15. War and the Quest for Peace

- The Six Day War
- Turmoil in the Region
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Causes of the Six Day War

The rise of a militant wing of the Ba'ath Party in Syria led to confrontations with Israel.

In April 1967 Syrian MiG fighter planes got into a dogfight with Israeli jets. Six Syrian planes were shot down.

Israel began ammassed troops on the Syrian border and Egypt responded by calling up its reservists and routed tanks into the Sinai.

The Arabs also renewed the blockade against Israeli shipping in the Gulf of 'Aqaba.
The Six Day War

On June 5, 1967, Israel's air force attacked the main air bases in Egypt, Jordan, and Syria wiping out their war-making potential.

Israel then sent their army into the Sinai and in four days took the entire peninsula.

The Israelis also broke the blockade of the Gulf of 'Aqaba and occupied the West Bank.

On June 7th they took Jerusalem and the Golan Heights.
Israeli Territorial Gains

Before and after the Six Day War, 1967

Before

After

Occupied by Israel

1967 Ceasefire line

Israel withdrew from Sinai in 1982 and Gaza in 2005
Why Israel Won

Despite being outnumbered and outgunned, the Israelis won because they attacked first.

By destroying the Arab's planes, they guaranteed themselves complete control of the air.

Further, Egypt's forces were divided with many fighting against Saudi forces in the Yemenese Civil War.

Israel's military was also efficient, technologically sophisticated, and well coordinated. The Arabs were divided into various factions.
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Arafat and the PLO

The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was established in 1964 but became militant after the Six Day War.

The PLO charter called for Palstinians to fight to regain their homeland within the British mandate borders.

The more effective fighting force was Fatah (Conquest), which signaled its existence in 1965 by trying to sabotage part of Israel's national water-carrier system.

Yasser Arafat became the leader of the PLO and Palstinians came to view their fida'iyin, whom the Israelis called terrorists, as freedom fighters.
The Middle East from 1968 to 1971

In 1967, Egypt and Saudi Arabia agreed to wind down the Yemenese Civil War.

In 1968, the Iraqi Ba'ath Party seized power in Baghdad, its vice president was Saddam Hussein.

In 1969, Libya had a civil war that brought to power an impetuous, articulate, and devout army colonel named Mu'ammar al-Qadhafi.

In 1969, Israel elected Golda Meir to rule the Labor Alignment government but opposition from Israeli conservatives (Likud) was on the rise.

In 1970, Nasir mediated a peace deal between Jordan and the PLO and died the next day of a heart attack. His successor was Anwar al-Sadat.
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Preparations for War

In early 1972, Sadat began to confer publicly and privately with other Arab heads of state about an attack on Israel.

Sadat brought the leaders of Jordan and Syria (now Hafiz al-Assad) for a minisummit, at which they agreed to revive their united front against Israel.

High ranking Egyptians and Syrians quietly planned a coordinated surprise attack on the Golan Heights and the east bank of the Suez Canal.
The Yom Kippur War

The outbreak of war was signaled by a massive Egyptian air and artillery assault on the east bank of the Suez and a large-scale Syrian tank invasion of the Golan Heights.

Israel quickly mobilized its reserves and the Arabs did not press their advantage.

As such, the Israelis began pushing the Syrians back beyond the 1967 armistice line.

The Israelis found a weak spot and drove into it, across the canal, and into Egyptian territory.
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The UN Resolution

By the third week of the Yom Kippur War, the Egyptians and the Syrians faced defeat.

Henry Kissinger flew to Moscow and drafted a Security Council Resolution with Leonid Brezhnev.

Israel and Egypt accepted the agreement, which called on Israel to return all the lands taken in 1967 in exchange for peace.

By the time the Security Council passed the resolution, Israel had surrounded Suez city and taken more land around Mount Hermon.
Recognition of the PLO

In October 1974 the Arab heads of state recognized the PLO as the "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people on any liberated Palestinian territory."

The UN General Assembly invited PLO chairman Arafat to speak.

The UN recognized the Palestinians' right to independence and sovereignty and granted the PLO observer status at the UN.

The UN even passed, by a large majority, a resolution condemning Zionism as a form of racism. They later repealed this resolution.
The Camp David Accords

Four years later on November 19, 1977, after many diplomatic efforts, Sadat flew to Israel and the addressed their assembly.

President Carter worked tirelessly to get Israel and Egypt to agree to peace.

At Camp David in September 1978, after 12 days of intense negotiations the two nations agreed to a framework for a peace treaty and a framework for peace in the Middle East.

On March 26, 1979 Begin and Sadat signed a complex treaty that ended the state of war between Egypt and Israel.
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