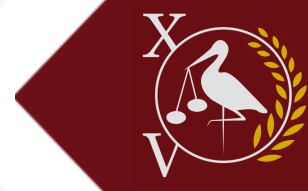June 1967

Martin de Haan, President of the Historical Security Council

Haganum Model United Nations XV

The Third Arab-Israeli War

The Historical Security Council

Table of Contents

Introduction

By June 7, 1967, the world is again embroiled in the ever-growing tide of war within the Middle East, by all means or definitions known as the Third Arab-Israeli War. What had started from long-standing geopolitical, religious, and territorial disputes between Israel and its neighboring Arab states has now grown into a war. These military actions, despite the long-ago efforts of the United Nations and other international actors in maintaining peace within the region, could further destabilize the Middle East with severe implications for world security and diplomacy.

This Research Report, therefore, seeks to give an overview of the origins and development of the conflict, analyze the positions of key stakeholders, and propose avenues for conflict resolution. The issue at hand must be treated with the greatest care by the Security Council, bearing in mind the historical grievances and aspirations of all parties, while seeking a balanced and sustainable solution.

Definition of key terms

Demilitarized Zone (DMZ)

An area in which military personnel are forbidden by treaty or agreement. In the context of this document, the DMZs separating Israel from Syria and Egypt were the scenes of many clashes.

Pre-1948 Palestine

This geographical entity, under British mandate, existed prior to the state of Israel. The understanding of its past is essential for grasping the conflict's territorial controversies.

UN Emergency Force (UNEF)

A peacekeeping force stationed in the Sinai Peninsula following the 1956 Suez Crisis, preventing further hostilities. Its withdrawal in May 1967 is seen as one of the decisive events that led to the ongoing war.

Casus Belli

Latin for "an act or event that provokes or justifies war." Egypt's blocking the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping is seen as a major casus belli.

Pan-Arabism

A political ideology advocating for the unification of Arab nations, which influences the collective Arab stance against Israel.

General Overview

Background

The roots of the conflict lie in the creation of Israel in 1948 and the subsequent Arab-Israeli War. At this point, neighboring Arab states refused to take over the areas of Palestine assigned to them by the United Nations Partition Plan. The armistice lines left Israel surrounded by hostile neighbors, with problems regarding Palestinian refugees and areas in dispute.

The situation deteriorated in the years leading up to the current conflict. Border clashes, particularly between Israel and Syria over the Golan Heights, continued to raise the tension. Under the leadership of President Gamal Abdel Nasser, Egypt took the lead in the unification of the Arab states against Israel through the appeal for Arab solidarity and the return of Palestinian land.

The immediate cause of the war was the decision by Egypt in May 1967 to close the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping, a move which Israel saw as a direct threat to its sovereignty and economic interests. The withdrawal of the UNEF from the Sinai Peninsula and the massing of Egyptian troops near Israel's border further escalated the crisis.

The Conflict as of Now

The war officially began on June 5, 1967, with an Israeli preemptive strike against Egyptian airfields. In hours, Israel gained air superiority and paralyzed the military powers of Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. On the ground, too, the Israeli forces have achieved big gains: they have occupied the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, from Jordan. Fighting is continuing on the Syrian front, especially around the Golan Heights.

The war has caused a lot of casualties and displacement on both sides. Given the rapid advances by the Israelis in the war, and apparent disarray among Arab forces, raise pressing questions about the outcome and long-term impact on the region.

Major parties involved

Israel

Israel's main goals are to guarantee its security, retain sovereignty, and have access to the main sea lanes. Its military doctrine has focused on preemption and rapid territorial conquest to eliminate nearby threats.

Egypt

Under the leadership of President Nasser, Egypt wants to assert its leading role in the Arab world and recover the territories which it considers occupied by Israel. The closure of the Straits of Tiran was a deliberate step to pressurize Israel, but the consequences were very dangerous.

Jordan

Jordan, under the leadership of King Hussein, has engaged in the war due to its alliance with Egypt and Syria. Jordan's loss of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is a great setback in terms of sovereignty.

Syria

Syria has been involved with Israel over several confrontations on the Golan Heights. It also has the broader aim of ridding the region of what it considers to be an illegitimate state through the application of Pan-Arabism.

The United Nations (UN)

The UN has attempted to mediate through diplomatic channels and peacekeeping missions, though mostly with little success. Indeed, it has been criticized for its impotence in failing to prevent hostilities from escalating.

The Soviet Union (USSR)

The USSR has provided considerable military and economic aid to the Arab states, regarding the conflict as an aspect of the larger Cold War rivalry with the United States.

The United States of America (US)

The US has been very supportive of Israel politically and militarily on the premise of shared democratic values and strategic interests in the region.

Timeline of events

1948   Establishment of Israel; First Arab-Israeli War.

1956   Suez Crisis; deployment of UNEF in Sinai.

1964   Formation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

1967, May   Egypt closes the Straits of Tiran; UNEF withdrawn.

1967, June 5   Israel launches preemptive strikes against Egypt, initiating the war.

1967, June 7   Israeli forces capture East Jerusalem and advance in the Sinai Peninsula and West Bank.

Relevant UN treaties and events

Event in bold Nunito 11: Short description of event, see example, date [day, month, year]. These aim to give some context of international agreements that may relate to the topic; when speaking about terrorism, for example, it may be helpful to refer to previous agreements that established the definition and established the way in which the UN may approach this issue, even if it isn't strictly an attempt to solve this issue.

A/RES/181; The Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestinian Question: General Assembly resolution calling for a particular partition of Palestine according to stipulations in the resolution, 29 November 1947.

A/RES/194; The Question of Palestine: General Assembly resolution affirming the right of return for Palestinian refugees, 11 December 1948.

SC/RES/73; The Question of Palestine: Security Council resolution establishing armistice lines after the First Arab-Israeli war, 11 August 1949.

First United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF I): First UNEF deployment on a peacekeeping mission in the Sinai Peninsula, 1956-1967.

Previous attempts to solve the issue

UNEF

The deployment of UNEF did not yet have the desired accomplishments. Although delaying another conflict in the region, the UNEF has failed its task of preventing armed conflicts altogether.

Diplomatic Efforts

Initiatives by the US, USSR, and other states to mediate between Israel and Arab nations have failed seeing another conflict has arisen in the region. This however does not mean that the Security Council should not strived towards a diplomatic solution.

Possible solutions

Immediate Ceasefire

The Security Council could call for an immediate cessation of hostilities and establish a neutral buffer zone monitored by international forces.

Negotiated Settlement

Encourage direct negotiations between Israel and its neighbors to address territorial disputes and security concerns, mediated by the UN or a neutral third party.

International Guarantees

Provide security guarantees to all parties, including Israel's right to exist and the territorial integrity of Arab states.

Addressing Root Causes

Devise a plan that will bring about a comprehensive solution to the Palestinian refugee problem, while ensuring resource equity, including water and trade routes.

Sources

- NR003888. (n.d.). Retrieved January 6, 2025, from UNGA.
- IP ARES 194. (n.d.). Retrieved January 6, 2025, from UNGA.
- Resolution 73 (1949). (n.d.). Retrieved January 6, 2025, from SC.
- Six-Day War. (n.d.). Wikipedia. Retrieved January 6, 2025, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Six-Day_War
- Israel. (n.d.). Wikipedia. Retrieved January 6, 2025, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel
- Jordan. (n.d.). Wikipedia. Retrieved January 6, 2025, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jordan
- State of Palestine. (n.d.). Wikipedia. Retrieved January 6, 2025, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_of_Palestine
- Egypt. (n.d.). Wikipedia. Retrieved January 6, 2025, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egypt
- Syria. (n.d.). Wikipedia. Retrieved January 6, 2025, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syria
- 1948 Arab–Israeli War. (n.d.). Wikipedia. Retrieved January 6, 2025, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1948_Arab–Israeli_War