

## No Pyrrhic Victory By Bret Stephens The Wall Street Journal June 5, 2007

On the morning of June 5, 1967, a fleet of low-flying Israeli jets surprised the Egyptian air force on the ground and destroyed it. This act of military pre-emption helped save Israel from what Iraq's then-President Abdul Rahman Aref had called, only several days earlier, "our opportunity . . . to wipe Israel off the map." Yet 40 years later Israel's victory is widely seen as a Pyrrhic one -- "a calamity for the Jewish state no less than for its neighbors," according to a recent editorial in the Economist.

And the alternative was?

The Six Day War is supposed to be the great pivot on which the modern history of the Middle East hinges, the moment the Palestinian question came into focus and Israel went from being the David to the Goliath of the conflict. It's a reading of history that has the convenience of offering a political prescription: Rewind to the status quo ante June 5, arrange a peace deal, and the problems that have arisen since more or less go away. Or so the thinking goes.

Yet the striking fact is that all of Israel's peace agreements -- with Egypt in 1979, with the Palestinians in 1993, with Jordan and Morocco in 1994 -- were achieved in the wake of the war. The Jewish state had gained territory; the Arab states wanted it back. Whatever else might be said for the land-for-peace formula, it's odd that the people who are its strongest advocates are usually the same ones who bemoan the apparent completeness of Israel's victory in 1967.

Great events have a way not only of reshaping the outlook for the future but also our understanding of the past, usually in the service of clarity. "Why England Slept" was an apt question to ask of Britain in the mid-1930s, but it made sense only after Sept. 1, 1939. By contrast, the Six Day War laid a thick fog over what came before. Today, the pre-1967 period is remembered (not least by many Israelis) as a time when the country's conscience was clear and respectable world opinion admired "plucky little Israel." Yet these were the same years when Israel lived within what Abba Eban, its dovish foreign minister, called "Auschwitz borders," with only nine miles separating the westernmost part of the West Bank from the Mediterranean Sea.

It is also often said today that the Six Day War humiliated the Arabs and propelled the region into future rounds of fighting. Yet President Aref of Iraq had prefaced his call to destroy Israel by describing

the war as the Arabs' chance "to wipe out the ignominy which has been with us since 1948." It is said that the war inaugurated the era of modern terrorism, as the Arab world switched from a strategy of conventional confrontation with Israel to one of "unconventional" attacks. Yet hundreds of Israelis had already been killed in fedayeen raids in Israel's first 19 years of existence.

It is said that the Palestinian movement was born from Israel's occupation of Gaza and the West Bank. Yet the Palestine Liberation Organization was already in its third year of operations when the war began. It is said that Israel enjoyed international legitimacy so long as it lived behind recognized frontiers. Yet those frontiers were no less provisional before 1967 than they were after. Only after the Six Day War did the Green Line come to be seen as the "real" border.

Fog also surrounds memories of the immediate aftermath of the war. To read some recent accounts, a more sagacious Israel could have followed up its historic victory with peace overtures that would have spared everyone the bloody entanglements of its occupation of the Sinai, Gaza, the West Bank and the Golan Heights. Or, failing that, it could have resisted the lure of building settlements in the territories in order not to complicate a land-for-peace transaction.

In fact, the Israeli cabinet agreed on June 19 to offer the Sinai to Egypt and the Golan to Syria in exchange for peace deals. In Khartoum that September, the Arab League declared "no peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel, no negotiations with it." As for Jewish settlements, hardly any were built for years after the war: In 1972, for instance, only about 800 settlers had moved to the West Bank.

It's true that the war caused Israel to lose friends abroad. "Le peuple juif, sûr de lui meme et dominateur" ("the Jewish people, sure of themselves and domineering") was Charles de Gaulle's memorable line in announcing, in November 1967, that France would no longer supply Israel militarily. Such were the Jewish state's former friends.

On the other hand, Israel gained new friends. The U.S., whose declared policy during the war was to be "neutral in thought, word and deed," would never again pretend such indifference, something that made all the difference to Israel in the 1973 Yom Kippur War. Tens of thousands of American and European Jews immigrated to Israel after 1967, sensing it was a country not on the brink of

extinction. Christian evangelicals also became Israel's firm friends, expanding the political base of American support beyond its traditionally narrow, Jewish-Democratic core.

None of this is to say that the Six Day War was an unalloyed (or unironic) blessing for Israel. By gaining control of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, Israel swapped its old territorial insecurities for new demographic ones. As Palestinian numbers grew, Israel's efforts to find a new strategic equilibrium -- first through negotiations with the PLO, later

through unilateral withdrawals -- became increasingly frenetic. Who knows whether they will succeed.

Then again, when the sun rose on June 5, 1967, Israel was a poor, desperately vulnerable country, which threw the dice on its own survival in the most audacious military strike of the 20th century. It is infinitely richer and more powerful today, sure in its alliance with the U.S. and capable of making concessions inconceivable 40 years ago. If these are the fruits of Israel's "Pyrrhic Victory," it needs more such of them.

## Lessons of the Six-Day War

By Ariel Cohen The Washington Times June 5, 2007

Today the world will commemorate the 40th anniversary of Israel's victory in the Six-Day War. This was one of the most convincing conventional military accomplishments of the 20th century, one which removed the threat of annihilation from the Jewish States for the following four decades.

During May 1967, Egypt's dictator Gamal Abdel Nasser and the leaders of Syria, apparently misled by carefully fed Soviet disinformation, mobilized their armies, and kicked United Nations peacekeepers out of Sinai. Nasser proclaimed "the Jews would be thrown into the Mediterranean." "Our basic objective will be to destroy Israel," he vowed May 26.

Nasser also closed the Straits of Tiran in the Red Sea, cutting Israel's maritime link to the Far East and Africa -- a *casus belli* under international law. Jordan joined the pending attack, while Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Algeria contributed troops and arms. The shadow of the Holocaust, which had occurred little more than 20 years earlier, again descended on Israel.

The key to Israel's victory was recognition that its survival was at stake. This led to full mobilization of the state and the people and creation of a government of national unity. The people and leaders had no choice but to become heroes overnight.

A generation of brilliant generals, led by Defense Minister Moshe Dayan, was in charge of the military, ably supported by Ezer Weizmann, the former Israeli Air Force (IAF) commander and deputy chief of staff. Gen. Weizmann, the future president of Israel, and his successor, Gen. Moredchai Hod, took a huge bet by throwing the well-trained 200-strong IAF against the Egyptian Russian-trained air force. The IAF, outnumbered 3-1, destroyed the Egyptian air force in the first 45 minutes of the war. The complete air superiority of the IAF and the dogged execution of a daring battle plan designed by then Southern front commander Yeshayahu Gavish were key to the victory in Sinai.

Meticulous intelligence work by the Mossad, led by Gen. Meir Amit, and by the military intelligence, AMAN, were also vital to attaining victory. Nasser's

army in Sinai was decimated. The Jordanians, occupying Judea and Samaria (the West Bank) and East Jerusalem, and the Syrians, lodged in the escarpments of the Golan Heights, were beaten within days.

On the diplomatic front, things were different from today. Despite blood-curdling threats by the Arab states, Israel had world public opinion largely on its side. The victory allowed Israel and the Jewish people to once again govern Jerusalem, accomplishing the dream expressed in all Jewish daily prayers during almost 2,000 years of exile. The Temple Mount, on which Solomon's Temple was built, and the Second Temple restored after the Babylonian exile, returned to Jewish sovereignty. So did the Western Wall, the most sacred site in Judaism. It is precisely the Israeli victories in the Six-Day War and in the Yom Kippur War (the failed Arab attempt at a rematch in 1973) that allowed the Jewish State to sign peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan.

Forty years later, however, Israel's very existence is challenged again. Now more than ever, Israel is the proverbial canary in the Middle East coal mine, the litmus test of Arab and Muslim attitudes to the world beyond the Land of Islam.

Today the threat is not only Arab -- it is also Iranian. It is not secular nationalism and pan-Arabism, but Islamist. It is both extremist Shi'a, as expressed by Iran and Hezbollah, and militant Sunni, articulated by Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Moslem Brotherhood, and increasingly, al Qaeda-affiliated organizations in Gaza and Lebanon.

Forty years ago, the threat was classically conventional. Today, Israel and the United States lack strategy and doctrine to defeat the whole spectrum of threats, from the suicide bombings and Qassam rockets of Hamas and Fatah, to the improvised explosive devices in Iraq and the short range Iranian-supplied Katyusha rockets of Hezbollah. The threat is also unconventional -- from Syrian chemical weapons-armed rockets, to the Iranian nuclear weapons program.

It is not the "Israeli occupation" but the rise of extremist Islamist forces that constitute a global

threat and are central in Middle East destabilization. Israeli, European and U.S. policymakers and generals still think in terms of nation-states and conventional armies. The global jihadi movement, its political leaders, paymasters, recruiters and propagandists recognize no national borders.

Israel also appears to have forgotten the lesson that in the Middle East one can negotiate only from a position of clear strength. Unilaterally pulling out of Lebanon in 2000 and from Gaza in 2005 only increased the terrorist appetite for blood. Ehud Olmert's proposed appeasement of Syria by giving up the Golan would be yet another geopolitical catastrophe.

Leaving bloodthirsty terrorist leaders, such as Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, Hamas' Haled Masha, or for that

## Fabricating an emotion

By Shmuel Katz *The Jerusalem Post* May 28, 2007

What is commonly called the Oriental imagination has long been recognized. It is only in our day, however, that it has played a striking part in shaping world events. The amplifying effects of modern communications media - Internet, 24-hour cable news - and the willing involvement of powerful world interests have presented the Oriental imagination with unprecedented influence.

The use of lies in our time as a primary weapon of state policy by the two most powerful totalitarian states the world has known - Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union - did, moreover, set an example. It also introduced techniques whose application sharpened the Oriental imagination into a highly effective political weapon.

Al-Ghazzali, the great 11th-century Muslim theologian, wrote: "Know that a lie is not haram [wrong] in itself, but only because the evil conclusions to which it leads the hearer, making him believe something that is not really the case... If a lie is the only way of obtaining a good result, it is permissible .... We must lie when truth leads to unpleasant results."

Thus the most startling item in the Arabs' propaganda is their usurpation of the Jewish patrimony of Jerusalem. Arab political propaganda claims that Jerusalem is an "Arab city," has been an Arab city for many centuries, and is a holy city in Islam. There is only one small grain of truth in this claim, which on the whole is as false as the quite common description of Palestine as "a land holy to three faiths."

It is possible to call Palestine a land holy to two faiths: to Christianity as well as to Judaism. It was certainly never holy to Islam. Muhammed no doubt turns in his grave at the ignorant suggestion that Islam has a "holy land," or a holy site of any degree other than Arabia. Palestine has no significance in

matter, Osama bin Laden, to roam free only delays peace in the Middle East.

The Six-Day War teaches us important lessons in freedom. National mobilization and unity in recognition of existential threats lead to victory. Bravery and real leadership, both national and on the battlefield, secure success. Never underestimate the enemy. Intelligence matters -- and so does public diplomacy and global information support.

Finally, we learn that both political and military institutions must recognize the nature of the evolving threat and devise and bravely carry out victorious strategies to defeat the implacable enemies of the free world, then and now.

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the Muslim religion. It never existed as a country under Arab or any of the other Muslim administrations.

Jerusalem does contain a site regarded as holy to Islam (and this too was borrowed from Judaism), but the city as such has no significance in Islam. While Jerusalem is the centerpiece of the Jewish tradition, and dominates the narrative of Christianity, Jerusalem is not mentioned even once in the Muslim Koran.

The known facts are fascinatingly simple. Muhammad, in establishing Islam in Arabia more than six centuries into the Christian era, hoped that both Jews and Christians would adopt the new religion. He called on them to accept him as the successor of both Moses and Jesus, whose original authority and sanctity he respected. To emphasize an affinity and religious continuity between the two older religions and Islam, he at first ordered that when praying, the Muslim should adopt the Jew's custom of turning his face to Jerusalem (at that time still under Christian rule). When, however, there was no response by Christians or Jews to his claim or to his appeal, he rescinded the order 18 months later. Muslims at prayer have ever since turned their faces to Mecca.

It was presumably the recognition by Muhammad of the sanctity of the Holy City of Judaism that gave birth to the Muslim tradition, conveniently borrowed by his successors, that the Temple area was the site of his ascent to the seventh heaven. The Koran itself relates that Muhammad in a single night was transported to heaven by Burak, a horse with wings, a woman's face, and a peacock's tail. He was first taken to what the Koran called the "utmost mosque" - il masjid al aksa.

Jerusalem is not mentioned in the story, and there was, of course, no mosque in Jerusalem. After

Muhammad's death, the tradition - which did not pass unchallenged by an opposing school of thought - laid it down that the "utmost mosque" meant the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

On this legend rests the Muslim claim to the Jewish Temple Mount as a Muslim holy place. The Dome of the Rock and the Al Aksa Mosque were subsequently built on the Mount. This, called Haram-a-Sharif, became the third holiest place in Islam (after Mecca and Medina).

It is not known that Muhammad in fact ever set foot in Jerusalem. Here begins and ends the religious significance of Jerusalem to Islam. It is fascinating to reflect what the Christian reaction would be if the Muslim theologians had chosen to declare the Church of the Holy Sepulcher as the station for Muhammad's ascent, then renamed it Burak, and claimed the site as Muslim property.

British historian Christopher Sykes has put it pithily: "To the Muslims it is not Jerusalem, but a certain site in Jerusalem which is venerated... the majestic Dome of the Rock. To a Muslim there is a profound difference between Jerusalem and Mecca and Medina. The latter are holy places containing holy sites. Apart from the hallowed rock, Jerusalem has no major Islamic significance."

Nor were the Muslims overly impressed with Jerusalem's importance when they ruled in Palestine. When, on the fall of the city to the Crusaders in 1099, a Muslim delegation arrived in Baghdad, then the capital of the empire, to seek aid against the invading Christians, the Baghdadis shed tears and expressed sympathy, but offered and took no action to help in the recovery of Jerusalem. The city never played any part in the Arabs' political life.

While, in turn, Damascus, Baghdad, and Cairo glittered with the luster of an imperial capital, Jerusalem stagnated as a remote provincial townlet. It never served even as a provincial capital, not even a subprovincial capital (an honor reserved for Ramle). No less significantly, it was never a Muslim cultural center. No great school of Islamic lore was established, nor any religious message proclaimed there.

To the Muslims, Jerusalem, though the site of a Holy Place, was a backwater.

It is not irrelevant to recall that Jordan, after its illegal occupation, never even suggested that here was a great opportunity to give expression to the alleged Muslim passion for Jerusalem by establishing a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital. No less telling is the fact that throughout the 19 years of Jordan's Muslim control of Jerusalem not a single one of the globe-trotting Saudi princes ever set foot in Jerusalem.

Nor did the Arabs attach any importance to living in Jerusalem. Even when the Muslims ruled, for long periods the majority of the population was Christian. After the middle of the 19th century, soon after modern Jewish reconstruction began, the Jews attained a majority, which they have never relinquished.

Successive Arab attacks, encouraged or permitted by the British, from 1920 onward, gradually squeezed the majority of the Jews out of the Old City and into the new. In 1948, when their ammunition ran out, the final remnant and the handful of defenders surrendered to the Jordanians. That was when the city was divided.

The Arabs' slight and superficial relationship to the city has only recently been expanded into a claim of an uncompromising, even exclusive, ownership. Just as they originally borrowed the sanctity of the Jewish holy place, they have now, in our generation, tried to simulate something of the unique and mystic passion of the Jewish people for their ancient and incomparable Holy City.

In the war of 1948, Abdallah's Arab League, under British guidance, captured the eastern part of Jerusalem, including the Old City. The one significant change in the subsequent 19 years of Jordanian rule was the attempt to obliterate the Jewish presence and the signs of Jewish identity. All the synagogues were destroyed.

In the ruins of the most famous of them - the hurva - an enterprising Arab citizen put together a small stable for his ass or his goat. The ancient Jewish cemetery on the Mount of Olives, overlooking the Old City, was torn up, some of its tombstones being used for paving and some for lavatory seats in Jordanian army camps.

The Arabs avoided hurting any Christian susceptibilities and, as a result, the many Christian witnesses in the Old City kept silent about acts of desecration and destruction perpetrated against Jewish sites. Then, suddenly for the first time in history, the Arabs discovered and revealed to the world the vehement, passionate, almost desperate accents of a deep-rooted, long-standing and undying attachment to Jerusalem.

This fabrication of an emotion which can, after all, so easily and manifestly be exposed, has - because of the very intensity of its presentation - made a significant impression throughout the world.

But it may be helpful in demonstrating a national characteristic of the Arabs, which has assumed central importance in the confrontation between the Jewish and Arab peoples: the admitted capacity of the Arabs to manufacture facts, to deceive themselves into accepting them, and to work

themselves up into a public passion over what is in fact a nonexistent emotion.

"What a people believes," writes modern Arab historian Philip Hitti about the Arabs, "even if untrue, has the same influence over the lives as if it were true."

For it is a well-known part of the character of Arab fantasy that the inventor of a story comes to believe it himself.

A charming little tale from Arab folklore tells of a man whose afternoon nap was disturbed by the noise of children playing in the courtyard below. He went out to the balcony and called, "Children, how

foolish you are! While you are playing here, they are giving away figs in the marketplace."

The children rushed off to collect their figs, and the man, pleased with his invention, went back to his couch. But just as he was about to drop off, a troublesome thought aroused him: "Here I am, lying around, when there are free figs to be had in the marketplace!"

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## What if Israelis had abducted the BBC man?

By Charles Moore The Daily Telegraph (UK) June 3, 2007

Watching the horrible video of Alan Johnston of the BBC broadcasting Palestinian propaganda under orders from his kidnappers, I found myself asking what it would have been like had he been kidnapped by Israelis, and made to do the same thing the other way round.

The first point is that it would never happen. There are no Israeli organisations - governmental or freelance - that would contemplate such a thing. That fact is itself significant.

But just suppose that some fanatical Jews had grabbed Mr Johnston and forced him to spout their message, abusing his own country as he did so. What would the world have said?

There would have been none of the caution which has characterised the response of the BBC and of the Government since Mr Johnston was abducted on March 12. The Israeli government would immediately have been condemned for its readiness to harbour terrorists or its failure to track them down.

Loud would have been the denunciations of the extremist doctrines of Zionism which had given rise to this vile act. The world isolation of Israel, if it failed to get Mr Johnston freed, would have been complete.

If Mr Johnston had been forced to broadcast saying, for example, that Israel was entitled to all the territories held since the Six-Day War, and calling on the release of all Israeli soldiers held by Arab powers in return for his own release, his words would have been scorned. The cause of Israel in the world would have been irreparably damaged by thus torturing him on television. No one would have been shy of saying so.

But of course in real life it is Arabs holding Mr Johnston, and so everyone treads on tip-toe. Bridget Kendall of the BBC opined that Mr Johnston had

been "asked" to say what he said in his video. Asked! If it were merely an "ask", why did he not say no?

Throughout Mr Johnston's captivity, the BBC has continually emphasised that he gave "a voice" to the Palestinian people, the implication being that he supported their cause, and should therefore be let out. One cannot imagine the equivalent being said if he had been held by Israelis.

Well, he is certainly giving a voice to the Palestinian people now. And the truth is that, although it is under horrible duress, what he says is not all that different from what the BBC says every day through the mouths of reporters who are not kidnapped and threatened, but are merely collecting their wages.

The language is more lurid in the Johnston video, but the narrative is essentially the same as we have heard over the years from Orla Guerin and Jeremy Bowen and virtually the whole pack of them.

It is that everything that is wrong in the Middle East and the wider Muslim world is the result of aggression or "heavy-handedness" (have you noticed how all actions by American or Israeli troops are "heavy-handed", just as surely as all racism is "unacceptable"?) by America or Israel or Britain.

Alan Johnston, under terrorist orders, spoke of the "absolute despair" of the Palestinians and attributed it to 40 years of Israeli occupation, "supported by the West". That is how it is presented, night after night, by the BBC.

The other side is almost unexamined. There is little to explain the internecine strife in the Arab world, particularly in Gaza, or the cynical motivations of Arab leaders for whom Palestinian miseries are politically convenient.

You get precious little investigation of the networks and mentalities of Islamist extremism - the methods and money of Hamas or Hizbollah and comparable groups - which produce acts of pure evil

like that in which Mr Johnston is involuntarily complicit.

The spotlight is not shone on how the "militants" (the BBC does not even permit the word "terrorist" in the Middle East context) and the warlords maintain their corruption and rule of fear, persecuting, among others, the Palestinians.

Instead it shines pitilessly on Blair and Bush and on Israel.

From the hellish to the ridiculous, the pattern is the same. Back at home, the Universities and Colleges Union has just voted for its members to "consider the moral implications of existing and proposed links with Israeli academic institutions".

Well, they could consider how work by scientists at the Technion in Haifa has led to the production of the drug Velcade, which treats multiple myeloma. Or they could look at the professor at Ben-Gurion University who discovered a bacteria that fights malaria and river blindness by killing mosquitoes and black fly.

Or they could study the co-operation between researchers at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, who have isolated the protein that triggers stress in order to try to treat post-traumatic stress disorder, and their equivalents at the Medical Research Council Laboratory of Molecular Biology in Cambridge.

The main universities of Israel are, in fact, everything that we in the West would recognise as proper universities. They have intellectual freedom. They do not require an ethnic or religious qualification for entry. They are not controlled by the government. They have world-class standards of research, often producing discoveries which benefit all humanity. In all this, they are virtually unique in the Middle East.

The silly dons are not alone. The National Union of Journalists, of which I am proud never to have been a member, has recently passed a comparable motion, brilliantly singling out the only country in the region with a free press for pariah treatment. Unison, which is a big, serious union, is

being pressed to support a boycott of Israeli goods, products of the only country in the region with a free trade union movement.

The doctrine is that Israel practises "apartheid" and that it must therefore be boycotted.

All this is moral madness. It is not mad, of course, to criticise Israeli policy. In some respects, indeed, it would be mad not to. It is not mad - though I think it is mistaken - to see the presence of Israel as the main reason for the lack of peace in the region.

But it is mad or, perhaps one should rather say, bad to try to raid Western culture's reserves of moral indignation and expend them on a country that is part of that culture in favour of surrounding countries that aren't. How can we have got ourselves into a situation in which we half-excuse turbaned torturers for kidnapping our fellow-citizens while trying to exclude Jewish biochemists from lecturing to our students?

Nobody yet knows the precise motivations of Mr Johnston's captors, but it is surely not a coincidence that they held him in silence until the 40th anniversary of the Six-Day War approached, and only then made him speak. They wanted him to give the world their historical explanation - Israeli oppression - for their cause.

Yet that war took place because President Nasser of Egypt led his country and his allies declaring "our basic aim will be to destroy Israel".

He failed, abjectly, and Egypt and Jordan later gave up the aspiration. But many others maintain it to this day, now with a pseudo-religious gloss added.

We keep giving sympathetic air-time to their death cult. In a way, Mr Johnston is paying the price: his captors are high on the oxygen of his corporation's publicity.

As for Israel, many sins can be laid to its charge. But it is morally serious in a way that we are not, because it has to be. Forty years after its greatest victory, it has to work out each morning how it can survive.

## Israel's Triumph By Fouad Ajami U.S. News & World Report June 11, 2007

"Most wars begin raggedly," the great historian A. J. P. Taylor once observed. And the Six-Day War of 1967, which would recast the Middle Eastern world into what we know today, was true to Taylor's dictum.

The great irony of this war was that it began with a hoax-a piece of faulty Soviet intelligence given to the Egyptians. On May 13, the Soviet ambassador to Cairo informed the Egyptians that Israel was massing "10 to 12 brigades" on the Syrian border in preparation for a big push against the radical regime in Damascus. There was no love lost between Syria's rulers and the charismatic leader at the helm in

Cairo, Gamal Abdel Nasser. The Egyptian was the dominant Arab of his time; on the eve of the war, he stood at the peak of a career full of reversals and triumphs. A few years earlier, he had taken his burdened country into a war in Yemen that would be dubbed Nasser's Vietnam. He had brought his fervor and revolutionary gospel of Arab unity to the Arabian Peninsula, a proxy war against the ruling dynasty in Saudi Arabia. The war had dragged on, and the man who had been the master and the voice of the "Arab street" was fighting a two-front war against the Syrians on the left and the Arab monarchies on the right.

Deliverance presented itself in mid-May, or so the Egyptian ruler thought. In response to that Soviet report, Nasser mobilized his troops on May 14 and dispatched them into the Sinai. Two days later, the Egyptians demanded the withdrawal of the United Nations Emergency Force serving as a buffer in the Sinai between Egyptian forces and those of Israel in the aftermath of the 1956 Suez War. Nasser's Arab rivals in Damascus; Amman, Jordan; and Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, had taunted him about hiding behind international peacekeepers and dodging a showdown with Israel.

The casus belli would come on May 22, when Nasser cast caution to the wind and announced the closing of the Gulf of Aqaba to Israeli shipping. "The Jews threaten war; we tell them: Welcome. We are ready for war." The Israeli port of Eilat, on the Gulf of Aqaba, was vital to Israel's commerce; the whole Israeli doctrine of deterrence had been challenged. Euphoria gripped the Arab world; the Egyptian ruler, it seemed, had recovered his political mastery and magic. He hadn't fired a shot, but great gains had come his way. On May 30, King Hussein of Jordan rushed to Cairo to place his Army under Egyptian command. Now the balance of power of the region had been undone. In the words of a popular song making the rounds in Israel at the time, Nasser was now "waiting for [Yitzhak] Rabin," the chief of staff of Israel's forces.

Rabin, the taciturn soldier, had prepared his Army well for this war. But Israel was led by the mildest of men, an unlikely leader for a time of war, Prime Minister Levi Eshkol. Fate had cast Eshkol at the helm of a young country being hurled into a war for its very survival. He dreaded the prospect of war and sought to defer the moment of reckoning. There hovered over Eshkol and Rabin the shadow of the legendary David Ben-Gurion. The "Old Man" of Israeli politics, who had brought his people from dispersion to statehood, had quit the political field four years earlier. He was now a brooding prophet at odds with his former companions. In the midst of this great crisis, Rabin sought out the advice of the country's undisputed father. He was to find no comfort there. "You have led the state into a grave situation," Ben-Gurion said, scolding him for mobilizing Israel's reserves in response to Egypt's moves. "We must not go to war. We are isolated. You bear the responsibility."

In the countdown to war, Israel would dispatch Foreign Minister Abba Eban to Paris, London, and Washington in search of support. France had been the principal supplier of Israel's arms, an ally and a diplomatic protector. But a different wind now blew: Charles de Gaulle had walked away from the fight over Algeria and had embarked upon a great accommodation with the Arab-Islamic world. "Don't make war," de Gaulle told the visiting Israeli. "At

any rate, do not be the first to shoot." Reminded that France had championed Israel's rights in the Gulf of Aqaba a decade earlier, de Gaulle crystallized the change that had overtaken French diplomacy: "That policy was correct, but it reflected the heat of the hour. That was 1957. It is now 1967." The Franco-Israeli alliance had been severed.

No diplomatic way out was to be offered by the British or by the Americans. Eban had known Lyndon Johnson for a dozen years or more, but the man he encountered had a "tormented" look in his eyes. Vietnam was now Johnson's nightmare. He sympathized with Israel but was averse to being drawn into new entanglements. He was not a "feeble mouse or a coward," Johnson was to tell Eban, but Israel had to show patience. Johnson knew that America had given commitments to Israel's freedom of navigation, but these commitments, he said, "will not be worth five cents if the people and Congress did not support their president now. Without the Congress, I am just a 6-foot-4 Texan." He was not worried about Israel, Johnson added, for American intelligence was unanimous in its judgment that "you will whip the hell out of them."

In the years to come, an intense debate would arise over the color of the light that Washington had given Israel. In one version, Johnson had given Israel a clear red light, an admonition not to use military force. In the other, the light had been green from the start, aimed perhaps at toppling the Egyptian ruler. On the 25th anniversary of the war, the debate was settled by William Quandt, an American foreign policy analyst with considerable government experience. Quandt's analysis sustains a "yellow light" interpretation of the diplomacy that preceded the war. In the early days of the crisis, Johnson had "genuinely hoped to avoid war in the Middle East," Quandt wrote. But this would change as Johnson realized that the only way to avoid a crisis entailed an American military commitment to reopen the Strait of Tiran, the waterway from the Red Sea into the Gulf of Aqaba. "As far as Johnson was concerned, Israel was free to act, but on its own. The red light turned yellow-but not quite green. For the Israeli cabinet, that was enough."

Decisive actions. When the war came on June 5, its military outcome was sealed in the first hours. It had been predicted that the war would start with an Israeli airstrike against Egypt's air bases. The Egyptians had known this and insisted that they could handle the first blow. But when Israel's strike came, the Egyptians were unprepared, and their Air Force was eliminated as a factor in this war. A Jordanian chronicler, Samir Mutawi, in an unsentimental account, Jordan in the 1967 War, wrote of the military outcome in stark terms: "From the afternoon of the first day of the war the Arabs

fought with virtually no air cover at all. As a result, the war was lost almost as soon as it had begun."

It was not just Egypt's Air Force that was destroyed in the course of this battle. What lay mortally wounded was the myth of secular Arab nationalism. The old order in the Arab world of monarchs and emirs and feeble semiparliamentary regimes had lost the war of 1948, and this had become its shame and burden. Now these "New Men" in Cairo and Damascus had been shown to be braggarts and pretenders. The road to Cairo, Damascus, and Amman lay open before Israel's Army. But Israel had its hands full with one great, taxing outcome of its victory: its acquisition of the territories of mandatory Palestine and its control over the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Wars have cunning; the Palestinians, defeated and dispersed in 1948, were the unintended beneficiaries of this new war. The defeat of the standing Arab armies had rid them of the shame of their own debacle in 1948. For Israel, now sovereign over the land between the River Jordan and the

## Remaking the world in six days

By Michael Oren *The Los Angeles Times*

Though it failed to bring peace, Israel's 1967 military triumph saved the country and changed the global landscape.

By all contemporary accounts, it was one of the most stunning military victories in history. In six intense days of fighting that began on June 5, 1967, Israeli forces saved their country from an imminent existential threat, defeated three major Arab armies and almost quadrupled the territory under their country's control.

Israeli flags flew on the banks of the Suez Canal, over the Golan Heights and above the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, the holiest site in Judaism. The victory was so great that Israelis naturally assumed that this would be their last war and that the spoils of their triumph could be traded for a permanent peace.

Needless to say, it did not come to pass. Today, Israel still occupies much of the land it conquered in 1967, while peace remains maddeningly elusive. This week, 40 years after they astonished the world, and themselves, with their lightning-quick feat, many Israelis are questioning whether they indeed won the Six-Day War — or whether it was in fact a Pyrrhic victory leading to more wars, prolonged occupation, internal political turmoil and terror.

But that view ignores history and fails to consider Israel's position before the war began. Compare, for example, Israel's diplomatic and strategic situation on June 4, 1967: The country was surrounded by Arab states bent on its destruction, utterly isolated and outgunned. Egypt alone had five

Mediterranean, there had come a monumental change: The "first republic" (1948-1967) had been an overwhelmingly secular polity, its center of gravity, and demography, in Tel Aviv and along the Mediterranean coast. The new country that emerged out of this war was now in possession of Jerusalem and of Hebron and Jericho-lands suffused with religious meaning. Israel's secularism would now have to duel with the religious pull of these new territories.

At the remove of four decades, we should not overdo the importance of that Soviet report about the phantom Israeli brigades. At the heart of the war lay the willful Arab refusal to accept Israel's legitimacy and statehood. Israel's victory in 1967 delivered a message: that the state that had fought its way into the world in 1948 is there to stay.

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times as many soldiers as Israel, and 10 times the tanks. Beyond the Middle East, Israel faced an inimical Soviet bloc that generously armed the forces of Egypt, Syria and Iraq, as well as the animosity of China and India. Though generally friendly, the United States still refused to sell weapons to the Israelis, who remained militarily dependent on France. Worse yet, on the eve of the war, the French concluded that they had more to gain from Arab oil producers and abruptly switched sides, imposing a total arms embargo on Israel.

All of that changed within a week. Having begun the conflict with Arab guns pointed at all of its cities, Israel concluded the war with its own troops in artillery range of every neighboring Arab capital — an achievement that convinced Arab leaders of the impossibility of destroying the Jewish state by conventional means. Israel, as a result, was eventually able to reconcile with Jordan and to trade territory captured in the 1967 war for a peace agreement with Egypt, its strongest Arab adversary.

The victory over Soviet arms hastened the collapse of the Kremlin's influence in the Middle East and impressed the Indians and the Chinese, who later established excellent relations with Israel. Most significantly, the United States, which previously regarded Israel as a friendly country but one that impaired its relations with the Arab world, suddenly realized that the Jewish state was in fact a regional superpower. The U.S. subsequently forged an alliance with Israel that has remained robust ever since.

In addition to bringing geopolitical advantages, the Six-Day War vastly enhanced Israel's relationship with Jewish communities abroad. Before the war, some of the leading Jewish organizations in the U.S. were reserved, if not distant, in their relationship with Israel. Political mobilization for the Jewish state was minimal. But as Arab armies massed on Israel's borders, Diaspora Jews confronted the possibility of witnessing a second Holocaust within a single generation, and later, reveled in the joy of Israel's success. Many were inspired by the reunification of the state of Israel with the biblical Land of Israel — with Bethlehem, Hebron and, above all, Jerusalem. Contributions poured into Israel, enabling it to strengthen its economy and its ability to absorb new immigrants, and American Jewish organizations lobbied for its defense.

Of course, there can be no overlooking the fact that the Six-Day War led to the establishment of controversial Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank and Gaza, to the ongoing conflict over Jerusalem and to the relentless debate over Palestinian statehood. And yet it was also the 1967 war that inaugurated the peace process — U.N. Resolution 242, enacted in its wake, remains the cornerstone of all negotiations — and created the conditions for Palestinian self-rule. The current Arab League peace plan calls for "full Israeli withdrawal ... to the June 4, 1967, lines," and the "road map" plan endorsed by the United States and much of the

international community provides for the emergence of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza.

None of this would be possible if the West Bank and Gaza were still occupied by Jordan and Egypt, respectively, as they were in 1967, and if the Arab world were still consumed with how best to make war, rather than peace, with Israel.

Even the most justified wars can have untold, negative consequences — World War II, for example, inaugurated the Cold War and communist control of Eastern Europe. The American Revolution, it could be argued, prolonged slavery in the United States and set the stage for the Civil War.

The Six-Day War was no exception. Though it resulted in a turbulent occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and contributed to the rise of terror, it also saved Israel from destruction and strengthened its economy, society and foreign relations. Most important, it opened opportunities for resolving the core issues of the Arab-Israeli conflict (which had already been underway for decades), for guaranteeing Israel's security and legitimacy and for achieving Palestinian independence.

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## Let's Get Moving ... Next year in Jerusalem

**By James S. Robbins National Review on line June 5, 2007**

Today the Congress is set to vote on House Concurrent Resolution 152, a nonbinding resolution commemorating the 40th anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem in 1967, commending Israel for administering the city with respect for all religious groups, and calling for the US to move its Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. The resolution is expected to pass by a wide margin. The Senate is considering even tougher language, saying Jerusalem must be recognized as the undivided capital of Israel before a Palestinian state will be recognized. But because the resolutions are non-binding they will have no practical impact. In fact the White House issued a Presidential Determination late on Friday evening (thus avoiding media scrutiny) stating that the embassy would not be moved for reasons of national security.

At the center of this political dance is the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995 (Public Law 104-45). It stated that it was the policy of the United States that the U.S. embassy should be moved to Jerusalem by May 31, 1999 (the date when it was believed the Oslo Peace Process would be completed). It stated that half the State Department budget used to maintain embassies worldwide would be suspended unless the move took place. The bill became law without signature in November 1995.

But here we are almost twelve years later, the embassy has not moved, and the State Department budget has not been suspended. The reason is found in Section Seven of the Embassy Act, which allows the President to suspend the move for six months if it would endanger U.S. national security. This waiver authority has been invoked twice yearly ever since.

President Bush has promised to move the embassy since the 2000 campaign. Every biannual waiver statement contains the line, "my Administration remains committed to beginning the process of moving our embassy to Jerusalem." But it is a little late in the game to make such a calculated statement, which seems to promise something but which in fact does not. Far from taking concrete steps to make the move, the administration has not even begun to "begin the process," whatever that means. I'm sure if there were any moves in this direction the government of Israel would go to great lengths to facilitate them. How hard can the process be? The U.S. has had a consulate in Jerusalem since 1844. Why not just declare that the interim embassy until a new one can be constructed? Why not undertake feasibility studies for suggested embassy sites? Why not simply state that the U.S. recognizes Jerusalem as Israel's capital? In short why not do something, anything to justify the president's

commitment to begin the process to make the move?

O.K., maybe it's just empty rhetoric. The U.S. has never supported Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. For 40 years our policy has been that the final status of Jerusalem should be negotiated between the interested parties, whoever they may be. Moving the embassy there would give the appearance of partiality. Apparently the State Department thinks that the Palestinians view us as disinterested agents in their conflict with Israel, and we don't want to endanger that perception. Of course, we also designate the elected ruling faction of the Palestinian Authority as a terrorist group, a slightly less subtle and completely justifiable concession to reality.

I understand why the government would rather leave this question ambiguous. It fears a negative reaction should we go forward with the move. One can imagine the consequences; our current sterling reputation in the Middle East would be tarnished, our historically warm relationship with the Palestinians would cool considerably. But seriously. Sometimes diplomats prefer ambiguity to certainty, especially when a degree of risk is involved. If definitive answers are likely to inflame passions, continue to muddle through until the situation changes. This is why we maintained the "One China" policy after flip-flopping on which China we recognize. We felt we had to do so to placate the People's Republic, which will not accept a sovereign Taiwan. But we are also committed to defending Taiwan from attack. So we would go to war to protect Taiwan's de facto independence, but are scared to death of them declaring it de jure. This type of strategic ambiguity serves the interests of stability, even as it offends our native sense of calling things like they are.

Yet ambiguity can also be harmful and destabilizing. Sometimes leaving a matter open to discussion, leaving unrealistic options on the table, only encourages a fight. If the final status of Jerusalem is contingent on an agreement of the

interested parties, initiative passes to the most recalcitrant group. If Hamas senses it has veto power over the status of Jerusalem, and can influence U.S. behavior regarding it, then they will keep doing whatever gave them that power in the first place. By making principled statements about moving the embassy but not following through on them we come off as weak, and invite more violence. Our credibility is already low in the region, and events like this only demonstrate our lack of resolve. Furthermore, diplomats should think about their self interest. Once they let Iran develop nuclear weapons, where would they rather be posted — Tel Aviv, which certainly would be targeted, or Jerusalem, which certainly would not?

So we should thank the Congress for keeping up the good fight, right? No, not really. It is easy to pass non-binding feel-good resolutions of this nature. Since they are not laws they have no genuine impact, but they allow members to tell their constituents that they are standing up for Israel against the Foggy Bottom obstructionists. Similar statements passed throughout the 1990s. But if the Congress really wanted to make a point it would revisit the Jerusalem Embassy Act and put some teeth in it. Specifically, close the national security loophole in Section Seven. Defund the U.S. embassy in Tel Aviv, but provide ample funding for diplomatic operations in Jerusalem. Hold all aid money to the PA until its leadership recognizes Jerusalem as the capital of Israel — well, it would help if they recognized Israel in the first place. Above all, end the uncertainty. Either stop making promises our country has no intention of keeping, or have the integrity to follow through on them. Next year in Jerusalem — it has a nice ring to it.

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## **Boycotting the Jews By The Wall Street Journal editorial June 5, 2007**

Palestinian rocket attacks against Israeli civilians are intensifying, Hamas leaders are calling for the destruction of the Jewish state and Gaza descends into chaos. For the British left that naturally calls for a boycott of, you've guessed it, Israel.

Britain's University and College Union last Wednesday urged its 120,000 members to shun Israeli academic institutions. The next day, Unison, representing 1.3 million public-service employees in the U.K., said it will discuss a boycott against Israeli goods at its annual conference starting June 19. This follows a call in April by 130 British doctors to expel Israel from the World Medical Association and a call that same month by the National Union of Journalists to boycott Israeli goods.

In the case of the university teachers, boycotts violate the very essence of academia, the free exchange of ideas and research. But the obsession with Israel has little to do with unbiased scientific inquiry; instead, it's a perversion of the truth. For the professors' union, Israel is supposedly an "apartheid state" uniquely deserving of punishment. The same holds for the other groups listed above.

Not every criticism of Israel is anti-Semitic. But the inverse, that criticism of the Jewish state is never anti-Semitic, can't be true either. To judge Israel by standards different than those applied to any other nation is racist in effect if not intent. That racism has become the British left's not so new defining ideology.