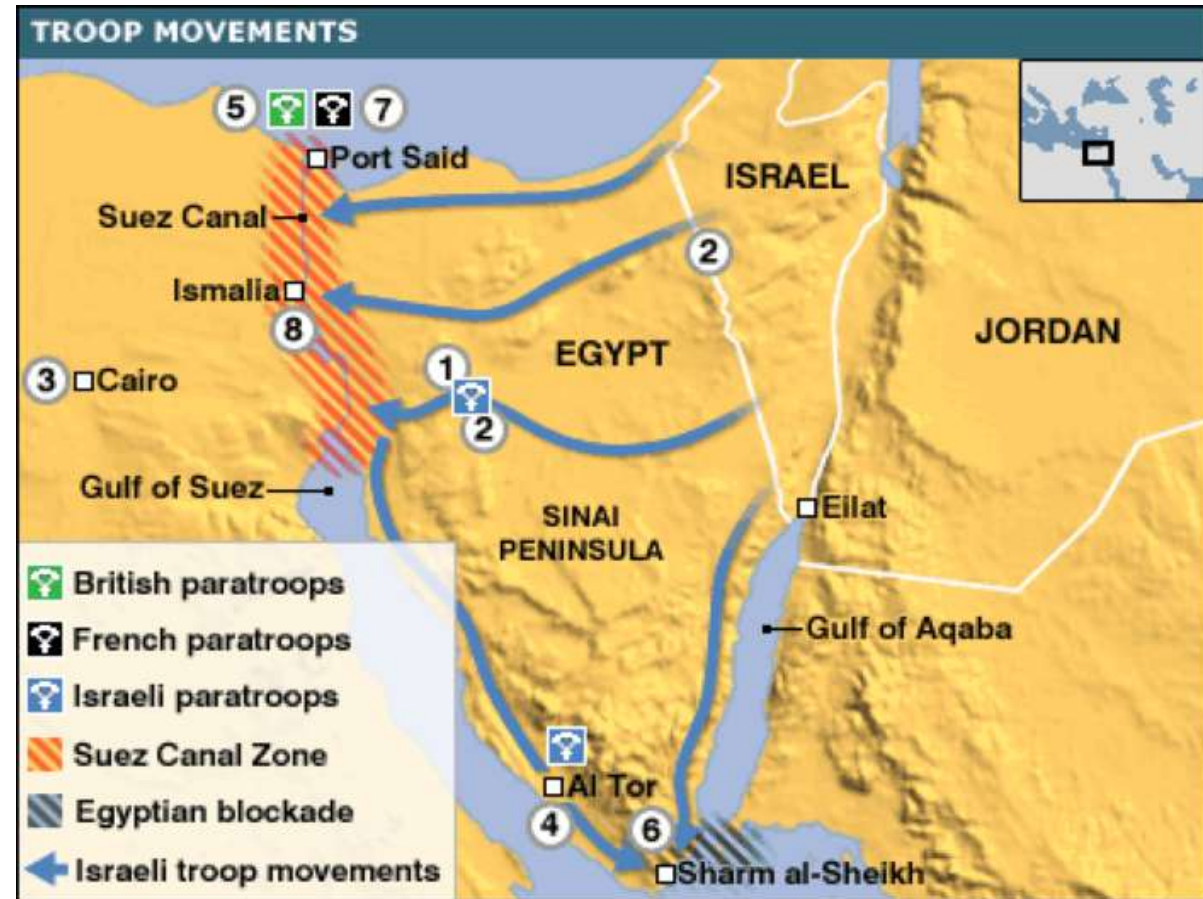
- 1954 => **Britain** promises Egypt it will **leave the Suez canal** (and **military base**) in 20 months
- **Nasser** promises **freedom of navigation** and permit **re-entry of British forces** in case of an armed attack against Arab states
- June 13, 1956 => Britain hands control of the canal over to Egypt
- 2 weeks later => Nasser **nationalizes the Suez Canal Company**
 - **No Israeli ships allowed through**



The Sinai War/Suez Canal Crisis

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- **GB, France + Israel** hatch a **plan to retake control** over the canal (Nationalization of the canal threatens their oil supply)
- October 29, 1956 => **Joint military operation** was **successful**
- The **Suez Canal occupied, Israel conquers the Sinai**
- The **US** was **caught off guard** by attacks



The Sinai War/Suez Canal Crisis

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- **USSR threatens Nuclear War**
- **USA + UN demand a cease fire and the full withdrawal** of Britain, France + Israel from the canal
- **UN troops are called in to keep the peace**
- 1957 => The **Canal** was **left in Egyptian hands**



The Sinai War/Suez Canal Crisis

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Recap: States involved => Egypt, Israel, France, GB the US, the USSR

Egypt

- Nasser asserts independence from Britain
- Arab Self Determination & Unity (**Pan Arabism**)
- Funds insurgents in other countries
- Invest in expanding its military
- Housing Palestinian Guerillas

Israel

- War of Independence in 1948
- Surrounded by enemies
- Supported by the USA
- Strong army, military success in 1948

The Sinai War/Suez Canal Crisis

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Recap: States involved => Egypt, Israel, France, GB the US, the USSR

France: wants to ...

- Protect its North African Empire (Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia)
- Re-establish dominance in International Relations
- 'Punish' Nasser for support of Algerian insurgency

Great Britain: wants to ...

- Keep control/Multinational control over of Suez Canal
- Overthrow Nasser
- Maintain the Baghdad Pact

The Baghdad Pact (1955-1979) was a defensive organization of Turkey, Iraq, GB, Pakistan & Iran. Aimed at promoting shared political, military, economic goals

The Sinai War/Suez Canal Crisis

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Recap: States involved => Egypt, Israel, France, GB the US, the USSR

USA: wants to ...	USSR: wants to ...
Contain Communism	Promote Communism
Promote Capitalism and democracy	Prevent Capitalism
Protect oil Shipping lines	Assist Post Colonial States
\$70 million in aid to build Aswan dam on the Nile	The Czech arms deal (1955: supply military arms in return for cotton + rice)

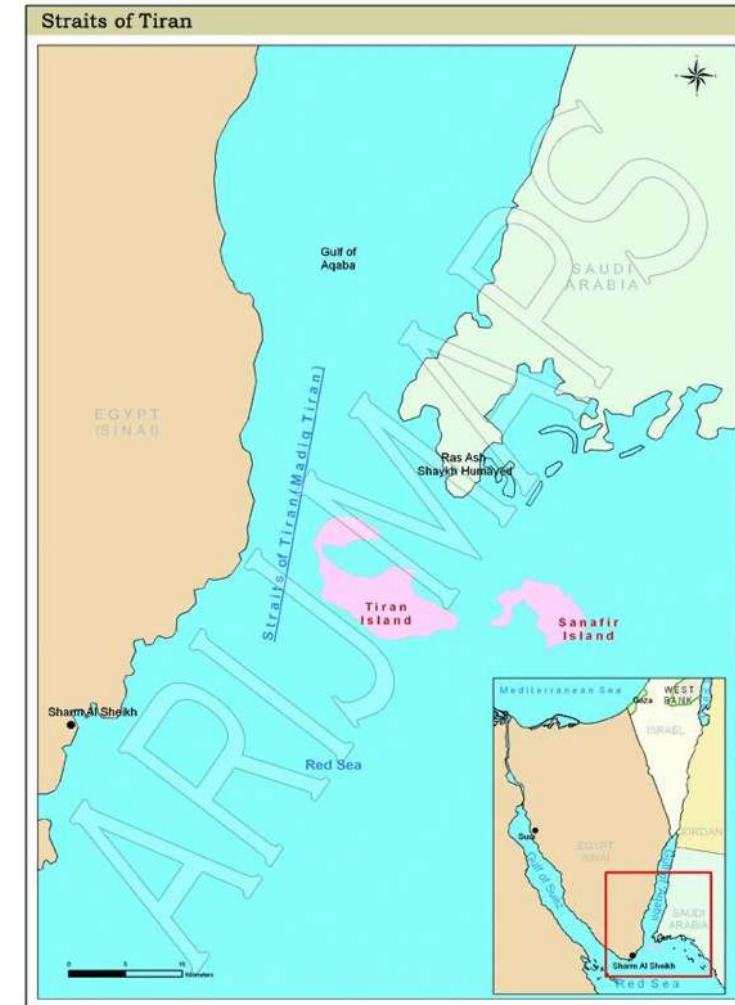


The Sinai War/Suez Canal Crisis

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Results =>

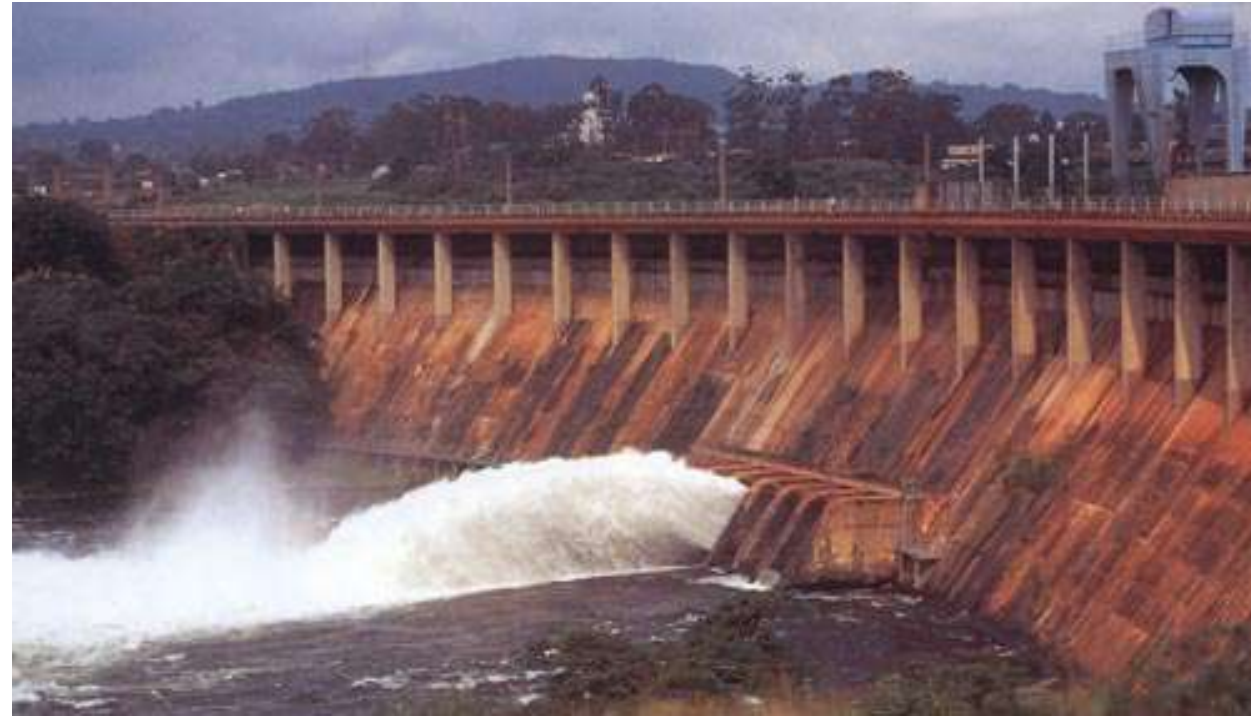
- **Military Victory for Israel** (+allies)
- Egypt gets Suez Canal
- **Israel gains land:** the Sinai region from Egypt
- **UN troops** move into **Sinai** (along Egypt/Israel border)
- **Political victory for Nasser**
- **Political defeat for France and GB**
- Brings the **Middle East** into the **Cold War**
- **Straits of Tiran** now **open to Israeli** shipping (Israeli ships are allowed back through)



What About the Dam??

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- 1960 => Soviet **loans** + proceeds from Suez Canal **tolls** allowed Nasser to begin work on the **Aswan High Dam**
- 57 million cubic yards of earth & rock used to build the dam (16 times that of the Great Pyramid at Giza)
- July 21, 1970 => **Project** was **completed**
- Nasser died of a heart attack a month later, before the dam was formally dedicated (1971)



THE SIX DAY WAR



The Six Day War (1956)

- **Main combatants** => Israel, Egypt, Syria, Jordan
- Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait contributed troops & arms to the Arab belligerent
- Took place during the **cold war**
 - The **international community** + **great powers** were **interested in the conflict**, did what they could to **influence** events in the region



The Six Day War (1956)

Events Leading to Six-day War

- **Jan-April 1967** => 63 Arab attacks (Syrian tank fire, mines, over 200 mortar shells, Palestinian terror attacks) heighten **anxiety in Israel** => Israeli **military response**
- **May 13** => After fourteen attacks, **Israeli PM Eshkol warns Syria of retaliation**
- **May 14** => USSR delivers **false information** about a **pending Israeli attack** of Syria to Anwar al-Sadat, speaker of the Egyptian National Assembly and to Syria



The Six Day War (1956)

Events Leading to Six-day War

- Why? to ensure Arab alliance with the Soviet superpower
- **May 14 => Egypt mobilizes thousands of troops in + around the Suez Canal. Nasser finds no Israeli buildup, but continues massing troops**
- **May 16 => Egypt moves into Sinai, demands UN peacekeepers' withdrawal**
- **May 17 => Egyptian reconnaissance mission over Dimona (Israeli nuclear reactor)**
 - Israel fears destruction of the reactor



The Six Day War (1956)

Events Leading to Six-day War

- **Israel** will suffer **mass casualties** if Egyptian air force strikes first
- Yet, if Israel will move pre-emptively, it may **provoke the Soviet Union** into joining in a war against Israel
- **May 18** => Secretary General **Thant** agrees to Egyptian demand to **remove UNEF** (Quickly + without bringing the issue to the UN)
- **May 19** => with UNEF gone, **Egypt** continues **troop buildup** in the Gaza Strip and Sinai (est. 80k men + 550 tanks)
- **May 22** => **Egypt closes the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping**, cuts off Israel from shipping route to Asia + halts the flow of oil from Israel's primary supplier

The Six Day War (1956)

Events Leading to Six-day War

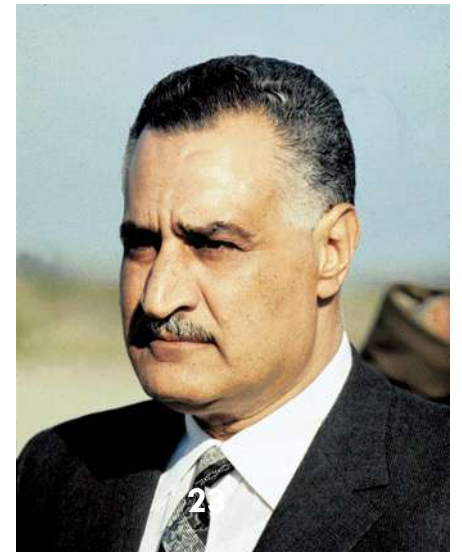
=> '**casus belli**' according to international law

- **May 23 => US President Johnson** calls the **blockade illegal** and **disastrous** for **peace**, but **warns Israel not to attack** first
 - US needs 2 more weeks to gain **international support for the Regatta Plan**, an **international convoy of ships to open the Straits of Tiran**
 - Subsequent **UN discussions** on opening the Straits prove **useless**
- **May 24- June 4 => Six Arab countries** deploy more than 230k troops close to Israel's boundary lines

The Six Day War (1956)

Events Leading to Six-day War

- **Israel calls up its reservists** and launches a desperate **diplomatic campaign** to win **international support** to end the Egyptian **blockade** of the **Straits of Tiran**
- **US unable** to get **international support** for the **Regatta Plan**
- **May 27 => Nasser cancels** Realizing that Israel is apparently aware of their war plans, Nasser cancels 'Operation Dawn', **planned Egyptian attack on Israel**



The Six Day War (1956)

Events Leading to Six-day War

- **May 30 => Jordan & Egypt sign mutual defense pact**
 - (Egypt already has an alliance with Syria)
- **May 31-June 4 => More threatening statements** from Arab leaders are broadcast, including that of **President Abdur Rahman Aref of Iraq:**

“The existence of Israel is an error which must be rectified. This is our opportunity to wipe out the ignominy which has been with us since 1948. Our goal is clear - to wipe Israel off the map”

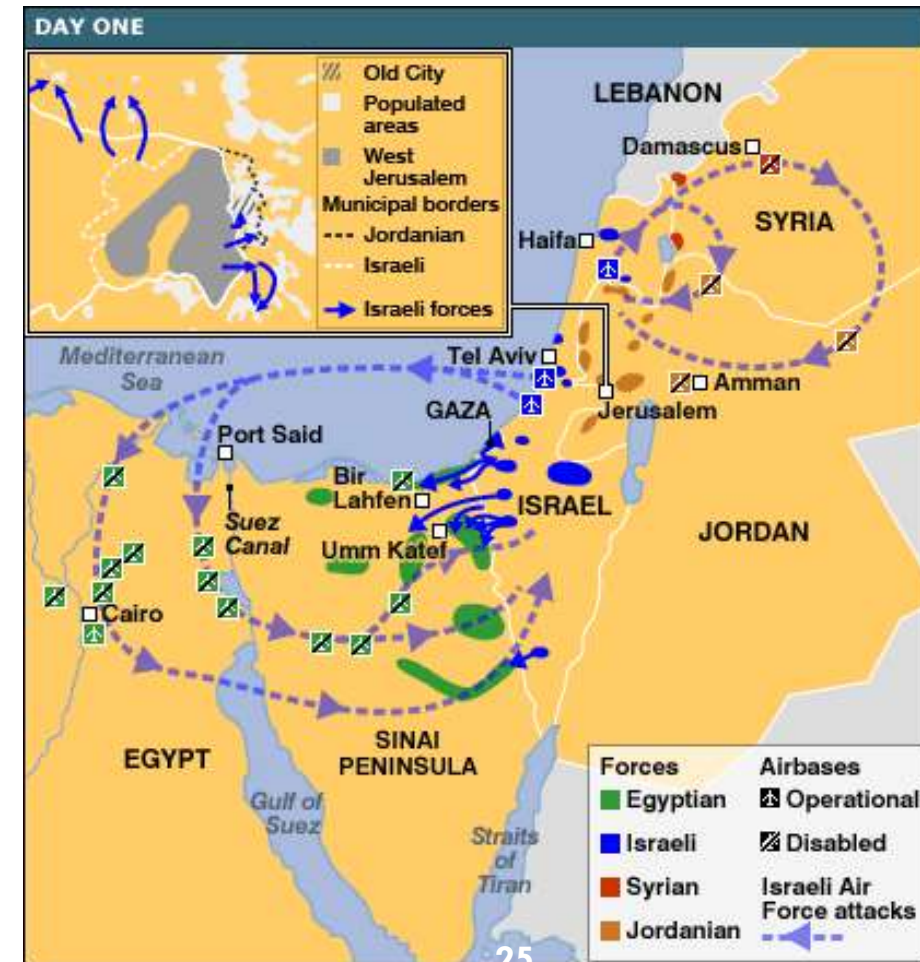


King Hussein of Jordan and Pres. Nasser of Egypt sign a mutual defense pact.



The Six Day War (1956)

- **June 5** => Israel launched a **pre-emptive strike** against the Egyptian army and air force
- The Six-Day War involved **three distinct battlefronts (Jordan, Egypt, Syria)**
- Egypt's air force was quickly crippled + **Israel conquered Gaza and the Sinai peninsula** (from Egypt) in four days
- Following **false reports** of Egyptian success, **Jordan** attacks from the **eastern portion of Jerusalem and the West Bank**



The Six Day War (1956)

- After three days => **Israeli forces defeated the Jordanians** and gained control of all of Jerusalem + the West Bank (the historical heartland of the Jewish people known to Israelis as **Judea and Samaria**)
- First day of the war=> Syrian air force attacked
- Fifth day => The **battle over the (Syrian) Golan Heights; Israel wins**, and the war terminated the following day



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Israeli tanks during a short stop on the Syrian frontier before going into action on the Golan Heights.

Post Six Day War

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- The results of the war affect the geopolitics of the region to this day
 - Israeli Military Victory + Territory gain
 - **The Sinai Peninsula** and Gaza from Egypt
 - **The Golan Heights** from Syria
 - **The West Bank** from Jordan
 - **East Jerusalem** from Jordan
- Many **Palestinians** lose faith in the ability of Arab countries to **recapture** their **land**, turn to **terrorism** and to the **PLO** as their **representative**

Israel before & after the Six Day War



Post Six Day War

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- **Important milestone for Israel => Gained control over east Jerusalem, the old city + the Western Wall: holiest site**
- *“For some two thousand years the Temple Mount was forbidden to the Jews. Until you came — you, the paratroopers — and returned it to the bosom of the nation. The Western Wall, for which every heart beats, is ours once again ... Endless words of longing have expressed the deep yearning for Jerusalem that beats within the Jewish heart... You have been given the great privilege of completing the circle, of returning to the nation its capital and its holy center...Jerusalem is yours forever.”*



– **Commander Gur to his brigade upon recapture of Jerusalem’s Old City and holy sites**



Post Six Day War

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- Having **escaped** feared **annihilation** + **won** a seemingly miraculous victory, Israel's leaders vowed:
 - **Not** to return to the **vulnerable** armistice **borders** of 1948 + a **divided** Jerusalem
 - To be "*unbelievably generous in working out peace terms*" (Foreign Minister Eban)
- **Israel's belief that the war had come to an end and peace would prevail along the borders was quickly dispelled** => Three weeks later: incident along the Suez Canal
- **Israel offers to return most territory** (not Jerusalem) in exchange **for peace**
- **Late June through July** => The **Soviet Union** initiated a **massive resupply of arms** to Egypt and Syria

Post Six Day War

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- **July 15 =>** Five **Arab leaders** agreed on the *‘necessary effective steps to eliminate the consequences of imperialist Israeli aggression on the Arab homeland’*
 - **Egypt** tried to convince the world that they had been **victimized by Israel**
 - **July 23 =>** Nasser: *‘We shall never surrender and shall not accept any peace that means surrender’*
- **August 29- Sep 1st =>** 13 Arab leaders meet at **Khartoum** (Sudan), pledge to **continue** their **struggle against Israel**
 - Issue the **“3 No’s”/Khartoum Declaration: No recognition of Israel, No negotiations with Israel, No peace with Israel**



Post Six Day War

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- 'maintenance of the rights of the Palestinian people in their nation'
- **October 21** => Egyptian missile boat sunk the Israeli destroyer 'Eilat', killing 47 people
- **Nov 25** => **UN Resolution 242: 'land for peace' paradigm**
 - Required Israel and its Arab neighbors to conclude peace treaties in exchange for Israeli withdrawal from occupied territory
 - Used as a centerpiece in future negotiations (the Oslo Accords, the "Road Map" peace plan)



Abba Eban and Gideon Rafael lead Israel's delegation to the UN after the war. Future PM Golda Meir sits behind Eban and Rafael.

Post Six Day War

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- **November + December => Arab states repeatedly refuse to negotiate** with Israel (attempts made by the Swedish ambassador to the Soviet Union + UN Secretary General's Special Envoy)
- The "**three No's of Khartoum**" held for a dozen years, until Egypt signed a peace treaty with Israel
 - The other 20 member states expelled it from the Arab League
- **Israeli Overconfidence** => Military ability believed to be superior

Post Six Day War

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- Initial **Peace efforts** (following UN resolution 242) proved **unsuccessful** =>
 - The Jarring initiatives (1967-1971)
 - The Rogers Plan (1969)
- **October 6, 1973** => **Egyptian & Syrian** forces **attacked Israeli** forces in **Sinai** and the **Golan Heights** to regain territory they had lost during the 1967 war (aka Yom Kippur War)

THE YOM KIPPUR WAR

The Arab-Israeli Conflict of 1973



Yom Kippur

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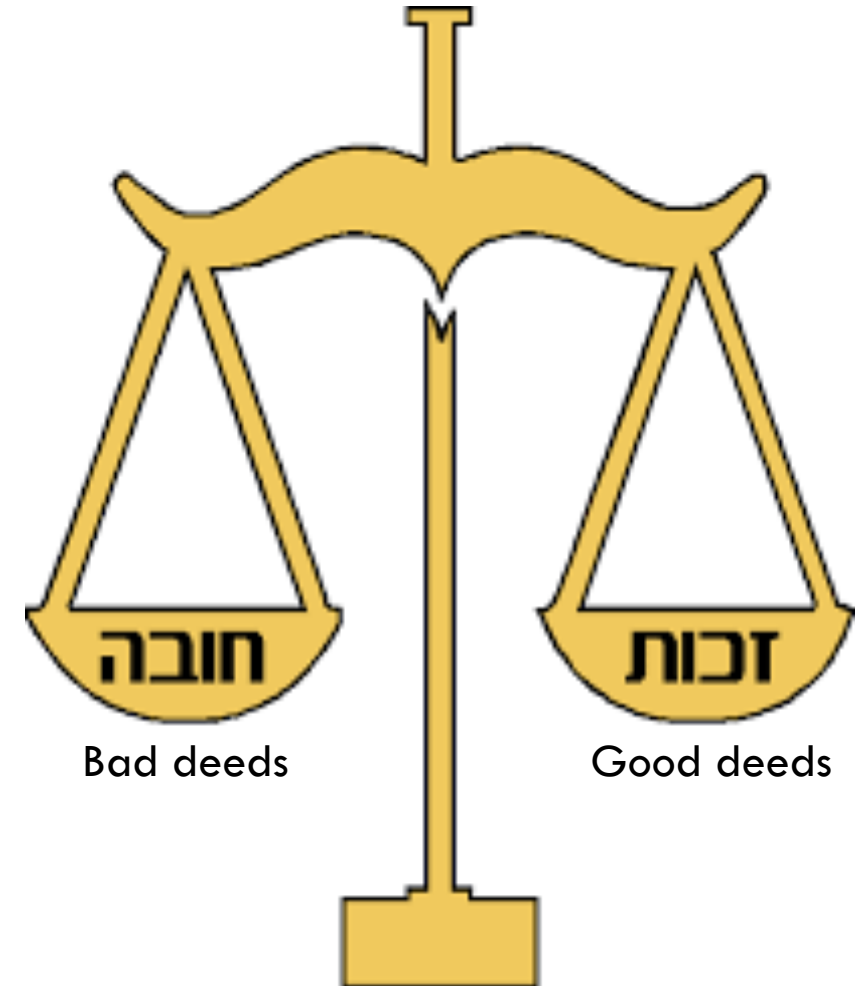
- **Yom Kippur** is the **holiest day of the year** for **religious Jews**
- Literally means “**Day of Atonement**”, based on the verse: *“For on this day He will forgive you, to purify you, that you be cleansed from all your sins before G-d”* (Leviticus 16:30)
- Celebrated on the **10th day of Tishrei** (first month in the Jewish calendar)
- Lasts for about 26h (from sunset until nightfall the next day)



Yom Kippur

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- Proceeds 'Rosh Hashanah' (Jewish New Years')
- Like Shabbat (Saturday/the day of rest), no work is allowed on Yom Kippur
- Jews "afflict their souls"
 - Abstain from food and drink
 - Do not wash or apply lotions/creams
 - Do not wear leather footwear
- Day of prayer in synagogues => Pray for **forgiveness**



Yom Kippur

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Biblical Origin =>

- Several months after the people of Israel left Egypt, they sinned by **worshipping a golden calf**
- **Moses** ascended **Mount Sinai** and prayed to God to forgive them
- After 80 days, full Divine favor was obtained, and **Moses came down** the mountain (on the 10th of Tishrei) - **Day of Atonement** - Yom Kippur



Yom Kippur War (1973)

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Aka 'October 1973 War'

- Lasts 3 weeks
- New **Egyptian** president **Anwar Sadat** (+ Syria) planed a war against Israel
 - Wanted the **Sinai peninsula** back, Syria wanted the **Golan Heights back** (1967)
 - **Soviets** Supplied Egyptians with **modern weapons** (missiles)



Yom Kippur War (1973)

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Aka 'October 1973 War'

- Israeli leadership **ignores military intelligence/no intelligence => Surprise attack** of Egypt & Syria **on Yom Kippur** (Holiest day of Jewish calendar)
 - Israel is pretty much shut down as many Jews are in Temple, Fasting
- **Israel caught off guard**

Yom Kippur War (1973)

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Beginning of the war =>

- **Egypt & Syria** secured **victories** in the **Sinai + Golan**
 - **Israeli** positions in the eastern Golan Heights fell to the advancing Syrian army
 - **Israeli troops** had to **withdraw** from many positions in the southern sector of the **Golan Heights** due to a **lack of tanks and manpower**
- **Egyptian forces** crossed the **Suez Canal** and overran the Israeli military's extensive fortifications, **forcing the Israelis back**



Yom Kippur War (1973)

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Israel Counter-Attacks =>

- Within 3 days, **Israel** was able to **contain the threat on both fronts**
 - Change tactics, biggest Tank Battle Ever
- On the fourth day: US sent a full-scale airlift of military equipment
 - **Restock** Israeli forces
 - Enabled **Israel** to launch an **offensive** that **retook** most of its **territorial losses**, even **gained some ground** against both the Egyptians and Syrians
- As the war progressed, Israel was winning and the **Israeli army moved towards the Egyptian capital (Cairo)**

Yom Kippur War (1973)

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The End of the War =>

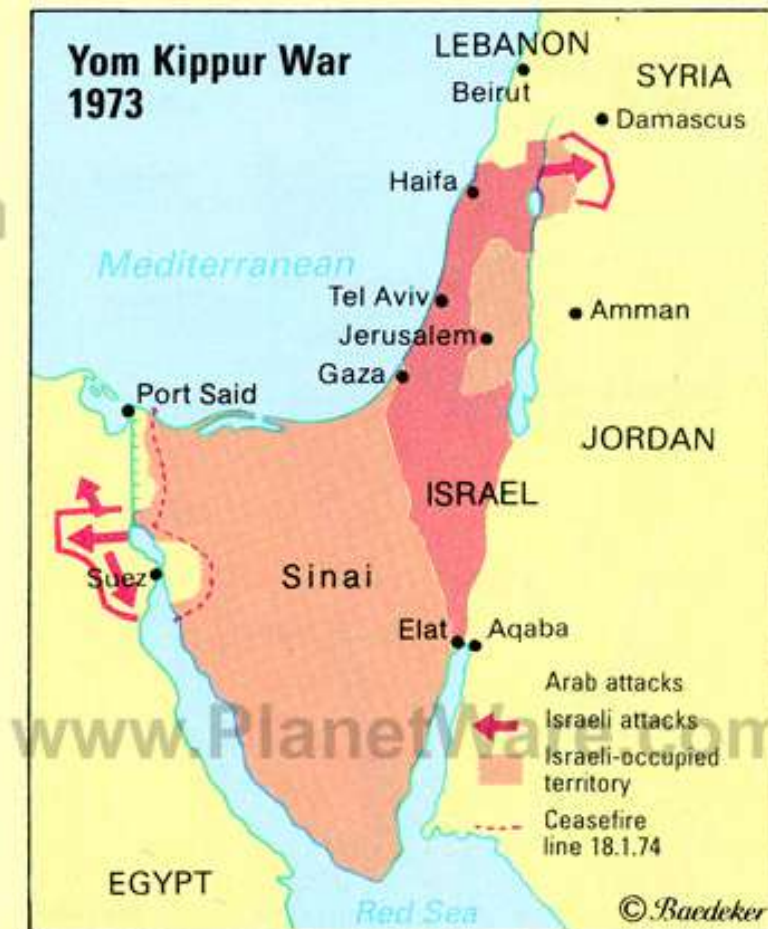
- October 22 => **UN called for a ceasefire; Israel didn't stop fighting**
- October 25 + 26 => The **USSR threatens to send troops to Egypt** (to support the Egyptian army) unless Israel stops
- **US/Nixon raise alert level**
 - **Threatened to send US forces** if the Soviets get involved
 - **Pressured Israel into obeying the cease-fire** (Fearing escalation into global conflict)
- **Israel accepts a cease-fire** and retreat its soldiers from Egypt

Post Yom Kippur War

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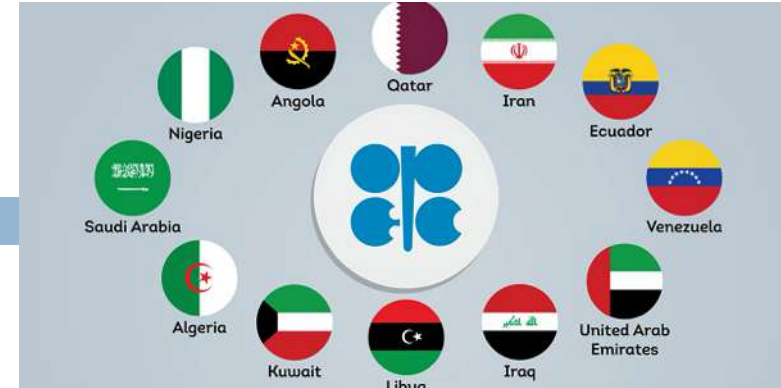
Results

- **Israel Gains Territory**
- **Sadat wins major political victory**
 - Showed they could fight + regained half of Sinai
- Sets the stage for the **Egyptian/Israeli peace talks: Camp David Accords**



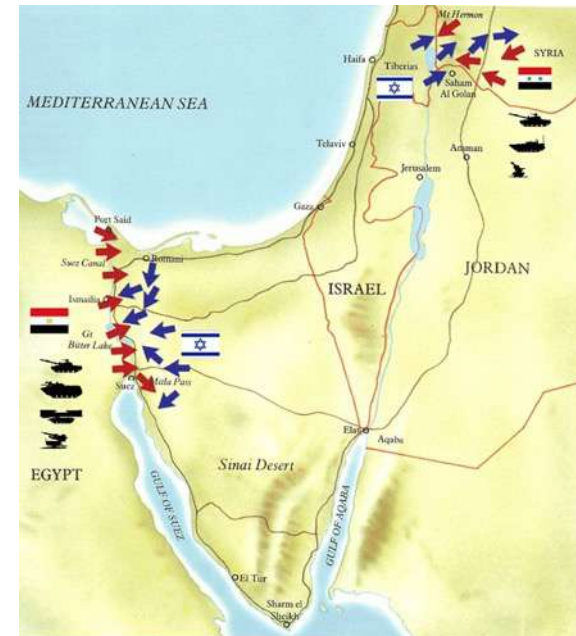
Post Yom Kippur War

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Results

- **UN troops sent to Sinai** to watch over the border
- In response to US airlift, **oil embargo against the US**, organized by the Arab members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (**OPEC**)
 - US re-examined its policy in the Middle East: **Settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict became a top priority**
 - Henry Kissinger (US Secretary of State) embarked on a negotiation mission: "**shuttle diplomacy**", led to **disengagement agreements** signed between **Israel and Egypt (1974, 1975)** + a similar agreement between **Israel and Syria (1994)**



Operation “Peace for Galilee”

47

- Operation “**Peace for Galilee**” (1982), Aka the (first) **Lebanon War**
- **Tension along Israel's northern border increased** during the 1970's and early 1980's => Frequent firing of **rockets & terrorist attacks** against Israeli civilian targets
 - The PLO created an informal state-within-a-state in Lebanon (after being forced out of Jordan in 1970)



The Palestine Liberation Organization (est. 1964) was the embodiment of the **Palestinian national movement**. It is an **umbrella organization**, comprised of numerous organizations of the resistance movement (political parties, popular organizations, independent persons). The **legitimate** representative of the Palestinian people

Operation “Peace for Galilee”

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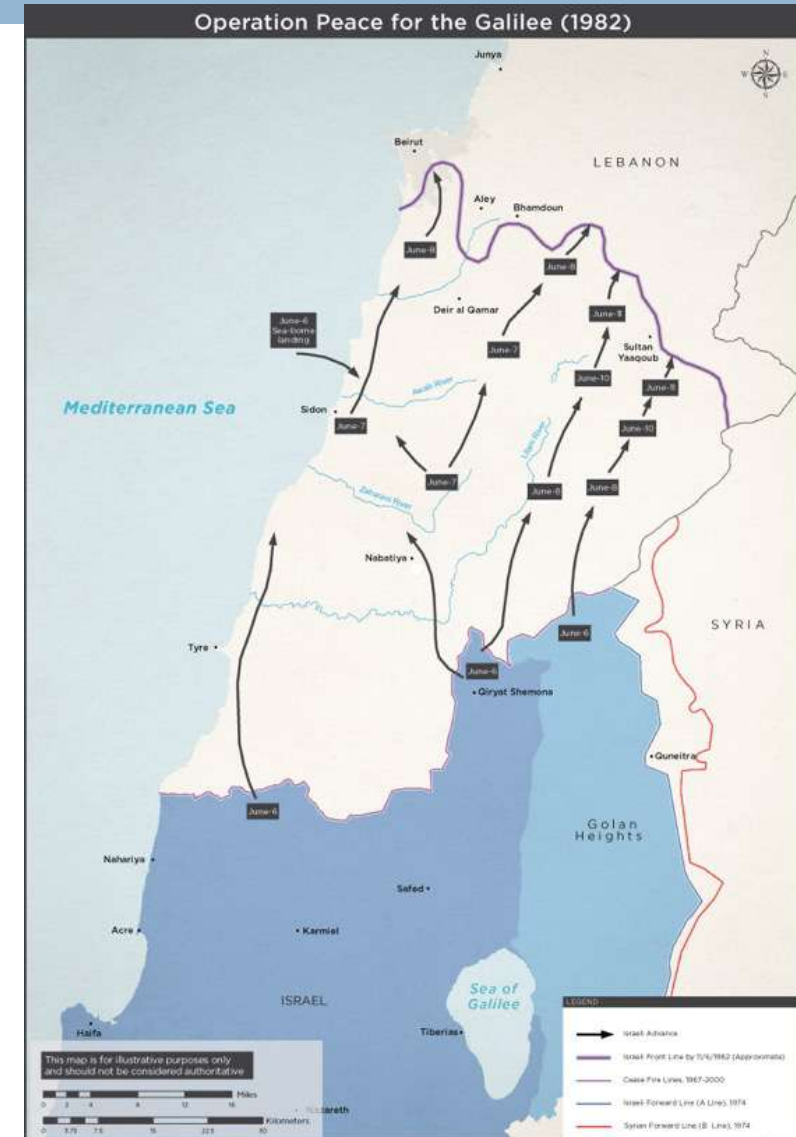
- A **ceasefire** with Palestinian terrorists in Lebanon (declared in July 1981) was broken
 - Continuous shooting of **missiles against Israeli targets** in Israel
 - The threat to the **northern settlements in Israel** became **unbearable**
- **Last straw:** 3 June 1982 => The Palestinian **Abu Nidal** organization (aka **Fatah** Revolutionary Council, part of the **PLO**) shot and **seriously wounded** Israel's ambassador to the UK
- **6 June 1982** => the IDF launched a **military operation in Lebanon**
 - **Full-scale invasion of Lebanon** meant to remove military threats from northern Israel

Operation “Peace for Galilee” (1982)

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Goals =>

- **Destroying PLO's forces** + based in southern Lebanon (on Israel's border)
- **End Syrian presence & influence** in southern Lebanon
- Assist in forming a more **friendly government** in Lebanon that would be able to **sign a peace treaty** with Israel
- Only **partially Succeeded**



Operation “Peace for Galilee” (1982)

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During the operation

- **Israel reaches Beirut (capital) within a week**
 - IAF’s major achievement => the **destruction of the Syrian air force within a matter of hours** (25 Syrian planes were shot down): Syrian air defense was effectively nonexistent
- End of June => Enlargement of the operation
 - **Israel captured most of southern Lebanon + besieged PLO and Syrian forces**



Operation “Peace for Galilee” (1982)

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Results

- The **PLO leadership & its forces** were **expelled from Lebanon** (Tunisia became the new PLO headquarters)
- Yet, other terrorist organizations (e.g. the newly formed Shi'ite organization, **Hezbollah**, an Iranian proxy) **continued to attack Israel** from southern Lebanon



Hizballah (the “Party of God”) is a a Lebanon-based **Shia terrorist group**, advocates Shia empowerment globally. Formed in 1982 in response to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon



Post Operation “Peace for Galilee”

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- September 14, 1982 => Lebanese President Gemayel was assassinated, civil war in Lebanon
- May 17, 1983 => A (Us brokered) **peace agreement** was signed between **Israel and Lebanon** but **wasn't ratified** by the Lebanese government
 - The Christian government of fragmented Lebanon was too weak to prevail
- **Daily ambushes against Israeli forces increased + increase in casualties**
 - 1,216 IDF soldiers killed between 5 June 1982 and 31 May 1985
- **Shift in national consensus** => First time in the history of Israel that the **justification & conduct of war** was debated

Post Operation “Peace for Galilee”

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- ‘**A War of Choice**’, a term coined by Prime Minister Begin- **unlike previous wars** which were perceived as dire necessities
- The **failure** of Operation Peace of Galilee to achieve its objective + **new national coalition government (1984)** => decision to withdraw from Lebanon
- 1985 => **IDF forces pulled back to a security zone in southern Lebanon** (narrow strip of territory adjacent to Israel's border) to protect Israeli towns & villages in the Galilee



Operation Peace for Galilee is not
a military operation resulting
from the lack of an alternative.

Menachem Begin

Post Operation “Peace for Galilee”

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- May 2000 => **IDF forces withdrew completely** from Lebanon
 - Nominal force was left behind to help the citizens of south Lebanon patrol the Security Zone)

Next Session...

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- Israeli Democracy and Political System

Questions? Feel free to email the lecturer =>

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