

Six Days In June



**A Geomat Study of
the Buildup
To the Six Day
War
and the
Capture of East
Jerusalem**

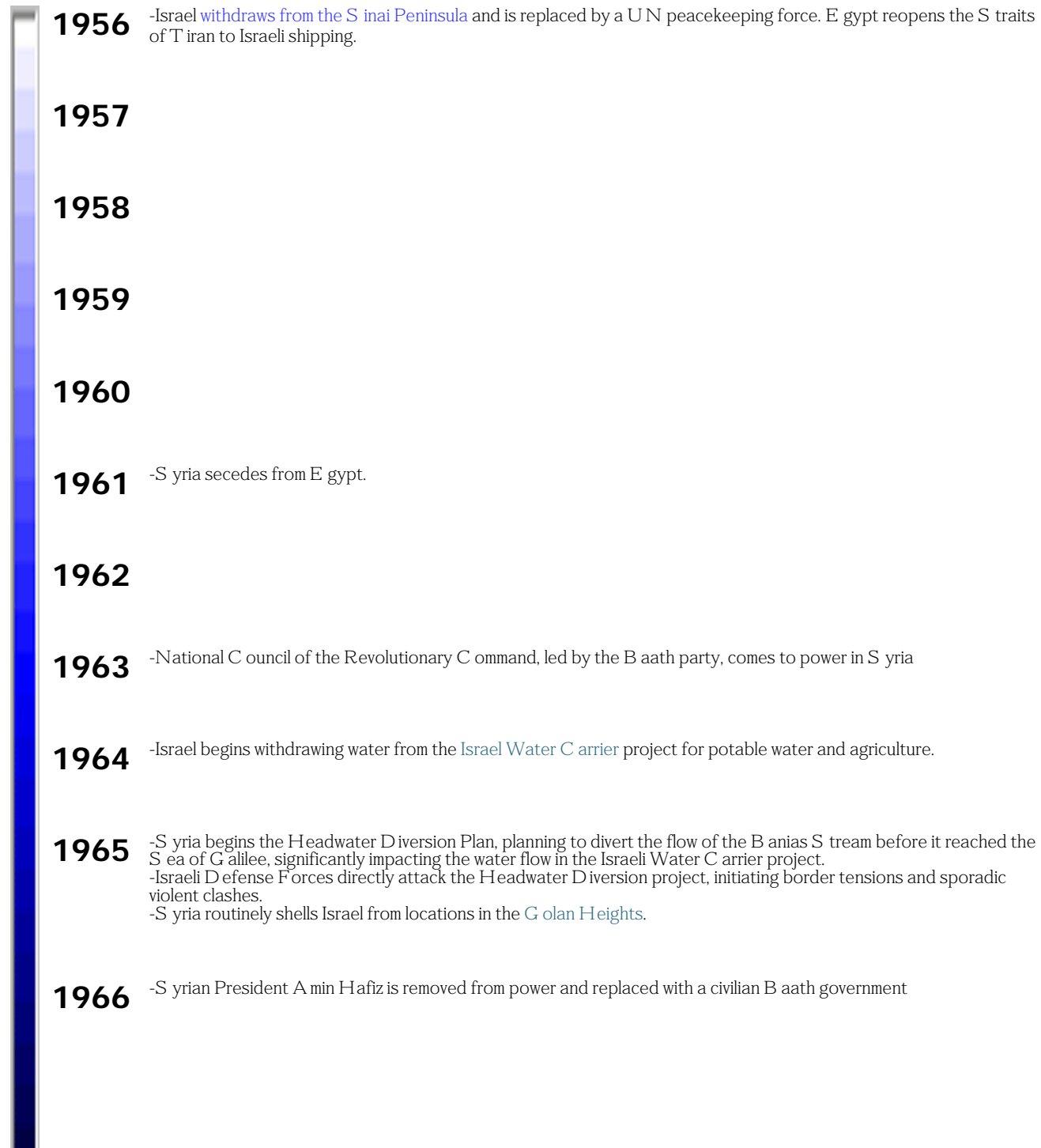
**A Case Study by Justin
Adams
University of Michigan**

"Today's war is not a new war but part of an old war." King Hussein of Jordan, June 1967

The Arab world, convinced that the creation of Israel was nothing more than imperial Britain displacing Arabs, never accepted the sovereignty of Israel, convincing themselves that the new nation would continue the imperial British spirit of imperialism and attempt to take more territory. Arab fears seemed to be justified after the Arab-Israeli war of 1948, in which Israel attempted to take complete control of Jerusalem and gained significant new territory through the armistice signed at the conclusion of the war. While not harboring any malevolence towards the Jewish people, many Arab countries continued to harbor resentment at what they saw as the occupation of Arab land by Israel, and fear of future incursions on other Arab land. The Arab world continued to pressure Israel by restricting its airspace and shipping options. Terrorist activity against Israel and Israeli retaliations both violated the armistice of 1949.

In 1956, with the military and political support of the British and the French, Israel invaded the Sinai peninsula in an attempt to capture the Suez Canal, recently nationalized by Egypt and now blocked to Israeli shipping. After significant military gains, the British ended hostilities in November of 1956, with France and Israel following suit shortly after. A UN peacekeeping force was put in place on the peninsula, and in March of 1957, Israel withdrew its remaining troops from Sinai.

Israel	Arabs
	
	
Moshe Dayan	Gamal Abdel Nasser
	
Yitzhak Rabin	King Hussein bin Talal
	
Uziel Narkiss	Hafez al-Assad



**1966**

- E gypt and S yria agree to a military alliance
- T he "S amu Incident," Israeli border patrol hit by mine on J ordanian border. Israel directs message to King Hussein declaring that Israel intends no violence towards J ordan. Israel attacks West B ank village of E s S amu.

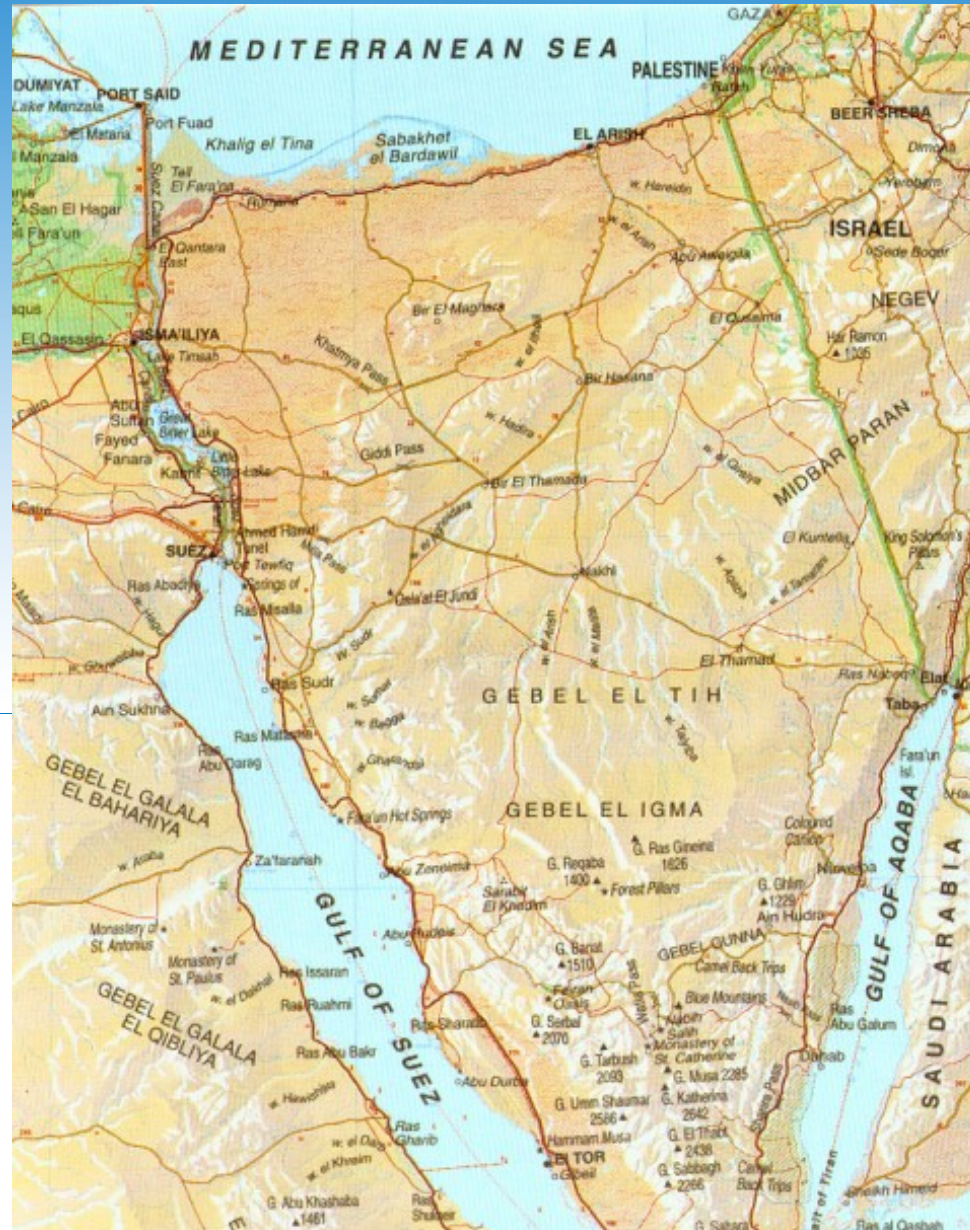
1967

- B order skirmishes between Israel and S yria over the border at the [G olan Heights](#) result in the loss of six S yrian aircraft
- E gypt ejects U N peacekeeping forces
- E gypt closes the S traits of T iran to Israeli shipping
- Israel executes pre-emptive air strike against E gyptian targets
- Israel invades S inai Peninsula, G aza S trip, and West B ank
- Israeli D efense Forces capture E ast [J erusalem](#)

References

The Sinai Peninsula

Despite large areas of arid desert, the Sinai Peninsula is a diverse area of desert, wetland, and reefs. It boasts abundant natural resources including oil and a bounty of diverse flora and fauna. Historically, it is home to St. Catherine's Monastery, the oldest monastery in the world, located at the base of Mt. Sinai, the biblical location where Moses received the ten commandments from God. Despite its natural oil resources, the primary strategic value lies in the peninsula's adjacency to the Suez Canal and the Straits of Tiran, which allows access to the Gulf of Aqaba, both of which are critical shipping routes for Israel.





Four Line Snake



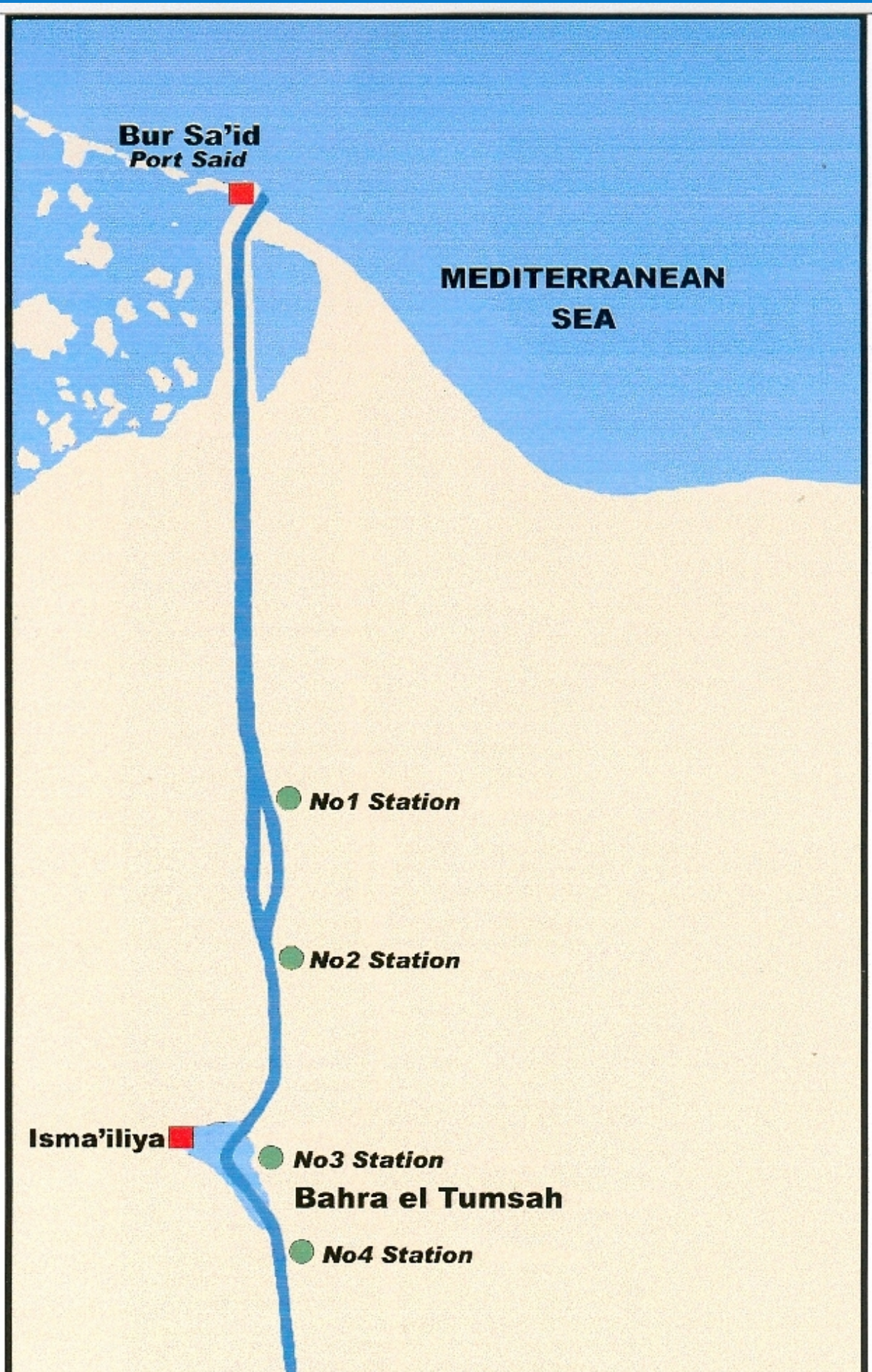
A Leopard prowling the mountainous area of the souther part of the peninsula

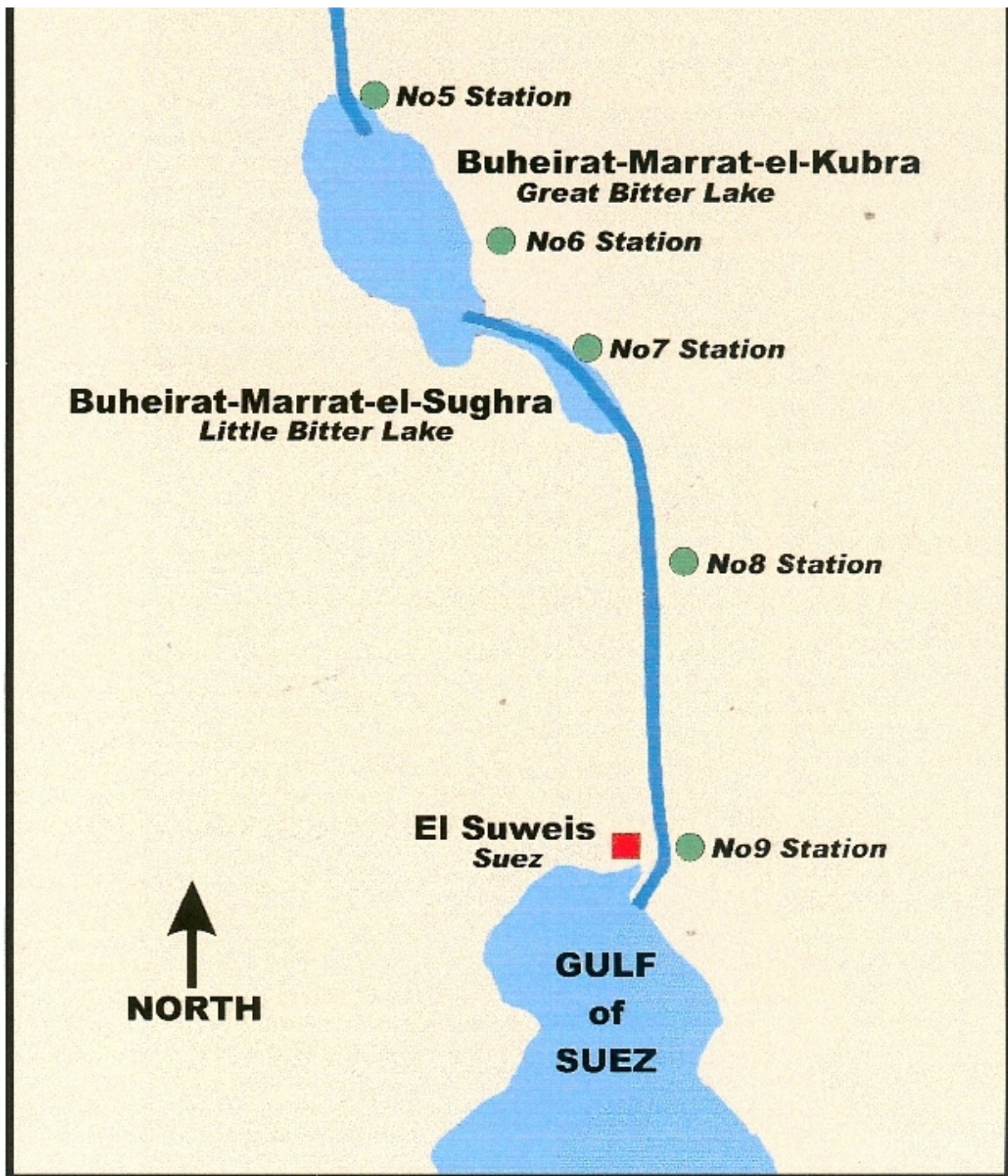


A coral reef off of the Sinai Peninsula in the Red Sea



A man-made canal in Egypt, the canal separates Egypt and the Sinai Peninsula and connects the Mediterranean to the Red Sea. 101 miles long and 984 ft. wide at its widest point, it is a critical two way shipping and travel route between Europe and Asia.











Defense Minister Moshe Dayan
1915-1981

"Along the Syrian border there were no farms and no refugee camps -- there was only the Syrian army... the kibbutzim saw the good agricultural land... and they dreamed about it... They didn't even try to hide their greed for the land... We would send a tractor to plow some area where it wasn't possible to do anything, in the demilitarized area, and knew in advance that the Syrians would start to shoot. If they didn't shoot, we would tell the tractor to advance further, until in the end the Syrians would get annoyed and shoot. And then we would use artillery and later the air force also, and that's how it was." 1976

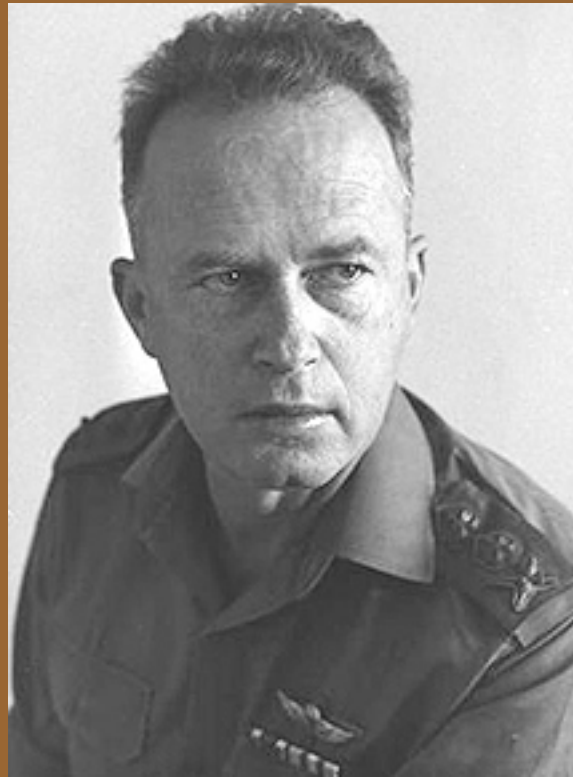
Already a battle hardened by the end of his teens, Moshe Dayan gained his trademark eyepatch while fighting the Vichy French in Syria during WWII after a bullet struck his binoculars. Dayan's activities in the 1948 War of Independence began when he commanded the defense of Jewish settlements in the Jordan Valley. He later commanded the battalion that attacked the city of Lydda and helped halt Egyptian forces on the southern front. In August 1948, he was appointed commander on the Jerusalem front. In 1949, he participated in armistice talks with Jordanian officials at Rhodes. Dayan's military prowess allowed him to rise to the rank of chief of operations at General Headquarters in 1952, and, in 1953, he was elected Chief of Staff of the armed forces³.

Dayan became Chief of Staff during a time of severe Arab belligerence. Despite the military armistice of 1949, the surrounding Arab nations remained hostile, using maritime blockades,

reinforcing an economic boycott, promoting political and propaganda warfare and supporting terrorism in Israel. Dayan insisted on strong retaliation operations. His view was that the Arabs saw terrorism as a stage of war, and the longer the terrorist attacks continued, the longer the Arabs had to build up their military strength. He wanted to force the Arabs into open battle before they gained full military power³. In 1957, Dayan led the Israeli Defense Forces in the Suez Canal incident.

In 1958, Dayan left the military for politics and became a member of the Israeli Knesset in 1959. In 1964, Dayan resigned as Minister of Agriculture after an argument with then Prime Minister Levi Eshkol. Dayan returned to Eshkol's cabinet as Defense Minister in the days before the Six Day War and crafted Israel's war strategy along with Israeli Commander Yitzhak Rabin. His popularity soared after the Israeli victories.

Dayan's popularity waned significantly after the 1973 Yom Kippur war in which Israel was caught completely by surprise. Blame fell largely on Dayan as Defense Minister and he resigned his post in 1974. In a surprising turnaround from his hawkish past, Dayan was a lead negotiator with Egypt during the Camp David Accords. Dayan died in 1981 after a two year battle with cancer.



Commander Yitzhak Rabin
1922-1995

"Jerusalem is united, it will never be divided again." June 1995

Joining the Israeli Defense Forces after their creation in 1948, Yitzhak Rabin rose to the rank of Major-General at the age of 32. Rabin established the IDF training doctrine and the leadership style which became known by the command "follow me." In 1962 he was appointed Chief of the General Staff and promoted to the rank of Lieutenant General. He developed the IDF fighting doctrine - based on movement and surprise - which was employed during the Six Day War. By 1967, he had risen to the position of commander of the Israeli Defense Forces.

In the tense waiting period between the Arab mobilization in May and the Six Day War, Rabin suffered a massive nervous breakdown, overwhelmed by the knowledge that a wrong decision on his part would allow the combined armies of 100 million Arab countrymen to strike and overwhelm his country of just 3 million citizens. However, Rabin recovered quickly and along with Moshe Dayan crafted a plan to strike at the Arab forces first, leading to "Operation Focus," and the beginning of the war.

At the conclusion of the Six Day War, Rabin retired his military post after a 26 year career. The next year, Rabin became Israel's representative ambassador to the United Nations. In 1973 he was

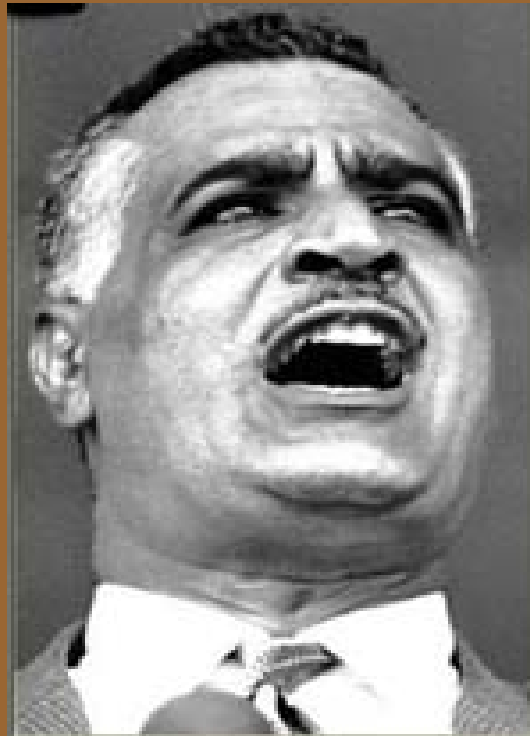
elected to the Israeli Knesset. In 1974 he became Prime Minister of Israel, however, he resigned the post after a series of minor scandals, including allowing the country to receive a shipment of F-16 fighter jets on the Sabbath. In 1992, Rabin once again became Prime Minister, and in 1994, he was a signatory of the Oslo Peace Accords, seen as the most significant step towards peaceful relations since the Camp David Accords. He was later awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, along with Yasser Arafat and Shimon Peres for his efforts.

On November 4, 1995, Rabin was assassinated by a right-wing Orthodox Jew who violently opposed the signing of the Oslo Peace Accords.



Israeli C ommander U ziel Narkiss
1925-1997

"What could I say? It was great. B ut what is great? O nly a poet can put it into words - and I'm not a poet." U zi Narkiss describes touching the Western Wall after the capture of E ast J erusalem.



Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser
1918-1970

"The Arab national aim is the elimination of Israel" May, 1965.

The second president of Egypt, Nasser, then a Lieutenant Colonel in the Egyptian army, helped lead the overthrow of King Farouk in 1952. In 1956, Nasser was elected president and helped guide through ratification a constitution that declared Egypt a single party "Socialist State" recognizing Islam as its official religion. A staunch anti-colonialist, Nasser like other Arabs saw Israel as nothing more than colonial intrusion on Arab land. Nasser was a believer in the concept of Pan-Arabism, or the unification of the Arab world under his sole leadership. He saw himself as an aggressive reformer who yearned to modernize Egypt and cleanse it of the corruption that had plagued Egyptian politics of years past.

Nasser soon began to have conflicts with other Arab countries, especially Saudi Arabia and Jordan, which opposed his aspirations to lead the Arab world. There were multiple attempts by Egyptian intelligence to assassinate Jordan's King Hussein, and in 1962 Egypt intervened in Yemen against royalists backed by Saudi Arabia. Expecting an easy victory, Egyptian forces instead got bogged down in a guerilla war. Nasser responded by attempting to subvert Saudi Arabia itself and by attacking supposed Yemeni royalist bases in Saudi Arabia. The attacks against Jordan and Saudi Arabia caused a marked deterioration in US-Egyptian relations and

also harmed Nasser's reputation in the Arab world¹.

In May of 1967, Nasser expelled UN peacekeepers from the Sinai peninsula and announced a blockade of the Straits of Tiran to Israel-bound shipping. The blockade sealed off the major Israeli port of Eilat and violated the armistice agreements that had followed the 1956 Sinai war. These bold... moves provoked massive pro-Nasser street demonstrations in Arab capitals, and one after another Arab government endorsed Nasser's steps and put its military under direct Egyptian control. Open warfare had seemed a distant possibility before May, but now everything had changed. Nasser had engineered the Arab unity that he had judged necessary to confront Israel¹. As June approached, Nasser's rhetoric became increasingly aggressive.

Shortly after the Arab defeat in the Six Day War, Nasser attempted to resign the presidency, but thousands of Egyptians marched in his support through Cairo. For the next three years, Nasser did his best to rebuild the Egyptian army with some success. His death in 1970 of a heart attack sent shock waves throughout the Arab world. In a stunning display of emotion, millions of Egyptians followed his funeral procession through the streets of Cairo. Nasser remains a significant figure of Arab pride and nationalism to this day.



As-S ayyid Hussein I bin T alal, King of Jordan
1935-1999

"It was a little after 11 A.M. The Norwegian General informed me that the Israeli Prime Minister had addressed an appeal to Jordan. Mr. Eshkol had summarily announced that the Israeli offensive had started that morning, Monday June 5, with operations directed against the United Arab Republic, and then he added: "If you don't intervene, you will suffer no consequences." By that time we were already fighting in Jerusalem and our planes had just taken off to bomb Israeli airbases..." Memoirs of King Hussein

Hussein... was proclaimed King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan on August 11, 1952. A Regency Council was appointed until King Hussein's formal accession to the throne on May 2, 1953, when he assumed his constitutional powers after reaching the age of eighteen, according to the Islamic calendar². Educated in the west, specifically in Britain, Hussein suffered rejection throughout his reign from other Arab leaders for what they saw as Hussein's close connections with western influence. He was the survivor of a number of assassination attempts.

Despite intense Israeli attempts to convince Hussein to keep Jordan out of any war that might erupt, Hussein reluctantly allowed the wave of pan-Arab nationalism that was flourishing in the days before the Six Day War to influence his policy. In May of 1967, Jordan signed a mutual defense treaty with Egypt. After the Israeli air strikes on Egyptian targets on June 5, Hussein received what he believed to be information about a victorious Egyptian defense and counterattack, and initiated the Jordanian troops.

After the Six Day War, King Hussein played a central role in creating UNSC Resolution 242 which

calls for Israel to withdraw from all Arab lands occupied after the Six Day War in exchange for peaceful co-existence with its Middle Eastern neighbors. The resolution remains a central part of today's peace negotiations. He remained a central figure in the peace process from that day, and was seen as a stabilizing figure in many other Middle Eastern conflicts.

In 1998, King Hussein was diagnosed with non-Hodgkins lymphoma cancer. Despite aggressive treatment in the United States, he passed away in February of 1999 to the great bereavement of his subjects.

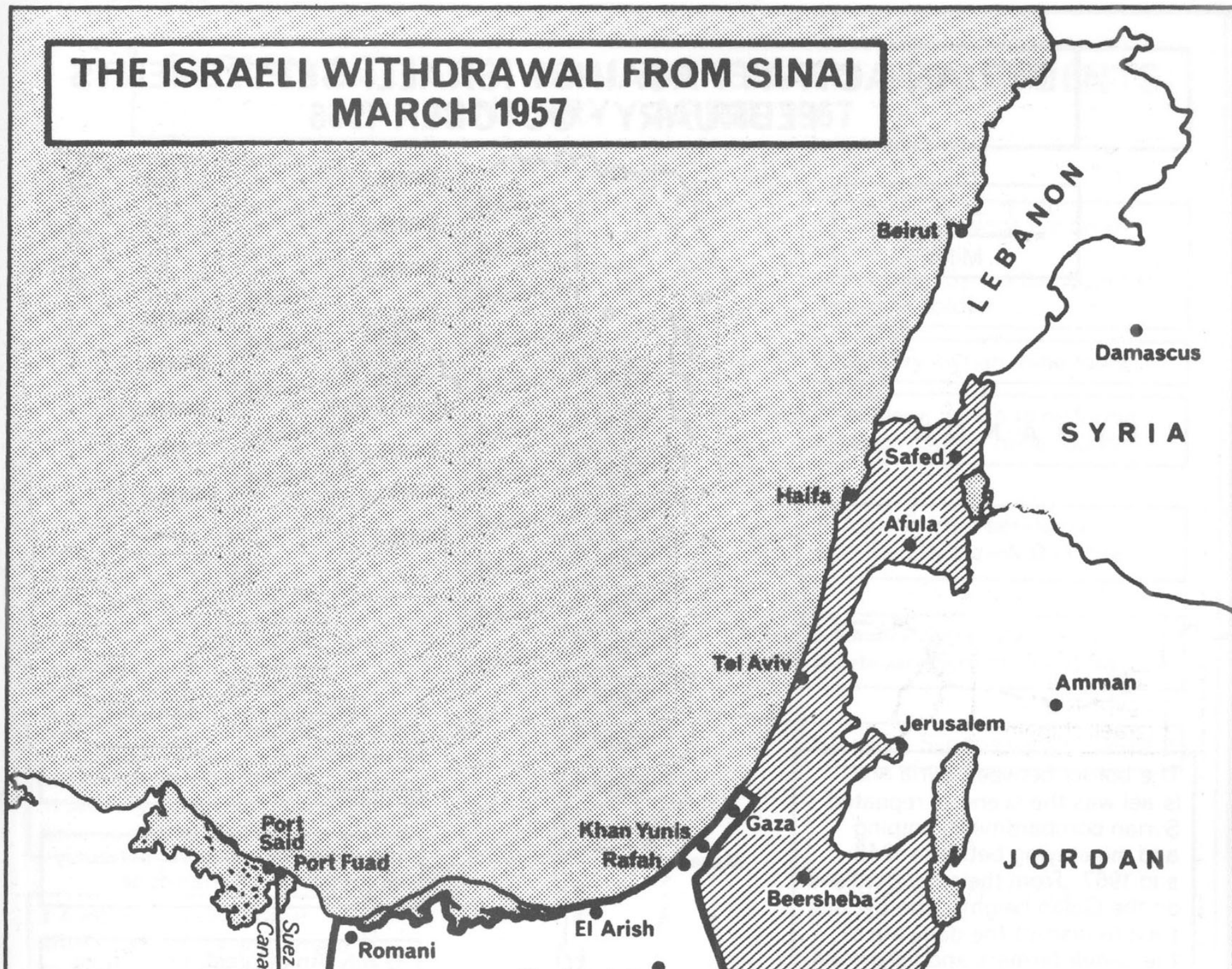


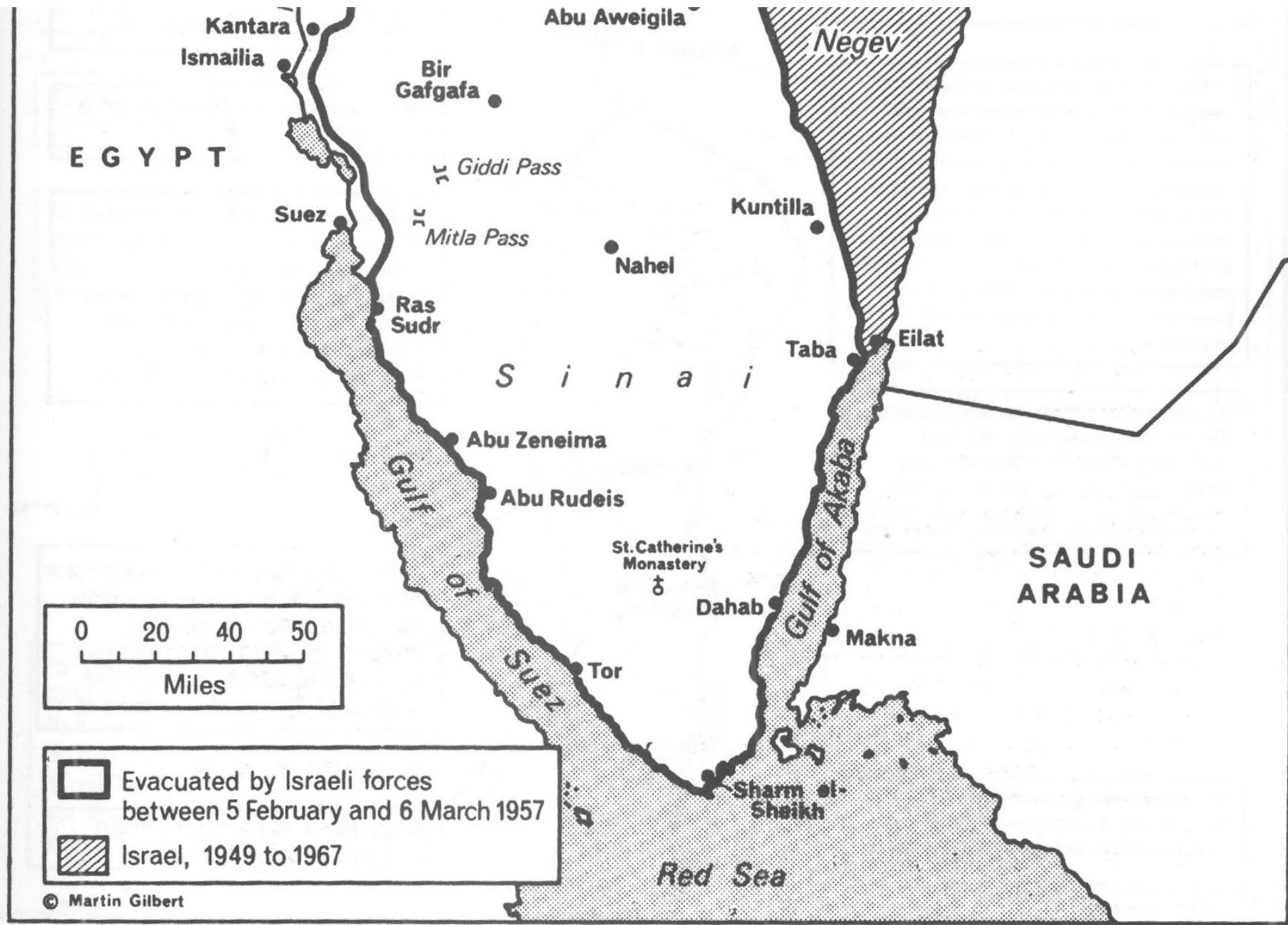
S yrian G eneral S ecretary Hafez al-A ssad
1930-2000

"Our forces are now entirely ready not only to repulse the aggression, but to initiate the act of liberation itself, and to explode the Zionist presence in the Arab homeland. The S yrian A rmy, with its finger on the trigger, is united... I, as a military man, believe that the time has come to enter into a battle of annihilation." May 1967

A member of the B aath A rab S ocialist Party, A ssad began his military career in the A ir F orce, training as a fighter pilot in the former S oviet U nion. He was discharged from the military in 1961 due to his outspoken stand against the S yrian cessation from E gypt. He was one of the primary leaders of the resistance movement that eventually established the B aath regime in 1963, becoming G eneral S ecretary i n1966 after the overthrow of President A min Hafiz. During the S ix D ay War, A ssad was quick to align S yria with E gyptian President Nasser against Israel. However, after the breakout of the war on June 5, A ssad ordered his military to take a cautious approach, and shell Israeli territory from behind S yrian borders.

A fter the disgrace of the performance of the S yrian military during the S ix D ay War, internal strife within the government forced A ssad to quickly, though peacefully, purge the B aath party of political dissonents. In 1973, A ssad joined E gypt in attacking Israel during the Yom Kippur war. A lthough A ssad's stance towards Israel became less harsh in the nineties, he never formally recognized Israel as a country or acknowledged its right to exist. Hafez al-A ssad died of a heart attack in 2000, and was succeeded by his son B ashar al-A ssad who is the current president of S yria.

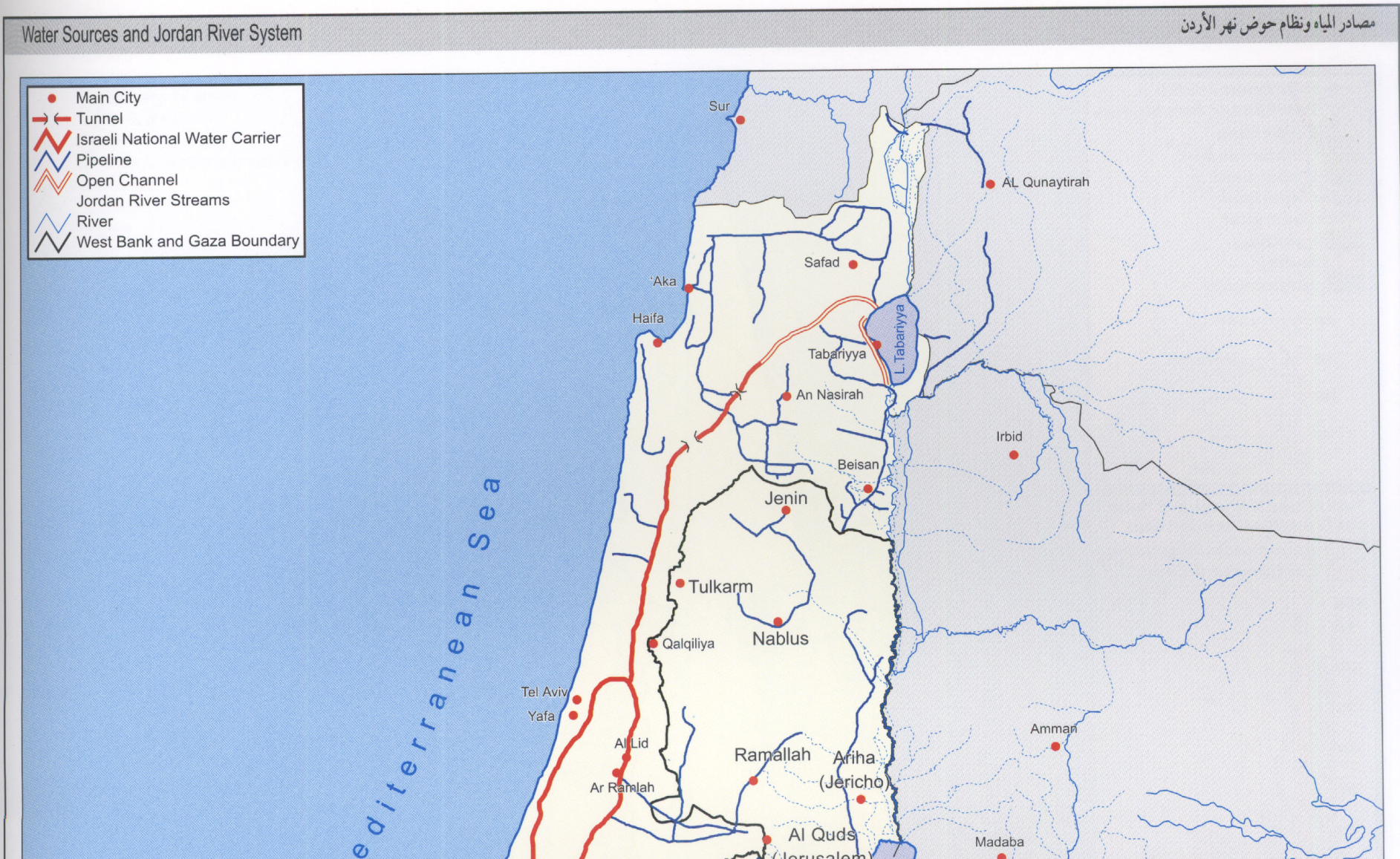


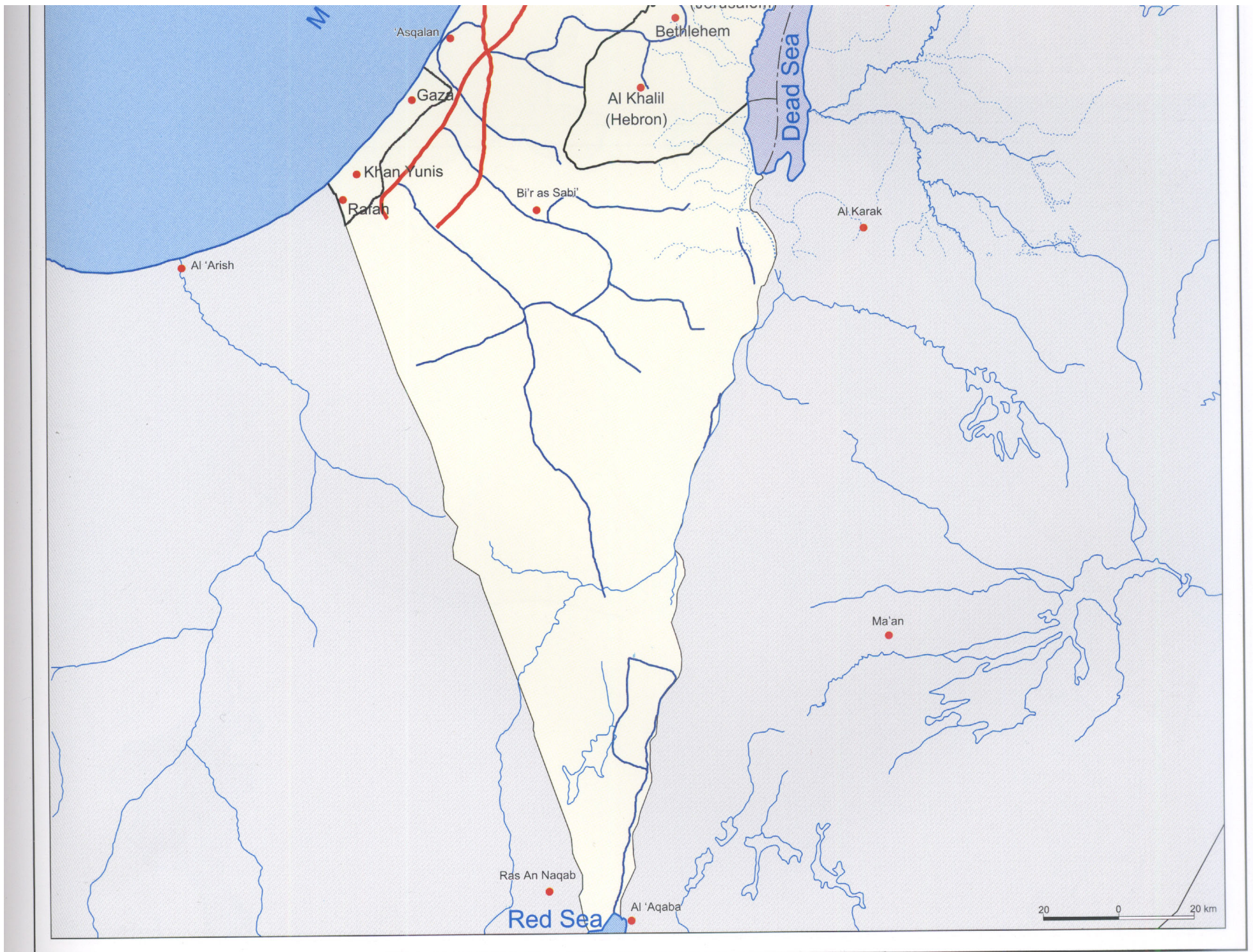


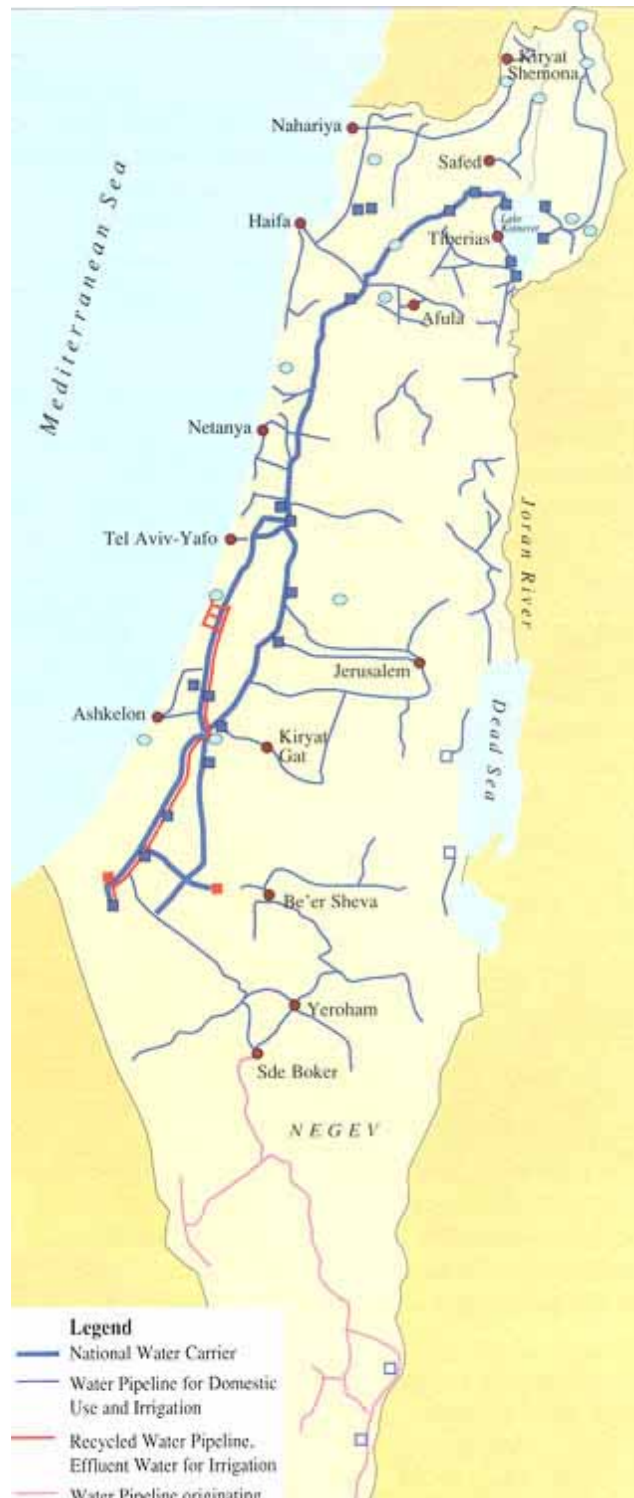
Water Carrier

In 1964, Israel completed its National Water Carrier, a series of canals and pipelines to transport water from the relatively water-rich northern part of the country to the much dryer southern regions. This project promised to allow increased population growth and immigration, and also to spur industrial and agricultural development, and was therefore strenuously opposed by the Arab countries¹.

Syria, by now led by a Ba'athist regime hostile to Nasser, took the lead in demanding Arab action to destroy the Israeli water project... Nasser, however, did not believe at the time that the Arabs were unified enough to defeat Israel, and he chose to defer a confrontation until what he saw as a more propitious moment¹.









Agricultural irrigation being provided by the National Water Carrier

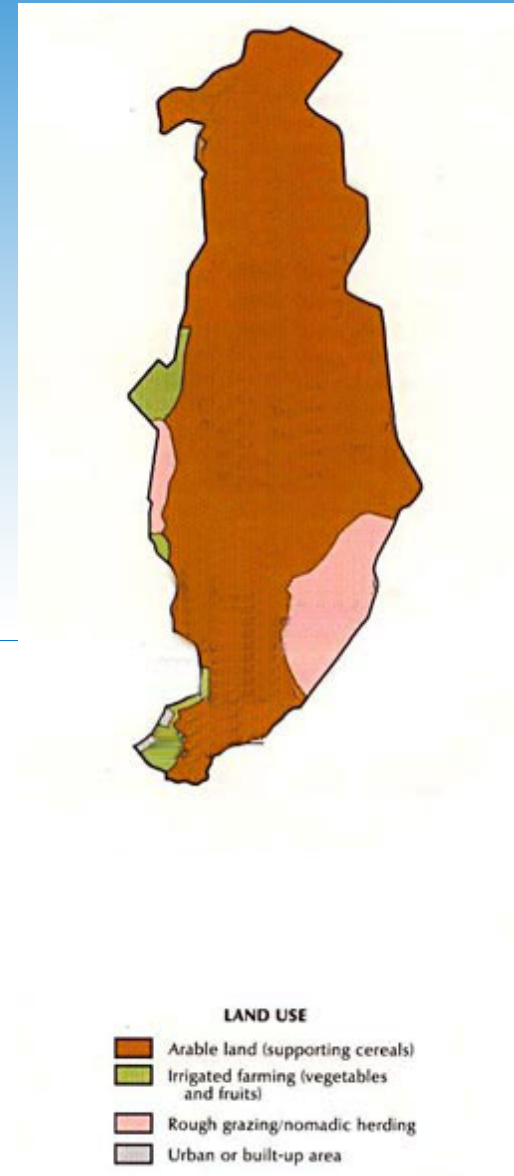




The Golan Heights

A large volcanic plateau bordering Israel, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan, the Golan Heights is comprised of a wealth of arable land and an abundance of streams and rivers that flow into the Sea of Galilee and together contributes nearly fifteen percent of Israel's water supply through the National Water Carrier.

Land use in the Golan Heights

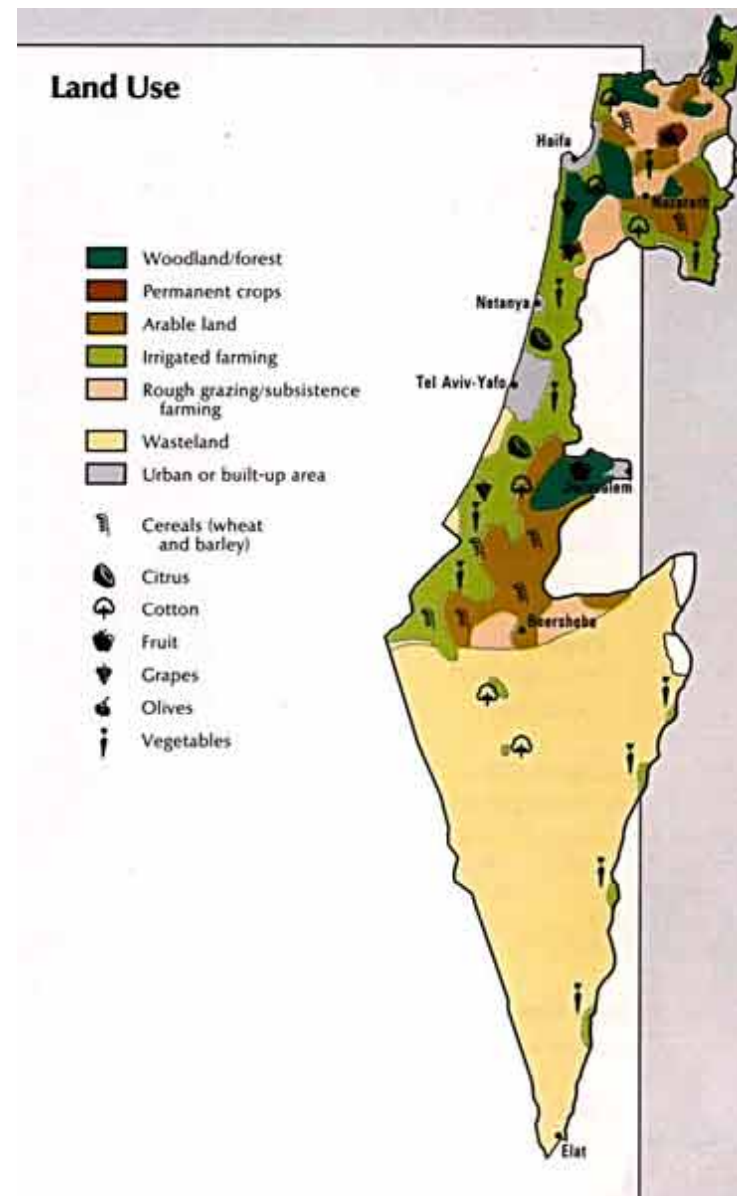


The Golan Heights



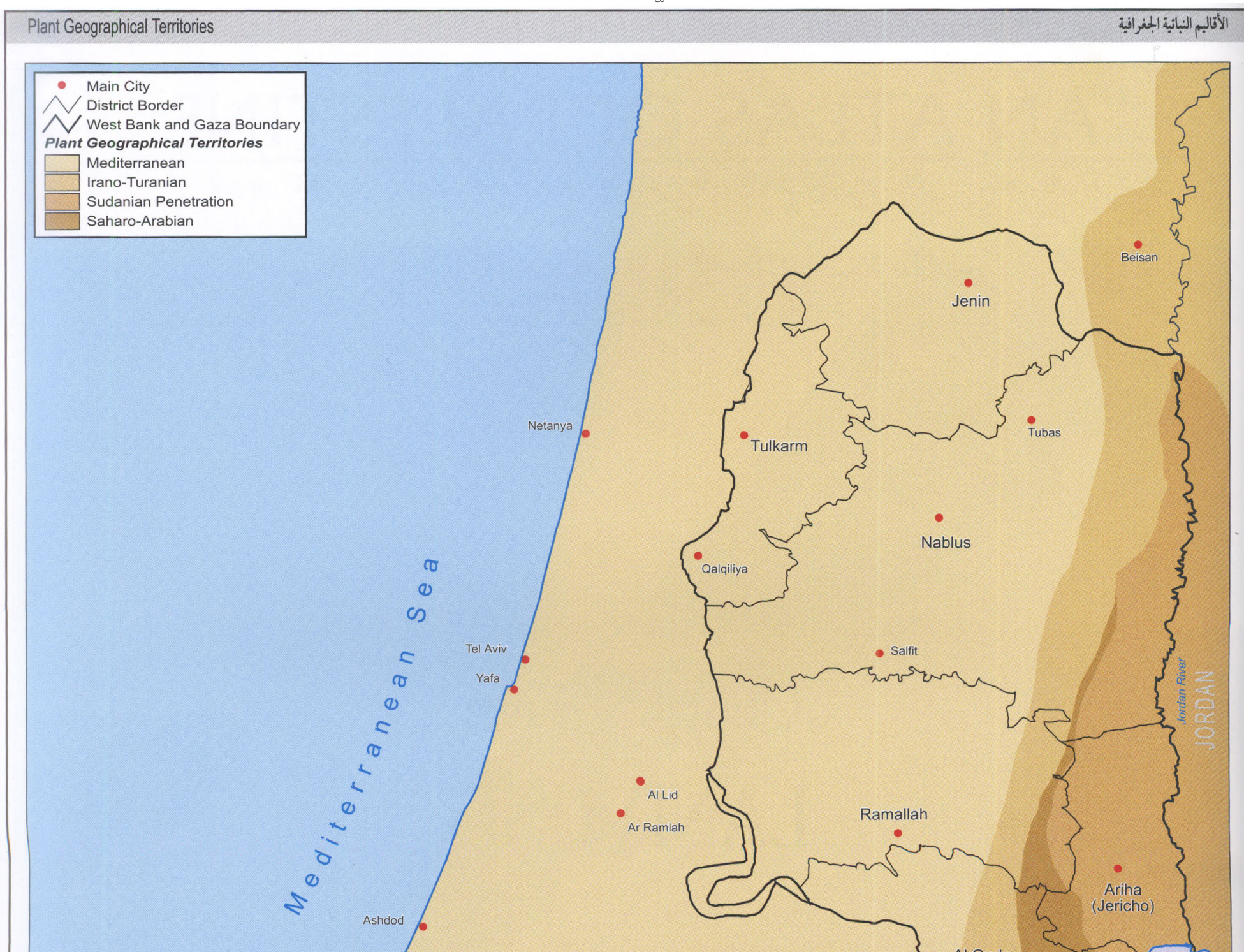
The abundant farming available within and along the Golan Heights had attracted Israeli farmers, unable to produce crops in the arid south (referred to as "The Wastelands"), for some time.

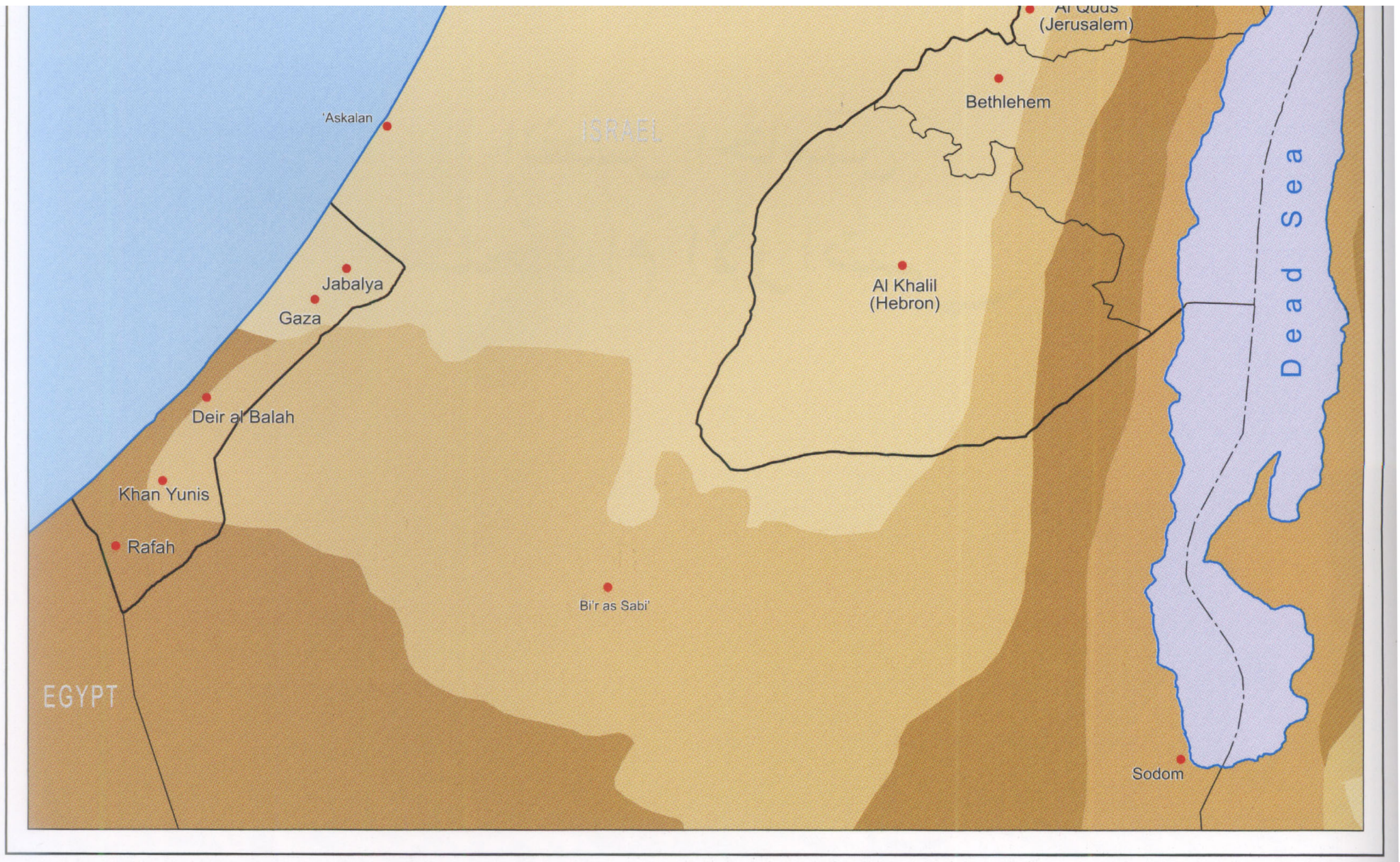
Land Use in Israel



Southern Israel's "Wastelands"

Mean annual rainfall (Observe disparity between north and south)





Panoramic Views





Tensions between Israel and Syria began after routine shelling by Syria of Israel from positions within the Golan Heights. In April 1967, a full scale incident between Israel and Syria breaks out after Syria repeatedly aims rocket fire at an Israeli tractor attempting to plow in the demilitarized zone. During the skirmish, Syria lost six MIG-21 fighters and Dassault Mirage III fighter aircraft from the Israeli Air Force strafed the Syrian capital of Damascus.

1967 Timeline Leading up to the Six Day War



January 1967

February 1967

March 1967

April 1967

-Dogfights between Israel and Syria after border incidents at the Golan Heights. Following an attack on the Israeli Water carrier at the water pump at Kibbutz Misgav Am, Israeli Prime Minister and Defense Minister Levi Eshkol resolved that after the next act of belligerence, Israel would position armored tractors deep into the demilitarized zones, wait to be hit, and then fire back¹. E nusing skirmishes led to a dogfight over the Golan Heights resulting in the loss of six Syrian aircraft and Israeli Air Forces strafing the Syrian capital.



May 1967

-E gyptian President Nasser declares "T he armies of E gypt, Jordan, S yria and Lebanon are poised on the borders of Israel to face the challenge, while standing behind us are the armies of Iraq, A lgeria, K uwait, S udan and the whole A rab nation. T his act will astound the world. T oday they will know that the A rabs are arranged for battle, the critical hour has arrived. We have reached the stage of serious action and not declarations."

-E gypt expels U N peacekeeping forces from the S inai Peninsula.

-E gypt closes the S traits of T iran to Israeli shipping.

June 1967

-Israel Pre-emptively strikes E gypt in "[O peration F ocus](#)."

-E gypt retreats from S inai Peninsula.

-Israeli D efene F orces Paratroopers advance and capture E ast J erusalem.



Modern day Jerusalem from Mt. of Olives

Jerusalem, located in the Judaean mountains between the Mediterranean Sea and the northern tip of the Dead Sea is one of the oldest cities in the world. The city is the holiest in all of Judaism, the third holiest city of Islam, and a site of great significance for Christianity. The walled area of Jerusalem, or the "Old City," constituted the entire city until the mid-nineteenth century, around the same time that its four traditional quarters were designated the Armenian, Christian, Jewish, and Muslim. Despite the small area of the Old City (.35 sq. miles), it is the home of several of the most important religious sites for the three western faiths; Judaism's Temple Mount and the Western Wall, Christianity's Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and Islam's Dome of the Rock and al-Aqsa Mosque.

First Century Jerusalem

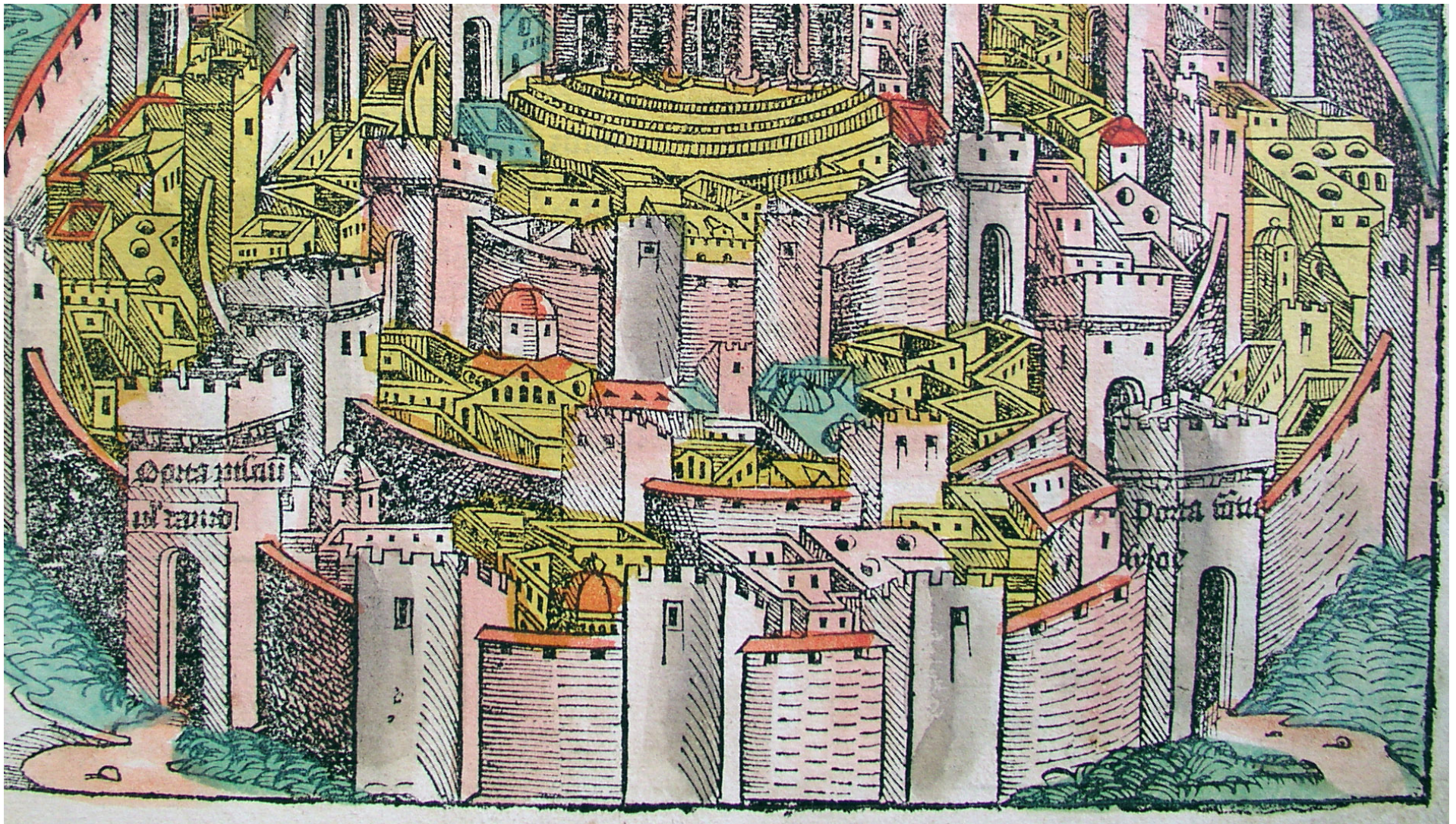
First Century Jerusalem



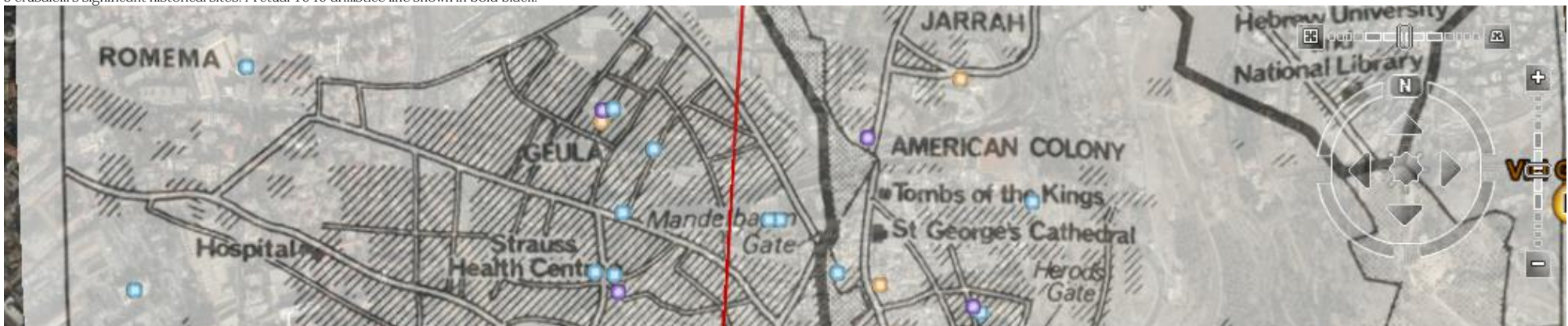
© 2003 Bible History Online

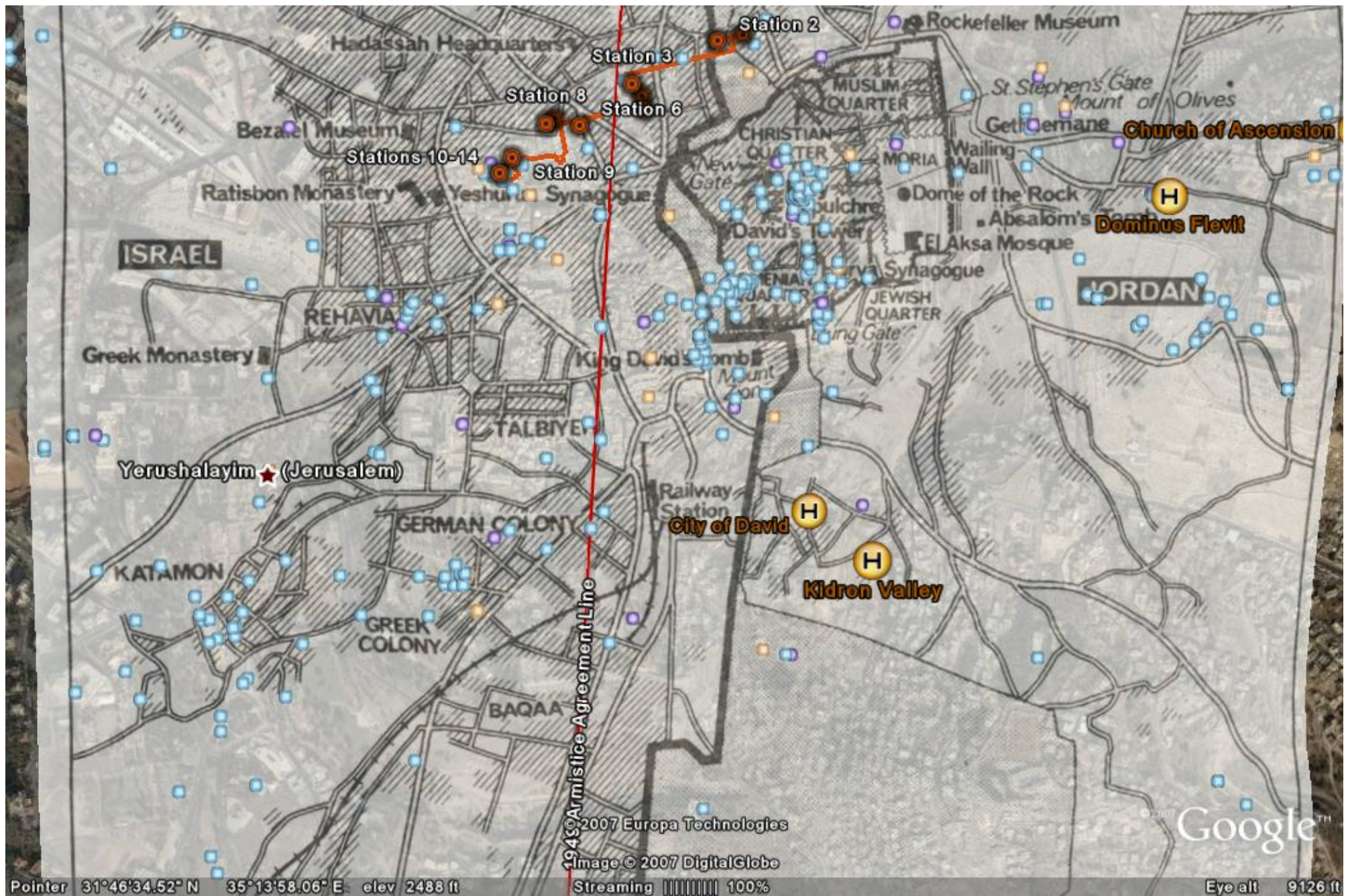
15th-16th Century Watercolor





Jerusalem's significant historical sites: A ctual 1949 armistice line shown in bold black.



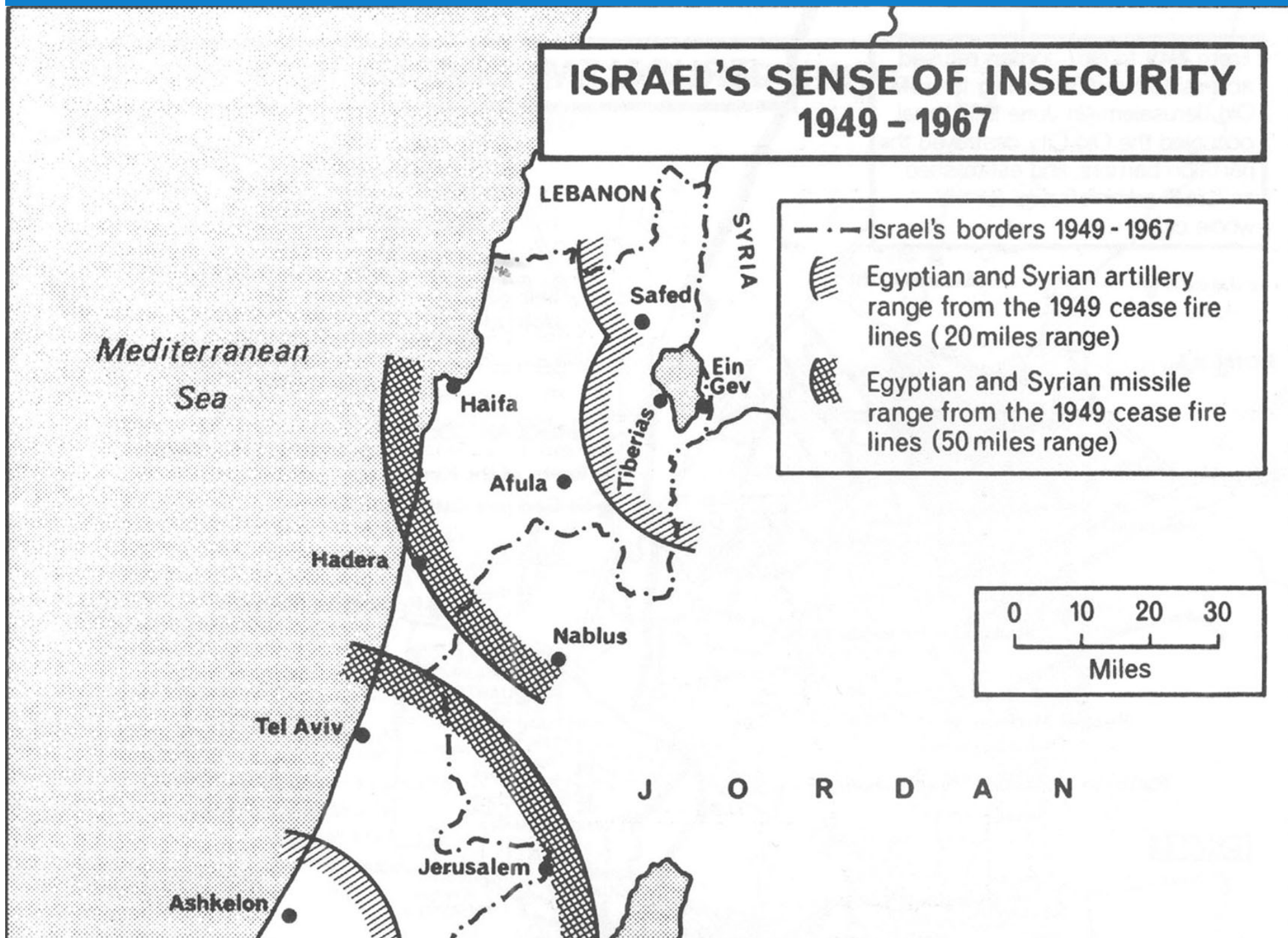


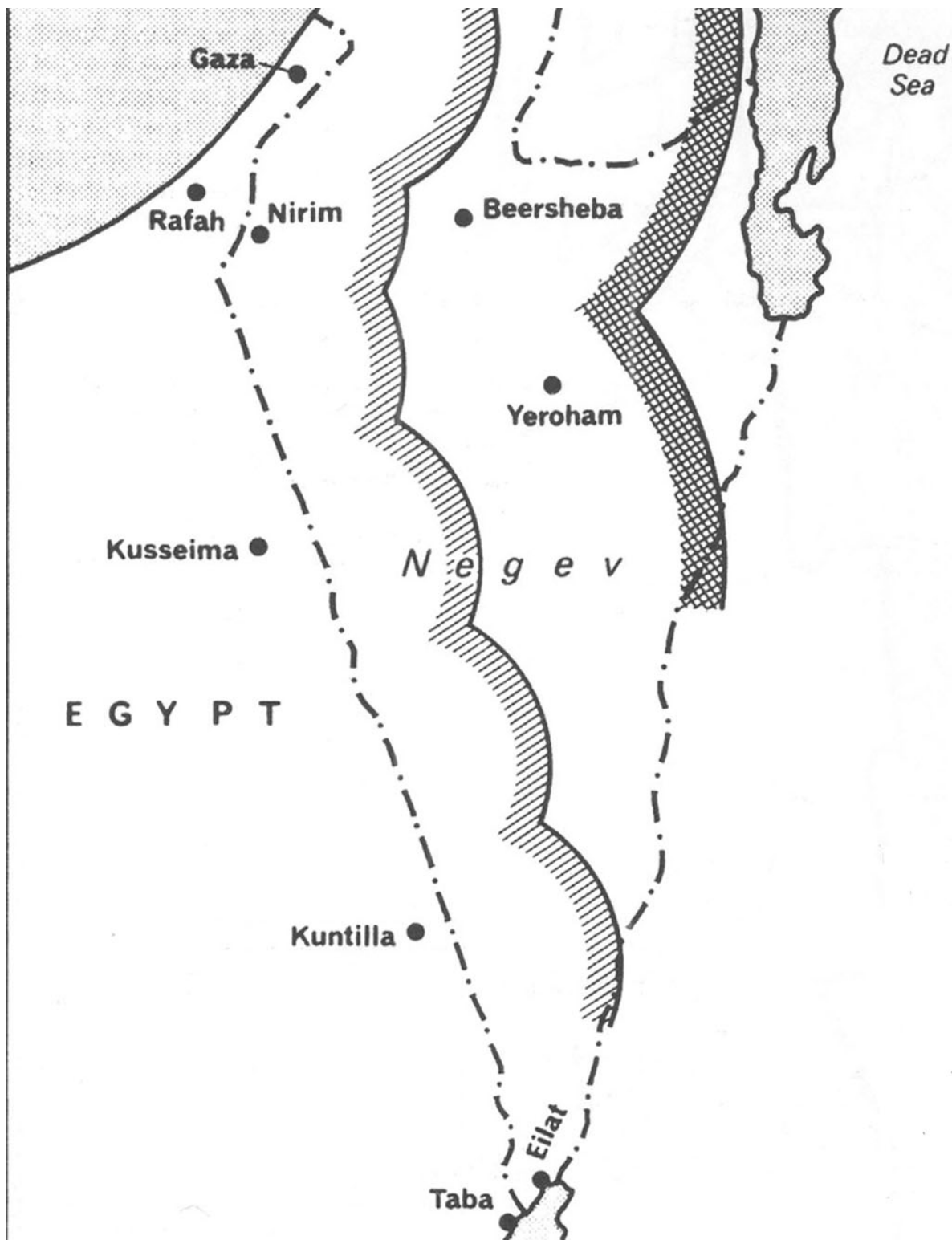
Under the Mandate of Palestine, the city of Jerusalem was to remain in the control of a special "international regime" controlled by the United Nations. This plan was never fully implemented and the city was the source of vicious fighting during the 1949 Arab-Israeli War. The resulting armistice led to the dividing line between West and East Jerusalem; the west controlled by Israel, and the east controlled by the Jordanian ruled West Bank. After the war, access to the eastern part of the city and its holy sites was cut off to Israelis by the Jordanian government, and extremely limited access was granted to visitors of East Jerusalem's holy Christian sites.

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In the Spring of 1967, Israel had good reason to worry. The entire nation was well within Artillery and Missile range of its hostile neighbors, and if Jordan chose to enter the war, a massive push by Jordanian troops could split the country in two and separate reinforcements from moving throughout the country. On the eve of war, Israel was outnumbered by over 2:1.



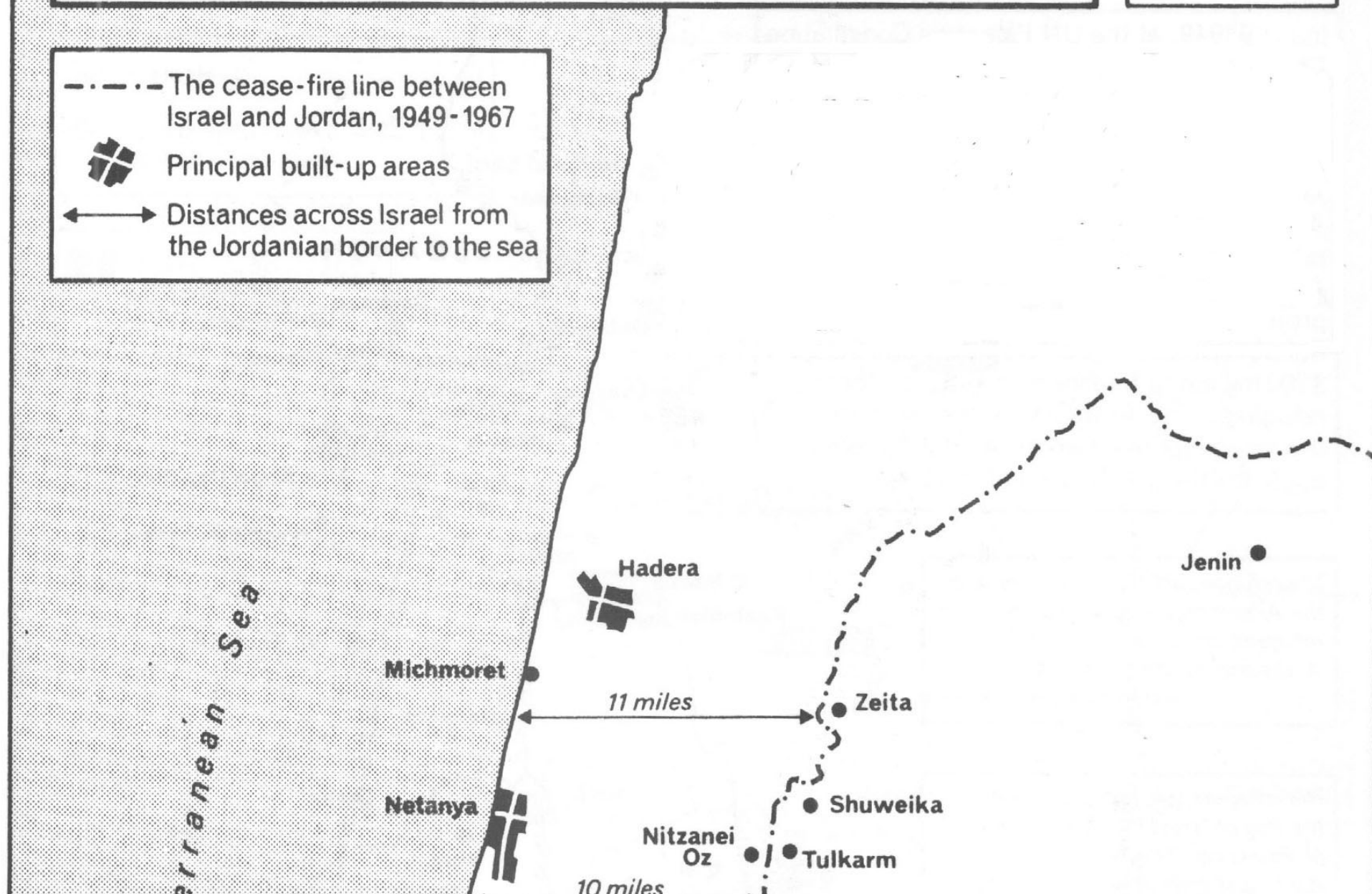


'The Arab national aim is the elimination of Israel'
**PRESIDENT NASSER OF EGYPT TO PRESIDENT
AREF OF IRAQ, 25 MAY 1965**

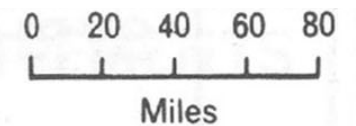
CENTRAL ISRAEL AND THE JORDAN BORDER 1949-1967


0 1 2 3 4 5
Miles


- . - . - The cease-fire line between Israel and Jordan, 1949-1967
- Principal built-up areas
- Distances across Israel from the Jordanian border to the sea



THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS 14-24 MAY 1967



 The State of Israel, 1949-1967

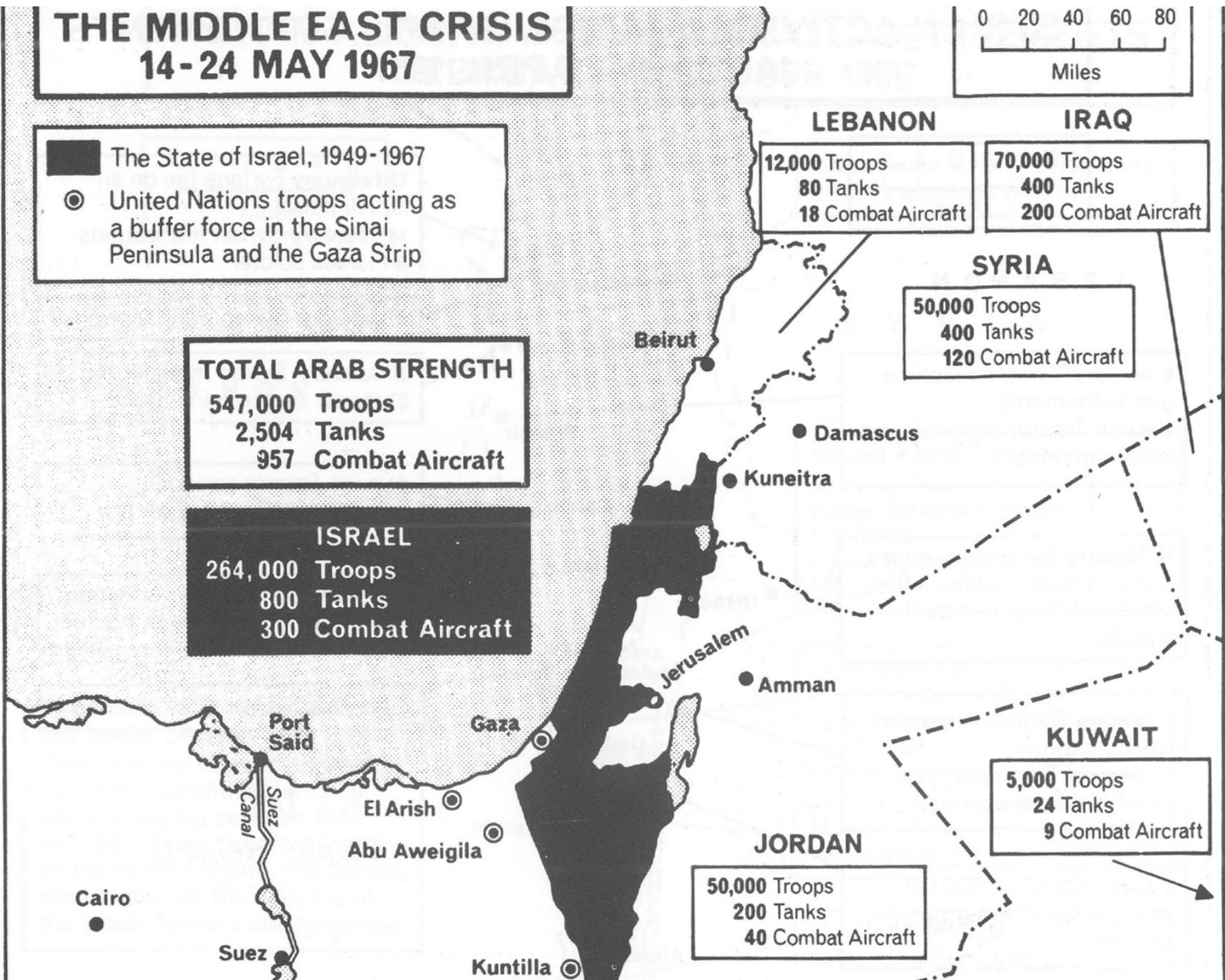
 United Nations troops acting as a buffer force in the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip

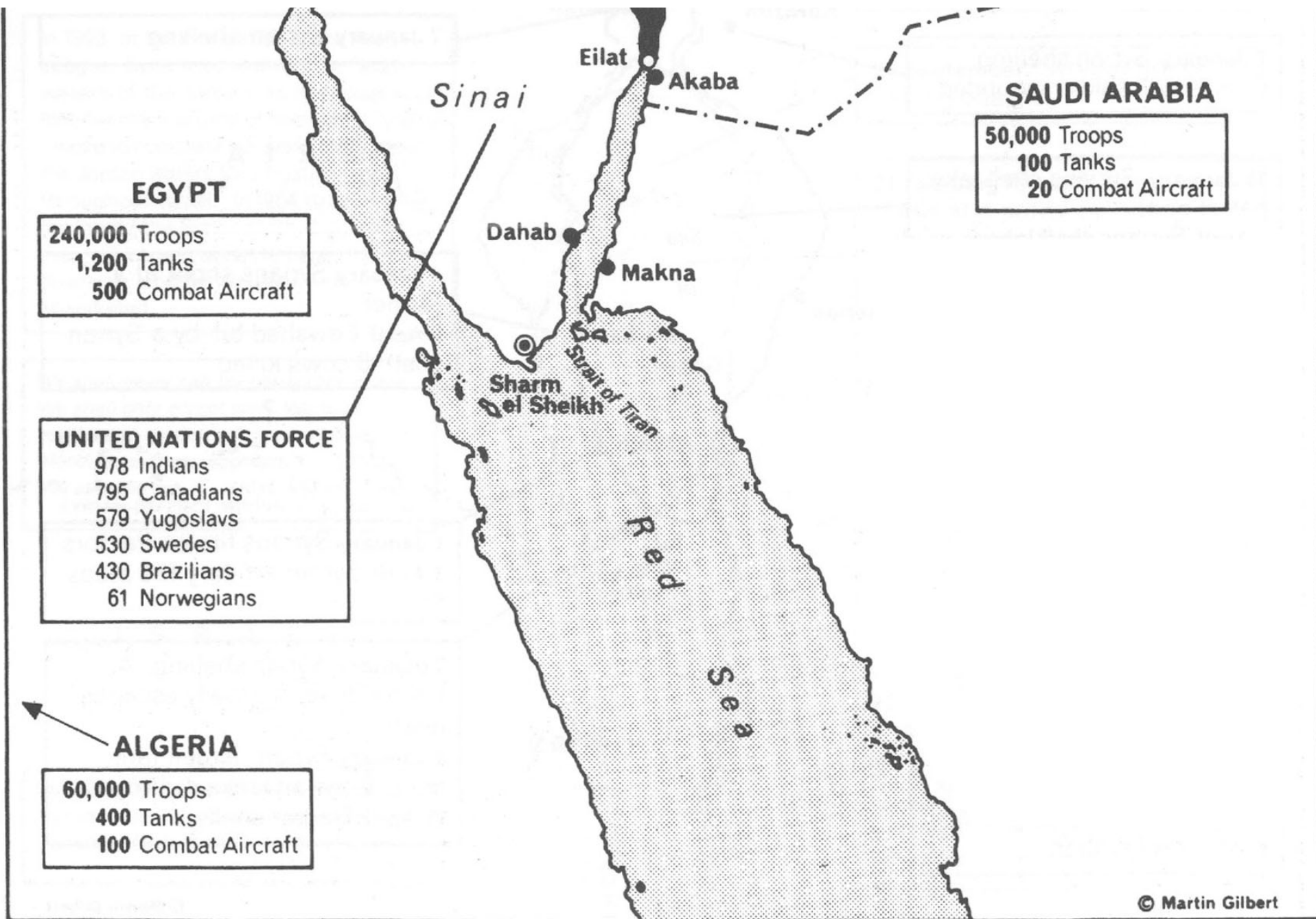
TOTAL ARAB STRENGTH

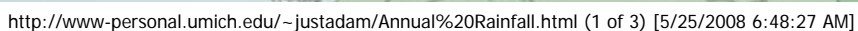
547,000 Troops
2,504 Tanks
957 Combat Aircraft

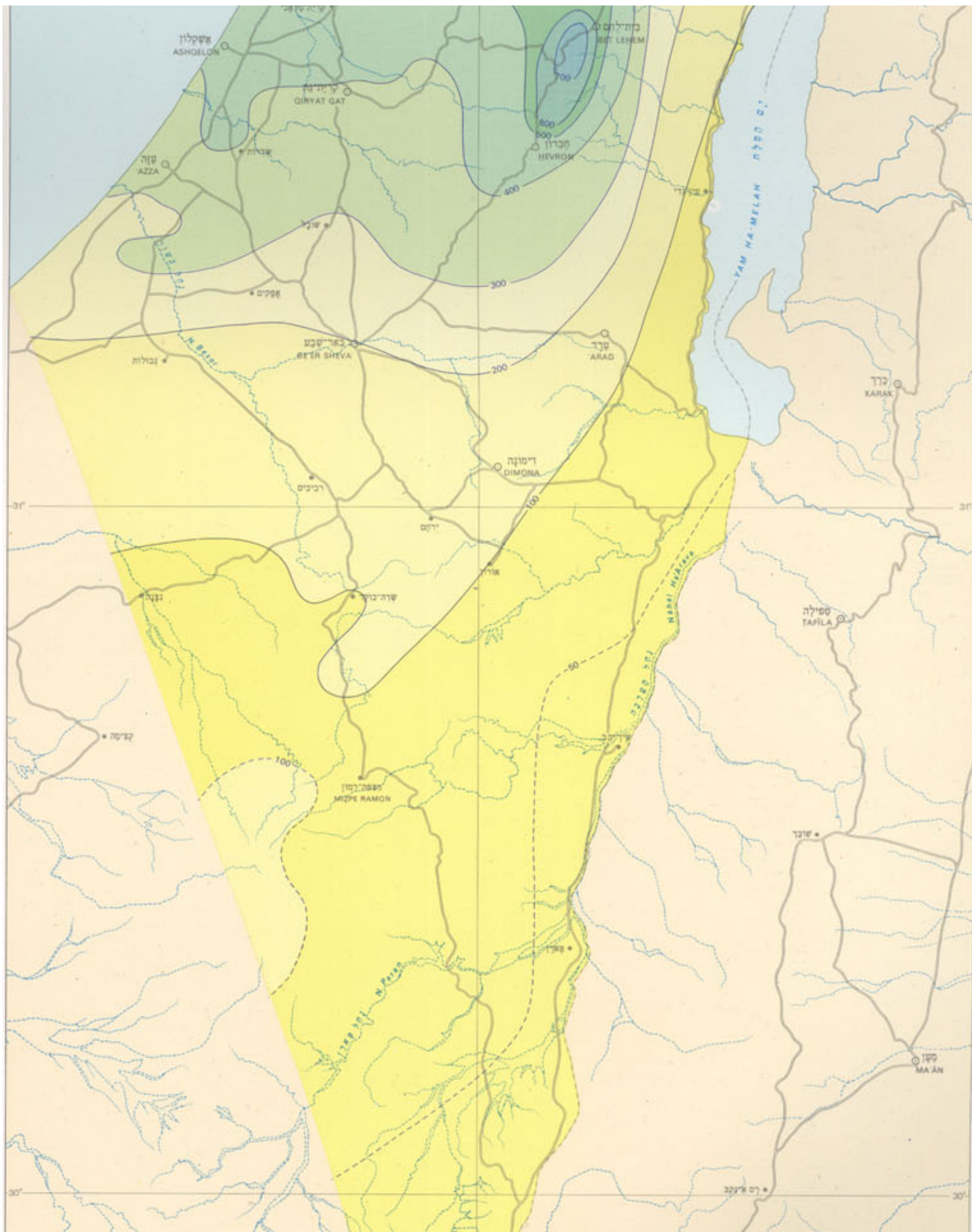
ISRAEL

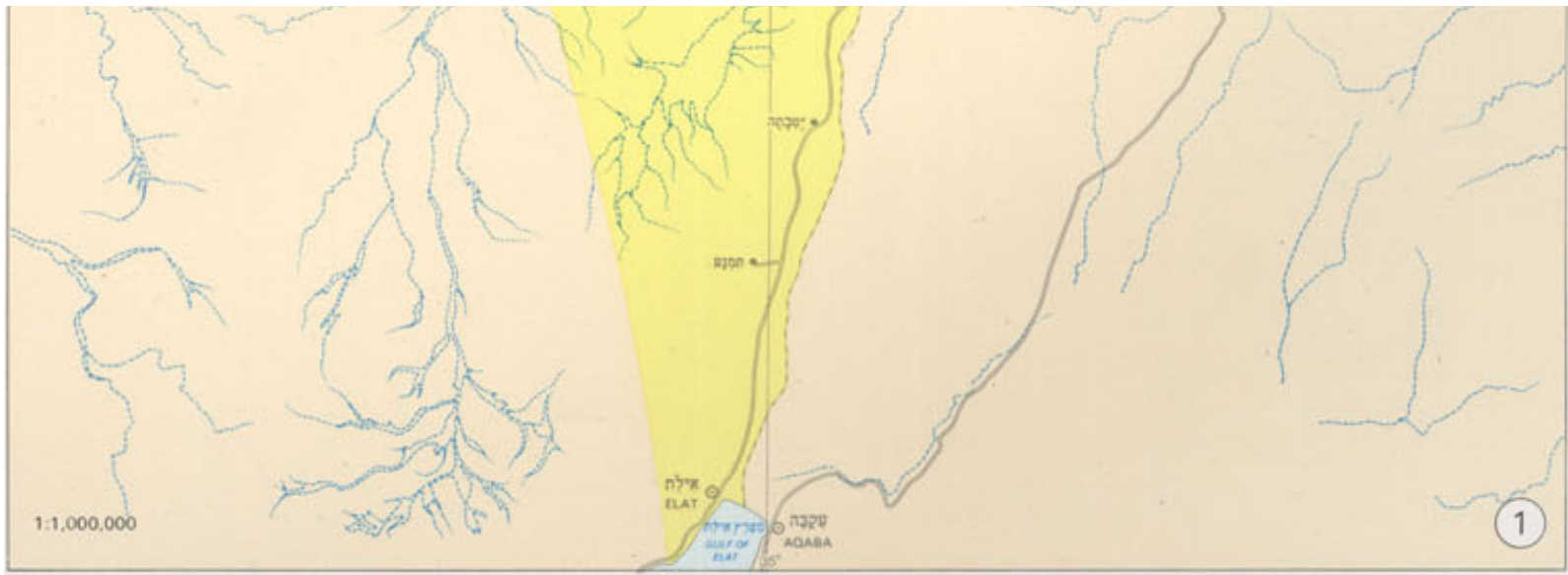
264,000 Troops
800 Tanks
300 Combat Aircraft












Six Day War Timeline



June 1, 1967 -Newly apointed D efense Minister Moshe D ayan summons C hief of S taff Yitzhak Rabin and S outhern C ommand B rigadier G eneral Yeshayahu G avish to present plans to attack and defend against E gypt.

June 2, 1967 -J ordan calls up reserve officers.

June 3, 1967

June 4, 1967

June 5, 1967 -A t 7:45 a.m. Israel pre-emptively strikes E gyptian A ir Forces during "O peration F ocus"
-B attle of A bu-A geila on the S inai Peninsula. E gyptian forces are defeated and the E gyptian A rmy is ordered to retreat from the peninsula.
-J ordanian troops begin moving into the area around J erusalem and occupy the G overnment House.

June 6, 1967 -Israeli troops continue their push through the S inai Peninsula
-B attle of A mmunition Hill



June 7, 1967 Israeli Defense Force Paratroopers capture E ast Jerusalem from J ordanian troops.

Operation Focus

At 7:45 a.m. on June 5, 1967, air sirens began to sound all over Israel as all but twelve of the country's nearly two hundred operational jets left the ground headed for Egypt. Flying low through previously discovered gaps in the Egyptian radar net, and approaching from unexpected directions, mostly from the west (that is, from the Mediterranean), the Israelis achieved complete tactical surprise. In the first day of fighting 80 percent of Egypt's bombers were destroyed along with 55 percent of its fighter jets. Those losses, combined with the devastation of the airbases and command and control centers demoralized the Egyptian high command, and gave Israel control of the skies over the southern front. Israeli losses totaled just 19 planes, mostly from ground fire¹.



The French made Dassault Mirage 3, the primary aircraft of the Israeli Air Forces



The Soviet-made Mig-21 Fishbed, the primary fighter aircraft of the Egyptian Air Force.



The Soviet-made TU-16 "Badger" bombers, the primary bomber aircraft of the Egyptian Air Force.



Uzi Narkiss, Moshe Dayan, and Yitzhak Rabin approach the Western Wall

On July 7, 1967, at 8:30 a.m., Israeli Defense Force paratroopers launched a three-pronged assault on Jerusalem from the hills surrounding the city taken from the Jordanians in the previous two days of fighting. Israeli Colonel Motta Gur led his battalion into the Old City through St. Stephen's Gate where they met little resistance. Climbing to the Temple Mount, the holiest site in Judaism, Gur radioed a message to Israeli commanders stating "The Temple Mount is in our hands."

[Watch Footage of Paratroopers Entering the City](#)