

UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 242 – SOURCE OF LASTING ARAB BITTERNESS*

Karol R. SORBY
Institute of Oriental Studies, Slovak Academy of Sciences
Klemensova 19, 813 64 Bratislava, Slovakia
kaorkaso@savba.sk

The passage of Resolution 242 by the UN Security Council on 22 November 1967 was a major diplomatic achievement in the Arab-Israeli conflict. It emphasised “the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war” and contained the formula that has since underlain all peace initiatives – land for peace. In exchange for withdrawing from Egyptian, Jordanian, and Syrian territory captured in the 1967 war, Israel was promised peace by the Arab states. The resolution provides the basis on which the peace talks between Israel and the Arabs could be conducted.

Key words: different superpowers interests; UN Security Council Resolution 242, formula “land for peace”, deliberately ambiguous wording of the terms

During the summer of 1967 the UN General Assembly’s emergency session failed to adopt a resolution calling for an end to Israeli occupation. Bilateral consultations between the USA and USSR during and after the session equally failed. The UN General Assembly met annually in regular session, normally convening on the third Tuesday in September. The session began with a general debate during which the heads of delegations provide overall assessment. In 1967, almost all the speakers in the debate referred in the first place to the Middle East.

Diplomatic activity was always high during the first weeks of each regular session of the General Assembly, when many foreign ministers were in New York. There were also several meetings held between heads of delegations. During the course of debate the Secretary General U Thant issued nine reports from observers on exchanges of fire across the Suez Canal initiated by both sides. Syria complained that Israel was mistreating the Palestinians in occupied

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territories, which Israel denied. The Palestine Conciliation Commission reported that the June war served “to further complicate an already very complex problem”.¹ Therefore at the end of September U Thant suggested that the time had come to remit the Middle East problem to the Security Council.²

On his way home from the USA King Ḥusayn stopped in London for a few days. On Sunday, 2 July 1967 he met Dr. Yacov Herzog at the home of Dr. Emanuel Herbert which lasted an hour and a half.³ There were reports in the Israeli press that King Ḥusayn had made contact with Israeli through an intermediary, but these reports were denied by Jordan.⁴

The Soviet Ambassador to Washington, Anatoly Dobrynin on 18 July met Arthur Goldberg, US representative to the UN, and reached an agreement on a revised version of the draft which the Latin American and Caribbean states had submitted in the first phase, but amended in the light of the discussions. They affirmed (to please the Arabs) the principle of the inadmissibility of the invasion of territory in accordance with the Charter and called on all parties to the dispute to immediately withdraw their forces from the territories occupied after 4 June 1967.⁵ They also affirmed (to please Israel) that all states in the region were entitled to political sovereignty and territorial integrity, free from threat of war, so that claims of belligerency should be terminated. The draft would have asked the Security Council to continue its efforts with a sense of urgency, looking towards a just solution of all aspects of the problem.⁶

The following day, 19 July, the meeting between the Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko and Arthur Goldberg led to a substantial US-Soviet agreement on the amended version of the draft. The Soviet Minister then asked for recess of 24 hours so that he could commend the agreed text to the Arab delegations, but they rejected it out of hand. The non-aligned states were dismayed at this

¹ SCOR (Security Council Official Records), 22nd year. Supplement for July-September 1967; GAOR (General Assembly Official Records), 22nd session, Annexes, Agenda item 34.

² Middle East Record, pp. 25, 86.

³ Dr. Emmanuel Herbert, Ḥusayn’s doctor and personal friend had a private clinic in London. He was a Jew from Russia and an ardent Zionist. At his home the King met Dr. Yacov Herzog, brother of Chaim Herzog, the director of military intelligence and later president of Israel. In SHLAİM, A. Lion of Jordan. The Life of King Hussein in War and Peace, pp. 193, 259.

⁴ *Middle East Record*, Vol. 3, 1967, p. 31–32; JABBER, F. A. *International Documents on Palestine 1967*, (doc. 178), p. 168–169; MUTAWI, S. A. Jordan in the 1967 War, p. 174.

⁵ U THANT, M. View from the UN. London and Newton Abbot: David Charles, 1978, p. 281; RIYĀD, M. Muḍakkirāt Maḥmūd Riyāḍ, 1948 – 1978. [Memoirs of Maḥmūd Riyāḍ]. Vol I, p. 89.

⁶ EBAN, A. An Autobiography, pp. 442–443.

stance and there was “profound and even bitter disappointment” in most groups in the Assembly.⁷ The United States withdrew its support for this draft resolution only forty-eight hours later. As usual, both sides blamed the other for the collapse of the US-Soviet compromise. The USSR thereafter took the line that the draft should be regarded as a tentative working paper only.⁸

However, the truth was that Israel too rejected the text, and the Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban told Arthur Goldberg that Israel would not withdraw its forces on the basis of the US-Soviet draft. Israel considered that the wording about withdrawal could be interpreted to mean withdrawal to the armistice demarcation lines, so that the United Nations would become “a cover for continued belligerence”. Moreover, the reference to the inadmissibility of conquest of territory by war was, in Israel’s view, a “doubtful principle”. Abba Eban continued that he could see no difference between the US-Soviet formula and Kosygin’s call for unconditional withdrawal, and he warned that if this draft were persisted in, “the United States would embark on a collision course with Israel”.⁹ The Israeli delegation was especially indignant because it had not been taken fully into the confidence of the United States about the discussions with the Soviet Union and Abba Eban uttered his impression that Israel’s American friends were acutely uncomfortable. But President Lyndon Johnson told Abba Eban that the further Israel moved from the territorial situation which had prevailed before the June war, the further Israel moved from peace.¹⁰

After the failure of the US-Soviet draft resolution, there was nothing useful the Assembly could do in spite of the presence of a great number of world leaders. The emergency session of the General Assembly “turned out to be futile despite the glittering assemblage of world leaders”.¹¹ The Assembly then adjourned and reconvened for one meeting on 18 September, the day before the opening of the Assembly’s regular annual session. The meetings were presided over by Ambassador Abdul Rahman Pazhwak of Afghanistan and by various vice-presidents.¹²

⁷ *Middle East Record*, Vol. 3, 1967, p. 83; LALL, A. *The UN and the Middle East Crisis 1967*, p. 212.

⁸ REICH, B. *Quest for Peace: United States-Israel Relations and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, p. 127.

⁹ RAFAEL, G. *Destination Peace. Three Decades of Israeli Foreign Policy. A Personal Memoir*, pp. 180–181; EBAN, A. *An Autobiography*, pp. 443–444.

¹⁰ SHEVCHENKO, A. *Breaking with Moscow*, p. 138; RAFAEL, G. *Destination peace*, pp. 180–181; EBAN, A. *An Autobiography*, pp. 443–444.

¹¹ U THANT, M. *View from the UN*, p. 271.

¹² LALL, A. *The UN and the Middle East Crisis 1967*, p. 219.

The general debate in the UN Assembly began on 21 September, though there was little new to be said on the Middle East that had not already been said in the Security Council or during the emergency Assembly. The Arab delegates attacked Israel and the United States and highly appreciated the Soviet Union for political support. While Arthur Goldberg, insisted on employing the term “conflict” in interpreting Israel’s actions in June the Arab delegates used the term “aggression”.¹³ At the time New York was seething with hatred for anything that was Arab. Israel, the occupier, enjoyed support while the Arabs, the victims of Israeli attack, were regarded as the villains, deserving punishment. Egypt therefore complained of a systematic “campaign of deception” about the facts in the Middle East for which the United States bore a special responsibility. The Muslim countries drew attention to the situation in Jerusalem. The Asian and African countries mostly supported the Arabs and there were voices demanding a treaty to outlaw belligerency in the Middle East and to control the arms race.¹⁴

The socialist countries expressed support for the Arabs and denounced Israel. The USSR proposed that Israel should compensate Egypt, Jordan and Syria for the material damage which those countries had suffered. Early in October the Security Council members started actively to discuss the situation. After two weeks spent in the UN, Andrei Gromyko returned to Moscow, and in his place arrived in New York Vasily Kuznetsov, First Deputy Foreign Minister of the USSR, a fair-minded man with a conciliatory style. His presence was in some quarters regarded as indicating renewed Soviet interest in moves to obtain a settlement which would encompass the withdrawal of Israel and the general cessation of belligerency in the Middle East. He was soon engaging in intensive negotiations on the Middle East, backed up in Washington by Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin, who saw Secretary of State Dean Rusk on 19 October.¹⁵

In the early days of October King Ḥusayn visited Moscow, where he expressed the gratitude of the Arabs for diplomatic support at the United Nations.¹⁶ Nikolai Podgorny, chairman of the Supreme Soviet of USSR, blamed Western imperialists for encouraging and aiding Israel. A communiqué after the talks stressed the identity of attitudes, as well as the need to eliminate the consequences of Israeli aggression. According to an Israeli intelligence report,

¹³ RIYĀD, M. Muḍakkirāt Maḥmūd Riyād, 1948 – 1978. Vol I., p. 145.

¹⁴ GAOR, 22nd session, 1573rd plenary meeting, 22 September 1967, 1580th plenary meeting, 5 October 1967, 1565th plenary meeting, 25 September 1967; LALL, A. *The UN and the Middle East Crisis 1967*, p. 227.

¹⁵ GAOR, 22nd session, 1563rd plenary meeting, 22 September 1967; 1573rd plenary meeting, 29 September 1967; 1575th plenary meeting, 2 October 1967; LALL, A. *The UN and the Middle East Crisis 1967*, pp. 226–227.

¹⁶ ḤUSAYN, al-malik. *Mihnati ka-malik*. [My Profession as King], p. 206.

the king was amazed by the honour and special treatment that he was accorded in Moscow. He discovered that the Russians were not quite the monsters he had assumed them to be. They offered him arms to buy, but he agreed only to economic aid and cultural relations. The primary reason for the visit was obviously a desire to form a personal impression of the Russians and to assess their ability to help break the Arab-Israeli impasse.¹⁷

Abba Eban, for Israel, said that the Arab states regarded the United Nations as a shelter against the necessity of peace. He insisted that Israel sought no declarations of guarantees, no general affirmations of Charter principles, no recommendations or statements by international bodies. What Israel proposed was a permanent end to armed conflict “by pacific settlement and direct agreement”.¹⁸ Immediately after the war, King Ḥusayn had been inclined towards a negotiated settlement, but when the Israeli policy was given expression in the Allon Plan, whereby Israel would retain strategic areas of the West Bank, and now that Israel established the first four military settlements in occupied territories, he realised that the idea of a demilitarised Arab West Bank was not on programme. As Jordan was bound by the Arab agreement at Khartoum, King Ḥusayn was in no position to discuss a separate peace with Israel. According to an observer, it was “an unfortunate conjunction, for had the two countries then negotiated the return of the West Bank, the festering Palestinian issue might now be largely an historical reference”.¹⁹

Israel continued to insist that the Arab states negotiate directly with it on the terms of a settlement. Herein lay one of the greatest obstacles to precise steps forward in the Middle East. While Israel insisted on direct negotiation, the Arabs rejected direct negotiation. The draft proposals of the Latin American and of the nonaligned states which received the largest numbers of votes at the Fifth Emergency Session moved even further away from direct negotiation. The nonaligned countries leaned heavily on third-party participation in negotiation. According to the Soviet-American text agreed upon on 19 July was that negotiations would be largely in the hands of UN.

The President of the General Assembly on 13 October suggested that the Assembly should interrupt its consideration of the Middle East, and members of the Security Council then resumed informal efforts to find a framework for peace. The following days were consumed by a frantic round of meetings, and

¹⁷ SHLAIM, A. *Lion of Jordan. The Life of King Hussein in War and Peace*, p. 269.

¹⁸ EBAN, A. *An Autobiography*, p. 446; GAOR, 22nd session, 1566th plenary meeting, 25 September 1967; JABBER, F. A. *International Documents on Palestine 1967*, docs. 150, 185, 197; *Middle East Record*, 1967, Vol. 3, p. 288.

¹⁹ GAOR, 22nd session, 1566th plenary meeting, 25 September 1967; JABBER, F. A. *International Documents on Palestine 1967*, docs. 150, 185, 197; BALL, George. *The Past Has Another Pattern. Memoirs*, p. 439; EBAN, A. *An Autobiography*, p. 446.

the negotiations were persistent and prolonged. With the two superpowers reflecting the positions of their clients in the Middle East, it was obvious that any agreement at all in the Council would be a considerable achievement. When it became clear that these discussions were unavailing, the five permanent members of the Council let it be known that they would welcome any initiative which the non-permanent members of the Council might take.²⁰

The non-permanent members began their separate efforts on 19 October. A good many papers and proposals were considered, including all the proposals circulated during the emergency Assembly earlier in the year, documents emerging from the Kosygin-Johnson meeting at Glassboro and other drafts. At the beginning of November, Argentina, Denmark and India were asked by the non-permanent members to form a drafting committee, but they were unable to resolve the difficulties.²¹ There was a general agreement that a resolution had to be passed calling for Israel's withdrawal from "all the occupied territories", while the Arab states maintained publicly that they would accept nothing less. All the land under Israeli occupation had to be returned, the Arabs insisted, and until that condition was met they would not negotiate. The Israelis maintained that they were willing to give up most of the land, but they wanted prior political concessions for doing so.

The same stand Israel had taken in 1957, arguing that it should reap some political benefit from its conquests. But at the time President D. Eisenhower had refused on the grounds that such a deal violated the UN Charter and US policy. He asked during a televised address: "Should a nation which attacks and occupies foreign territory in the face of UN disapproval be allowed to impose conditions on its own withdrawal? If we agreed that armed attack can properly achieve the purposes of the assailant, then I fear we will have turned back the clock of international order".²² Eisenhower's position had not only been in the best idealistic tradition of the USA, but was also the essence of high statesmanship. By his uncompromising stand, he stated for all the nations of the world to hear that America observed the principles of the UN Charter and was willing to support the weak against the strong.

President Lyndon Johnson and his advisers were mindful of how Eisenhower had dealt with the Israelis after the Suez War. They were determined not to adopt the same strategy of forcing Israel to withdraw from conquered territories in return for little in the way of Arab concession and so they completely revised

²⁰ *Middle east Record*, 1967, Vol. 3, p. 87.

²¹ U THANT, M. View from the UN, p. 288–290. RAFAEL, G. Destination Peace. Three Decades of Israeli Foreign Policy. A Personal Memoir, p. 188.

²² Cit. In NEFF, Donald. Warriors for Jerusalem. The Six Days That Changed the Middle East, pp. 334–335.

US-Israeli relations.²³ This did not mean that the United States endorsed Israel's indefinite hold on the occupied territories, but rather that the territories should be exchanged for a genuine peace agreement, something that had been missing in the Middle East since Israel's creation. This would take time, obviously, but time seemed to be on Israel's side, and the Israelis had officially made it clear that they did not intend to return to the former armistice line.²⁴ The need, as American officials saw it, was to establish such a framework for a peace settlement and then to allow time to pass until the Arabs were prepared to negotiate to recover their territories. Apart from helping to establish the diplomatic framework, the United States need only ensure that the military balance not shift against Israel. Such a change was not likely in the near future, however because the Egyptian, Syrian, and Jordanian armed forces lay in ruins.

In the course of the next five months, American diplomatic efforts were aimed at achieving a UN Security Council resolution that would incorporate Johnson's five points.²⁵ The main areas of disagreement between Israel and the Arabs, as well as between the USA and USSR, rapidly emerged. The Arabs, on the one hand, insisted on full Israeli withdrawal from the newly occupied territory prior to the end of belligerency. Israel, on the other hand, held out for direct negotiations and a "package settlement" in which withdrawal would occur only after the conclusion of a peace agreement. The USSR generally backed the Arab position, whereas the USA agreed with Israel on the "package" approach, but was less insistent on direct negotiations.

As to the withdrawal of Israeli forces, the American position changed between June and November. Initially the USA was prepared to support a Latin American draft resolution that called on Israel to "withdraw all its forces from all territories occupied by it as a result of the recent conflict". The resolution was defeated, as was a tentative joint US-Soviet draft in mid-July that was never considered because of radical Arab objections to provisions calling for an end of war with Israel. In late August the Arab position hardened further at the Khartoum conference, where Egypt's President Jamāl ʿAbdannāṣir and King Ḥusayn of Jordan, in return for subsidies from the oil-producing Arab countries, were obliged to subscribe to guidelines for a political settlement with Israel

²³ GREEN, S. *Taking Sides. Americas Secret Relations with a Militant Israel*, p. 250.

²⁴ NEFF, D. *Warriors for Jerusalem. The Six Days That Changed the Middle East*, p. 299.

²⁵ The five points or principles were: disengagement and withdrawal of forces; recognition of the political independence and territorial integrity of all countries within recognised boundaries; the right of all sovereign nations to exist in peace and security a just and equitable solution of the refugee problem, freedom of innocent maritime passage; registration and limitation of arms shipments. In ROSTOW, E. (ed.). *Peace in the Balance. The Future of American Foreign Policy*, p. 265.

based on no recognition, no negotiations, no peace agreement, and no abandonment of Palestinian rights.²⁶

The Western powers pressed for a new attempt to agree on the framework for a settlement. British Foreign Secretary George Brown told the Assembly that it was deplorable that there was still no agreement on how to tackle the main causes of the conflict. He was concerned at a report that Israeli settlements were to be established in the occupied territories.²⁷ Later in the month, the British cabinet decided to seek the resumption of diplomatic relations with Egypt. A senior British diplomat, Sir Harold Beeley, visited Cairo, and after a few minor matters had been resolved in discussion with Egyptian ministers, he met Jamāl ʿAbdunnāṣir on 21 October. Agreement to resume diplomatic relations was quickly reached, and was announced a month later.²⁸

Skirmishing along the Suez Canal continued, increasingly taking a civilian toll in Egypt's canal cities. Partial evacuation of the towns had to be undertaken to protect civilians. Then on 21 October the most serious incident occurred since the war. The British-made and from Egyptians seized Israeli destroyer *Eilat* which was patrolling off Port Said approached or possibly entered Egyptian territorial waters. The warship with a crew of about 200 sailors was sunk and losses were 47 killed and 91 wounded. Missiles had been fired from two Soviet-made missile boats given to Egypt in 1962 along with the missiles. In one quick accident, all the boastful post-war talk about the inadequacy of Soviet weaponry seemed somewhat exaggerated. In any case, as General Odd Bull stressed, these events were violations of the cease-fire. Although Israelis refused any violation of Egypt's territorial waters, it had been an error of judgment to regard the warship's mission as a routine patrol.²⁹

Egypt, humiliated in war, rejoiced; however, three days later came the revenge. Israel opened fire with artillery against the Egyptian oil refinery at Port Tawfiq. The bombardment of oil facilities and attacks on civilians had convinced Egypt to evacuate 300 thousand persons from canal cities to prevent them from being hostage to Israeli gunners. Egypt asked for an urgent meeting of the Security Council to undertake enforcement measures against Israel. Israel in reply claimed that the firing had been initiated by Egypt. The need to defuse the Middle East brought the Security Council back in session on 24 October after Egypt had asked. The Council convened in the same evening and agreed to

²⁶ KORN, D. A. *Stalemate: The War of Attrition and Great Power Diplomacy in the Middle East, 1967 – 1970*, pp. 31–45.

²⁷ CROSSMAN, R. *The Diaries of a Cabinet Minister*. Vol. II., pp. 513, 537.

²⁸ *Middle East Record*, 1967, Vol. 3, p. 61.

²⁹ BULL, O. *War and Peace in the Middle East. The Experiences and Views of a U.N. Observer*, p. 146; SCOR, 22nd year. Supplement for October-December 1967, pp. 164–190.

the participation of Israel, Egypt, Jordan and Syria, and continued until after midnight and held two further meetings the next day.³⁰ The Soviet Union, Bulgaria and Mali thought that the Council should condemn Israel and also demanded that compensation should be paid to Egypt for the damage caused and the USSR introduced a draft resolution in that effect. Israel said that recent events were a culmination to a long series of Egyptian provocations. In the end, a balanced resolution was drafted and unanimously adopted, which regretted the casualties and loss of property, condemned the violations of the cease-fire and demanded an immediate prohibition of military activities in the area.³¹

The Secretary General indicated that he would like to strengthen the UN observer mission in the Suez Canal sector, and he later reported that he favoured the establishment of nine additional observation posts and to increase their number and better equipment. As such a decision had to be in accordance with the UN Charter, Nikolai Fedorenko submitted a draft resolution which would have authorised the strengthening of the UN observer mission in line with U Thant's request.³² During the meetings several clashes occurred between US delegate Arthur Goldberg and Egypt's Foreign Minister Maḥmūd Riyāḍ. The latter after listening to Goldberg describe the problems of the Middle East, he commented: "There is no need for me to get to know Israel's position now, for the US position conforms to that of Israel." Although this remark was made with emotion, it was largely true as it applied to public opinion. Americans were basically so supportive of Israel that the country was nearly automatically anti-Arab.

Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban was in New York too for the Council session, and he was having a considerably more enjoyable time than his Egyptian counterpart. Everywhere Israelis went they were hailed as heroes. Abba Eban had requested a private meeting with President Lyndon Johnson and he met him in the White House on 24 October. The President gave the Minister a pro forma lecture about Israel's failure to consult with Washington before going to war and the dangers ahead, saying that "Israelis should not forget what we have said about territorial integrity and boundaries, as we could not countenance aggression". The rhetoric aside, Abba Eban heard from the President what he really wanted to hear, namely, that US objectives and Israeli objectives are much the same in general. When the UN debate resumed in late

³⁰ JABBER, F. A. *International Documents on Palestine 1967*, doc. 444, p. 713; SCOR, 22nd year, Supplement for October–December 1967, pp. 64–69, 191–193; U THANT, M. *View from the UN*, p. 286; BULL, O. *War and Peace in the Middle East*, p. 146.

³¹ SCOR, 22nd year, 1369th meeting, 24 October 1967, paras. 25, 33, 64–65, 85, 129–130; Supplement for October–December 1967, pp. 193–194.

³² SCOR, 22nd year, 1371st meeting, 25 October 1967, paras. 6–10; Supplement for October–December 1967, pp. 76–79.

October, the US position had shifted to support for “withdrawal of armed forces from occupied territories”. The ambiguity was intentional and represented the maximum that Israel was prepared to accept. Even with this change, however, the United States made it clear in an early October minute of understanding signed with the British that the text “referring to withdrawal must similarly be understood to mean withdrawal from occupied territories of the UAR, Jordan and Syria, the details to be worked out between the parties taking security into account”.

In the Security Council Lord Caradon expressed disappointment at the apparent lack of urgency shown by Council members. “For months we have been urging the appointment of a United Nations special representative.” He disclosed that members of the Council had been “working with urgency, particularly in the past few days, to establish and declare the principles which should govern a settlement.”³³ The Johnson Administration was determined to support Israel as far as it could, yet at the same time it recognised there was an urgent need to find a solution to the tensions that were already becoming acute in the Middle East. To that end, the United States and the nations of the world now again concentrated their efforts in the United Nations.

For the next month, November, the Security Council devoted itself to the task which Lord Caradon, Britain’s Permanent Delegate to the UN, had foreshadowed, with a mixture of public debate and private diplomacy.³⁴ Notable personalities from around the world travelled to New York. The Soviet deputy Foreign Minister Vasily Kuznetsov, had arrived on 16 October. Gideon Rafael found him “a skilful and respected negotiator”,³⁵ and Maḥmūd Riyād writes that he was “very stable, fair and far-sighted” respected by all UN delegates.³⁶ U Thant describes him as “pleasant and relaxed”, very different from the acidulous Nikolai Fedorenko.³⁷

Abba Eban broke his journey in London so that he could speak at a meeting to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Balfour Declaration on a national home for the Jews. Richard Crossman also spoke, making an implicit attack on the United Nations and an overt plea for direct negotiations. Afterwards he met Harold Wilson and George Brown, who told him that Britain was in general agreement

³³ JABBER, F. A. *International Documents on Palestine 1967*, doc. 200, p. 181; SCOR, 22nd year, 1369th meeting, 24 October 1967, paras. 40, 43, 82, 96, 123, 135, 140; 1370th meeting, 25 October 1967, para. 12; 1371st meeting, 25 October 1967, paras. 45, 66–69.

³⁴ SCOR, 22nd year, Supplement for October–December 1967, p. 70–73, 205–206.

³⁵ RAFAEL, G. *Destination Peace*, p. 186.

³⁶ RIYĀD, M. *Mudakkirāt Maḥmūd Riyād, 1948 – 1978*. Vol I., p. 159.

³⁷ U THANT, M. *View from the UN*, pp. 284–285.

with the United States, but that as Britain now had tolerable relations with Egypt, it was sometimes possible to pursue a somewhat independent line. George Brown told that Britain would advocate Israeli withdrawal, but only in the context of permanent peace and to such secure and agreed boundaries as would provide satisfactorily for Israel's security.³⁸

Consultations with all Security Council members continued throughout October on the basis defined and approved by the United States. At the beginning of November Arthur Goldberg sent to the Egyptians a copy of the US draft resolution that he would submit to the Security Council. Maḥmūd Riyāḍ had been to the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, and had then visited Paris in order to hand over a letter from Jamāl ʿAbdannāṣir expressing his esteem for de Gaulle and his policies. In New York the Egyptian Foreign Minister after reading of this draft found out that it showed a reversal of the previous American position at General Assembly meetings. He complained that the proposal which the United States was sponsoring was an Israeli draft under a US name: it was ambiguous and did not contain one clear statement about Israeli withdrawal. Arthur Goldberg assured him that the US proposal meant Israel's withdrawal saying that the draft seeks to achieve that goal even without a clear statement, because Sinai is a part of Egypt, the West Bank is part of Jordan, and the Golan is a part of Syria.³⁹ King Ḥusayn, who had seen Lyndon Johnson and Dean Rusk in Washington, told Maḥmūd Riyāḍ that the Americans favoured "Israel's complete withdrawal", but he retorted that Egypt could not accept a resolution which did not clearly stipulate the inadmissibility of Israel's occupation of Arab territories. King Ḥusayn in his public statements maintained that the problems of the area could be solved if only Israel would withdraw substantially from occupied territories and hinted that the Arabs would then recognise Israel's right to exist in peace and security.⁴⁰ The Big Four began on 3 November a new round of consultations. Maḥmūd Riyāḍ reports that Vasily Kuznetsov asked him whether it would be useful to submit the US-Soviet draft of the previous July and he answered that Dean Rusk had assured the Moroccan Foreign Minister that no such draft resolution existed. This incensed V. Kuznetsov who said that the United States was trying to derail the Security Council and exert tremendous pressure to acquire a convenient resolution.⁴¹

The Security Council held a night meeting on 9–10 November, after which Argentina and Brazil initiated a new round of consultations, though without

³⁸ JABBER, F. A. *International Documents on Palestine 1967*, (doc. 204), pp. 185–186; EBAN, A. *An Autobiography*, pp. 449–450; CROSSMAN, R. *The Diaries of a Cabinet Minister*. Vol. II., p. 554.

³⁹ RIYĀḌ, M. *Muḍakkirāt Maḥmūd Riyāḍ, 1948 – 1978*. Vol. I., p. 148.

⁴⁰ JABBER, F. A. *International Documents on Palestine 1967*, (doc. 434), pp. 693–694.

⁴¹ RIYĀḌ, M. *Muḍakkirāt Maḥmūd Riyāḍ, 1948 – 1978*. Vol. I., p. 155.

success. Then the lead passed to Britain and three days later Lord Caradon formally submitted a British draft.⁴² The Council held seven meetings between 9 and 22 November. Several representatives, and especially Lord Caradon, stressed the urgent need for progress and the hope of unanimous agreement.⁴³ The Arabs, with Third World and Communist support, insisted that any resolution must provide for Israeli withdrawal. Israel wanted a resolution in which any withdrawal would be linked to an Arab commitment to real peace.⁴⁴

The Council proceeded to listen first to the UAR representative, Foreign Minister Maḥmūd Riyāḍ. His statement emphasised the need for immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Israeli forces to the positions they had occupied prior to 5 June. At the same time, he described the decision of the Arab summit meeting in Khartoum as “a decision for a political solution of the crisis”.⁴⁵ There were five draft resolutions. The first introduced the Indian delegate in the name of India, Mali and Nigeria and was usually known as the three-power proposal or as the non-aligned draft. This draft was based on the draft prepared by the Latin American and Caribbean countries and submitted to the emergency Assembly the previous July.⁴⁶ The second proposal was the Latin American text itself, circulated to the Security Council on 9 November at the request of India. However, after the vote on 22 November the delegate of Argentina disclosed that a new Latin American text prepared strictly in accordance with the terms of the July draft, but that this had been withheld so as not to prejudice the chances of the British proposal.⁴⁷

The third proposal was submitted by the USA. The Administration had felt growing concern at indications “Israeli objectives may be shifting from its original position seeking peace with no territorial gains towards one of territorial expansionism...”⁴⁸ The new US draft differed in some respect from the July proposal and affirmed the need for “withdrawal of forces from occupied territories” and envisaged a special representative of the UN Secretary

⁴² *Middle East Record*, 1967, Vol. 3, p. 88.

⁴³ SCOR, 22nd year, Supplement for October–December 1967, p. 208.

⁴⁴ CARADON, L. H., et al. U. N. Security Council Resolution 242; a case study in diplomatic ambiguity, pp. 4–8; *Middle East Record*, 1967, Vol. 3, p. 87; U THANT, M. View from the UN, pp. 288–289.

⁴⁵ LALL, A. The UN and the Middle East Crisis 1967, p. 240.

⁴⁶ SCOR, 22nd year, 1373rd meeting, 9–10 November 1967; 1379th meeting, 16 November 1967; 1382nd meeting, 22 November 1967; RAFAEL, G. *Destination Peace*, p. 188.

⁴⁷ GAOR, 5th emergency special session, Annexes, Agenda item 5, pp. 42–43; SCOR, 22nd year, 1382nd meeting, 22 November 1967.

⁴⁸ GREEN, S. *Taking Sides. Americas Secret Relations with a Militant Israel*, pp. 245 and 360–363.

General who would assist the parties in working out the solutions.⁴⁹ The Israeli government had strong objections to this draft and asked Gideon Rafael to convey these to Arthur Goldberg. The fourth draft presented Lord Caradon, who explained that Britain had based its proposal on the principles of the Latin American text, but modified after consultations with the parties. He admitted that the text was not perfect: it represented an attempt to be fair, just, and impartial.⁵⁰ The fifth draft was sponsored by the USSR, but was introduced at a late stage and the proposal – in Lord Caradon's view – turned out to be extreme.⁵¹

The Johnson Administration, now facing an identical situation as it was in 1957, displayed no such exalted ideals or level of statecraft. Instead, it embarked on a confused and at times an almost unbelievably naive effort to find a solution. From the very beginning, it retreated from the principle upheld by Eisenhower and conceded that indeed Israel should be allowed to impose conditions on its withdrawal. This was a fatal mistake. It plagued the Administration's actions throughout its handling of the crisis and it led directly to its squandering nearly all of its energies on one narrow issue: crafting a withdrawal formula acceptable to Israel. Fundamental to this reasoning was the assumption that any changes made would be minor and that Israel would make reciprocal concessions for any small pieces of land it might gain in adjustments to the frontiers. It apparently never occurred to the American negotiators that if withdrawal was not required to be total, then Israel might later be able to argue – as it was to do – that its withdrawal did not have to be major.

Palestinians have often complained since 1967 that the resolution was faulty in referring only to “a just settlement of the refugee problem” and not to the right of Palestinians to have their own national homeland or state. Even Gideon Rafael regards this as “a most conspicuous omission”, but Maḥmūd Riyāḍ considers that to have referred to the Palestinian question after the Arabs had just suffered a total military defeat which would not have helped the Palestinian cause. With a single exception, the point about Palestinian rights was not made

⁴⁹ SCOR, 22nd year, Supplement for October–December 1967, p. 208–209; GAOR, 5th emergency special session, Annexes, Agenda item 5, p. 39; LALL, A. The UN and the Middle East Crisis 1967, p. 237; RAFAEL, G. Destination Peace, p. 187; JABBER, F. A. International Documents on Palestine 1967, (doc. 182), p. 170.

⁵⁰ SCOR, 22nd year, 1381st meeting, 20 November 1967, 1382nd meeting, 22 November 1967; BROWN, G. In my way, p. 14; CARADON, L. H., et al. U. N. Security Council Resolution 242, pp. 26–27.

⁵¹ KASS, I. Soviet Involvement in the Middle East: Policy Formulation, 1966 – 1973, p. 57; CARADON, L. H., et al. U. N. Security Council Resolution 242, p. 51; LALL, A. The UN and the Middle East Crisis 1967, p. 255.

during the debates in November 1967. Syria rejected the proposals. According to the Syrian ambassador, the British text neglected the rights of the Palestine Arabs. The British text was also denounced by the PLO. General Odd Bull believed that the reference to refugees rather than Palestinian national rights was a compromise: he considers that the Palestinians ought to have accepted the resolution, on the understanding that “the refugee problem can only be solved by accepting the Palestinians’ right to self-determination and the right to establish a state of their own”.⁵²

In presenting his draft Lord Caradon emphasised that the intention was to achieve a balanced resolution. Therefore, the first part called for withdrawal and the ending of the state of war while the second part embodied what was needed to ensure peace. It was the understanding of the Arab states that the implementation of the first part would come first, because it cleared the ground for the implementation of the second. In order to convince the Arab states to accept the resolution in this wording and to show the seriousness of the American wish to achieve its rapid implementation, the United States assured them that it would use its weight in order to implement the resolution. The most vigorous and sustained controversy evokes paragraph 1 (i) of the British draft stipulating “withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict”.⁵³ Did the paragraph intend total Israeli withdrawal on all fronts, or only partial withdrawal? The answer is not clear!

During the last few days before the final vote, when Lord Caradon presented his draft, he expanded on the interpretation of the resolution and reiterated the statement of George Brown who said that Britain does not accept war as a means of settling disputes, nor that a State should be allowed to extend its frontiers as a result of war. This meant that Israel must withdraw. But equally, Israel’s neighbours must recognise its right to exist, and it must enjoy security within its frontiers.⁵⁴ Lord Caradon and his colleagues engaged in a forceful campaign mainly in English to commend the English version of the text. The Arabs and their friend made strong efforts to have the word “the” inserted before “territories” in the English version, believing that withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from “the” territories occupied in the recent conflict would certainly mean total withdrawal, whereas the text without the definite article

⁵² RAFAEL, G. *Destination Peace*, p. 190; RIAD, M. *The Struggle for Peace in the Middle East*, p. 74; JABBER, F. A. *International Documents on Palestine 1967*, (docs. 445–446, 451, 454, 458–459) pp. 715–735.

⁵³ In the French translation we find “Retrait des forces armées israéliennes des territoires occupés lors de recent conflit”. As there is no definite article in Russian or Chinese, these translations cannot be used. However, in the Spanish translation, wording “los territorios” is used.

⁵⁴ RIYĀD, M. *Mudakkirāt Maḥmūd Riyāḍ, 1948 – 1978*. Vol. I., p. 160.

could mean partial withdrawal. Gideon Rafael states that Lord Caradon himself tried to use the definite article “the territories” and seemed disappointed when he encountered a resolute rejection from Israel and the United States. Throughout the discussions and negotiations, Israel resisted all efforts to call for complete withdrawal because it was inconceivable for Israel. Abba Eban recalls that discussion of the various drafts occupied many sessions of the Israeli cabinet.⁵⁵ Despite general Arab mistrust Lord Caradon finally convinced the Arabs that the English text meant total Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories.⁵⁶ Arthur Lall writes that there were informal discussions before the vote was taken. The Indian delegate decided to state that his understanding was that the British draft resolution meant full withdrawal and that India would vote for it on this understanding. Lord Caradon informed the Indian delegate that if he made the suggested interpretation regarding withdrawal he (Caradon) would respond by saying that each delegate was entitled to his own interpretation, but the Indian interpretation was not binding on the Council. Thereupon Vasily Kuznetsov said that if Britain were to repudiate expressly the idea of complete withdrawal the USSR would veto the British proposal. Lord Caradon then retreated and said that “it is only the resolution that will bind us, and we regard its wording as clear”.⁵⁷ On 22 November 1967 the vote was taken and all fifteen representatives at the Council table raised their hands to signify approval. The British draft had been adopted unanimously.

Following the vote several delegations, including USSR, India, Mali, Nigeria and Bulgaria said in the Council that they took it for granted that what was envisaged was total withdrawal of Israeli forces from all occupied territories. Arthur Godberg said that he had voted on the draft resolution and not for each and every speech that had been made. Abba Eban, for whom the issue was crucial, said he was communicating to the Israeli government nothing except the original English text.⁵⁸ Lord Caradon took the view that there was no justification for Israeli annexation of territory except for certain minor rectifications as the parties may agree on.⁵⁹ It is worth mentioning that five months after the war, Israel would not have agreed to total withdrawal on terms acceptable to the Arabs, and the Americans would not agree to a resolution

⁵⁵ ROSTOW, E. *Peace in the Balance. The Future of American Foreign Policy*, p. 269–270; RAFAEL, G. *Destination Peace*, p. 189; EBAN, A. *An Autobiography*, pp. 451–452; CARADON, L. H., et al. *U. N. Security Council Resolution 242*, p. 49.

⁵⁶ EL-FARRA, Muhammad. *Years of No Decision*, pp. 115–116; CARADON, L. H., et al. *U. N. Security Council Resolution 242*, pp. 10–13.

⁵⁷ LALL, A. *The UN and the Middle East Crisis 1967*, pp. 260–262; SCOR, 22nd year, 1381st meeting, 20 November 1967, 1382nd meeting, 22 November 1967.

⁵⁸ CARADON, L. H., et al. *U. N. Security Council Resolution 242*, p. 22.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 9–14.

unacceptable to Israel. In view of Lord Caradon the wording was both fair and clear. However, the result was deliberately ambiguous and it was immediately and publicly interpreted in totally different senses by the opposing parties.⁶⁰

Passage of Resolution 242 was a fitting conclusion to the six days in June that transformed the Middle East irreversibly. Like other efforts before and after, it gave the appearance of great accomplishment, but it had no substance without the cooperation of both sides directly involved in the Middle East. Months and years passed and nothing happened. Israel, instead of showing signs of withdrawing, extended its occupation by building more and more Jewish settlements on land confiscated from Arab owners on the West Bank, on the Golan Heights and in East Jerusalem. By allowing Israel to retain its conquest, to annex Jerusalem, to settle the occupied territories, to inflict collective punishment on a defenceless people, the United States in effect encouraged the illicit behaviour of Israel. The desperate situation of millions of Arabs remains a source of their lasting bitterness.

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⁶⁰ VANCE, C. Hard Choices; critical years in America's foreign policy, p. 160; BROWN, G. In my way. p. 233.

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