

## MODERN HISTORY

**Analyse the efforts at peacemaking between Israel and the Arab states from 1949 to 1979. What factors changed during those 30 years that led to peace between Egypt and Israel in 1979?**

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Since Resolution 181 (the partition of Palestine) in 1947 there have been many attempts to create peace between Israel and the Arab nations surrounding it. In an endeavour to appease both the Arab League and Israel the UN's resolutions proved too ambiguous and consequently failed in bringing an actual resolution. The only peace that occurred between 1949 and 1979 was a result of the self determined peace treaty formed between an exhausted Egypt and an apprehensive Israel in 1979.

The first attempt at peace, made by the UN, was conceived during the end of the 1948 Arab-Israeli war (known as the "War of Independence" by the Israelis and "The Catastrophe" by the Arabs). Their response to the war (which sparked by the partition of Palestine, the first of UN's "resolutions" in this issue) came in the form of "Resolution 194", which essentially demanded the protection of free access to Holy Places, the demilitarisation and UN control of Jerusalem, free access to Jerusalem and calls for the return of Palestinian refugees to their land.' The primary issue that arose from this resolution was a flaw which meant that it wasn't a binding agreement, meaning implementation of the act was at the will of the parties involved. With both parties unwilling to come to a compromise this made the resolution an inevitable failure. The Arabs were yet to recognise Israel as a legitimate state and the Israelis (due to the threat of the Arab nations surrounding it and, as just mentioned, the denial of Israel's legitimacy) wanted the land for their own security, a buffer zone separating them from the Arab states. The resolution, overall, failed in creating peace and stability in the Middle East. Due to its lack of authority, the UN's first intervention was indeed proven futile.

The UN's second effort to establish peace and stability in the Middle East came in the form of Resolution 242, written to end the Six Day War. It is well known for its ambiguous language which sparked more conflict than actually resolving it. In essence, it was a diplomatic solution offering 'peace in return for land', Israel returning land they had occupied for peace with the Arab League. The document became well known throughout the history of the conflict due to the inexplicit way it was written (which caused conflict). It orders the return of occupied territories without specifying which territories were to be returned, with neither "the" or "all" being use. This gave way to two different two distinctively different interpretations on both sides. Nor does it imply which part of the agreement should come first, the peace or the land. To Israel, this meant giving back the land at their own discretion, the Sinai Peninsula, the Golan Heights and the land they'd occupied due to the Six Day war. They also wanted peace to be adhered before the return of the land, although they had their own motives for relinquishing their occupied territories. The Arabs took the article as returning all occupied territories since the 1948 'Catastrophe'. Although the resolution was proven as a failure at peacemaking in the Middle East, it is a milestone in the acknowledgement of Israel as a legitimate state by the Arab nations (excluding Syria, who did not accept the resolution). In most respects it created more complications in the already complicated situation, creating an internationally agreed solution which left both parties expecting different results from it. Evidently, the UN's second attempt at forming peace and stability after an Arab-Israeli war was not only ineffective, but somewhat harmful. Yet despite the negative results, it still brought Israel closer to be acknowledged by its surrounding states, the first step (and one of the primary factors) into the peace agreement between Israel and Egypt.

The final resolution made by the UN previous to the Israel-Egypt peace treaty was "Resolution 338". It was created to end the Yon Kippur/Ramadan War, caused by the stern rejections of peace with Egypt from Israel and the desperation of Sadat, whose nation was in economic ruins. Resolution 338 firstly called for an immediate ceasefire.

It then commanded that Resolution 242 would be implemented immediately after the ceasefire and that negotiations must be made between the parties involved in the war. The primary issue with this is that it enforces Resolution 242 which, as said before, is ambiguous enough to make it open for interpretation. This merely prolonged the disagreement on the amount of land which was to be given back to Palestine. Resolution 338 had the same failings as 242. It was reinforcing a resolution which was too open to interpretation, to make a mutual agreement that would make both parties happy. However, the resolution did forcefully open up negotiations between the Arab League and Israel, which, along with other factors, resulted in the Camp David Accords and a time of peace between Israel and Egypt.

The Camp David Accords were peace agreements between Egypt and Israel signed by Egyptian President Anwar El Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin. This was mostly due to the changes in administration. With the death of Nasser and the failure of Pan-Arab Nationalism from their continual losses to Israel, (particularly the Six Day and Yom Kippur Wars) Anwar El Sadat was elected into parliament. Sadat's first concern was peace with Israel and he spent years trying to form a peace treaty with them under the administration of Yitzhak Rabin. His 'land for peace' negotiations failed until Rabin was succeeded by Menachem Begin in 1977 with Begin similarly striving for a peace settlement. In addition, the economic suffering of Egypt from their numerous losses (having lost thousands of men, resources and money in war) led to Sadat's concern of recovering his nation rather than the cause of the Palestinians. Sadat wanted peace and stability, meaning a peace treaty with Israel and regaining the Sinai Peninsula was of higher significance than fighting a war for the Palestinians. To a lesser extent, the UN's resolution 242 forced Egypt, along with other Arab nations, to recognise Israel as a legitimate state, which is arguably the foundation for the negotiations between the two nations.

Between the years of 1948 and 1979, many factors influenced the peacemaking efforts of the Arab-Israeli conflict including several indecisive UN measures which, though ineffective, provided some stability through which negotiations could be made. Political shifts within the nations, particularly the acknowledgement of Israel as a legitimate state and the self determination of the administration of both Anwar El Sadat and Menachem Begin, were crucial to the peacemaking process.