

The Six Day War

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The Six Day War began on June 5 and shortly ended the same year on June 10, 1967.¹ The war was fought between the Jewish state of Israel and the neighboring Arab states, within the Middle East. To fully understand the conflict, it is important to know what caused the war, why it only lasted for six days, and how a compromise resolved the conflict. The conflicts began in the early 1960's and would continue until the Six Day War and unfortunately, would never fully be resolved to this day. The Six Day War resulted in one of the most historic and important moments for the Jewish people, yet the war brought more conflict than before between the newly found Jewish-state and its Arab neighbors. The war was able to end in an immediate UN ceasefire, but the conflict between the various Middle Eastern countries would never reach a viable compromise.

Throughout history, the relationship between the Muslims and Jews has been rocky and continues till this day. The Jewish state of Israel is surrounded by Arab countries including Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Egypt with all four consisting of a primarily Muslim culture. The Land of Israel is considered the Holy Land by Muslims, Jews, and Christians, causing conflicts to revolve around the status of ownership around the country. These three religions roughly have the same concept of why Israel historically should belong to them, all three believe the land was given to them by God. Currently, Israel belongs to the Jews, yet Israel remains to be extremely diverse and has a strong Muslim and Christian culture. Although Israel is recognized by most as the Jewish homeland, it continues to be an ongoing fight between the neighboring Arab states about the true ownership. The Six Day War was one of hundreds of battles fought by the Jewish people to get the land of Israel. The Six Day War would ultimately be the most historic and momentous war for the Jewish people and for Israel's history.

¹ "Six-Day War | Causes & Summary | Britannica.com." <https://www.britannica.com/event/Six-Day-War>. Accessed 12 Mar. 2018.

History is known to repeat itself and it continues to do so when it comes to the relationship between Israel, Syria, Egypt, and Jordan. The Six Day War was just one of many wars fought over Israel between these four countries. This was a conflict fought between these nations and like many previous battles, the cause of The Six Day War would begin with the reappearing struggle to win control over the Land of Israel. ²The Six Day War was fought in 1961 but tensions had begun rising in the area well before. Since 1963, the topic of exploiting the waters of the Kinneret Lake and the Jordan River would only further strain the delicate relationship between the Arab-states and Israel. This resulted in a surge of terror attacks, executed by Palestinians toward the occupants of the Land of Israel. The terror attacks would constantly be praised and encouraged by multiple Arab-States, particularly Syria. Syria would also begin to increase and initiate more military clashes between itself and Israel.³

The Six Day War was started by a chain of little conflicts caused by the Arabs that transpired throughout multiple years. ⁴The immediate causes of the Six Day War includes events such as the concluding of the Syrian-Egyptian military pact, which Jordan and Iraq would later join. The second immediate cause was the removal of the UN Emergency Forces from the Sinai Peninsula and the concentration of Egyptian forces in that area. The last major immediate cause of the war was the closing of the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping by Egypt, causing a *casus belli* for Israel.⁵

² "Events leading to the Six Day War: 1967."

<http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Facts+About+Israel/Israel+in+Maps/Events+leading+to+the+Six+Day+War-+1967.htm>. Accessed 8 Mar. 2018.

³ "Six-Day War ends - Jun 11, 1967 - HISTORY.com." <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/six-day-war-ends>. Accessed 12 Mar. 2018.

⁴ "Events leading to the Six Day War: 1967."

<http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Facts+About+Israel/Israel+in+Maps/Events+leading+to+the+Six+Day+War-+1967.htm>. Accessed 12 Mar. 2018.

⁵ "Egypt, Syria Sign Mutual Defense Pact Against Israel | Jewish"

<http://archive.jta.org/1955/10/21/archive/egypt-syria-sign-mutual-defense-pact-against-israel>. Accessed 12 Mar. 2018.

The Syrian-Egyptian military pact consisted of different regulations that would be followed by each country that signed. The main reason for the pact was to give protection to Syria and Egypt in the case of a physical conflict against either country. The Pact stated that if either Syria or Egypt were to be attacked, the other country would join forces with the country at war. The Syrian-Egyptian military pact would later get Jordan and Iraq to join the pact. The pact was a serious threat toward Israel, because Egypt, Jordan, and Syria all border Israel, the pact states that if Israel (or any country that wasn't in the pact) were to go to war with any of these four countries, all four would retaliate by attacking that individual country.⁶

The Syrian-Egyptian military pact was just one immediate cause of the Six Day War, it simultaneously is an example of the multiple Arab-states joining forces against the single Jewish-state in the entire Middle East. ⁷The departing of the UNEF from the Sinai Peninsula was another immediate cause of the conflict. In a report given by UN Secretary-General U Thant to the Security Council on the topic of withdrawing UNEF peacekeepers from Gaza and the Sinai, Thant states his concerns about removing the peacekeepers from Egypt land. Thant's sixth statement in the reports disclose both his personal and professional opinion on the dangers of leaving the Middle East, Thant writes "A number of factors serve to aggravate the situation to an unusual degree, increasing tension and danger." The last of the immediate causes was the closing of the Straits of Tiran to Israel, this is said to be the "last straw" for Israel before it became clear that war was inevitable and coming soon. The Strait of Tiran was the only and largest source of trade for Israel, the water passage allowed Israel direct access to Asia and Africa for constant

⁶ "Egypt, Syria Sign Mutual Defense Pact Against Israel | Jewish"
<http://archive.jta.org/1955/10/21/archive/egypt-syria-sign-mutual-defense-pact-against-israel>. Accessed 12 Mar. 2018.

⁷ "Withdrawal of the UNEF from the United Arab Republic (May 1967)."
<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/withdrawal-of-the-unef-from-the-united-arab-republic-may-1967>. Accessed 8 Mar. 2018.

trade. Closing the Strait of Tiran was viewed by many as a way for Egypt to destroy Israel, but for the first time ever Egypt chose to try and end Israel's economic success in hopes to simultaneously annihilate them as a whole. Egypt was capable of closing the Strait of Tiran without any interference because they claimed that they owned the waters meaning they had control of who used them and for what.⁸

Egyptian president, Gamal Abdel Nasser was known to make many promises to his people, his largest and most common vow was that the Jewish-State of Israel would soon be destroyed. Nasser had a lot to say on the matter but never took any measures to give truth to his claims, until 1967. Nasser was determined to put an end to the Jewish control over the land of Israel.⁹ Nasser began his mission by subtly forcing the UNEF out of Egypt and the Sinai Peninsula and by closing the Strait of Tiran to Israel. Both of these actions would further strengthen Egyptian control over Israel. The Jewish-State of Israel was carefully watching every step being taken by their neighboring Arab-States, especially Egypt, in order to plan ahead in case of war.¹⁰ Nasser was just one of many leaders who viewed the size of Israel as a weakness. This caused countries such as Egypt to be less prepared for the inevitable war.¹¹

Due to the constant threat of being invaded or attacked, the Jewish people and the Israeli army hasn't allowed their small numbers to affect their chances of winning a war. The Israeli defense forces or the IDF has taken all the necessary precautions and actions to lower the risk of

⁸ "Egypt, Syria Sign Mutual Defense Pact Against Israel | Jewish" <http://archive.jta.org/1955/10/21/archive/egypt-syria-sign-mutual-defense-pact-against-israel>. Accessed 8 Mar. 2018.

⁹ "Statement by President Nasser to Arab Trade Unionists (May 1967)." <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/statement-by-president-nasser-to-arab-trade-unionists-may-1967>. Accessed 8 Mar. 2018.

¹⁰ "Six-Day War | Causes & Summary | Britannica.com." <https://www.britannica.com/event/Six-Day-War>. Accessed 12 Mar. 2018.

¹¹ "Statement by President Nasser to Arab Trade Unionists (May 1967)." <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/statement-by-president-nasser-to-arab-trade-unionists-may-1967>. Accessed 12 Mar. 2018.

a war.¹²In November 1966 there was an Israeli airstrike on the Jordanian West Bank in the village of Al-Samu, the attack left 18 dead and 54 wounded. In April 1967, there was an air battle between Israel and Syria which concluded with the Israeli Air Force shooting down 6 Syrian MiG fighter jets. Along with these two attacks, there were Soviet intelligence reports in May of 1967 which contained inaccurate information about a possible campaign that Israel was supposedly planning against Syria. Unfortunately, these false reports only further escalated tensions between Israel and its Arab neighbors.

In May of 1967, Syria allegedly falsely informed Egypt that Israel was massing troops along the border, Egypt almost immediately mobilized its troops and ordered the withdrawal of the UNEF from the Israel-Egypt ceasefire lines of the 1956 conflict. The UN peacekeepers would leave on May 19, and within the next three days, Egypt would make its next big move, by closing the Strait of Tiran to all Israeli shipping.¹³ May 30th, Jordan was one of many to sign a mutual-defense treaty with Syria and Egypt and other numerous Arab-states, all sending troops to join the Arab coalition against Israel.¹⁴ The signs all showed that a pan-Arab attack was well in the works, Israel's government was hasty when it came to war especially because the odds had never have been in Israel's favor.¹⁵ ¹⁶ The Israeli government authorized its armed forces to launch a surprise preemptive strike on June 4th, 1967. June 5th was the official start date of The Six Day War, the battle began with an Israeli assault against Arab air power. In a meticulously

¹² "Six-Day War | Causes & Summary | Britannica.com." <https://www.britannica.com/event/Six-Day-War>. Accessed 8 Mar. 2018.

¹³ "Withdrawal of the UNEF from the United Arab Republic (May 1967)." <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/withdrawal-of-the-unef-from-the-united-arab-republic-may-1967>. Accessed 12 Mar. 2018.

¹⁴ "Egyptian-Syrian Mutual Defense Pact (October 20, 1955 ... - Jstor." <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4322774>. Accessed 8 Mar. 2018.

¹⁵ "Six-Day War ends - Jun 11, 1967 - HISTORY.com." <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/six-day-war-ends>. Accessed 8 Mar. 2018.

¹⁶ "Six Day War - Historical Documents." http://www.sixdaywar.co.uk/historical_documents.htm. Accessed 12 Mar. 2018.

and brilliantly planned attack, the Israeli air force was capable of destroying the entire Egyptian air force on the ground and they were able to destroy the Arab's most powerful weapon. After obliterating the biggest threat, the Israeli air force began going after the lesser air forces of Syria, Jordan, and Iraq, and by the end of the first day, Israel had effortlessly won air superiority.^{17 18}

Starting on June 5th, Israel decided to focus the main effort of its ground forces against Egypt's Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula. In a lightning attack, the Israeli army burst through the Egyptian lines and continued across the Sinai Peninsula. The Egyptians tried to fight but were quickly outflanked by the Israeli and they were completely destroyed in the lethal air attacks. By June 8th, Egypt's forces were defeated, allowing Israel to gain control over the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula to the Suez Canal. On June 5th, to the east of Israel, Jordan began shelling the West Jerusalem, sparking a rapid and overwhelming response from the IDF.¹⁹ Israel was able to overrun the West Bank and on June 7th they regained control of the Old City of East Jerusalem. On the historic day, the chief chaplain of the IDF blew a Shofar (ram's horn) at the Western Wall to announce the reunification of the Israeli-administered western sector and East Jerusalem.²⁰

On June 7th, the UN Security Council called for a compromise through a ceasefire, which was immediately accepted by both Israel and Jordan. Egypt did not accept until the following day. However, Syria held out and they continued to shell villages in northern Israel.²¹ Israel

¹⁷ "Six Day War - Historical Documents." http://www.sixdaywar.co.uk/historical_documents.htm. Accessed 8 Mar. 2018.

¹⁸ "Six-Day War ends - Jun 11, 1967 - HISTORY.com." <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/six-day-war-ends>. Accessed 12 Mar. 2018.

¹⁹ "Six-Day War | Causes & Summary | Britannica.com." <https://www.britannica.com/event/Six-Day-War>. Accessed 12 Mar. 2018.

²⁰ "Six-Day War ends - Jun 11, 1967 - HISTORY.com." <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/six-day-war-ends>. Accessed 12 Mar. 2018.

²¹ "Six-Day War ends - Jun 11, 1967 - HISTORY.com." <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/six-day-war-ends>. Accessed 12 Mar. 2018.

bombarded their northern neighbor, Syria, they attacked Syria's fortified Golan Heights for two days before launching an infantry assault and a tank June 9th. On the 9th, the Jewish-state of Israel launched the assault, Israel was more than successful in their attack and was able to capture the Golan Heights after an intense day of fighting.²² By June 10th, Syria accepted the cease-fire.²³ On June 11th, a UN-brokered ceasefire took effect across the three combat zones, Finally, the Six Day War ended with a temporary compromise of an immediate ceasefire.²⁴

The UN Security Council aside from getting a ceasefire called for a withdrawal from all occupied regions. Israel declined and they set up military administrations in the occupied areas and they permanently annexed East Jerusalem. Israel was firm on making it known that Gaza, the Golan Heights, the West Bank, and the Sinai Peninsula would be returned if they got something in exchange. Israel was willing to give all the land they just spent six days tirelessly fighting for back to the Arab's if the Arabs recognize the right for Israel to exist and guaranteed against future attacks. Although Israel was extremely generous in their offer, the Arab leaders decided it would be better to allow Israel to double in size, rather than recognize them as a country. In August of 1967, the defeated Arab leaders met to discuss the future of the Middle East.²⁵ The Arab leaders were able to come up with the Khartoum Resolutions the policy states that there would be No Peace, No Negotiations, and No Recognition of Israel. The Leaders also decided to zealously defend the rights of Palestinian Arabs in the occupied territories.²⁶ This

²² "Six-Day War | Causes & Summary | Britannica.com." <https://www.britannica.com/event/Six-Day-War>. Accessed 12 Mar. 2018.

²³ "9 - Jerusalem Center For Public Affairs." http://jcpa.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/washington_post_june_91.pdf. Accessed 12 Mar. 2018.

²⁴ "Untitled - Jerusalem Center For Public Affairs." http://jcpa.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/new_york_times_june_11.pdf. Accessed 12 Mar. 2018.

²⁵ "Six-Day War ends - Jun 11, 1967 - HISTORY.com." <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/six-day-war-ends>. Accessed 12 Mar. 2018.

²⁶ "Khartoum Resolutions - Six Day War." http://www.sixdaywar.co.uk/khartoum_resolutions.htm. Accessed 8 Mar. 2018.

resolution would ultimately be what would keep Israel and its Arab neighbors from reaching a permanent compromise.

Eventually, Egypt would negotiate and compromise with Israel and in 1982 the Sinai Peninsula was returned to Egypt in exchange for full diplomatic recognition of Israel. Jordan and Egypt would later give up their respective claims to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and give them to the Palestinians. The East Bank is another territory that has since been returned to Jordan. In 2005, Israel left the Gaza Strip allowing it to become Palestinian territory.²⁷

The Six Day War was a very short, yet extremely successful war for the Jewish Land of Israel.²⁸ The war allowed Israel to capture so much previously controlled Arab land, that Israel after the war had more than doubled in size after only six days of fighting. The Six Day War was short yet devastating for Arab countries, each suffering tremendous losses. Egypt's suffered more than 11,000 casualties, Jordan lost 6,000, and Syria had 1,000, Israel in comparison had only 700 deaths. The Arabs also had devastating losses in weaponry and equipment. For the Arabs, the defeat was such a shock that it demoralized both the Arab public and the political elite. Egyptian President Nasser finally tried to support his claim of the destruction of Israel, and when he did he immediately failed. The embarrassment and disbelief caused the Nasser to repeatedly lie on live radio to his people. He would speak about the Egyptians victories when in reality the Egyptian army was barely functioning by June 10th.²⁹ After the war, Nasser announced his resignation on June 9th but quickly took it back after the mass demonstrations asking him to stay.

²⁷ "Six-Day War ends - Jun 11, 1967 - HISTORY.com." <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/six-day-war-ends>. Accessed 12 Mar. 2018.

²⁸ "Six-Day War | Causes & Summary | Britannica.com." <https://www.britannica.com/event/Six-Day-War>. Accessed 12 Mar. 2018.

²⁹ "Six-Day War | Causes & Summary | Britannica.com." <https://www.britannica.com/event/Six-Day-War>. Accessed 12 Mar. 2018.

The Six Day War was one of the most significant historic conflicts between the Arab-states and the Jewish-state of Israel in the Middle East. The war allowed Israel to have military superiority and it caused Israel to double in size. The war, unfortunately, was ended by a temporary compromise, which would quickly fail, bringing a whole new era of conflict to the Middle East. The Israeli-Palestinian conflicts are unlikely to end anytime soon, but at least tensions between Egypt and Israel have lowered sufficiently.³⁰The Six Day War resulted in one of the most historic and important moments for the Jewish people, yet the war brought a new type of conflict than before, between the newly found Jewish-state and its Arab neighbors. The war ended with a temporary compromise by the UN with a ceasefire. Unfortunately, The Six Day War was a conflict that would never reach a permanent compromise.

Annotated Bibliography

Primary Sources:

Estrabrooke, Robert H. "Egypt, Syria accept ceasefire; Israel hits US ship, 10 killed."

Washington Post, November 27, 2011.

http://jcpa.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/washington_post_june_91.pdf.

This source was very useful because it was a primary source from the Washington Post. The article from 1967 was able to show what news was being told to those in America about the Six Day War. The source also gave lots of detail about daily occurrences in the war.

Gruson, Sydney. "CEASE-FIRE IN SYRIA ACCEPTED; ISRAELIS HOLD BORDER HEIGHTS; SOVIET BREAKS TIES TO ISRAEL." *Washington Post*, November 27, 2011.

³⁰ "Six-Day War | Causes & Summary | Britannica.com." <https://www.britannica.com/event/Six-Day-War>. Accessed 12 Mar. 2018.

http://jcpa.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/new_york_times_june_11.pdf.

This source is another Washington Post article that was written at the time of the war. The source gives many pages worth of information on the conflict and the immediate compromise ceasefire. The article is extremely helpful to see what information was being reported during the conflict and what the different countries involved were doing or saying at the time.

War, Six Day. Six Day War - Historical Documents. Accessed March 08, 2018.

Military capabilities of Israel and Arab-states: LBJ Library, April 2004.

http://www.sixdaywar.co.uk/historical_documents.htm.

This source is a document about the Six Day War and the different military approaches and capabilities of the Israeli army and the Arab states. This document is a CIA analysis of the Six Day War and the military capabilities of the various armies. This document is extremely useful because it is a professional's analysis of the war and what actions could have been taken by Israel and the effects those actions would have on the neighboring Arab-states.

Secondary Sources

Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Six-Day War." Encyclopædia Britannica.

November 29, 2017. Accessed March 08, 2018.

<https://www.britannica.com/event/Six-Day-War>.

This source gives a summary of what happened during the war and it includes different Arab countries' outlook on the war. It helps me understand some of the motives behind the war and it also helps me understand why the outcome was how it was and how if it were any different the country of Israel may not exist let alone be where it is today.

"Egypt, Syria Sign Mutual Defense Pact Against Israel." Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

October 21, 1955. Accessed March 08, 2018.

<https://www.jta.org/1955/10/21/archive/egypt-syria-sign-mutual-defense-pact-against-israel>.

This source was about the Mutual Defense Pact Against Israel which was signed by multiple Arab countries. The source gave me some important information about the pact and what it included. The source also showed who signed it and what it included.

"Events leading to the Six Day War (1967)." Mfa.gov.il.

Accessed March 08, 2018.

<http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/aboutisrael/maps/pages/events%20leading%20to%20the%20six%20day%20war-%201967.aspx>.

This source is about why the war started and the actions that led up to the start of the war. This source includes details of many Middle Eastern countries and the parts they played in starting and fighting this war. This source will help give me evidence to show why the

war began and how the conflict was resolved. This was an extremely short war so the compromise was very immediate.

"Six-Day War ends." History.com.

Accessed March 08, 2018. <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/six-day-war-ends>.

This is a source that discusses what happened during and after the war from a variety of perspectives. This source benefits me because it gives details on the outcome of the Six Day War and it also explains what benefits and victories Israel had and what they lost. This source also shows how the UN was involved and what came out of the war.

"The Six-Day War: Statement by President Nasser to Arab Trade Unionists."

Statement by President Nasser to Arab Trade Unionists (May 1967). Accessed March 08, 2018. <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/statement-by-president-nasser-to-arab-trade-unionists-may-1967>.

This source was the statement made by President Nasser to the people of Egypt and to the Arab Trade Unionists. The statement is basically Nasser speaking about his desire and goal to destroy Israel. The source shows me Egypt's feelings about Israel and what they want and also how a war in Egypt's mind is only going to hopefully allow the Egyptians and Arabs have more of a chance to further destroy Israel.

"UN Emergency Force (UNEF): Withdrawal of the UNEF from the United Arab Republic."

Withdrawal of the UNEF from the United Arab Republic (May 1967). Accessed March 08, 2018.

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/withdrawal-of-the-unef-from-the-united-arab-republic-may-1967>.

This source is about the withdrawal of the UNEF from the United Arab Republic. In this document there are 19 detailed reasons for the decision to leave the Gaza Strip and Sinai and what was occurring in the area for the UNEF to be there to begin with. This is a direct report from the UN Security - General to the Security Council meaning it is unlikely to be biased and it shows what happened according to the UNEF.

War, Six Day. Khartoum Resolutions.

Accessed March 08, 2018. http://www.sixdaywar.co.uk/khartoum_resolutions.htm.

This source is about the Khartoum Resolutions, which were made by the Arab-states (except Egypt) to discuss how to deal with Israel after the Six Day War. These resolutions ultimately wanted no peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel, and no negotiations with Israel. In the resolutions it states that the Arab-states felt it was up to them to regain Israel and make it an Arab-state. The leaders of these states agreed to try and cut off all relations with the Jewish-state.