Forum: Historical Security Council

Issue: Outbreak of the Yom Kippur War

1973, October 6-8

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Introductory Note on Historical Simulations

Please note that this Historical Security Council simulation is frozen in time on October 8th, 1973. Delegates will have liberty to change what happened only on that date. If you do change something that actually happened historically, the contingencies that would have unfolded thereafter are unknown, just as our future is unknown today. Economists and political scientists create models they hope are suited to make predictions about outcomes, many of their predictions may prove to be wrong, while others become reality.

The best way to influence the outcome of this crisis is to create a new or different reality. That is our task. You may infuse your Member State policies with your personal insights, values and principles (economic, social, and political) just as all diplomats do. We will proceed in our deliberations knowing that the future is not inevitable, and we will try to avoid bias based on hindsight.

With this in mind, no information, events, etc. that transpired after October 8th of 1973 are permitted   in   the   simulation.

I.Introduction

At 2:00 PM on the 6th of October 1973, Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack against military targets in regions occupied by the state of Israel[1]. This attack shocked Israel and the international community alike, with neither the United States nor the Soviet Union anticipating such swift and large-scale military action. Though Egypt has been in a formal state of belligerence against Israel since 1967, there was a cease-fire in effect since the end of the War of Attrition in 1970[2]. Although this attack was unexpected, it did not occur in a vacuum, as the history of Arab - Israeli conflict is as old as the state of Israel itself, resulting mainly from Arab frustration over Israel's expansion and alleged mistreatment of the Palestinians.

This attack was deliberately planned to take place on Yom Kippur, the holiest Jewish holiday, as most Israelis would not be using communication technologies such as phone or radio, in observance of the holiday. Additionally, the attack falls during the Muslim holiday of Ramadan. The war's religious timeframe mirrors the religious nature of the conflict itself, further fueling the violence, as both sides are fighting not just for land, but for God.

The international community has tried to head off the war at its start with both the Soviet Union and the United States calling for a cease-fire. However, this call has been rejected by Egypt[4]. This is expected as the intention of Egyptian and Syrian militaries is to recapture the territories lost in the 1967 Six-Day War, namely the Sinai Peninsula and Golan Heights respectively[1]. This sudden invasion has created an atmosphere of fear within Israel, with the government scrabbling to organize its military to effectively repel the invasion. While the nation and government of Israel were caught off guard, allowing the Egyptian and Syrian armies to secure significant territorial gains and push the Israelis back

from their fortifications[3], Israel is clear in its intentions: Israel's primary concern is the defense of its territory and citizens as well as the prevention of an Arab victory[1]. Such prevention of any sort of Arab victory regardless of its scope is in the vital interest of the Israeli government to maintain both the citizenry and international communities' faith in an otherwise challenged and fragile government[1].

Egyptian soldiers celebrate successfully crossing the Suez Canal into the Sinai Peninsula[6]

The outbreak of war between Arab nations and Israel, while far from unprecedented, was not in any sense inconsequential. Aside from the immediate humanitarian destruction and the destabilization of a region already experiencing immense turmoil, both of the parties in the conflict have backing from global superpowers, leaving the possibility of this turning into a long and bloody proxy war[5]. The conflict also has the potential to have major ramifications for the global economy.

In order to address this sudden conflict, a special session of the Security Council has been called in the hopes that it can end the conflict in its infancy. Due to the high stakes nature of the conflict, it is imperative that a solution is found quickly. Determining what this solution might be is now the task of the   Security   Council.

II.   Key Terms

A.   Golan Heights

The Golan Heights are a plateau captured by Israel from Syria in the Six-Day War, which Syria is now fighting to recapture. The Golan Heights are valued for both their strategic importance, as well as their rich soil which is apt for farming[7]. Additionally, Israel values the Golan Heights as a buffer zone between itself and Syria and for Syria, retaking the land has immense symbolic importance.[7] Both sides are opposed to relinquishing control of the region.

B. Sinai Peninsula

The Sinai Peninsula is a peninsula between the Gulf of Suez and Gulf of Aquaba[8]. Largely desert and with an era nearly three times the size of pre-1967 Israel, it was captured by Israel from Egypt during the 1967 war. The Sinai Peninsula has been part of Egypt for thousands of years.[8] Egypt has been intent on getting it back and had made numerous offers to the Israelis in an effort to regain the territory.[4] Egypt has now turned to war to achieve this end. It is of extremely strategic significance as it encompasses the eastern bank of the Suez Canal, which is controlled by Egypt and a vital route for international shipping[8].

Israel's territories after the Six-Day War (yellow stripes), 1967

C. Belligerence

Belligerence in the diplomatic sense means the act of being at war.[9] A state of belligerence is a legal category not a descriptor of the current on-the-ground realities of a war meaning that a nation can be in a state of belligerence against another even if there is a current lull in fighting.

D. Six-Day War

The Six-Day War was a conflict in 1967 from the 5th to the 10th of June, between Israel and Jordan, Syria and Egypt. The War began with an allegedly primitive air strike by Israel following the mobilization of its Arab neighbors' militaries. The fighting lasted just six days (hence the name) and resulted in a decisive Israeli victory. Israel captured the Golan Heights, Sinai Peninsula, West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem.[10] The UN called for a cease-fire on June 7th, which was

immediately accepted by Jordan and Israel, accepted by Egypt on June 8th, and Syria on June 10th.[10] The victory created a new sense of national success and security in Israel. Besides suffering crushing military losses, the loss of these territories came to dominate the Arab states' policy towards Israel in the coming decades, with numerous diplomatic efforts and finally a military attempt to retake the land in the form of the Yom Kippur War.

E. Multi-lateral vs Bilateral Diplomacy

Multilateral vs Bilateral Diplomacy can be understood as a group as opposed to one-on-one collaboration. Multilateral diplomacy is diplomacy between three, or more parties generally in an international forum about an issue, in which not all parties are necessarily directly affected by the issue.[11] Examples of such international forums include the United Nations, African Union or World Health Organization (WHO). Bilateral Diplomacy tends to be talks between two nation-states, often resulting in a treaty or other such bilateral agreement. A prominent example of Bilateral Diplomacy has been US-Soviet cooperation as the two major world powers on a host of issues since 1945. Each have their own dynamics and advantages, with multilateral diplomacy generally leading to more diversity of opinion, balance and comprehensiveness, contrasted with bilateral diplomacy which allows for swifter, more direct and more personalized processes.[11] Both have been used in the Israeli-Arab situation and both can be used to address the Yom Kippur War.

F. Proxy War

A proxy war is a conflict between smaller powers that represent the interests of larger powers, often these larger powers[12] (generally the Soviet Union and the United States in modern times) provide military or economic support the party aligned with them. Well known examples include the Korean War and Vietnam War.

III. General Overview

A. History of the State of Israel

Since its establishment in 1948, the state of Israel has been in a constant state of conflict with its neighbors. This history begins with the League of Nations granting the United Kingdom a mandate over the territory of Palestine following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire [13]. In the following almost 30 years of British colonial rule, British authorities welcomed Jewish settlers in their attempts to establish a Jewish Nation, much to the condemnation of the local Arab Palestinians[13].

In the wake of World War II and revelations about the horrors of the Holocaust, there was a renewed international focus on the establishment of a Jewish homeland, culminating in the United Nations Partition plan for Israel and Palestine in 1948, which created and drew the borders of two states: the Jewish state of Israel and the Arab state of Palestine[13]. No sooner had the state of Israel been established then it found itself at war with five of its Arab neighbors: Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq[13]. Despite having a significantly smaller fighting force, Israel successfully repelled its invaders and ended the war in possession of 20% more land than it was granted under the UN partition plan[14]. Rather than return this land, it was added to the territory of the Israeli state. Following this war, Israel primarily focused on the establishment of its government and society, as well as dealing with the influx of Jews,

primarily from Europe (because of the Holocaust) and from Arab nations (due to expulsions from said nations to protest Israel's establishment and actions) [14]. In 1956 Israel assisted the United Kingdom and France in invading Egypt following the nationalization of the Suez Canal by the Egyptian government. Despite Britian, France and Israel being forced to withdraw this escalated Israeli-Egyptian tensions, resulting in the closing of the Suez Canal to Israeli shipping and eventually leading to the Six-Day-War[13]. The Six-Day War was a brief conflict between an Egyptian-led Arab coalition and Israel which resulted in a decisive Israeli victory. In addition to capturing the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, Israel also gained control of the Golan Heights and the Sinai Peninsula. The war transformed Israel from a state fighting for survival to a regional power[12], as well as putting it in a position of power over Egypt and Syria. After suffering a crushing defeat in the Six-Day War, Egypt attempted to dislodge Israeli forces from the Sinai Peninsula in the war of attrition, however after its efforts proved fruitless, Egypt accepted a ceasefire proposed by the United States in 1970[4]. This sets the stage for the Yom Kippur War, which can essentially be understood as an attempt by Syria and Egypt to retake their former territories with military force. However, before doing so Egypt did pursue other means to reclaim its land.

B. Egyptian Diplomatic Efforts

Initially, in the period between the Six-Day and Yom Kippur Wars, the United States tried to facilitate negotiations between Egypt and Israel[10], to no avail. This dynamic changed with the death of Egyptian President Gamal 'Abdel Nasser. His replacement Anwar Sadat sought to build a more liberal peaceful Egypt[15] and made significant efforts towards a diplomatic solution, before eventually turning to military action. Sadat's primary goal, however, "was to redress the situation following the 1967 defeat, to regain [Egypt's] self-confidence"[16] through any means necessary [17] Although the solution to the War of Attrition came from outside actors (namely the United States)[4], efforts to secure a lasting peace after the War of Attrition in 1970 came from Egypt.

In February 1971, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat offered US President Richard Nixon a reopening of the Suez Canal in exchange for demilitarization of the east bank of the Suez by the Israeli Defense Force[4]. Furthermore, he made clear that he would end all claims of belligerency against Israel, were it to withdraw to its pre-1967 borders.   This proposal was, however, rejected by the Israeli government and the United States did not attempt to persuade the Israelis to reconsider.

Following a deliberate lack of progress on the issue at the 1972 Moscow summit, Egypt took more dramatic steps[4]. Sadat expelled 20,000 Soviet Military advisors and opened back-channel communication with the United States through his National Security Advisor[4]. These displays of friendliness to the West were a means for Sadat to once again pursue a diplomatic path to regaining the territory Egypt had lost in 1967. Sadat offered a comprehensive bilateral peace agreement between Egypt and Israel if Israel withdrew from the Sinai[4]. Again, Israel rejected Sadat's offer[4], leading Sadat to realize that the only means to reclaim Egyptian honor and territory was via a show of military force[15]. In the Summer of 1973, Sadat began preparing for such an attack.

IV.   Major Parties Involved

A.   United Nations

The United Nations played a vital role in the establishment of Israel in the form of Resolution 181, as did its predecessor the League of Nations) which granted the British the mandate to govern Palestine. During previous Arab - Israeli conflicts, the United Nations has tried to intervene with mixed success. In 1949 the Rhodes Talks, supervised by the UN (United Nations), were successful in creating an armistice to end the Israeli War of Independence.[18] Additionally the call by the United Nations for cease-fire during the Six-Day war was almost immediately successful. The attempt at reaching a permanent solution in 1967 came in the form of Resolution 242. Although initially a success, it proved to be a failure in its implementation.[19] Throughout the conflict, the UN has played an important role in mediation and monitoring of the situation. The United Nations also has an important role to play in any sort of multilateral solution to the Yom Kippur War.

B. Israel

Israel emerged as a product of the Zionist movement for a Jewish homeland which although existing for over a hundred years accelerated in the first half of the 20th century, with the British allowing Jewish immigration to Palestine with the Balfour declaration.[23] After its establishment via the United Nations, Israel was initially thought of as a socialist state that embraced Western style, social-democratic capitalism.[24] Its existence has antagonized its neighbors, as the influx of Jewish refugees displaced hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, often with violence. As such Israel has found itself surrounded by nations hostile to it. Israel is currently led by Prime Minister Golda Meir a member of the Labor party.

C. Egypt

Egypt as a leader among the Arab nations has often led both the diplomatic and military resistance against Israel. It led the Arab coalitions in the Israeli "War of Independence", Six-Day War, and now in the Yom Kippur War. It has, however, made significant efforts to lead in diplomacy as well as on the battlefield[4]. Although it has generally been clearly within the Soviet sphere of influence, President Sadat is much friendlier to the West compared to his predecessor President Nasser.[15]

D. Soviet Union

The Soviet Union was initially friendly to Israel and supported the partition plan, however, due to the latter's reliance on and support of the United States, relations between the two nations frayed.[20] The Soviet Union has become significantly closer to the Arab states, turning the Arab - Israeli dispute into yet another front in the US - Soviet rivalry. The Soviet Union has, however, played an active role in attempting to broker a peace deal, viewing a de-escalation in the Middle East in its own interest.[19]

E. United States

The United States has been one of Israel's closest allies, with the United States providing political and military support. Nevertheless, the United States has made significant efforts to pressure Israel to engage in diplomacy and find compromises.[4] The United States does, however, have a stake in not upsetting Arab nations as it is reliant on them for oil. The US has also often worked with the Soviet Union and other actors on proposals which it then tries to "sell" to its regional clients.[19]

F. Syria

Syria is the junior partner in the Egypt-Syria alliance that has come to dominate Middle Eastern Politics. This dynamic is best reflected in the since dissolved United Arab Republic, a short-lived nation created by uniting Egypt and Syria[20]. It lasted just 3 years and ended due to feelings in Syria of being treated as territory Egypt had acquired not equal partners[20]. second to the Egyptians. Nonetheless as demonstrated in the failure of Resolution 242, Syria was a significant enough partner in the Arab coalition that a solution that lacked its support was a solution doomed to fail.[23]

V. Timeline of Key Events

1917		Balfour Declaration is issued by the British Government, it invites Jews to immigrate to Palestine much to Arabs dislike[13]
1920	1920	League of Nations grants British mandate to administer Palestine Israeli, Arab frustrations are fueled in the coming decades by discontent with British colonial rule
1930		Arab revolt against British Colonial Authority, caused by economic issues and unequal treatment of Jews and Arabs
1947	1947	UN partition plan, or Resolution 181 establishes a Jewish and Arab state
1948	1948	Israeli War of independence, between 5 Arab states and Israel, the war results s narrow Israeli victory
1956	1956	Suez Canal conflict results in worsening Egyptian-Israeli relations
1967	1967	Six-Day War[13] between Israel and Arab coalition results in swift and extensive Israeli victory

VI. Previous & Possible Solutions

A.   Security Council Resolution 242

The first attempt to create a lasting peace came directly after the Six-Day War in the form of United Nations Security Council Resolution 242. This Resolution, carefully crafted and purposefully vague, was passed by unanimous vote of the Security Council on November 22, 1967[19]. The core of the resolution was the so-called "land for peace"[25] exchange that would be at the center of Arab – Israeli diplomacy going forward: Israel needed "to withdraw from territories occupied in the recent conflict"[15] and the surrounding Arab states needed to recognize its sovereignty and legitimacy[26]. Although the resolution was accepted by Jordan, Egypt, and Israel, the implementation has become difficult. Another issue stems from Syria's refusal to accept Resolution 242[25]. Even among the states that did accept it, the vagueness of the resolution simultaneously proved to be its lifeblood and Achilles heel. The interpretation by the Israelis that the absence of the word "the" in front of "territories occupied" means that the withdrawal did not have to be immediate[25]. Consequently, Israel has not made significant effort to obey the resolution and so nor did Arab states. As such SC Resolution 242 though symbolically a triumph did not create a lasting solution to the issue.

B. Rogers Plan

Bearing the name of former US Secretary of State William Rogers, this plan was an attempt at a top-down solution in the wake of the Six-Day War. After Richard Nixon took office, the United States embraced the French suggestion of talks to find a lasting solution in the Middle East between the 4 big powers (the United States, Soviet Union, United Kingdom, and France) [20]. However, the United States quickly set up additional talks between itself and the Soviet Union on an agreement between just Israel and Egypt, leaving agreements with the other Arab states for the 4-power talks. In these one-on-one talks, the United States and Soviet Union started far apart in their demands but agreed that the solution was a bilateral agreement. They set out a loose set of ideas as the bedrock of an Israeli-Egyptian peace. The Soviet Union was able to initially sell the Egyptians on the idea of bilateral talks, however, two sticking points emerged. One was the Israeli insistence on a specific peace plan, trying to avoid the mistakes of SC Resolution 242. The other issue was the Arab insistence on a complete withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula.[20] This led to a cooling in the cooperation between the two powers with their meetings becoming progressively less productive. The Soviet Union told the Egyptians that the United States as obstructing a full withdrawal from Sinai. To dispel this notion, the United States publicly supported a full withdrawal from Sinai. Although it angered Israel, this move built enough goodwill with the Arabs to allow for a comprehensive plan to be drafted. The so-called "Rogers Plan" included the following points:
- Negotiations between Israel and Egypt under the UN's special representative to the Middle East[4]
- An Israeli withdrawal from Egyptian territory captured during the Six-Day War
- A comprehensive peace agreement including a termination of all claims of belligerency between the nations[4]
- Negotiations about demilitarization and shipping[19]
- A plan for a return of 100, 000 Palestinian refugees over 10 years[20]

The Rogers Plan was initially met with mild dislike by the Israelis, however following the public suggestion by the United States in the four-power talks that Israel should also return both the West Bank and eastern Jerusalem to Jordan, the Israel cabinet vigorously rejected the Rogers Plan[20]. Egypt followed

suit and so by December of 1969, the Rogers plan had been rejected by Egypt, Israel, and the United

States[4]. Although the Rogers plan was used as the basis of the negotiations following the War of Attrition[4], its main purpose was to establish the idea of bilateral negotiation as the solution to the Arab – Israeli conflict.

C. Bilateral Negotiation

Given the above-mentioned failure of Resolution 242 and the difficulty presented by a top-down solution negotiated by other member states on behalf of the parties in the conflict, it is clear that one of the best options to end the Arab - Israeli conflict is through direct negotiation. The circumstances of this negotiation are what is critical. The core question for the Security Council to decide is whether multi-party or bilateral negotiations are better suited to the Yom Kippur War. Additionally For negotiations to take place, the Security Council must first succeed in facilitating a cease-fire. To do this the Security Council must make sure it has methods of ensuring the words it passes don't just remain words. In short, an enforcement mechanism of some kind, whether incentive, disincentivize, or anything else is vital. The Security Council must structure the negotiations to be impartial and mediated. When crafting clauses it is advantageous for delegates to clearly define the goal and scope of negotiations. Finally, any result reached by negotiations must be a consensus that both sides have a tangible interest in implementing. One option to create such interest is via the land-for-peace format.

D. Termination of Superpower Support

As the Syrians and Egyptians, as well as the Israelis, are reliant on the support of the Soviet Union and the United States respectively, these member states wield significant influence over them. As Israel is supplied weapons by the United States and Egypt and Syria are supplied by the Soviet Union[34], neither side would be able to effectively wage war without its superpower's backing, it can be argued that were the United States and the Soviet Union both to demand from their allies that they stop the fighting and engage in negotiation, they would oblige. The difficulty here is that these advisories in geo-politics would have to operate as a unified force, both completely willing to back up their demands by stopping support to their allies and fully confident that the other would do the same.

VII. Conclusion

War has begun. It is the task of the international community to bring this war to a swift and peaceful end. As the leaders of the international community, this is the task of the Security Council. However, proceed with caution. Be wary of the diplomat whose simple solutions to a difficult issue reveal themselves to be counterproductive. The Yom Kippur war is a product of history. The history of the initial Arab hostility to a Jewish state and the ensuing 1948 war. The history of ever worsening Israeli - Egyptian relations culminating in the Six-Day War. The history of the Arab desire to regain the land and dignity it lost in such a war. It is also the history of diplomatic successes such as the successful peaceful settling of the War of Attrition, as well as diplomatic failures such as the implementation of Resolution 242. Any successful solution must take this past into account. The past is there to be learned from:
1. The Yom-Kippur War and general Israeli situation are infused with our current Cold War politics. Can this be overcome?

2. If a permanent solution is not found, is future conflict inevitable
3. The views of the Arabs and Israelis are diametrically opposed. Yet is it not in the interest of both parties to realize peace and security for their peoples

Remember these points when crafting your resolutions. This current conflict has the potential of being long, bloody and disastrous for all parties. It is now the responsibility of the Security Council to prevent this.

The moral weight and opportunity for reaching peace rests with you, the members of this body.

VIII. Question to Consider

1. Does my country have direct ties to either Israel or the Arab states of Egypt, Syria, Jordan, etc.?
2. Is my state aligned with the Soviet Union, United States or neither?
3. What was my states response to the establishment of Israel? What about the 1967 war?
4. Has my member state generally favored Bilateral or Multilateral solutions? Why and in what situations?
5. How can the United Nations Security Council ensure that a cease-fire is observed?
6. What is the best way to structure and frame peace talks so that both sides are willing to and interested in participating?
7. Does my state have a significant Jewish/Muslim population and if so, what effect do they have on politics?
8. Does my nation have any territory disputes or controversies surrounding its establishment, whether it acquired its land through problematic methods?

IX. Sources for Further Research

[Future government of Palestine](#)
UN General Assembly Resolution 181 which created the dual states of Israel and Palestine, known as the UN partition plan

[The Superpowers and an Arab-Israeli Political Settlement: The Cold War Years on JSTOR](#)
A good exploration of Soviet motives throughout the Arab-Israeli conflict. Note: this does contain information after the 8th of January 1973 do not let it influence your views.

[US-Soviet Negotiations of 1969 and the Rogers Plan](#)
An in-depth journal article about US-Soviet diplomatic efforts, the Rogers plan, and its failure.

[Egypt's War for Peace on JSTOR](#)
A journal article about Egyptian policy towards Israel and the changes within it under different Presidents. Note: this does contain information after the 8th of January 1973 do not let it influence your views.

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